

## Minutes

December 14, 2021

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

Also Present: Lynn Taylor, Alec Helms, Cindy Land, Phil Johnson and Mary Ann LaRoche. Attendance sheet is also attached.

Commissioner Bechtol opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' 1st floor December 9, 2021 were read and approved. Michael Pepple made the motion to approve, Timothy Bechtol seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

The Clerk presented the following resolutions for consideration:

Resolution #888-21 – Authorizing the payment of the listed and/or attached Purchase Orders. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #889-21 – Transfer of funds with the appropriation – Prosecutor. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #890-21 – Additional appropriation within the Auditor's certification – Commissioner's to appropriate to Prosecutor. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #891-21 – Authority to release funds collected to Domestic Violence Shelter, Inc. per O.R.C. 3113.34 (Marriage License) - \$4,760.00. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #892-21 – Authority to release funds collected to Domestic Violence Shelter, Inc. per O.R.C. 2935.032 (Divorce/Dissolutions) - \$3,504.00. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #893-21 – Additional appropriation within the Auditor's Certification – Commissioner's to appropriate to Recorder Indexing. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #894-21 – Transfer of funds within the appropriation – Buildings and Grounds. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #895-21 – Annual appropriation resolution for Fiscal Year 2022. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #896-21 – Transfer of funds within the appropriation – Sheriff. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #897-21 – Additional appropriation within the Auditor’s Certification – Commissioner’s to appropriate to the General Fund. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Resolution #898-21 – Adoption of a Revolving Loan Fund Administration Agreement. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The November Fund Report was signed. In addition, the 2022 County Holiday Schedule was approved by the Commissioners. William Bateson made the motion and Michael Pepple seconded for Timothy Bechtol to sign the Grant Extension County Critical Infrastructure Grant form. Lizzie Essinger stated that due to supply shortages and delays in shipping, the Village of Rawson Grant deadline needs to be extended.

Phil Johnson presented the following Resolution for consideration:

Resolution #899-21 – Authorizing the Board to act as a “Lead Entity” with regard to the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program and Authorizing the Execution of a Letter of Intent regarding the Board’s Participation in the program. Phil stated that this is a new grant program that recently became available. Bill Bateson inquired if the County will need to buy any of these properties and Lizzie stated that is not necessary. All that is needed is access agreements. Furthermore, Lizzie stated that this is money available for Communities to clean up and revitalize properties. Bill inquired if there is a length of time ownership required and Lizzie couldn’t think of any such requirement. Tim Bechtol stated that the Brownfield properties are not included in this program. Bill Bateson stated that this is a good idea and it’s their job to ask questions to safeguard the use of public money. William Bateson made the motion to approve, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Phil Johnson requested an executive session in regards to potential real estate acquisition.

Charity Rauschenberg had nothing to report.

Lizzie Essinger had nothing to report.

Denny Holman provided a copy of the Washington Township Trustee Resolution requesting the Commissioners restrict construction of economically significant Wind Farms, Large Wind Farms, and Large Solar Facilities within the County. Denny stated the Seneca County Commissioners passed a blanket resolution. Bill Bateson stated that he appreciates the resolution and it helps the Townships tell the Commissioners where they want to be. Cindy stated that not all trustees were at the Township Association Meeting and that she can send out a template to the Townships if needed. Bill stated that he is not against renewable energy, he is trying to determine if this is the best and wise use of land. Tim Bechtol appreciated Denny’s resolution and stated that the Board is more than willing to hold informational meetings in the Townships if requested. Tim described it as a listening tour. Denny liked that suggestion. Cindy stated that time is of the essence and these meetings need to happen sooner rather than later. The board concurred. Denny stated that he knows of 3 or 4 more companies that have reached out to area landowners.

Captain Ryan Kidwell read a letter into the record regarding the request for additional funding for the staffing levels at the Hancock County Justice Center. Tim stated that he did not intend to

offend anyone about his questions regarding staffing, but did want to know in the case of an unanticipated emergency, what would happen to staffing in a situation that wasn't planned. Captain Kidwell appreciated that question and he said they have in place emergency procedures. However, this current situation is different than that, because applicants are not coming in very fast wanting jobs. Captain Kidwell stated that they have always been able to maintain the minimal staffing requirement with no problem. This time it's much worse due to many factors; job burnout, health, vacations etc. Captain Kidwell indicated that from November- December, 79 shifts of overtime occurred and from December – January 92 shifts of overtime will potentially happen. If the reduction in jail population happens, overtime will be manageable at 23 shifts. Captain Kidwell stated that they are in the process of hiring more in the pipeline. Tim inquired if any funds can be reallocated from line items currently in their budget. Sheriff Heldman said he will get with Becky. Captain Kidwell said that TCAP funds were received and were deposited to the General Fund. Judge Starn said that ½ of the TCAP funds were reallocated to the Sheriff for outside housing. Bill thanked the Sheriff and his staff for this information and acknowledged that this is a nationwide problem. Bill stated that we need to buy some time and Cindy stated that if an agreement is needed with Putnam County, that she will be out of the office this week and to notify Phil Johnson. Sheriff Heldman stated that he is asking for a 3-month commitment from the Commissioners. Bill Bateson made the motion and Timothy Bechtol seconded to provide financing until the end of February 2022.

