

MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2019

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00PM in the Annex Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Kathy Norem, Bryan Cavender, and Charlie Chesak present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Kathy Norem at 6:16PM due to the lateness of the Starke County Board of Commissioners Executive Session.

Commissioner Kathy Norem welcomed new board member Commissioner Bryan Cavender and the new Auditor, Rachel Oesterreich.

2019 APPOINTMENTS

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to nominate Commissioner Charlie Chesak as President, Commissioner Kathy Norem as Vice-President, Commissioner Bryan Cavender as Secretary and Marty Lucas as County Attorney. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

The meeting was then turned over to President, Commissioner Chesak.

COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARDS

Commissioner Norem made a motion to appoint Greg Troike and Merlyn Lucas to the Starke Drainage Board to a three year term. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

COMMISSIONERS TO CONTACT

Commissioner Norem made a motion for Commissioner Cavender – Jail; Commissioner Norem – Courthouse and Annex; Commissioner Chesak – Highway Department, EMS, and County Landfill. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

BUILDING REVIEW BOARD AND FINANCE BOARD

Commissioner Norem advised the Commissioners, by virtue of their Office, are members of the Building Code Review Board, and the County Finance Board.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Commissioner Norem advised there has been a change in the Economic Development Contract and the Board of Commissioners now have two appointments to the Economic Development Board. Commissioner Norem made a motion for Commissioner Norem and Commissioner Chesak to serve on this board as a one year term. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

KIRPC BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to appoint Commissioner Chesak and Carolla Heilstedt to the KIRPC Board for a one year term. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

ARROWHEAD BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to appoint Commissioner Cavender to the Arrowhead Board. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to reappoint Commissioner Norem to the Workforce Development Board. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Commissioner Norem made a motion to appoint Don Binkley as the Democrat Representative, Roger Chaffins as the Township Trustee Representative, and Commissioner Cavender as the Board of Commissioner Representative to the Planning Commission Board. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

HEALTH BOARD

Commissioner Norem advised that the Health Board requires political balance and this year we have two Democrats that are up for appointments this year, one is a registered nurse appointment and one is a lay person appointment. Commissioner Norem made a motion to reappoint Debra Windbigler and Rita Burger to the Health Board to a four year term. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

AVIATION BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to reappoint Lionel Smead to the Aviation Board as a four year term as he meets the political balance of the board. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

HOSPITAL COMMUNITY BOARD

Commissioner Norem advised that the President of the Hospital Community Board sent in a letter formally requesting that the two current members who are up for appointment be reappointed. Commissioner Norem also advised that one of those members, Jerry Wilson, did indeed contact her expressing his agreement to the reappointment but the other member did not. Commissioner Norem made a motion to reappoint Jerry Wilson to the Hospital Community Board for a four year term as well as hold the other appointment until the next meeting to verify whether or not Larry Jernas would like to continue to be on the Hospital Community Board. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to reappoint Marvin Peters to the Alcoholic Beverage Board for a one year term. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

SOLID WASTE BOARD

Commissioner Norem advised the Commissioner, by virtue of their Office, are members of the Solid Waste Board.

PTABOA BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to reappoint Todd Leinbach and Carolla Heilstedt to the PTABOA Board for a one year term. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

LEPC BOARD; EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BOARD; FEMA BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to appoint Commissioner Chesak and Commissioner Norem as the proxy on all three boards. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

STARKE COUNTY CONVENTION & VISTORS' COMMISSION

Commissioner Norem advised that because there is difficulty populating this board, due to members are required to be the innkeepers that collect the tax, and that there is controversy surrounding the little bit of money that does come in. For these factors Commissioner Norem made a motion to forward these issues to the council to determine if they want to continue with the Starke County Convention & Visitors' Commission and if so then they will need to find the board members to fulfill the positions on the board for the Board of Commissioners to appoint. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Commissioner Norem made the motion to reappoint Councilman Brad Hazelton and Commissioner Cavender, Lee Nagai, and William Sonnemaker to the Redevelopment Commission for a one year term. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Norem made a motion for these members to remain the same. The members currently include Commissioner Chesak, James Coad, Mike Gerhart, Travis Clary, Frank Lynch, Bill Crase, Rik Ritzler, Jean Nier, Bill Dulin, & (Jail Commander). Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

