

Minutes

April 4, 2024

Commissioners Present: William Bateson, Timothy Bechtol and Michael Pepple.

Also Present: Lynn Taylor, Cindy Land, Adam Witteman, Bob Wisner, Cindy Wisner and Denise Timmerman.

Commissioner Bechtol opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' 1st floor conference room. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Minutes from the April 2, 2024 were read with Michael Pepple making the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Mike Pepple made the motion to approve the Warrant Journal, Bill Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0. The payroll for JFS and the Commissioner's Office was approved. The March Fund Report was also signed.

The Clerk presented the following resolutions for consideration:

Resolution #197-24 – Transfer of Hancock County Solid Waste Management District Tier Disposal Fees to the Tiered Disposal Fee Fund 5109. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #198-24 – Additional appropriation within the Auditor's certification – Commissioner's to appropriate to Redevelopment Tax Equivalent Fund #8111. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #199-24 – Additional appropriation within the Auditor's certification – Commissioner's to appropriate to Special Improvement Fund #4005. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #200-24 – Transfer of funds from Indigent Defense Fund #8180 to the General Fund #1001 (February 2024 \$2,275.62). Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #201-24 – Was not presented.

Resolution #202-24 – Transfer of funds within the appropriation – General Fund #1001. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #203-24 – Additional appropriation within the Auditor's certification – Commissioner's to appropriate to the General Fund #1001 (Common Pleas Court). Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Cindy Land presented the following resolutions for consideration:

Resolution #204-24 – Authorization for the purchase of two (2) used vehicles for the Hancock County Department of Job & Family Services, Hancock County, Ohio. Initially, vehicles were found for \$11,900, however those have been sold. Cindy stated that she has authorized a total purchase price of \$16,000 on this resolution for the 2 vehicles. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #205-24 – Authorizing the disposal of wire rack shelving units no longer needed by Hancock County for E- 911. Cindy stated that these are valued at less than \$2,500 and are no longer needed. They have been stuck in a closet for several years. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #206-24 – Authorization to enter into grant agreement from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency for performance period 2022-2024 Emergency Management Performance Grant programs- APRA. This is a request from Lee Swisher for a grant term beginning 10/1/2022 through 12/31/2024. Due to the fact that there are unused funds from prior requests, Lee was able to receive additional leftover funds. Lee is authorized to sign the grant documents. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, William Bateson seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Cindy Land discussed that she would like to present the 3 contracts to allow Wood County to assist Hancock County JFS with adult protective services. This would most likely be on an hourly rate until for the term of the contracts. The Board agreed to proceed with the resolution when Cindy is able to present them.

Adam Witteman had nothing to report.

Denise Timmerman discussed the differences between the BSC project and the wind turbine project. She also provided the Board on the most recent meeting held at the Allen Township on April 2, 2024. Cindy also provided an update from the meeting at Allen Township. Furthermore, Denise stated that she has been denied the opportunity to speak at City Council meetings and would appreciate the Board's correspondence to the State Legislatures. Cindy Land has a draft of a letter that she is working on and will work with the Commissioners Office to get addresses of those to send the letter to. Denise also talked about her concerns with the future of Allen Township due to the possibility of more annexations.

Meetings and Reports

Bill Bateson reported that he attended the Economic Development meeting.

Mike Pepple attended the Township Trustee meeting and the 911 meeting. It appears that there will be an update coming within the next 12 months that will require the Commissioners to approve. Cindy will be working with the Townships to get their acknowledgement.

Tim Bechtol stated that he also attended the Township Trustee meeting and the LEPC meeting.

At 11:30 am., the Commissioners presented the 2024 State of the County.

At 2:00 pm., a Records Commission meeting was held. Commissioner Bechtol was in attendance. Lynn Taylor, Treasurer Welton, Prosecutor Phil Riegle, Recorder Tracey Coldren, Nichole Coleman and Jeff Hunker were also in attendance.

Lynn Taylor

Lynn Taylor, Clerk

Reviewed and approved by:

Timothy K. Bechtol

Timothy K. Bechtol

Michael W. Pepple

Michael W. Pepple

William L. Bateson

William L. Bateson

By Chris Goodwin written Feb 20 th. 2024

This is a recent letter I sent to one of our state representatives, however this can be used as a frame of reference for anyone who wants to understand the issue, some of the processes we've already been through, and why this is so important to our community. All references are provided at the bottom of the letter.

