



**MINUTES  
MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'  
NOVEMBER 13, 2019  
NAT U HILL III MEETING ROOM  
COURTHOUSE  
BLOOMINGTON, IN**

The Monroe County Commissioners met in a regular meeting on November 13, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. with the following members present: Julie Thomas, President; Lee Jones, Vice President; and Penny Githens, Commissioner. Also present: Jordan Miller, Payroll Administrator; Jeff Cockerill, Attorney; Angie Purdie, Commissioners' Administrator; Lisa Ridge, Highway Director; and Anita Freeman, Deputy Auditor.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Thomas

**II. COMMISSIONERS' PUBLIC STATEMENT**

Statement read by Githens

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT – FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA, LIMITED TO 3 MINUTES**

(Unidentified female speaker) Hi. Um, I just want to publically and personally comment on the decision made by the county to have the luncheon hosted by the jail and have their holiday meal catered by inmates at the jail. I know that there's been some remedies to this and I understand that they're either going to be paid or they're not going to cook. But I'm just very concerned about how that decision was made in the first place. I know we just talked about like valuing diversity, um, and the statement you just made. If we value diversity so much I just really shocked that that decision was made in the first place. And I'm wondering if we need consult other communities in Bloomington when we make these decisions maybe people who have a good understanding of what it's like to be incarcerated. Maybe reach out to New Leaf New Life, maybe reach out to Black Lives Matter, um, there's a number of organizations in Bloomington. So when you have that inkling of like, hum, is this going to be controversial when I say that the jail is going to cater a luncheon for the county employees, um, the people who incarcerate the prisoners. If you have an inkling of hum maybe that's not a good idea, follow that inkling and really go dive into it because this is just something that shouldn't have even

happened if there would have been a little more thought put into it. And I'm also concerned about the response I saw the email that was sent out to county employees, the county employees who voiced their concerns, and it was just an email of complete dismissal. That really concerns me as someone who is a part of this community that when people are concerned that oh this is problematic we shouldn't do this it's met with, hum, if you don't like it don't come, that's just completely unacceptable and I think that was recognized. I also saw a Facebook post addressing this and you know I also agree that the trustees absolutely are capable of making a delicious meal absolutely um, but it's not really a privilege. Um, one only the men are allowed to be trustees and it's a very small amount of men, um, they're not paid throughout the year well if at all, um, so I'm also wanting to be cognizant of the other 364 days if you pay them for this one event. Because these are people's lives we know that we have a huge problem with incarceration in Bloomington a lot of recidivism I think we need to be more thoughtful. So thank you.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **OCTOBER 30, 2019**

Jones made motion to approve. Githens seconded.

**Motion carried by voice vote.**

#### **V. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS DOCKET**

- **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE –NOVEMBER 13, 2019**

Jones made motion to approve. Githens seconded.

(Miller) Total for Accounts Payable - \$4,203,919.81

- \$3,219,407.58 – LIT
- \$158,010.72 – Civilcon Inc.
- \$105,219.38 – Willoughby Industries Inc.

(Githens) I think it would be nice to explain that it's so high because we were paying out things that are due to other county entities.

(Thomas) Yes, the units.

**After call for public comment, carried by voice vote.**

#### **VI. REPORTS**

- **TRAFFIC/ROAD UPDATE:**

- The Stormwater project at Fairfax/Cherry Lane has been halted awaiting Vectren Gas to move a gas line. Project will resume as soon as that gas line is moved. Area residents have been notified of the delay.



## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. MOVE TO APPROVE: RENEWAL OF SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAM.**

**FUND NAME: HEALTH      FUND NUMBER: 1159      AMOUNT: UP TO \$20,000/YEAR**

Jones made motion to approve. Githens seconded.

Good morning. **Penny Caudill**, Monroe County Health Department. As we have talked about the last few weeks we are here today to officially request renewal for our Monroe County Syringe Service Program. In your packet you have a variety of things we are fine tuning the last pieces of our agreement with Indiana Recovery Alliance so we will be bringing that contract back to you in a couple of weeks to sign. But the mission of the Monroe County Health Department is to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Monroe County. One of the ways that we believe that we can do that is to address public health issues. We know that since 2010 the Center for Disease Control has noted that Hepatitis C infections has more than tripled and Monroe County is not immune to this and that's why in 2015 we requested the Syringe Services Program to begin. It started in February 2016 and we've been very pleased to be able to provide that best practice in this community to reduce the spread of infections and save lives of people. I've talked to before and I know that you all are aware, but just to make to those who might not be aware that it is a syringe service program because it's not about just exchanging needles it is about a variety of services. That includes meeting people where they are, it includes talking to them and building that rapport so that any participant comes in feels comfortable to say what it is they need, do they need a referral for housing, for food, for medical care, for mental health services, for recovery services, for whatever it might be. We've been very happy with Indiana Recovery Alliance and we'll talk about that contract later, but we are very pleased about the work that's being done in this community between the Health Department and Indiana Recovery Alliance and certainly other entities in our community who are addressing this issue. So I hope that you will renew this for another two years. Once that happens and we have the contract signed we will have a letter that will need to go the State Health Commissioner outlining everything that we have done. I know that we have several people today with us who are in support of this. I don't if some of them may want to say something, some may not, but if I could just ask if they are in support to stand up.

(Thomas) Thank you all for being here.

(Caudill) We've also received several letters, Local Council of Women, individuals, other people have sent letters of support as well. So with that I'll just leave it to you.

(Jones) I have the impression that we think, hope that maybe this problem has kind of crested and is going back downhill a little bit.

(Caudill) We've talked about in the beginning we're doing more testing and anytime that you increase testing you are going to find more infection. It is very likely we will see rates increase simply from testing but certainly we are seeing fewer overdoses, overdose deaths because part of the program is getting Naloxone out into the hands of people. One of our supporters today too is from Indiana University, Greg Carter, we've got a nursing student she has signed an



agreement that's going to help us with that distribution. IRA does an enormous amount of Naloxone and the Health Department does distribution of Naloxone and that is a lifesaving thing. So we are seeing a reduction in deaths which is very important. It is harder sometimes to capture whether or not we're having fewer opioid overdoses. A lot of that is anecdotal from people because people do have naloxone and not everybody is going to the hospital so there is that piece. The other thing that we see with drug use is that drugs change and so we see an increase in this drug and a decrease in that drug and so there is some cyclicity to that but certainly we intend to be a part of the solution and reduce the transmission Hepatitis C and HIV through this program.

(Jones) Clearly you have been a big part of this solution and I'm really pleased that this program is doing what it is.

(Caudill) The other thing I guess I would like to say is to recognize that recovery comes in many forms and sometimes what one person may imagine is recovery is not someone else's. Again, the reason this program works, the reason I think IRA is very successful is because we recognize that recovery is what you see and what that is to you and harm reduction is a big piece of that.

(Githens) I'm really proud of the fact that Monroe County does this. We were the fourth county in the state to take on this kind of a program. We're one of only nine in the state that currently does it and I think it makes a big difference in our community. So I applaud everything that you and the IRA is doing.

(Caudill) And we are the largest and we serve the most people in part because we're not trying to do it by ourselves and that we do have that partnership with IRA.

(Thomas) And we're surrounded by counties that don't and that's unfortunate. That's why I'm so proud to be in Monroe County and thank you all again for being here. This really is a public health crisis this is not a criminal justice issue. This is a public health crisis and that's the response that's needed. And yes, it can be controversial but, I don't see any other way to do this and to do it as successfully and reduce stigma and focus on reducing public harm. That's the goal and so it's much as a public relations, education, services as it is anything else. There is so many components to it and people just think its needle exchange and it's not it is so much bigger than that. We do want to thank everyone who works on this from the volunteers, to staff, to IRA, to our health department, everyone out there. It was last year the van was driving by me and it was warm enough that my windows were open and I'm like thanks for what you do, it was just a nice moment to be able to say thank you because you know they're out there and we might not see them every day but they're out there making a big difference.

(Caudill) I'm glad that you even mentioned that because we have the mobilization money and we plan, most likely when we come back for the contract with IRA, we will have the mobile unit here and so you'll see the fruits of those funds and be able to take a look at that and see the wonderful new ability to take those services out to the community. Everybody deserve health and happiness. We want to support people where ever they are.

(Thomas) And we're protecting people in the community who may not be infected themselves but may become infected right through contact. The impact is much larger than we can ever know it really is and that's a wonderful thing too.

(Caudill) Anytime we talk about prevention it's very hard to sort of prove what you're preventing. When you look at numbers that's what's already happened so we want to prevent those from simply going up.

(Githens) It compliments other programs in the county like our drug court and things like that. I mean it's just part and parcel of what we choose to do, what our values are.

(Thomas) It's our values that's for sure.

Good morning. **Jim Shelton** with the Chamber. We certainly support this again this year. To us it's a health issue and it's a work force issue. We need a healthy work force. This is a very wise thing to do I congratulate you for doing it and encourage you to approve this. Then as a CASA, I've got a 2 ½ year old little guy whose mom is alive because of the naloxone that was available when she OD'd and she's been sober so far since that's happened for about 5 months. So all of these efforts really do benefit people. Thank you.

