

July 18, 2011

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet in regular session at 6:00pm in the Annex meeting room, Knox Indiana and the following proceedings were held to wit:

Due to the absence of President, Mark Smith, Vice-President Mitch Semans called the meeting to order.

IN RE: STARKE COUNTY LIBRARY REQUEST

Ellen Dodge, Director of the Starke County Library, and Curt Pletcher, of Umbaugh & Associates, appeared before the Board to request approval for a proposed library renovation project, which had been tabled at the June 20th meeting. Mr. Pletcher advised the bond issue would be \$1,785,000. If the request is approved, the library payment would decrease slightly from the current payment. Also, if the bond issue is approved the tax payers will not see a change in the tax rate they are currently paying. A discussion followed regarding the effect of this additional bond issue, and other capital projects projected in the county's future. Councilman Dave Pearman made a motion to table the request for now, and take into consideration all of the other projects the county made be facing. The motion was seconded by Councilman McLaughlin and passed with all ayes.

IN RE: MINUTES

Councilman Radkiewicz made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20th meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman McLaughlin and it passed with all ayes. The final minutes of the May 16th meeting were also signed.

IN RE: McLAUGHLIN REQUEST

Councilman McLaughlin announced Councilman Pearman and he recently attended the County Council State Conference in Indianapolis. He advised one of the issues discussed was that department heads should not try to spend all of their county general budget before the end of the year. With the monies left unexpended in the county general fund at the end of the year, of that, up to whatever the statutory limit is, could be transferred into the Rainy Day Fund. He advised that it was an old tale: if the money is not spent by the end of the year, the Council will take it away in next year's budget. He stated the department's next year's budget will not be penalized if the monies are not spent by year end. He requested permission from the Council to go around the County and address this situation with all department heads. Marty Lucas advised he will check on the availability of the Rainy Day Fund and what it can be spent on. A super majority of 5/7 is required to receive permission to spend monies from that Fund. Councilwoman Judy Benninghoff made a motion to allow McLaughlin to talk to the department heads, seconded by Councilman Pearman. The motion passed with all ayes.

IN RE: 911 FUND REPORT

Sheriff Oscar Cowen and Jail Office Manager, Chris Smith appeared before the Board to give a report on the status of the 911 Fund, # 1156. A discussion began regarding if Starke County is receiving their fair share of the cell phones fees revenue from the State. Marty Lucas stated there needs to be some accountability for how Starke County's share is calculated. There are two different issues: the county receiving their fair share, and cell phone companies needing to increase the fees collected from 25-50 cents, up to \$3.00. Councilman Pearman requested Mr. Lucas also compose letters to the State Representatives to address this problem. He stated other counties are affected by this also. Councilman McLaughlin made a motion to have Marty draft letters to the representatives; seconded by Councilman Pearman. The motion passed with all ayes. Getting back to the report by Ms. Smith, she is expecting the fund will be good for this year. They have discovered ways to under spend the appropriated budget, especially in the line item of health insurance. So, expenditures will not be as high as was recently projected.

IN RE: TRANSFER REQUESTS

Sheriff Oscar Cowen appeared before the Board to request transfers in the Sheriff's budget. A request was made to transfer \$500.00 from line item 0101 005-1000.07, Merit Board, to line item 0101 005-2000.01, office supplies. Also requested from a \$700.00 transfer to 0101 005-3000.01, postage, from line item 0101 005-3000.05, telephone. A motion was made by Councilman Radkiewicz to approve the transfer requests; seconded by Councilman McLaughlin. The motion passed with all ayes.

His other request, which was to transfer money into the County General Fund, jail budget, from the County Misdemeanant Fund, # 0526 was met with much discussion. As per DLGF guidelines, a transfer can't be made into the County General Fund, from another Fund, and then specify the line item that would receive added appropriations, within requesting an additional appropriations approval from the State. But, the Council could give the Sheriff approval to spend his share of the Misdemeanant Fund, directly from that Fund. Commissioner Norem gave a brief history of the Misdemeanant Fund. Marty Lucas read the county ordinance, 2009-32, regarding the spending of that fund. It was created to allow the Sheriff 50% of the fund for jail expense, and Community Corrections, 50% of the Fund. Commissioner Norem requested, since Community Corrections isn't in a financial position to need those funds, that 100% of that Fund be used for the jail. The balance currently in that Fund is \$16,775.63. Councilman Pearman stated he would be comfortable with the Sheriff only spending ½ of that fund. At this point, Councilman Semans addressed the Sheriff's request to transfer \$2000.00 in the jail's budget, County General, line item 0101 027-2000.02, laundry/cleaning, from line item 0101 027-2000.03, inst/Medical. Councilman McLaughlin made a motion to approve the transfer; seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes. In reference to the remaining portion of the request, to approve the Sheriff spending the

funds in the county corrections fund: McLaughlin stated he would like to talk with Community Corrections to see how they feel about their portion of that fund, before they allow the Sheriff to receive 100%. Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve the Sheriff's access to 50% of the Misdemeanor Fund, # 0526, and request someone from Community Corrections be present at the next meeting to discuss their share of the Fund. Councilman McLaughlin seconded the motion. The vote was 4 ayes and 2 nays. The two against the motion were Judy Benninghoff and Robert Sims.

IN RE: DOG TAX COLLECTION AGENT

In regard to the Council County Ordinance, 2011-02 creating the County Option Dog Tax, the Starke County Auditor's office agreed to act as the collection agent. The original ordinance had stated the Starke County Humane Society would act as the collection agent, but they are not interested. Councilman Pearman made a motion to allow the Auditor's Office to be the County Option Dog Tax Collection Agent; seconded by Councilman McLaughlin. Because they felt if they voted no to the collection agent the tax wouldn't happen; the vote for the motion was 3 ayes, and 3 nays. The three nays were Radkiewicz, Semans, and Benninghoff. After a discussion regarding the county's need to create revenue to pay for animal control related issues; Councilman Pearman made a new motion to accept the Auditor's office as the collection agent. The motion was seconded by McLaughlin. The vote was 4 ayes, and 2 nays. The 2 nays were Radkiewicz and Semans. The motion passed. The details of the dog tax collection are still being completed.

IN RE: DRUG AND TOBACCO FREE STARKE COUNTY

Jennie Carter, of Drug and Tobacco Free Starke County, appeared before the Board to ask the Council approval of an appropriation request in the amount of \$6000.00 from Fund # 1140, 10-1-06 Drug Free Community Fund, to be used to cover administrative expenses. Councilman Radkiewicz made a motion to approve the appropriation, to access the fund, in the amount of \$6000.00. Councilwoman Benninghoff seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

IN RE: COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TRANSFER REQUESTS:

County Highway Superintendent, Steve Siddall, appeared before the Council to request the transfer of \$200,000.00 from line item 533-1000.08, group insurance, of the County Highway Dept. Fund, 0702, to line item 533-4000.01, new trucks. He stated they are in need of purchasing a new vehicle, and do anticipate a savings in the health insurance expense. Benninghoff made a motion to approve this request, seconded by McLaughlin. The motion passed with all ayes. Mr. Siddall's next request was to transfer \$30,000.00, from line item 0702 533-3000.14, repair road equipment, and \$1000.00 be put into line item 0702 533-3000.01, fuel pump maintenance, and \$29,000.00 be put into truck repair, line item 0702 533-3000.13. Benninghoff made a motion to approve this request, seconded by McLaughlin. The motion passed with all ayes. Since Mr. Siddall's last request was to transfer within the same account number, in Fund 0790, Cumulative Bridge Fund, no council approval is needed.

Councilman Pearman stated the need to establish a committee composed of three County Council members, and one County Commissioner, to look into the proposed Library remodel project. Mark Smith, Mitch Semans and Tony Radkiewicz of the Council and Commissioner Jennifer Davis volunteered to be on the committee.

There being no further business, Councilwoman Benninghoff made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Pearman. The meeting was adjourned at 7:18PM.

July 18, 2011

ABSENT
Mark Smith, President

Mitch Semans, Vice President

Judy Benninghoff

Marvin McLaughlin

Dave Pearman

Tony Radkiewicz

Robert Sims

Katherine Chaffins, Starke Co. Auditor &
Council Secretary

