

MIAMI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
25 N BROADWAY
PERU, IN 46970
MAY 4, 2020

Commissioner Hunt called regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners via teleconference to order. All Commissioners are present.

DUKES HOSPITAL

Deb Close, Dukes Hospital CEO came before the board to provide an update on their response to the COVID-19 virus. Ms. Close explained in late fall the staff noticed that flu season had hit incredibly hard and by January doctors and hospital officials started questioning if something more serious was happening. Ms. Close went on to explain the hospital routinely goes through emergency preparedness plans quarterly in preparation for things like disasters, pandemics, etc. In mid-January Ms. Close received notification that PPE (personal protective equipment) would be an issue and the hospital started early by implementing PPE usage and daily debriefings. Ms. Close received a call from doctors in China that the pandemic is worse than expected and PPE's were difficult to find. On March 4, Ms. Close deployed the Incident Command Team. Everyone at the hospital was cross-trained for the surge of the virus, practice drills started and weekly meetings were held to keep everyone aware of the situation. Dr. Close also implemented a COVID-19 Team, which isolated workers who would manage the care of the COVID-19 patients. Ms. Close stated the numbers would increase, as expected as more people are tested. The community needs to look at the positive cases versus deaths, which shows Miami County has performed well in controlling the issue locally to keep the citizens safe.

HIGHWAY

Ken Einselen, Highway Engineer came before the board to present the 2019 Highway Annual Report for review. Commissioner Musselman made a motion to approve the 2019 Highway Annual Report as presented. Commissioner West 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

Engineer Einselen presented Form IC639-final acceptance from INDOT of the Kelly Avenue project. There was a delay due to failed material, but it has been resolved. Commissioner West made a motion to approve Form IC639-final acceptance from INDOT of the Kelly Avenue project. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

Engineer Einselen presented the bid for crack sealing for Wabash Road, which is part of the Community Crossings Grant for \$61,639.00. The project requires a 25% match from the county. Commissioner Musselman made a motion to approve the bid for crack sealing for Wabash Road, which is part of the Community Crossings Grant for \$61,639.00. Commissioner West 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

Engineer Einselen presented supplemental signature pages for the 4 Community Crossings projects. Each project has a local agreement and needs approved for the state to accept the grant request. Commissioner West made a motion to sign the supplemental agreements for the 4 Community Crossings projects. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

HEALTH DEPT/COVID-19

Dr. Redmon provided an updated on the current Back On Track plan issued by Governor Holcomb. The plan, structured in phases, could change if there is a surge in cases. Phase II started today, but Dr. Redmon would like to verify some gray areas as the county could implement stricter guidelines, but not less than the state. Dr. Redmon reiterated the 3 main guidelines have not changed; continue to social distance, self-quarantine and wear facial coverings. The virus is deadly and there is no vaccine. It is important for everyone to understand the vulnerable groups and that the guidelines are not erased. Everyone needs to go back to work and while there will be an increase in more positive cases, the goal is not to have more deaths. Dr. Redmon is concerned with the increase in numbers in Cass County and something that needs to remain monitored. Commissioner West asked about testing available for those who are in the vulnerable group. Dr. Redmon noted that

there is not widespread testing available, but there is a laboratory in Logansport that is offering the anti-body test for \$65.00. The goal of the anti-body test is to determine who has had the virus. If someone has had it, it is unlikely the person who has had it would catch it again, but the testing helps the state collect data to better understand the virus. Commissioner West inquired about what the county needed to do for those employees who fall in the vulnerable category and if the county should continue to pay the employees if they are off work. Dr. Redmon explained if it gave the county a sense of security, the board could cover the anti-body testing and allow the employee to return to work. Dr. Redmon stressed that it is still critical the county keeps safety a priority as the public returns to the building. The importance of wearing masks in the building is to protect others. Dr. Redmon feels strongly that the Security Officers at the door should be wearing masks. Commissioner Musselman feels that if the county offers the anti-body testing to 1 employee, they must offer it to all. Commissioner West stated that testing would only be for those in the vulnerable category such as over 65 or those with serious health issues.

Sheriff Hunter explained he would not force any of his employees to wear a mask. They have been provided to the employees, but it remains their option as to whether or not they wear them. Dr. Redmon explained those who are asymptomatic could be a serious concern and wearing a mask has proven to help by adding another layer of protection to others. Sheriff Hunter stated that there are conflicting medical reports about the effectiveness of the masks and some doctors do not feel it does any good. Therefore, if his employees want to wear a mask they can, but he would not force them to wear it. Commissioner West noted the masks are not for the employees' protection, but for the protection of others. Dr. Redmon agreed that it is considered a multi-layer approach, a back up to social distancing and a way to protect others from exposure. Sheriff Hunter feels if the Health Department is concerned about the masks being worn, they should send someone from their office to monitor the doors. Dr. Redmon stated the board could hire a part-time nurse to monitor the door, but feels Security wearing a mask is a simple request for protecting the public. The intent is to protect the community by wearing a mask and there is good evidence to show that it is effective. Commissioner West noted Attorney Steve Downs advised the county a few weeks ago that they needed to follow the directive of the Health Officer and agrees that the Security Officers should wear the masks to help protect the public. Dr. Redmon raised concerns over liability of the county if someone is needlessly exposed because Security Officers are not forced to wear masks. The key is to provide safety and an added layer of protection. Commissioner Hunt asked Dr. Redmon is the use of the Plexiglas dividers would be sufficient if security does not want to wear a mask. Dr. Redmon agreed that the Plexiglas divider would be acceptable if the masks are not used.

