

STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2021

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00 PM, 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 6:00 PM.

KVREMC/JOSH PEPPL

Josh Pepple from KVREMC came before the Board of Commissioners to request a fee reduction in the right of way permit fees for the Kankakee Valley REMC Fiber Project. Mr. Pepple advised the cost would be around \$29,700 total for 75 miles. They will not be asking for any reduction in road boring or any other cuts that will need to happen in the roadway itself. Commissioner Gourley advised he did meet with Josh and Councilman Pearman last week and the executive summary provided by Josh is in line with their previous discussions. Councilman Cavender asked what kind of reduction they are asking for. Mr. Pepple advised they are looking for an 80% reduction in the fee schedule for a total to be paid of \$5,900 in right of way permit fees. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to accept the executive summary as presented by KVREMC and to apply an 80% discount for a reduced fee for a total of \$5900. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

WASHINGTON TWP RADIO DISCUSSION

Kathy Benko, Washington Township Trustee, came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss radio problems their fire department has been having. She advised they are having problems with the VHF communicating with their department. She advised J & K was out to their location but he had left before they could speak with him so they are not sure what J & K did, if anything. Councilman Pearman, who is also the chairman on of the Communications Committee, stated that there is a process when a department experiences a problem and a chain of command that should be followed. He advised he did not even know of this problem until today. He advised he has spoken with Rick Clark and Kenny Pfof about the radio problem and they stated they do know J & K came out there but they are not sure was done and they are not sure if it has been resolved. Councilman Pearman advised when he can get with Rick, he will personally go out to the fire station and observe the issues they are having when calls come in. He stated that it may be a good idea to have J & K come in and provide an update to the Board of Commissioners because we are paying the \$50,000 per year for their contract. Matt Noonan advised J & K only come out once per year for service checks. He would like to see them come out on a quarterly basis. Commissioner Gourley asked if the Communications Committee would be open to providing other options to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Noonan advised that the only problem with that is there are only two options anymore either J & K or ERS and the current equipment we have would not be compatible with ERS so if we did change we would have to purchase all new equipment. The Board of Commissioners advised Auditor Oesterreich to contact J & K to have them come to the next meeting for an update.

ARPA PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Auditor Oesterreich advised that she would like to see "consulting services" be added to the ARPA ordinance/resolution for the possible use of revenue estimates to be completed in the future. Debbie Wappel suggested the use of the ARPA funds towards improving broadband services within Starke County, she explained in certain areas it is really hard to work from home because of bad internet services. She also suggested face lifting the community such as the removal of old dilapidated buildings in the San Pierre area and also there are several areas in San Pierre that has turned into a junkyard. Steve Dodge advised he is here on behalf of the Gateway Committee and he would like to also see the money go toward a face lift for the county such as making improvements to the Depot building, caboose, and the Rochester Bridge near the Depot building. He advised it has been over 30 years since those structures have been maintained. He advised he also suggested putting up signage directing people to areas such as the Starke County Forest and other recreational areas. Attorney Lucas advised that signage has already been approved by the Starke County Park Board so that should be installed soon. Councilman Pearman asked if the Starke County Park Board has developed a park map. Attorney Lucas

stated they have some smaller maps on their website but will suggest to the Park Board the idea of creating a full Starke County map with all available recreation areas.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the payroll docket in the amount of \$252,120.84, including deductions in the amount of \$75,197.33 for the pay period ending on 06/26/2021 and pay date of 07/02/2021. 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 \$292,435.02. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes from June 21st, 2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to accept and approve the letter of support as presented by Starke County Court Services. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to reappoint Bill Crase and Dan Gumz to the River Board. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Attorney Lucas gave a brief run down regarding an update with the opioid litigation. This portion relates to Purdue Pharma. They are currently in bankruptcy court under title 11 which is reorganization. We are named as a party affiliated with the national opioid litigation. They negotiated for a master ballot position, meaning that the litigants in the opioid interstate litigation collectively have a veto on this, which means the majority of them have to support it in order for the purposed settlement to go through. Attorney Lucas advised that the purposed settlement is with Purdue Pharma only, they are going to go bankrupt and have a reorganization, and they will be paying out different amounts to different areas. The entire company will then be conveyed to a new corporation and under different control. The attorney has advised to take the settlement agreement. Attorney Lucas advised the board that they could do one of three things. They could vote to approve, which would be 1 of 6,000 votes, they could abstain from voting, or they could vote against it. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the purposed action. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Auditor Oesterreich asked what the Commissioners wanted to do with the old Coroner’s vehicle. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to have the highway fix the item that needs to be fixed on the vehicle, then move the vehicle to the Annex I parking lot, at which time the old EMA vehicle will be moved to the highway department for storage until the next county auction and also to have Auditor Oesterreich remove the insurance from the old EMA vehicle. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

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 6:46 PM.

TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2021

Charlie Chesak, President

Bryan Cavender, Vice-President

Mark Gourley, Member

Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor
& Secretary to the Bo