### **Meetings/Reports**

William Bateson stated that his mother passed away and has been out of the office. He appreciated all the thoughts from everyone.

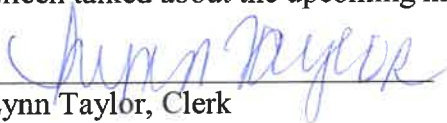
Michael Pepple stated that he attended the Ag Council Meeting and the ADAMHS Opioid Task Force Meeting. In addition, he attended the Habitat for Humanity Board Meeting.

Timothy Bechtol stated that he attended the Alliance Board Meeting. Tim also attended the Regional Planning Brownfield Site Meeting with the Mayor.

At 10:30 a.m., Timothy Bechtol made the motion to enter into executive session to discuss potential real estate acquisition. Michael Pepple seconded. A roll call vote resulted as follows: Timothy Bechtol, yes; Michael Pepple, yes; William Bateson, yes. At 11:36 a.m., Timothy Bechtol made the motion to come out of executive session with no action taken, Michael Pepple seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

At 1:00 p.m., the Commissioners met with Maggie Neeley and Phyllis Nielson. Lynn Taylor, Christine Carrigan, Charity Rauschenberg, Adam Witteman and Rhonda Switzer were also in attendance. Maggie provided an updated to the Commissioners regarding the status of Hancock County's medical insurance claim history for 2021. Final YTD information for 2021 will not be available for several weeks, however, the stop loss pace has remained consistent. Maggie provided information that will need to be posted on the County's public website. It was stated that this information will be on the Commissioner's website once received from Gallagher. The FSA with Isolved has been clarified and Christine Carrigan offered to assist the Auditor's Office with the account information. A conference call will be held later this week.


At 1:30 p.m., the Commissioners met with Barb Marquart, Eileen Stanic, and Steve Welton. Lynn Taylor, Charity Rauschenberg and Adam Witteman were also in attendance. Bill Bateson made the motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting and Mike Pepple seconded. Motion passed 2-0. Eileen went over the Hancock County funds and they are in a good position. Eileen talked about the upcoming meeting of the Federal Reserve today and tomorrow.

  
Lynn Taylor, Clerk

Reviewed and approved by:

  
Timothy K. Bechtol

Absent  
Michael W. Pepple

  
William L. Bateson

Sunday  
December 14, 2021

|                    |                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Lou Wilia          | The Courier                           |
| Lizzy Essinger     | HRPC                                  |
| Judge Starr        | HCPC                                  |
| Michael Heldman    | Sheriff                               |
| Lyon Kinwell       | Hamcof County SO - Jail Administrator |
| Dennis Johnson     | Wash. Twp Trustee                     |
| John L. Johnson    | Wash Twp Trustee                      |
| MARK A. PACE       | HCPU                                  |
| Bart Moser         | Orange Twp Fiscal Officer             |
| <del>Charity</del> |                                       |
| Charity            |                                       |
| Adam               |                                       |



# HANCOCK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

*A Community Oriented Policing Agency*

Michael E. Heldman, Sheriff

12/14/2021

Hancock County Commissioners  
514 South Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Findlay, Ohio 45840

Commissioners Bateson, Bechtol and Pepple,

In response to some questions you have about the staffing levels at the Hancock County Justice Center today is not about Sheriff Heldman or me, but what I can share with you is the behaviors we have experienced over the last several days that have truly been impactful.

What today is really about is:

- Facility safety and security
- Staff Safety
- How we have gotten to a point where staff are overwhelmed and exhausted
- How we have gotten to a point where we have so many shifts of overtime we have no officers to work if we have a work call off
- Respect for the men and women who have stuck with us through good times and bad
- This is not about the toxic employee from past or present who for whatever reason have been misinformed or who have formalized their own opinion of what is being suggested as a solution to a pressing issue and want to tear others down, blaming their shortfalls on the administration including staff moral

I ask you how you believe we are any different than the local businesses not just in Hancock County but throughout the United States who have found themselves faced with employee shortages and difficulties in finding replacements.

