

MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00PM, in person at the Starke County Annex Building, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, Bryan Cavender, and Mark Gourley present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner President Charles Chesak directly at 6:00PM.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

Travis Clary, Starke County EMS Director came before the Board of Commissioners to present his monthly report. He advised the run report for the last month has been 25-30 runs higher than was they have been running. Their transfer run volume is still running around 40%. He provided the Board of Commissioner the financial for the department. For the month of March they had collected \$82,744.08. Director Clary stated that our operations continue to run smoothly. We continue to operate 4 ambulances out of 3 bases located throughout our county. We have 3 24-hour 911 ambulances, and the 12-hour transfer unit during the day. We have filled our vacancy for a Full-Time Paramedic. We brought on a great Paramedic to our service, with many years of experience & he is also a certified Flight Paramedic. We had the vacancy after a recent retirement from our service. We are currently now searching for a Full-Time EMT to fill a vacancy after a long-time employee was unable to come back due to an injury that was unrelated to the job. I have interviewed 2 people so far for that position, and I look to have that position filled by May 1st. I have hired two additional part-time Paramedics to our service, and one part-time EMT. We continue to be more fortunate than our surrounding counties when it comes to staffing, and I am very thankful for that. Laporte County, and Pulaski County are both in desperate need of Paramedics specifically. We also have our longtime office manager retiring in May. Marylynn will be retiring after 25 years of service for us. She will be greatly missed. We will be posting her position in the very near future.

Director Clary stated we have held one training last month, and plan on doing another training this month with our new ventilator that was purchased with grant funding related to Covid-19. It is a much-needed upgrade, but requires quite a bit of education with all of its new features. We are excited to officially get the ventilator in service. We will also be training on our new video laryngoscopes. We obtained these from a recent grant from the Starke County Community Foundation, and The Hardesty Memorial Fund. I am excited for the new laryngoscopes because they come with pediatric blades which our old video scopes did not. I want our crews to feel as comfortable as possible when intubating a pediatric patient. I hope this helps when they are placed in that situation as we typically thankfully don't have too many of those situations. I want them to have the best possible equipment for them, and our patients. He advised in safety they have had an injury free month in March. He also advised of the following:

Ambulance Maintenance:

0084 (2012 Chevy Diesel) had no issues for the month of March.

3308 (2021 Gas Engine) will be going in this week for a full-service oil change at the Knox Ford Garage.

4230 (2019 Gas) will have new rear tires put on it tomorrow.

0514 (2015 Diesel) received a service at our County Highway Department.

0086 (2009 Diesel) is out of service waiting for Kenny from Signal 10 Equipment to fix some possible wiring issues with the front emergency panel, and the rear of the ambulance. It also went in to have its power steering lines replaced.

0085 (2013 Diesel) had no issues for the month of March.

Director Clary advised the generator for Medic 5 should be here within the next 5 weeks. They were on a 20 plus week backorder when we ordered it back in early January. He stated he continues researching some other grant opportunities that are coming down the line to get our other two stations outfitted with generators.

We had major base maintenance issues. He advised he continues to assist Frank Lynch with the Health Department on mainly Wednesdays & Thursdays. I am a vaccinator, support staff or just medical staff on the days he has his clinics at the community center here in Knox. I have also been doing some home visits to vaccinate those who are non-ambulatory. Those individuals have been extremely thankful for that service.

State Recertification- I have been working on our state recertification for our service. I have been working on this for about 2 weeks now, and almost have it completed. It is a rather lengthy application process that has to be completed every four years to keep our service an ALS service. It expires in July of this year, but I hope to have that submitted to the state by the end of this month.