(Thomas) Thank you so much. That's a great story to share. Thank you all for being here, we see your numbers and that's what really matters so it's great to have you here.

**After call for public comment, motion carried by voice vote.**

#### **VIII. APPOINTMENTS**

- **NONE**

#### **IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The County has been working with a coalition of community partners to create a Crisis Diversion Center. It will be located under the County Garage. The formal announcement is tentatively set for Tuesday, November 19, Noon at Switchyard Park. Public is invited to attend.
- A comprehensive look at Criminal Justice review in Monroe County will be held November 20, 6:30pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church Meeting Room, 2120 N Fee Lane. Public invited to attend.
- Accepting applications for all boards and commissions. The Plan Commission currently has one opening and the Plat Committee currently has two openings. For more information about the boards and commissions you may go to [www.co.monroe.in.us](http://www.co.monroe.in.us).



(Thomas) I do want to address the issue of the county luncheon and this is something that the Board of Commissioners offered in response to this and I think it's important that we share this with the public, for those of you like me who aren't on Facebook.

So the concern is about the employee luncheon. It's important to note first of all that Monroe County does not use taxpayer dollars to support our luncheon. We actually use proceeds from our vending machines, which has actually been in decline. Given that we had a very little bit in our fund and we wanted to do something for our employees we came up with what we thought was a good solution. But, the concerns that we have are really two fold. The first concern relates to that the trustees, and this is what we heard first from within the county, that somehow the trustees were not capable enough to prepare the meal and we whole heartedly reject this. Because it runs counter to our values and to everything we're working for and we're trying to reduce stigma, we're trying to get this idea in the community and the perception that our trustees are not capable or trustworthy is a really big part of what we're doing with our criminal justice reform.

The second concern, and when folks in the community raised this, was it appropriate for trustees to volunteer to help in the jail facility, are they able to volunteer while confined. It's gave us pause and that's why we have a great community and that's a good thing. And we had a lot of conversations about this and we heard from the trustees as well. And we only needed two food items prepared, it's not actually catering the meal, it's actually preparing two food items that need to be done in a commercial kitchen. We contacted the Sheriff and the Jail Commander and they said yes, if you all pay for it we're happy to assist. The jail's plan was to allow the trustees who wanted to to volunteer. They were asked if they wanted to participate, they're not required to if you want to help that would be great if not that's ok. The trustees stated they were honored to asked and even those who no longer worked in the kitchen said they wanted to help because it gave them a sense of pride, purpose and recognition. They're excited to do this and to not allow them on the other hand would be, when somebody volunteers their time and their willingness and talents, it's hard to say no. We are working toward a payment for those who choose to pay them the living wage of the county which is \$15/hour and we're going to figure out how to do that and have them to prepare those two items for us if they'd like too. And if not we will go public and that's just the way it is and it's unfortunate. So I think we came up with the best solution possible and I appreciate the community's concern. We're always mindful of what is going on not only in the criminal justice system but also in the community at large and we always do our best, just know our hearts are in the right place and we always do our best in these situations. I think we came up with a really good solution for this issue. I think it's a good sign of what's coming but I also think it's indicative of the need for criminal justice reform effort and that's why we're pleased to be proceeding with that as well.

(Githens) I think I learned also through this that we're looking at a ServSafe program within the jail that actually provides training for folks when upon release will have another career opportunity presented to them. And that's something that I didn't know about. I'm really pleased that we're being proactive for people.

(Thomas) That's very true. And making sure that folks are employable is a big part of this. Good point.

- Next Commissioners' Meeting: November 20, 2019, 10am in the Nat U Hill meeting room, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the courthouse.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

The minutes of the November 13, 2019 Board of Commissioners' meeting were approved on November 20, 2019.

**Monroe County Commissioners**

Ayes:

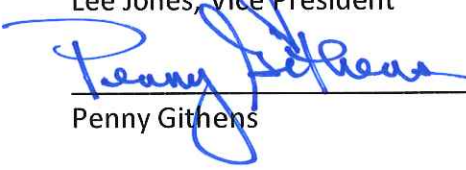
Nays:

  
Julie Thomas, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Thomas, President


  
Lee Jones, Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lee Jones, Vice President

  
Penny Githens

\_\_\_\_\_  
Penny Githens

Attest:

  
Catherine Smith, Auditor



**MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**WORK SESSION AGENDA**  
**MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE**  
**JUDGE NAT U. HILL III MEETING ROOM**  
**BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA**  
**November 13, 2019**

**NO WORK SESSION ITEMS THIS DATE**