I ask that you take a moment to think about what challenges private sector employment faces today and I want you to add to that the responsibility of working with individuals who have mental illness without being licensed mental health professionals, substance use issues, violent behaviors, individuals who will act out in ways against themselves that subject staff to all forms of trauma and potentially its after affects like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Day in and day out staff can't escape it but they make the conscious effort to come back for the next shift. Could you do that?

What is most frustrating are those who question the decisions made, those who have no background, no formal training, no education and have never walked in a correctional officers shoes, nor have served one day in a correctional environment.

*Administrative Offices*  
200 West Crawford Street  
Findlay, OH 45840  
Phone: (419) 424-7097  
Fax: (419) 424-7078

*Justice Center*  
200 West Crawford Street  
Findlay, OH 45840  
Phone: (419) 424-7202  
Fax: (419) 424-7028

*Rehabilitation & Opportunity Center*  
7746 CR 140 Suite C  
Findlay, OH 45840  
Phone: (419) 424-7453  
Fax: (419) 424-7454

Web Address: [hancocksheriff.org](http://hancocksheriff.org)

EMERGENCY - CALL 911 or (419) 422-2424

Our decision and request to the criminal justice stakeholders and courts has been to reduce our jail population and has been based on the safety of our staff and the facility, not political agenda as some are trying to make it. Our decisions have been very difficult but that is what we are faced within our positions of responsibility. Our decisions have been solely based on the concern and compassion we have for our staff. Our decisions were made for the safety of our staff and the security of the facility. Our decisions have been based on those in custody who we are ultimately responsible for. Does our decision impact the community? Yes. However, our efforts are to make that impact temporary. We are also not talking about those who are a threat to our community or community safety. We are talking about non-violent, non-threatening traffic or criminal offenders who are eligible to be considered for alternatives or deferred incarceration until a time that we can safely get back on our feet.

The thought of a mutual aid request brings its own set of issues and also liabilities. We are not the only county faced with this situation. This is no comparison to a violent incursion, this is not an invasion or attack. This is about a needed operational change for the safety of staff and the security of the Hancock County Justice Center. This is about the number of overtime hours being worked, hours that have gotten completely out of control and compromise safety. In the event of any emergency such as an incursion the Justice Center has in place policies and procedures that guide us through those emergency procedures. If you really want to tell staff they don't matter and business is as usual is more important than their safety and the safety of the environment they work in, then I guess call in mutual aid. But I ask who is going to have the manpower to respond to more than twenty four hour event. I also ask how you believe that the Correctional Officer union would allow non-union members from outside of Hancock County to come in and take over their work.

What we are talking about is the need to trust and respect the Sheriff and the decisions he has been elected to make. We also ask for that same trust and respect for the Sheriff's administrative staff and the decisions and recommendations we have had to make and present to the Sheriff.

Today's request for funds came from a City of Findlay request addressed to the Sheriff as a request to be able to maintain today's housing population in working with ninety eight beds by housing inmates outside of Hancock County and to offset the tough times that we face in preserving the safety of our staff and the safety and security of our facility. Minimally we are asking for three months of financial assistance allowing us to continue to move forward in hiring correctional staff and lessening the amount of staff overtime in doing so. At the end of the three months we request that we come back together and further evaluate. If at the end of three months we are in a better and much safer direction we then restore business as usual. The granting of this request does come with a concern. Will other criminal justice stakeholders be able to assist us to live within our means after we have fully restored staffing levels or will the expectations be that we return to housing inmates outside Hancock County as we did pre COVID.

A question has been asked as to how many officers we are down since our November budget hearing. The answer is five. The reasons for departure are as follows:

Retirement after 31 years of service

Transfer to another Hancock County agency – Hancock County Prosecutors Office

United States Postal Service

Private Sector – Auto Dealership

Private Security

Prior to November and in 2021 we have had the following departures to the following employment fields:

Hospital Police Force

Private Security

(2) Correctional Officers have laterally transferred within the Sheriff's Office to the HCSO Road Enforcement Division as they were also Peace Officer certified

Private Sector – Auto Dealership

No longer interested being in Corrections or Law Enforcement

The above noted departures are not about the how well we administrate or operate the Justice Center it is about the changing times. It is about the hours of work. It is about time off. It is about the responsibilities and challenges we ask our staff to face every day. It is about an ever changing jail population that has become difficult to navigate and mentally challenging to handle.

Today's conversation and funding request should be focused on officer safety, the safety and security of the Justice Center and the reduction of the number of overtime shifts that our corrections staff face. Today should be about nothing more.

Respectfully,



Captain Ryan C. Kidwell

Jail Administrator

Hancock County Sheriff's Office