

Monday, March 7, 2011

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in regular session at 9:00am in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Dan Bridegroom, Kathy Norem, and Jennifer Davis present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

RE: MINUTES

Kathy Norem made the motion to approve a draft of the minutes of the Feb. 21st meeting, and the final minutes of the Feb. 7th and Feb. 15th meetings. Jennifer Davis seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with three ayes.

RE: PAYROLL AND VENDOR CLAIMS

Kathy Norem made the motion to approve the payroll claim for the pay period ending Feb. 19, 2011 in the amount of \$ 166,271.26 seconded by Jennifer Davis; passing with three ayes.

Dan Bridegroom presented the pay claims for the period ending March 7, 2011. The original total amount of the claims totaled \$ 365,457.08, but after the claims were prepared the Surveyor's Office pulled a claim, that had not been approved by the Drainage Board, taking the claim total to \$ 331,684.58. Kathy Norem made a motion to approve the claims for payment, except: 1. In reference to the juvenile detention contract, the amount per day should be \$ 89.00, not \$ 129.00. The new contract the County will have with the Cedarbridge Treatment Centers (Muncie Reception Detention Center), allows the \$ 89.00/day fee went into effect on the first of the year. 2. Hold the claim to the Logansport State Hospital, while the actual court order is researched, and 3. Change the mileage claim submitted by Jeff Williams. He is allowed mileage reimbursement from the county seat to the meeting, and back to the county seat, not mileage from his residence. Jennifer Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: EMS

Mary Lynn Ritchie, EMS Clerk, notified the board of \$ 499.28 collected from Mr. O'hara and \$ 65.00 received from the Starke County Clerk for accounts that were in collections. Mary Lynn submitted to the board a spreadsheet she had completed showing the total runs billed for the month of Feb., broken down into payee classes. A total of 299 runs had been billed in Feb. Ms. Norem stated she would also like to see an aging report of the accounts receivable, which Ms. Ritchie acknowledged she could do.

Lisa Burger, the EMS Director appeared before the board. Mr. Bridegroom asked her about purchasing snow blowers, for the ambulance garages to use to clean out the drives, in the event of a snow storm and the county highway can't get to them quickly. Ms. Burger advised she was concerned regarding OSHA, and employees handling the pieces of equipment. She was advised to keep in communication with the county highway department. Ms. Norem stated she wants the county highway to make the snow plowing of the ambulance drives, a top priority. She doesn't want the ambulance runs stopped because of snow in the drives.

RE: COUNTY HIGHWAY

Steve Siddall, County Highway Superintendent, appeared before the Board to report the County Highway had received a railroad grant to upgrade the railroad crossings in the county. The County will receive 100% reimbursement as part of this grant. It will allow the county highway department to put down reflective tape at the railroad crossings with a heat gun. Steve estimates the cost per crossings to be approximately \$ 2000.00 and should include the area CR 300N through to CR 1150E.

He also advised he will be attending Road School on Tues. and Wed., March 8 & 9, and will be inquiring as to who actually should be maintaining the road, which is now called Campbell Drive, in the North Judson area. There doesn't seem to be any documentation concerning Campbell Drive.

Dan stated, because of the rising fuel prices, the list of projects for 2011 might need to be downsized. Mowing the roadways may need to be cut back. Jennifer inquired about the situation when farmers plant their fields too close to the roadway. It was advised to possibly have the media make an announcement, that is if crops are planted to close to the roadway, there could be a situation where they would have to be mowed down to improve the visibility of the driver's at intersections. Dan advised the county had five claims against them last year.

RE: HEALTH BOARD

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Bridegroom inquired if the agenda could be modified, to move up the time for the Health Department. Mr. Wakeland, who had the appointed time on the agenda, gave his approval.

Dr. Alexander, Frank Lynch and Dr. Bartush appeared before the Board to give a report of the Starke County Health Board. They are requesting to:

1. Change the septic permit fees for new installation to \$ 60.00 (new is now \$ 200.00)
Change the septic permit fees for repairs to \$ 60.00 (is now \$ 40.00)
They noted the soil surveys are now being completed by a soil scientist. The fee for the soil survey is estimated to be \$ 200.- 250.
2. Copies of birth and death records be changed to \$ 10.00 per page. They did advise the Health Department has a new copier.
3. There will be a \$ 250.00 fine for food establishments operating without a current permit, or with no permit. They advised 30% of the establishments do not have a current permit. The fine established in 1999 was set at \$ 35.00. Marty stated fines and fees need to be set by the Board of Commissioners. He believes the existing ordinance should be changed, but the changes need to be advertised.

Dr. Alexander also requested to move the Sanitarian's Office back to the Health Department, in the courthouse, after the hiring of the new employee. The position has been posted and they have received five applicants, at this time.

She also advised the Health Board will be meeting on a monthly basis until all of the issues have been resolved. Dan stated they need to get caught up with food inspections, since they are so far behind. Frank Lynch reported they are not behind, that they had been completed by Mr. Singleton or by Frank, himself.

Kathy stated she is happy with the progress of the Health Board, since the first of the year. She is confident Dr. Alexander is a professional, and will run the department according to state statutes. Jennifer thanked them for the report from the Health Board, which summarized their activities. The Health Board inquired if their final approved minutes could be posted on the county website. Marty stated they are a public entity and therefore the information can be posted, and it could state as to who makes motions.

RE: BRUCE WAKELAND & THE STARKE COUNTY FOREST

Mr. Wakeland appeared before the Board with the completed paperwork for the process of donating to Starke County, approximately 129 acres of his property, to establish the Starke County Forest. He presented to the Board a classified forest plat, which had been completed by Territorial Engineering Co., free of charge. The \$ 200.00 costs saved, is a donation to the program. He also advised 12.6 acres of the project has been in a conservation reserve program with the FSA since 1987 and it expires in 2011. He was advised he could renew the program. That is an annual revenue of approximately \$ 750.00 which would be placed into the operation budget of the forest. He would like to see a separate fund be established to account for this operation, instead of the funds going into the general fund of the county.

He advised the public access to the premises would be off Division Road. The access from SR8 would be used for logging purposes only. He also advised he has built an observation tower , approximately 8 feet high, located in the middle of the marsh.

Marty Lucas stated the property would need to be added to the liability portion of the county's insurance coverage before the property could be open to the public. Mr. Wakeland would be the overseer/manager of the property and the Board of Commissioners would be the property's Trustees.

Kathy Norem made the motion to accept the Resolution of the Commissioners of Starke County Indiana Accepting the Donation of Certain Lands in Trust and Creating The Starke County Forest. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Commissioner Norem also made the motion to establish the Irrevocable Starke County Forest Trust. Ms. Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed with all ayes. Both documents were signed. Mr. Lucas advised he will complete the next step and meet with the insurance carrier at the site. It is expected the site could be open to the public by this summer. Mr. Wakeland stated he would like to have an open house this summer.

RE: FORENSIC FLUIDS

Diedre Cunningham, of Forensic Fluids Laboratories appeared before the Board to discuss employee testing. She reviewed the testing procedures. She advised there will be a five panel screening: amphetamines, methamphetamines, cocaine, THC, and opiates. There is an \$ 18.00 fee per test, which does include the MRO service. The MRO is the medical review officer and is only required when a test result is positive for the presence of medications, and the MRO checks with the employee and their current list of medications. She advised the test results are 100%

accurate and the results are either sent by fax, email or an encrypted web portal. The test is an oral swab. The actual test if completed by the employee, a timed test, three minutes in the mouth. The oral fluid equates to a blood test. It measures impairment and recent use, where a urine test doesn't. Forensic Fluids will provide a random list of employees to be tested based on the criteria required from the insurance company. Kathy stated she believed Dona Hoban will be the administrator of the testing, since she is the county's Human Resource Manager. Ms. Cunningham also advised she does not have a contractual agreement, just a signed privacy agreement. She would need employee listings of those employees that the insurance company is requiring to be testing. The testing could start at that time, there is just a one day turnaround to receive the testing kits. Training will be done via Webinar. She also advised the \$20.00 charge per test would include the postage to send the test into the laboratory. Marty stated he would like to see a written agreement between the County and Forensic Fluids. Commissioner Norem stated she believes the policy as to who is required to be tested be added to the employee handbook along with the updated travel policy. She stated the county could receive a sample policy from the insurance company. Marty stated he will be in contact with her.

RE: LAUSTEN PROPERTY

Marty Lucas advised he was still working on the Lausten property. He is experiencing problems transcribing Mr. Lausten's documents. Also, he does not have a telephone number on file for him. He advised Mr. Lausten would benefit by having an attorney assist him handling the situation, and presenting it to the Board. Ms. Davis offered to visit Mr. Lausten, along with Dennis Estok, Starke County Surveyor, and advise Mr. Lausten of the situation. Marty stated he can't evaluate the petition based only on Mr. Lausten's letter, but he doesn't deny the request either. It just is not accurately presented.

RE: COURTHOUSE ELEVATOR REPAIR AND MODERNIZATION

Carl Goodrich, the courthouse maintenance person, appeared before the Board to present the three price quotes he received on the elevator repair and modernization. The quotes were as followed: Schindler Elevator \$ 75,530.00, Kone Elevator \$ 73,000.00 and Oracle Elevator \$ 62,971.49. Carl asked the Board to make the elevator repair an emergency situation. He advised the State could shut down the elevator at any time, but it will stay operating as long as the State allows. He stated they were looking at a 6-8 weeks time frame for the ordering of the materials for the repairs, and then 6-8 weeks for doing the actual repairs, and that also requires state approval. He stated the current elevator was installed in 1956, and that it is the only one left in the state that is still operating and is that old. He advised they would also need additional funds for the building of a machine equipment room in the basement of the courthouse, that met with required state codes. Since the closing of the elevator will affect the business of the court on the third floor of the courthouse, Kathy volunteered to accompany Carl when they see the Judge, and explain the situation to him.

Commissioner Norem made the motion to declare the elevator repairs to be an emergency and to accept the price quote from Oracle Elevator of Indianapolis, since they were the lowest bid, pending Marty's review. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed with all ayes. Carl advised Oracle requires 35% down when the proposal is signed and returned, 35% payable when the materials have arrived, and the balance of 30% when the work is completed. Commissioner Bridegroom stated the repairs will be paid from the Cumulative Cap. Dev. Fund.

RE: RECORDER SOFTWARE

Lisa Minix, Starke County Recorder, appeared before the Board along with a representative from FIDLAR software company. Lisa advised FIDLAR agreed to remove the internet access portion of the software. Marty stated he has a renewed "monopoly concern, but he stated there was no problem with the FIDLAR contract. There was a discussion regarding the situation of the user paying for copies when they are printing out the information on their equipment using their paper, vs. when the county recorder supplies the copy. The software representative did state that when the end user on the internet has to pay for the information, they can track who is requesting the info, and that could be valuable in the case of identity theft.

Commissioner Norem stated, with trepidation, and as long as the taxpayer will not be charged, she will make the motion to allow the Recorder to purchase the FIDLAR software. Jennifer Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed with all ayes.

ALSO TO BE DISCUSSED:

RE: PAYGOV

Linda Belork, the Starke County Treasurer, appeared before the Board to request permission to use the PAYGOV system as a way to process credit cards in her office. Currently the treasurer's office does not accept credit cards from the taxpayers, as a means to pay tax bills. She advised this company would supply the card scan readers, and also would go after the bad debt (in the event a credit card transaction would be reversed by the company). She advised PAYGOV charges a 2.95% transaction fee, but it is payable by the card user and not the county. The 2.95% fee would be added to the tax bill. Marty stated this item did not have to be on the agenda to be considered by the Board. Jennifer Davis made the motion to accept the proposal of the Treasurer; reluctantly seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: SHERIFF OSCAR COWEN:

Sheriff Cowen appeared before the Board to submit paperwork he had received on a prisoner civil rights complaint. Also, he is requesting to purchase two additional squad cars for the department. The two oldest squad cars currently have over 250,000 miles each. Commissioner Norem also stated the jail is in need of a new roof and a new furnace. The cost of the furnace is approximately \$12,000.00 and the cost of the roof repairs is unknown. The Sheriff stated the furnace is the top priority and the roof the second. He said he would check with McGrath's company to verify the cost of the furnace repairs. He felt that the furnace could shut down at any time. Commissioner Bridegroom suggested that they get prices on both repairs. He is not familiar with who could do the repairs to the roof, since it is a rubber, flat roof, and John Bochnicka is now retired. Commissioner Davis stated there is a need to go through the jail with a checklist inspection at least every six months. Sheriff Cowen advised that is being done on a weekly basis. The Board inquired if there was anything else the Sheriff required. He stated the jail was also needing two to three padded cells. A padded cell is a one man cell. That was a cited item, but they would need more room in the jail. They advised the Sheriff to get price quotes on the roof and furnace repairs. The cost of all the projects would have to be funded by the Cumulative Cap. Dev. Fund.

Commissioner Norem noted the Starke County Community Corrections had filed their annual report. She noted it is a well put together report. A copy is on file in the Auditor's Office.

She also noted that the contract with the Cedarbridge Treatment Center, the Muncie Reception Detention Center has been accepted by the Probation Officer and the Judge. Ms. Norem made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Ms. Davis. The motion passed with all ayes.

Marty stated he will have the county's travel policy completed shortly and should be on the agenda for the next commissioner's meeting, on the 21st of March.

Commissioner Bridegroom reported the receipt of a letter from the DNR stating the State of Indiana's intention to acquire about 124 acres located in Oregon and California Townships in Starke County. The transaction is expected to close in approximately 90 days.

Also, he advised he was signing the Extension Contractual Services Agreement Between Purdue University and the Government of Starke County, for the period of Jan. 1, 2011 through Dec. 31, 2011.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:20pm.

Dan Bridegroom, President

Kathy Norem, Vice President

Jennifer Davis

Katherine Chaffins Auditor &
Secretary to the Commissioners