RECORDS COMMITTEE

Commissioner Norem advised that as per Indiana Code the following individuals will serve on the Records Committee, Commissioner Chesak, Clerk Bernadette Manual, Assessor Michelle Snowdon, and IT Director Richard Franks.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

EMS Director Travis Clary and EMS Clerk MaryLynn Richie appeared before the Board to present their monthly departmental report. Clerk Richie stated she had collected \$87.54 from Small Claims Court and \$2,067.57 from Collections Attorney Jonathan O'Hara. Clerk Richie presented the year-end report. She noted the number of transfers were 34% of the total runs. She stated their department has been busy with in the last week as their department has a total of 85 runs, averaging about 12 runs per day. Commissioner Norem inquired about the status of the formation of the 12 hour staff dedicate to transfers. Both Clerk Richie and Director Clary stated they have not heard anything from the hospital about dedicated their requests to the Starke County EMS. Commissioner Norem asked if their department was ready if this were to happen. Director Clary advised ambulance wise he does not feel confident in doing so at this time as they are still having problems with their unit 3308. He stated the new ambulance will be here around March and he will feel confident at dedicating one unit to transfers only at that time. Clerk Richie reported that their revenue for this month was \$16,000.00 more than last month. This makes the department only \$7,800.00 short from last year's revenue. The transfer income started picking up in August of 2018 when Porter left. Director Clary stated at the moment they are only dedicated to a 50 miles radius transfer request. When they have one sole unit dedicated to transfers only, they will be able to go to Indianapolis or Fort Wayne, which they would charge by the mile. Clerk Richie stated they generated \$116,000.00 more revenue for the last six months of 2018 than what was generated for the last six months of 2017.

Director Clary advised of Operations within the department. He stated their new Basic/Advanced Life Support Protocols are completed and will be placed in the ambulances tomorrow. They are continuing to work towards a go-live date with the new report writing software. Personnel wise he reported there has been no new hires this month and they are continuing to cut down on overtime with the recent Full-Time hires. Training wise they had their Basic EMT skills assessment for 2018 in November, and held skills assessment for the Paramedics last month. The department continues to train for new protocol updates that will be released on January 8, 2019. They have also trained once more on their new writing software in December. Director Clary provided the Sheriff's Department with a bleeding control class. He also taught a CPR class for Bella Vita Pregnancy Center here in Knox. He will be teaching CRP to Community Services next week and has continued to be more involved with the community. Director Clary reported that safety wise they had another injury free month in December. He stated in Ambulance Maintenance 3308 is out of service once more for the DEF system issues, sensory work, and for the replacement of a glow plug. 0514 received two new front tires, and some other front end work. 0085 received an oil change and his ALS Non-Transport vehicle was serviced this week.

Director Clary reported base maintenance included Medic 1 base garage door operator had to be replaced and Medic 3 had some minor electrical issues that have been resolved. He stated he has been hitting it hard with applying for grants. He will be applying for the community foundation grant in the coming weeks and a new ambulance cot. He also reported that the EMS department has received a \$2,500.00 operation round-up grant from Kankakee Valley REMC to assist in the purchase of portable 800 MHz radios. Furthermore, their department has been notified that the VFW post in Knox has donated another \$15,000.00 for a third Lucas Device. The VFW has donated a total of \$30,000.00 to the EMS department within the last five months for Lucas Devices. Director Clary reported they had a

cardiac monitor go down and they do not have a back-up cardiac monitor at this time. Director Clary asked for approval to purchase a cardiac monitor for the amount of \$21,158.00 with possible 0% financing for five years. Commissioner Norem made a motion to purchase a cardiac monitor for the amount of \$21,158.00 and trade-in the old device. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Director Clary was advised to take this information to the council to see how the council would like to pay for the device.