EMA FULL TIME POSITION REQUEST

Lewis Matzat, Starke County EMA Director came before the Board of Commissioners to request the EMA Director Position that is currently part time become a full time position. He explained that he has been in this position for seven weeks now and he has realized that this position needs to become full time as we are missing out on key components of the EMA's actual job. He stated we could get by with this but this is not what needs to be done. He advised he has put in is verbal resignation. Director Matzat discussed the EMA salary and that it represents a poor salary for the EMA position. He requests that the salary be increased as well. Council President Pearman advised that he has been helping out with the EMA position and was able to turn in several reports by the end of the year that the previous Director had not finished. He advised they all got together as a group and met to talk about his findings, he graciously said he would stay on as EMA Director until we would see where we are at. He explained part of the problem was that it appeared that there was not enough work to keep J busy. He stated that we knew Lewis was only going to be able to work 15 hours a week but the position being part time and an individual could really work up to 30 hours a week so that may be enough added hours for that position. He did advised they going into this the EMA advisory board did know that Lewis could only work 15 hours per week. Director Matzat advised that it is hard to find someone who has an EMA background who would want to work part time. A discussion was held between Council President Pearman and Director Matzat about what type of background the EMA Director should have. Commissioner Gourley asked asked Director Matzat as a part time position what is not getting done. Director Matzat advised that the biggest item is the comprehensive plan which is very outdated. He reviewed several instances that he had encountered in the time period that he had been with the county. After further discussion between Council President Pearman and Director Matzat, Commissioner Gourley made a motion to table this discussion until their next Commissioner Meeting. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

VETERANS COMMITTEE REQUEST

The Starke County Veterans Committee would like to place a plaque on the courthouse lawn. The Board of Commissioners would like to see an example of the plaque. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to table the discussion until their next meeting. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

HIGHWAY MONTHLY REPORT

Mary Perren, Asset Manager of the Starke County Highway Department came before the Board of Commissioners to present their monthly report. She advised in addition to looking for a superintendent we are also accepting applications for part-time summer help to mow county rights-of-way with tractors and for full-time highway maintenance workers. All of those positions have been posted. We recently brought all of our tractors and other summer equipment back from storage and are in the process of getting everything ready now for the season. We have replaced one culvert already and have several others on the list. The first step is to call in utility locates to ensure the safety of our workers when they are digging, and that will be done this week. We've also removed several beaver dams and are responding to those on an as-needed basis.

We will be doing our annual culvert inspections in the coming weeks as well and will be getting ready for our spring bridge cleaning. The fire truck we acquired from California Township is outfitted with hoses, nozzles. The cap for it came in today, so it is ready to go. It will make very fast work of bridge cleaning. Once the bridges are clean we will see if they need to be sealed.

Asset Manager Perren advised we are in the process of organizing our sign shed before we do a complete inventory and order. At last count we have 5,534 county-maintained signs. We track the sign type, location and condition in GIS and have been making upgrades in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices to ensure we are compliant with state guidelines. PASER Ratings – These are an assessment of pavement conditions and are done every spring and fall as part of our road improvement planning process. We will be doing these in the coming weeks as well. This data is included in the annual Asset Management Report we are required to file with the state. Oil Prices – We

got very competitive oil prices from our three suppliers this year and those are currently under review. We do need to decide which vendor we are using for AE-150 and AE-200 soon so we can make pug and patch. We will not be chip sealing until August. New Vehicles – The new distributor truck is on order. I spoke with the representative from Southeastern Equipment today, and they will come out and show us how to operate it after it is delivered. The new pickup truck should be in at Lochmandy Ford in Knox later this month, and the new single-axle truck is still at Terry Truck Equipment in Winamac where he is finishing up a final few things. Hopefully we will have it soon.

She advised of the upcoming Training Sessions which are Wednesday, April 7 – Purdue LTAP PASER Training – All of our new people are registered. The training is taking place online and they will be completing it at the garage. As you know we do PASER ratings in the spring and fall to assess pavement conditions and plan our mix of fixes for road preservation as well as to complete the annual Asset Management Report that is required by the state. Bob will be doing the spring round of PASER in the next few weeks now that winter is (hopefully) behind us.

Thursday, May 6 – Purdue LTAP Aerial Lift Training – This is a full staff training at the highway garage which will cover safe use of the bucket truck. Purdue LTAP is providing the trainers, and they will be using our truck. TBD – Purdue LTAP Temporary Traffic Control Training – This is another full staff training at the highway garage. We just submitted the request last week and got notice this morning that we are approved to host it, but we do not yet have a date. Since the training is onsite we will provide the barricades. The on-site training will give our staff a chance to actually practice setting up traffic control, which should be very useful for them. We can also ask the trainer to emphasize traffic control for rural roads and get a much more personalized training than the previous regional classes we attended pre-COVID.

TBD – Meth lab awareness training – We are working with Mark Ennis from Bliss-McKnight to schedule this training so our drivers know what to look for and avoid when they are picking up roadside trash. In the past a trooper from the Indiana State Police has come to the garage to present this training. We were not able to conduct this training last year due to COVID-19, and as you know we have several new drivers.

