

The Board of Brown County Commissioners met in regular session with the following members present: Keith Olsen. Also present were County Clerk Melissa Gormley and Commissioner Elect Richard L. Lehmkuhl. County Attorney Kevin Hill was present for a portion of the meeting. Keith Olsen opened the meeting at 8:10 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

OATH OF OFFICE

Judge Patton administered the oath of office to elected official Richard Lehmkuhl.

SHERIFF

John Merchant reported there are 16 inmates in the county jail, 15 males and 1 female. Merchant updated the commissioners on an arrest made in Brown County concerning stolen property. Merchant stated that the community did a great job of reporting issues surrounding the incident. Merchant stated that he was asked to speak about the emergency response on the wind farm. He is researching some of the issues.

COUNTY CLERK

Brown County Clerk, Melissa Gormley, reported to the commissioners on the annual bids. Gormley stated she will be sending out the hay bid and oil bid. Bids will be opened on February 28, 2019. Gormley told the commissioners that a van will need to be rented for the Extension Office in February.

WIND ENERGY

Commissioner Olsen commented on the wind farm. He told all those present to send letters to the commissioners before the meeting on January 28, 2019. Olsen stated that he has told residents not to sign anything and to talk to your neighbors before you do anything. Sheriff Merchant said if residents are feeling pressured, they can call the Sheriff's Office.

Matt Tedman, Brown County Resident, asked the commissioners about a meeting later this summer for deciding on the agreement. He asked if the towers could be erected without the agreement. Commissioner Olsen told him no. Tedman stated that he is just trying to get a better understanding of the process.

Ben Swinger, Brown County Resident, was present to voice his concerns about living next to wind turbines. Swinger stated that he had just purchased some land outside of Hamlin. He spoke of the noise level of the turbines. He also had information available about land values. Swinger had a list of things he would like addressed, such as decibel levels, setbacks, structure heights, wear and tear on roads and bridges, the effect on property values, who is responsible for the removal of turbines if the project is abandoned, can medical helicopters land around the area, and what other things are affected by the turbines. Swinger encouraged the commissioners to go out to a wind farm and experience it for themselves.

Kent Grimm asked if the wind energy company could just come in and start erecting the towers. County Attorney Kevin Hill discussed the Conditional Use Permit and what the county is currently working on. Hill told those present that the county is going to interview engineers. The actual construction of the wind turbines will not happen until the CUP agreement is signed. Time wise, construction will not be until the end of the year and CUP negotiation will be this summer. Setbacks can take place in the Conditional Use Permit. Amy Kopp asked about overlay zoning. Hill said he was aware of resolutions and spot zoning. Kent Grimm stated that Living with Dekalb County Turbines was an educational YouTube video.

Swinger asked if road and bridge agreements would include money going to the townships. Attorney Hill stated that would be included in the discussions in the Conditional Use Permit. Commissioner Olsen reminded everyone that they could call the commissioners with concerns.

Selena Brownlee had information on windfarms being banned from Europe. Olsen stated to write letter to Senator Pyle and Representative Garber. Calvin Brocher, Morrill Resident, suggested the commissioners get something on the books before the wind farms come in. Brocher commented that you can't give away acres of your ground. Dalton Menold, asked the commissioners if their hands are tied on what kind of zoning they can do if construction has already started? Attorney Hill stated that the county is aware of that and it would be discussed at a future meeting. Jenna Swinger stated that she wanted Commissioner Kruse to be aware of everyone's concerns. She also asked if setbacks would be the same in the country as they would be in the towns. Attorney Hill said that since the county has not retained an engineer, that would be something to speak with them about. The county would get public input before any decisions were made. Linda Bailey asked the commissioners if a moratorium could be put in place. Attorney Kevin Hill stated that the commissioners are exploring all options, but the commissioners feel there is sufficient time to educate themselves without doing that.

DISPATCH SERVICES

Nick Aberle was present to discuss the fire department procedure that he asked the commissioners about at the previous meeting. Aberle spoke with fire personnel, and has an understanding of the procedures. Sheriff Merchant explained the dispatch procedures.

TAXES

Commissioner Olsen stated that the commissioners do not control the value of your taxes. That is through the state. He does not want people blaming the commissioners for their taxes.

LIQUOR LICENSE

Motion by Keith Olsen to approve the 2019-2020 Liquor License for the County Cabin. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Motion carried.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE PERMIT

Motion by Richard Lehmkuhl to approve Emergency Vehicle Permits for Lucas Linden and Cody Nuss. Seconded by Keith Olsen. Motion carried.

TAX CHANGE ORDERS

Tax change orders 2018-27, 2018-29 through 2018-31, and 2018-34 were approved and signed.

COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Lehmkuhl stated he would like a prayer to be recited before every meeting. He will contact someone to be at the meetings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Keith Olsen for a 10 minute executive session on non-elected personnel with the two Commissioners, Brown County Attorney, Kevin Hill, and Brown County Clerk, Melissa Gormley, present to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel with executive session necessary to protect privacy interests. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Closed at 9:00 a.m. Opened at 9:10 a.m. No binding action was taken.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Keith Olsen for a 10 minute executive session on non-elected personnel with the two Commissioners, Yvonne Murrow, Appraisers Office, and Brown County Clerk, Melissa Gormley, present to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel with executive session necessary to protect privacy interests. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Closed at 9:26 a.m. Opened at 9:36 a.m. No binding action was taken.

COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Olsen stated that he contacted Jim Hills Window Company. They will be here this spring to replace windows.

Motion by Keith Olsen to adjourn. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, January 22, 2019.

ATTEST:

APPROVED BY:

MELISSA GORMLEY, COUNTY CLERK

KEITH OLSEN, MEMBER

DWIGHT A. KRUSE, MEMBER (ABSENT)

RICHARD L. LEHMKUHL, MEMBER