SHERIFF

Sheriff Hunter came before the board to discuss an issue with air conditioner unit at the jail. Sheriff Hunter is waiting on the quotes from Climate Makers and Quality Plumbing. The quotes should be in soon, but warmer weather will be here soon and Sheriff Hunter does not want to have an issue with installation.

Sheriff Hunter spoke about the 2nd Security Officer position. The courts will be opening back up soon and that will cause an increase in the number of patrons while they work to catch up on cases. Commissioner West asked Auditor Brown about income availability. Auditor Brown stated that during a conference call last week with the state, the Auditors were advised that income tax distributions would be reduced based on the number of people on unemployment, to look for assessed values to drop, which affects property tax collections and finally, the growth quotient will likely be minimal over the next few years. Due to these factors, the county needs to monitor spending closely as the next few years could be much like those during the recession. Auditor Brown also feels the money the council approved to move to Rainy Day to help with the construction project of the Courthouse and Annex buildings will likely need reduced. Auditor Brown understands that part of the project included increasing Security, but would be something the council would need to review and consider before making a formal decision.

Judge Banina stated that the courts have always been in need of additional security, but the Supreme Court pushed the start date for courts to May 18, 2020, so there is time for

group consideration about pushing out hiring the 2nd person. Sheriff Hunter stated he understands the financial situation, but if the county does decide to add the extra position, there will be training that must take place. Judge Spahr stated he chairs the Security Committee and understands the financial situation the county could be facing, but agreed that there is plenty of need for an additional security position. Judge Spahr does feel like the 1 entrance has been good and hopes after the COVID-19 crisis ends, the county will continue. Judge Grund concurred with the other judges that the security is needed as soon as possible.

Judge Banina asked the board about the return to work policy for the court related offices since the date for reconvening has been pushed to May 18, 2020. Judge Banina would like clarification if employees able to work from home and if the employees would receive pay if they were not essential. Commissioner Hunt explained if an employee can work from home, they should continue to do so as long as they get their hours in and complete their work. Commissioner Musselman feels the matter of COVID-19 is ever changing and hard to answer if the employees should be paid while not working. Clerk Sherry Raber said her office is in the same situation as the courts because of the Supreme Courts extension order. Clerk Raber stated that if the county required the employees to take a lay-off, they would not receive pay until after they return to work. Judge Banina explained the board discussed giving extra time or money to those essential employees who worked and it does not seem fair the board is now discussing laying off the employees. Commissioner Hunt suggested the board continue to pay the employees if they are unable to work. Commissioner West noted he would agree to pay the employees if they are not able to work due to the extension, but to be mindful that at budget time there could be cuts required. Commissioner West made a motion to pay court related employees until May 18, 2020. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

VETERANS MEMORIAL DAY EVENT

Jay Kendall, VSO came to notify the board that the Memorial Day ceremonies at all locations would be cancelled. Patrons can pick-up flags at the VFW to place at the cemeteries. It was suggested that VSO Kendall reschedule to June 14, 2020, which is also Flag Day. VSO Kendall was in agreement with rescheduling. Commissioner West made a motion to reschedule the Veterans Memorial Day ceremonies to June 14, 2020 with a time to be determined. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

MINUTES

Commissioner West made a motion to approve the 4/20/20 minutes. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

CLAIMS

Commissioner West made a motion to approve claims. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

PAYROLL

Commissioner Musselman made a motion to approve payroll. Commissioner West 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kerry Worl, Highway Superintendent asked if the county would pay for the anti-body testing of employees 65 and older and those who also have serious health conditions. Commissioner West made a motion for the county to pay for anti-body testing for those employees 65 and older or have evidence of a serious health condition. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 2-1 (Hunt opposed).

Superintendent Worl asked if a plan had been put together for illegal dumping in the county. Commissioner West stated the right-of-ways belong to the county and the Highway should pick-up an illegal dumping. Superintendent Worl explained if the county takes on picking up the illegal dumping, it would cost additional time, manpower and the Highway Department would need some kind of dumpster. Commissioner West offered to help change the mission statement to eliminate the Highway picking up trash in the county.

Commissioner West thanked Auditor Brown for putting the return-to-work policy together and for all her hard work.

COURTHOUSE RESTRICTIONS

Commissioner West made a motion to remain at 1 entrance at 5th Street until further notice, with the remaining doors used as emergency exits only. Commissioner Musselman 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

Commissioner Musselman made a motion to allow up to 25 patrons in the building, excluding the courts and all employees until May 23, 2020. Commissioner West 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

Commissioner Musselman made a motion to allow up to 100 patrons in the building beginning May 24, 2020, excluding the courts and all employees. Commissioner West 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Musselman made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner West 2nd the motion and it passed 3-0.

Adjourned

MIAMI COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

_____, **Chairman**
Alan Hunt

_____, **Vice Chairman**
Larry West

_____, **Member**
Keith Musselman

Attest: _____, **Auditor**
Mary Brown