

?Commissioners award property assessment contract

Written by

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? The Washington County Board of Commissioners met for the first time in 2009 on Wednesday, January 7; all members were present. The minutes of previous meeting, all claims and payroll were approved unanimously.

County Attorney, Tom Scifres, conducted an election of the Board President for 2009. New Commissioners David Brown and John Mishler, nominated and seconded Lana Sullivan to serve as Board President.

The Commissioners followed the recommendation of Washington County Assessor, Jason Cockerill, by awarding a contract for performing the upcoming property tax re-assessment. The contract, in the amount of \$446,537, was award to Tyler Technologies of Dayton, OH. Last year, the State of Indiana eliminated the position of Township Assessor effective July 1. According to Cockerill, that action will save the county approximately \$70,000 per year.

When asked when property tax billing cycles would get back to normal, Cockerill said, "We should be back on schedule by fall unless the Department of Local Government Finance changes something in the process—spring tax bills might be just a little late, though."

In other business, the Commissioners made several appointments. One appointment of interest was that of County Service Officer. Following the County Council lead of funding one full-time position in the Veterans Affairs Office (VAO), the Commissioners appointed Pat Rice to the full time position. Recent controversy over Madge Lyles working in the VAO would seem to be put to rest by this appointment. Lyles and some of her supporters were present at the meeting and were heard by the Commissioners.

The Commissioners also appointed Rick Graves to continue as Highway Superintendent. Graves' recommendations for several positions within his department were also approved by the Commissioners.

Mark Nantz of Knapp Miller Brown addressed the Commissioners regarding increases in the county employee contribution for family medical insurance. The employee share of the insurance premium went from \$400 to \$700 per month. Nantz explained the reason for the increase on that particular part of the dependent insurance but noted that the county as a whole was paying less.

Sullivan noted that even though she has not heard from any county employees regarding the increase, it is of concern to her. Brown commented that when a person's take home pay decreases that much, it hurts.

The Commissioners authorized the purchase of a new server for the courthouse computer system. Apparently, concerns exist about the storage capacity and back up capabilities of the current server. The new service will cost \$6598, the majority of which is likely to be paid out of the Recorder's budget due to the large amount of server space that office uses in relation to the rest of the departments.

Scifres gave the Commissioners an update on land acquisition efforts associated with Bridge #113 near Fredricksburg. According to Scifres the landowner has agreed to sell the parcel of land for \$2500.

With no further business to conduct, the Commissioners adjourned until their next regularly scheduled meeting on January 21.