COUNTY HIGHWAY MONTHLY REPORT

Rik Ritzler, Superintendent of the County Highway Department, appeared before the Board to present his monthly departmental report. He advised that December was a good example in how weather affects a highway department. In December of 2017 there was 14 snow events, 14.8 inches of snowfall, and 1632 plowing hours. In December of 2018 there was 4 snow events, .99 inches of snowfall, and 175 plowing hours. This is a difference of \$78,731.75 in operation costs from December 2017 and December 2018. Superintendent Ritzler reported that their three operating funds are all in good financial shape despite the flooding costs, the transmission line repair costs, and a successfully completed road improvement schedule. The highway department likes to have \$300,000 in MVH, \$100,000 in LRS, and \$100,000 in Cumulative Bridge to begin the New Year. Superintendent Ritzler explained that because of the smaller gas tax revenue estimates this year the department had to cut their 2019 MVH budget by 9.8% for 2019. The 2018 MVH budget was \$3,411,671.00 and the 2019 MVH budget is now \$3,106,323.00. This is a reduction of \$305,348.00. The department was able to handle the budget cut by readjusting some of the vehicle purchases and delaying facility upgrades. However, there should be no reduction in overall service the department provides the citizens of Starke County. Despite the cuts the department has increase the paving/road improvement budget by \$48,500.00. One requirement of the gas tax increase of 2017 is that the County must show that 50% of the MVH funds are being spent on road improvements and preservation, not routine maintenance. This is an increase in the documentation and office work, which was anticipated and the new office employee will be handling the new documentation process.

Superintendent Ritzler reported that another duty of the new office employee is to be their APWA accreditation manager. This individual will also help clean-up and codify the department's policies, practices, and procedures. The clean-up and codifying process needs to be completed as the APWA required their accredited organizations to all have written policies or all department procedures. Each month the department will be presenting the Board of Commissioners two or more policies and/or procedures. This month Superintendent Ritzler presented the straightaway mowing policy and the Personal Protective Equipment Procedures (PPE).

Straightaway Mowing – It is the policy of the Starke County Highway Department to mow 5 feet from the edge of the roadway. This allows ample room for motorists to safety pull to the side of the road if necessary and also creates better visibility to reduce collisions with deer and other animals. Additionally, maintaining a 5 foot right-of-way keeps plant roots from encroaching onto the road surface and causing damage.

Mowing at Corners and Intersections – It is the policy of the Starke County Highway Department to mow 15 feet in all directions at corners and intersections. At some corners and intersections additional visibility is required to ensure the safety of motorists. In those instances, additional mowing will be necessary.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Starke County Highway Department's mowing policy and procedures. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Superintendent Ritzler also presented the departments Personal Protective Equipment Procedures. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Starke County highway Department's Personal Protective Equipment Procedures. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Superintendent Ritzler advised that his department was awarded two Community Crossing Grant projects. One is the intersection improvement of 600 S. & CR 210. The second is the hot mix overlay on 25 North from CR600E to SR23. He also advised that today INDOT opened the first round of the 2019 Community Crossing Grants and he has several projects in mind in the process of applying for these grants. Superintendent Ritzler advised that the replacement of Bridge 154 on 100E north of 400N will begin next month. United Consultants finished their first round of inspections and has provided the department with a to-do list of bridge maintenance projects. These projects have already begun and are nearly complete.