We were able to max out Community Crossings funds in 2020. We had some money left over after the 250 N and Range Road Hot Mix Asphalt projects, and we applied for and got two small projects. One is HMA on 600 E between 700 N and 900 N. Weather permitting we are going to start berming that road this week in anticipation of that. We will be doing the work ourselves and using the grant money to pay for the materials. We also got CCMG money to replace the culvert on 300 E just north of 800 N. That pipe is ordered and should arrive this week. We will also be doing the installation ourselves.

Asset Manager Perren also stated INDOT has not yet announced recipients for Community Crossings 2021-1. We applied for funds to hot mix CR 700 E between SR 8 and 625 S as part of our ongoing truck route plan. The eventual goal is to have all residents of Starke County within a couple miles of either a state or a local hot mix asphalt road. We have grants in process to replace three bridges: Bridge 7 on CR 1200 E over the Yellow River; Bridge 137 on CR 300 E over the Yellow River and Bridge 59 on CR 700 S over Bogus Run. We were just recently awarded funds during the most recent INDOT call for projects for this bridge. The design RFP is currently posted, with proposals due April 16th. Several firms have inquired about that project, and we are hoping for a good response. Bridge Inspections – We just completed Phase II of our bridge inspection cycle and will be posting the RFP for the next inspections in July per INDOT's schedule.

Josh Gonya from United Consulting came before the Board of Commissioners to present the bridge inspection findings. He presented the final inspection report for the Phase II of the bridge inspections for Starke County. He advised the binders contain information on all 57 bridges in Starke County. He explained it has a table of contents which includes items such as the priority schedule for bridges and recommended maintenance items. He also presented a summary sheet to the Board of Commissioners. He stated that the bottom of the summary sheet reports the highest priority of rehabilitation and replacement. He explained that three of the bridges that Starke County currently has grants for are on this list. Mr. Gonya advised that Starke County only has five bridges that they recommend for replacement and they are all listed on the sheet. He advised that the bridges on average for Starke County are only 28 years old which is good. We only have 20% that are over 50 years old. In general a bridges life span is 50-75 years. He advised Starke County is really performing well on all metrics. Dan Watson from Beam, Longest, & Neff came before the Board of Commissioners to introduce himself and express interest in being able to submit an RFP for the next round of Bridge Inspections. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the Phase 1 Contract for the Bridge No. 7 project. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made

a motion to approve the removal of the job descriptions and positions of the crew leader and senior driver of the highway department. Commissioners Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the payroll docket in the amount of \$265,529.20, including deductions in the amount of \$80,701.41 for the pay period ending on 03/26/2021 and pay date of 03/26/2021. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$527,077.22. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the minutes from March 15th, 2021. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Auditor Oesterreich mentioned the optional services available to full time county employees being AFLAC and Boston Mutual and explained the services provided by these companies. The Board of Commissioners decided that they will still offer these services to full time county employees.

Commissioner Chesak presented Solar Bill HB1381 Resolution. He advised this basically just states that we want to control the outcome of solar farms ourselves within the county. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the Ordinance of the Starke County commissioners Expression of Opposition to HB1381 and State Preemption of Local Government of Commercial Solar Wind Power Installations. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Gourley advised he had an individual contact him about the dirt bike situation that was brought up during the last meeting. She owns a property neighboring the property in question with the dirt bike tracks on it. She had mentioned a zoning change that she was not aware of. Commissioner Gourley advised he was not aware of a zoning change in that area either. Attorney Lucas asked if anyway has spoken to the zoning board about this. He believes this is primarily a zoning issues as it is a land use issue. Commissioner Cavender advised that he believes they will be discussing this matter at the next planning commission meeting.

Commissioner Chesak brought up the American Rescue Plan Act Ordinance, he advised they will need to pass this resolution tonight. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to suspend the rules and approve the Ordinance for the Creation of American Rescue Plan Act Fund. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

The Board of Commissioner held a discussion regarding the COVID restrictions. Commissioner Gourley made a motion for face covering as designed in the Governor's Executive Order 21-09 shall be required inside all county buildings or facilities outside on county property where a distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained and at any K-12 educational facility as specified in paragraph 8 of Executive Order 21-09. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Attorney Lucas advised that statutory authority is with Dr. Browne and the Health Department and not the Board of Commissioners. However, the Board of Commissioners can cover the County Buildings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Gourley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

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Charlie Chesak, President

Bryan Cavender, Vice-President

Mark Gourley

Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor