

?Commissioners receive bids for highway department materials

Written by

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? The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Wednesday, December 3; all members were present. The Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of previous meetings, all claims and payroll.

According to Board President, Lana Sullivan, the number of bids for materials ranging from gasoline to culvert pipe and gravel this year exceeded anything she can remember.

Commissioners Mike Goering and Byron Green agreed with Sullivan.

After County Attorney, Tom Scifres, read the bids for nearly an hour, the Commissioners agreed to take the bids under advisement and asked Highway Superintendent, Rick Graves to review the bid specifications and make a recommendation to the Board.

The bids will be awarded at the December 17 Commissioners meeting. Even though oil prices are down nearly \$100 per barrel, the range of bids for asphalt rivaled prices being paid back when the oil was selling for close to \$150 per barrel. Attempts to get a reasonable explanation for the high prices were unsuccessful.

The Commissioners also received construction engineering proposals from several firms to be considered for work on Bridge No. 113 in Fredericksburg. According to Goering, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) guidelines call for the Commissioners to follow a prescribed procedure of scoring the various engineering firms and then submit the names of the three firms with the highest score to INDOT for consideration.

In other business, the Commissioners approved and signed a joint resolution in support of the much publicized working agreement between Washington County Memorial Hospital and Saint Vincent's Hospital of Indianapolis. The Commissioners also agreed to appoint Sullivan as their representative on the joint committee whose responsibility it is to work many of the details for the proposed merger of the two hospitals.

After hearing that two people have fallen on the south stairway of the courthouse, the Commissioners voted unanimously to have a handrail installed, similar to the one on the north stairways.

Sullivan took time to respond to questions about the process used recently to approve bids and purchase three pickup trucks for the county highway department. She admitted that there were some flaws in the process but said that overall, fairness was the result of that process.

Goering suggested that a memo be sent around to county employees asking them not to park on the square through December 10. The purpose of this action is to allow taxpayers easy access to the courthouse to pay property taxes. It was pointed out during the discussion of this issue that only county officials and not all county employees are allowed to park on the square which has a two hour maximum parking limit.

With no additional business to conduct, the Commissioners adjourned until their next meeting on Monday, December 8. This special meeting was called in order to make recommendations to INDOT regarding engineering firms for Bridge No. 113. The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 17, beginning at 3pm.