Superintendent Ritzler advised that the department Construction Inspection Supervisor has been able to inspect all 661 culverts and small structures. Now that the first round is complete the Superintendent and his two Foreman will re-inspect any culverts that were rated as poor during the first inspection. This will be used to form the 2019 culvert replacement program. The Construction Inspection Supervisor will now focus his efforts on inspecting all 6428 of the department's county road signs which will be used to create a 2019 worklist for the sign technician. After the sign inspection is complete the Superintendent and the Construction Inspection Supervisor will begin Starke County's 2019 PASER ratings. The PASER ratings help form the road improvement list for the year. In the departments vehicles reports he stated that the Starke and Marshall County Highway Department have negotiated the purchase of Marshall County's used chipper and used distributor truck. The Starke County Highway department will purchase both of these items for a total of \$60,000.00. Commissioner Norem made a motion to purchase this equipment from Marshall County Highway Department for the amount of \$60,000.00. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Ritzler advised that training within his department is not usually scheduled for January, however, they still have their weekly tool talks and on the job training for newer employees. He also advised there have been no reportable accidents for the month of December and the department has not had a Workman's Compensation claim since early last summer.

Superintendent Ritzler advised there is an ADA grant program available for local agencies, he believes this grant will focus on some intersection and roadway enhancements and the department may qualify to apply for this grant. In the US 30 Coalition report the Ritzler stated that he attended the US30 coalition meeting in Warsaw, IN on December 14, 2018. It was voted by the committee that because Charlie Weaver had moved out of state and has not attended the last three committee meetings, he will now be replaced by his proxy Rik Ritzler, as Starke County's representative to the committee. Starke County now has to appoint a proxy to replace Mr. Ritzler. Starke County will no longer be handling the financial matters for the Committee. LaPorte and Porter Counties are still delinquent in paying their association dues. The committee president will be meeting with representative from both counties to discuss this matter. The next committee meeting will be in Indianapolis on February 13, 2019 at 10:00AM EST. This will be followed by a legislative lunch meeting member of the State House and Senate. The committee member were encouraged to invite local development corporations, Chamber representatives, industry representatives, and other stakeholders to the luncheon. Commissioner Norem advised that at least one of the representative of the Board of Commissioners should attend this meeting. Commissioner Chesak stated he will look into attending this meeting.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MONTHLY REPORT AND APPROPRIATION REQUEST

Larry Wickert, Economic Development Director, appeared before the board to present his department's monthly report and request for appropriations. Director Wickert began with the appropriation request, the first request is for the Starke County Economic Development Foundation 2019 Economic Development Consulting Contract for the amount of \$159,480.00. The second appropriation request is for the 2019 Hamlet Fire Well & Industrial Parks for the amount of \$15,000.00. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve both appropriation requests as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Director Wickert stated he is not going to get into the discussion of their busy month of December but would rather discuss the project they are beginning with the Prairie Trails Club. They would like to extend the Erie Trail which goes from North Judson to US 35. The proposed extension will go two miles beyond US 35. They are currently in the process of asking the State for some grant money to support this extension, they have a few items to maneuver before beginning the grant application process for a portion of the 90 million dollars that the Indiana Governor has dedicated to putting into the trails system of Indiana as he believe this will bring industry to many portions of Indiana. Director Wickert asked the board for jurisdictional approval for beginning this process of the project. He stated that the projected costs for the project in Starke County would be \$442,000.00 and the county's portion would be \$88,000.00. He also requested from the board in kind support from the commissioners to allow the Starke County Highway Department to possibly provide hauling, labor, or material for the project. After some discussion, Commissioner Norem made a motion to support the project and look forward to reviewing a proposal for participation. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem then made a motion to provide an appropriately worded jurisdictional letter of support for the project. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem advised that she had spoken with Director Wickert about money for the skill, she advised that the Commissioners would not approve money for scill until they had a scill contract.