Representative Jon Cross,

I am writing to you today about a major series of events that has been recently affecting my local community, however, the results of which will have widespread effects across not only Ohio, but other states as well. The following is a synopsis of events that have occurred surrounding a "green energy" company in my township (Allen Township, Hancock County, OH) called One Energy (soon to be renamed to One Power). I alone have put hundreds of hours into researching these issues that I am about to explain, but many people in our community have been working diligently on this as well. All public references are documented at the end.
Important Background Information:

The company One Energy is a "green energy" company that installs wind turbines as an alternative energy source for large businesses in Allen Township of Hancock County, OH. They currently have 10 turbines, 9 of which are operational (more on that later), split between 3 companies: Whirlpool, Ball Corp., and Valfilm. In 2021, Senate Bill 52 was passed in the state legislation, basically stating that counties have the right to ban large solar or wind farms, as well as economically significant wind farms (5 MW or higher). Anything under 5 MW would rely on local zoning laws (which Allen Township is currently un-zoned, again more on that later). It is also important to note that anything 5 MW or higher has to go through the Ohio Power Siting Board. Around a half year later (2022), Hancock County passed a resolution that implemented SB 52 for all but one township in the county, (a completely different township).

One Energy's wind turbines have gone up between 2015 and 2019, so all current turbines would be grandfathered in. It is important to note though that they have grouped their turbines into what they call "micro grids", each just barely under 5 MW, even though the aggregate of these turbines is 15 MW, and they are all contained within less than half a square mile. Because of this, they are able to evade any oversight.

The Beginnings

In November 2023, I first heard that One Energy was proposing a name change to a nearby road from Township Road 115 to Electric Avenue. Many residents were unhappy about this, and showed up to the hearing at the county commissioner's office. Emergency services got involved and after over 30 testimonies against the change, the proposal was denied. I presented one of these testimonies, and while doing research in preparation, I found some recent news articles about One Energy, including interviews with its CEO, Jereme Kent. The following is a summary of what is in these articles.

misinformation. During the meeting, he was asked if he would like a chance to speak on the issue, to which he responded that he'd let his lawyers do the talking. It is important to note that this only starts the process of zoning, where 5 volunteers create a zoning document, have hearings and public comments, then ultimately get decided on at the ballots by the voters. With this upcoming election being the presidential election, we believe that this will be the most representative of the public's opinion. I'll continue on with more about our zoning experience in a bit, but I bring this all up to mention one final article.

In light of the potential for Allen Township to become zoned One Energy, will be constructing 3 more turbines that will be 30% larger and 30 acres of solar panels, surrounding nearby residents, and it will all be operational by the beginning of next year. This was on January 9th. On January 22nd, a 140 ft blade from one of their newest wind turbines fell off, crashing down to the ground. This turbine is located near a local resident's home, but luckily, since the blade fell straight down, there were no damages. If this speaks to the quality of their newest models, what about these new larger ones that they are rushing to get through before zoning passes?

Legal Issues

Since the special meeting on December 18th, Jereme Kent or one of his representatives from One Energy has been recording every township and county meeting. On Sunday January 27th 20 minutes before the first real meeting of the volunteer zoning committee, the county assistant prosecutor was contacted by lawyers on behalf of One Energy that they are filing a lawsuit against Allen Township. The next day a list of township and county officials, as well as the 5 volunteers received a Record Preservation Demand from the law firm. The lawsuit is clearly frivolous, as the assistant prosecutor pointed out to us that nobody had done anything wrong. It is accomplishing its goal though of delaying the process. Because there is a lawsuit, we are essentially going to have to restart the zoning process, which means we most likely won't be able to get it in for the November election. Even if we can though, I'm not convinced that there won't be more frivolous lawsuits to try to delay the process for as long as possible.

It is clear that the people of Allen Township want to protect and preserve our community, our agriculture, our property values, our families, and ourselves. By being tied up in these lawsuits, our township has lost all legal recourse to be able to do this. With that being said though, this is much bigger than just our township. As Jereme Kent stated, though, they are not only seeking to cover all of Ohio, but other states as well. We need help from our state representatives, and I believe that you are poised to be in a good position for this.

Thank you for your time,
Chris Goodwin

Resources

Senate Bill 52: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/134/sb52>

Hancock County Resolution: <https://wkxa.com/wp.../uploads/2022/04/exclusion-zones.pdf>

US Turbine Database: <https://eerscmap.usgs.gov/uswtodb/viewer/...>

Road Name Change Article: <https://thecourier.com/.../bye-bye-tr-215-hello-electric.../>

TortoiseEcofin Acquisition Article: <https://thecourier.com/.../300m-deal-to-grow-one-energy/>