IT DEPARTMENT CAD SYSTEM AND J & K INVOICE

IT Director Richard Franks stated that they had discussed before that it needed to be addressed what each agency would be responsible for when it comes to the licensing and maintenance of the CAD system. He presented the cost it would be per agency based on the volume of calls that agency receives. Hamlet Quote for CAD System \$6,690.00 Initial Payment and \$3,024.60 yearly for maintenance and support. Knox Quote for CAD System \$15,610.00 Initial Payment and \$7,057.00 per year for maintenance and support. North Judson Quote for CAD System \$11,890.00 Initial Payment and \$5,689.50 per year for maintenance and support. Attorney Marty Lucas asked if this has been discussed with any of the agencies. Commissioner Chesak advised he spoke with the Chief of Police of North Judson and she was concerned that this amount is not currently in North Judson's 2019 budget. Discussion was held about who has the responsibility of speaking with the other agencies about whether or not they will be billed for the new CAD system. It was the opinion of all Commissioners that the Sheriff will have the responsibility of contacting all of these agencies about whether or not they would like to migrate to the new CAD system. Commissioner Norem made a motion that the Sheriff is to have the discussion about the CAD system with Knox, North Judson, and Hamlet policing agencies to see if they would like to be added to the new CAD system. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

IT Director Franks then presented an invoice from J & K Communications Inc. for the programming and services J & K has already completed on programming fire repeaters, portables, mobiles, base stations, and pagers to a new frequency. Eric Wappel, Captain of the North Judson Fire Department gave a statement about the issues they have had with the pagers within their department. There was much discussion between the Board of Commissioners, Eric Wappel, and IT Director Franks about past and current problems with the radios, towers, and vendors regarding radio communication within the county. The discussion continued with the issue of what vendor the county should call to have come in and fix the current problems of radio communications. It was decided by the Commissioners that a meeting will be set up with at least one commissioner and one or two representatives from each fire department. Eric Wappel will come up with a list for radio communication vendors and give that information to Commissioner Chesak.

AUDITOR'S BUSINESS: MINUTES, VENDOR CLAIMS DOCKET, PAYROLL DOCKET

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 17th meeting.

Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Payroll Claims Docket for the pay period ending on 12/29/18 with a pay date of 01/04/19, in the total gross amount of \$260,034.24. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Payroll Claims Docket for the pay period ending on 12/15/18 with a pay date of 12/21/18, in the total gross amount of \$247,243.88. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Claims Docket in the total gross amount of \$1,089,524.17. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to the Broadband Grant Forms that were brought before the Board by KIRPC. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

IN OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Commissioner Cavender advised the Board of Commissioners that Coroner Jack Rosa does not have a charge account at Knox NAPA for parts for the Coroners vehicle. Commissioner Norem advised Coroner Rosa to go the Knox NAPA and set up an account. If any paperwork needs to be signed the Commissioners will sign it at the next meeting.

Tim Miller presented information regarding the solid waste building. He stated he purchased the transformer for the building and would like reimbursed. He presented the receipt and an invoice to the Board of the Commissioners for his company for reimbursement. He stated there is a dilemma on NIPSCO who is providing the gas, REMC is handling the electric. NIPSCO has not been responding to his requests to hook up the gas. Commissioner Norem advised Mr. Miller to call Starke County Co-op to install a propane tank so that the project will not be delayed. Mr. Miller advised that the building is completed they are just making the finishing touches to the inside of the building. He stated they are within a week of completed the job as long as they can get the furnace going. Mr. Miller also had mentioned the leak he was notified about the Coroner's building. He stated that a drain tube and drip pan

was plugged up with dead skin cells and this will continue to happen unless there is an exhaust fan installed that will remove the dead skin cells from the area to keep the dead skin cells from clogging up the drain tube and drip pan. Commissioner Norem advised Coroner Rosa to have an exhaust fan installed and an alarm installed on the body cooler.

PUBLIC COMMENT

An inquiry from the public asked the board of the EMS department will no longer be bringing their vehicles to the highway department for service as in the EMS monthly report stated they had service on their vehicles but it was not completed at the highway department. Commissioner Chesak believes that they are taking their vehicles somewhere other than the highway department but is not sure were. Commissioner Norem inquired about why this is so if they highway department cannot complete the job that is one thing but if they can the department should be bringing the vehicles to the highway department for repair. Commissioner Norem advised Commissioner Chesak to speak with the EMS department about taking their vehicles to the highway department for their vehicle repairs.

There being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Chesak made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:12PM.

JANUARY 7, 2019

Charlie Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

Bryan Cavender

Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor
& Secretary to the Board of County Commissioners