

**August 15, 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:

The meeting was called to order by President, Mark Smith. Councilman Mitch Seamans was not present.

**IN RE: MINUTES**

Councilman McLaughlin questioned the wording of the minutes of the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting; that 10% of the unexpended county general fund could be transferred into the Rainy Day Fund, at the end of the year. The correct wording, instead of the 10%, should say: an amount, whatever is the statutory limit, could be transferred into the Rainy Day Fund from the unexpended county's general fund. Councilman McLaughlin made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting as corrected: seconded by Council Pearman. The motion passed with all ayes. The final minutes of the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting were also signed.

Council President, Mark Smith, passed out a handout: work sheets from a special state meeting for county councilmen, that was attended by Councilmen Pearman and McLaughlin.

**IN RE: SEPARATION OF THE ANNEX BUILDING MAINTENANCE FROM THE COURTHOUSE MAINTENANCE BUDGET**

James Coad and Carl Goodson appeared before the Board to request the separation of the Annex Building maintenance budget from the Courthouse maintenance budget. They had proposed they would be two separate departments. President Smith suggested that the maintenance budgets be included in the same department but set up specific line items per each building. The 2012 proposed budget should be submitted before the hearing, basically splitting the current budget in half per building. He advised it would just consist of a transfer within the same department if one or the other building was needing additional funding.

Commissioner Dan Bridegroom gave an update to the Council in regards to the courthouse elevator repair project. He stated he was advised by the company doing the repairs on the elevator, that the project also requires smoke detectors, smoke alarms, telephone line installed in the elevator, and outside the elevator; to be compliant with the new State codes. He stated there was nothing in the contract in regard to the additional elevator requirements. He stated the company doing the repairs does not do that work, and instead he received a price quote from Simplex. He advised the price quote is approximately \$10,000.00 which would bring the total elevator repair project to \$80,000.00. He stated Simplex would be available to start the work as soon as possible, and the repairman works strictly on historical buildings. He will call and notify Simplex in the AM.

**IN RE: STARKE COUNTY LIBRARY REQUEST**

Ellen Dodge, Director of the Starke County Library, and a representative from Umbaugh & Associates appeared before the Board to request approval, for a proposed library renovation project. The renovations would include adding an additional meeting room, expanding the children's/young adult's section, painting and new carpeting. Marty Lucas had questioned what affect the circuit breaker would have on the bond proposal. The Umbaugh representative replied that there would not be any additional impact from a circuit breaker, greater than what you currently see. Also the debt service levy would be no different than the current debt. He stated the 1.78 million dollar bond, would be a 20 year bond. Marty Lucas summarized the situation as: if approved it would be status quo, but if not, it could free up some money to be used elsewhere. The representative stated that could be true. He also stated the debt service payments will not be higher than they are currently paying, and actually could be slightly lower. President Smith advised the county still needed to address the jail situation. Councilman Pearman inquired why the money would only be spent at the Knox Library, when there are branches in San Pierre, Koontz Lake and Hamlet, whose conditions need to be addressed. A library board member stated that approximately 25% of the circulation is conducted at the branch locations, and they need to address the rapidly growing children's department at the main Knox location. The auditor inquired as to why the breakdown of tax rates for the library does not show a debt service line item as other taxing units do in their tax rates. The Umbaugh representative stated the debt line item is called "lease rental". He advised "lease rental" line and "debt service" are the same thing. He stated the original bond issue was issued to a building corporation. Mrs. Dodge stated that was what they had always called it. Commissioner Davis spoke of her support for the library; and would like to see the library continue moving aggressively ahead. Commissioner McLaughlin stated he would like to table the request for now. Councilman Radkiewicz stated he had been in the library lately and noted it was not crowded at that time. Councilwoman Benninghoff stated she has received approximately 4-5 telephone calls in

regard to the proposed library project. She stated, even though they supported the library and believe it is a tremendous asset, they were not in favor of a two million dollar renovation. President Smith advised a committee of Commissioner Davis, Councilman Pearman, Councilman Smith and Councilman Semans was formed to access the project. Commissioner Davis was asked to chair the committee, and she agreed. Mrs. Dodge addressed Councilman Radkiewicz' comment and stated the children's department is not in the open area that you see when you walk in the door. That open area is not the concern; it is the crowding in the children's department and also addressing the existing parking lot and the lack of sufficient parking spaces. President Smith stated by taking no action by the council, the issue will remain tabled.

#### **RE: COUNTY OPTION DOG TAX**

Marty Lucas stated he had a revised copy of the County Option Dog Tax Ordinance, the council had approved at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, stating the Starke County Auditor, as the collection agent. Since it had already been voted on, it only required their signatures. The ordinance was signed.

#### **RE: SHERIFF REQUESTS**

Commissioner Norem stated the Sheriff would like to withdraw his request to purchase a used vehicle, but he is requesting the proceeds of the insurance claim be deposited into the fund that originally paid for the vehicle. Commissioner Sims stated he believed Ron Lawson's vehicle had been purchased out of the Sheriff's Commissary Fund and that the Sheriff would have the title on file. President Smith stated all titles of the county, be filed in the Auditor's office. Commissioner Norem stated she would check into the original funding for that vehicle.

Commissioner Norem stated she had not discussed with the Sheriff, Oscar Cowen, his request to spend the County Corrections Fund. President Smith advised the use of the fund to pay for personnel in the jail, is not a good plan for the future. He inquired if the Sheriff had submitted a transfer request, but there was not a request at this time. The auditor stated the balance in the County Corrections Fund, 0526, is \$16,276.68 as of Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>. She also distributed a copy of the letter received from the State, in which the county was advised of the amount of funding they will be receiving for 2011: \$16,885.66, which is expected to occur approximately September 1<sup>st</sup>. President Smith stated he was not in favor of changing the way it is set up at this time. Councilman McLaughlin stated they need to know the needs for funding of the Community Corrections.

#### **RE: STARKE COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT YTD FUNDING REPORT**

EMA Director, Ted Bombagetti, appeared before the Board to submit his yearly report. President Smith stated last year the Council had separated the EMA department from the EMS department. At that time the Board had stated the position needed to bring more in funding to the County, than the director's salary. They had requested periodical reports from the Director. Mr. Bombagetti advised that the county has received a total of \$182,776.37 in cash and merchandise in the past year. Starke County was the only northern Indiana county to receive FEMA reimbursement. The \$34,352.80 received was reimbursement from the Robbins Ditch breakout, last spring. He also stated that he is assessed by the State in an County Emergency Management Capability Assessment; a total of 186 points is required, and he scored a total of 231 points. A copy of the EMA Director's report is on file in the Auditor's office. Councilman Radkiewicz inquired on the status of the radio replacements. Mr. Bombagetti advised the grant funding program opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> and will be open until September 9<sup>th</sup>. He stated he is still collecting inventories from some departments. He advised since this is a marching funds grant, he will re-appear at a later date, to request the amount of the county match.

#### **RE: TRANSFER REQUESTS**

Starke County Clerk, Evelyn Skronski, had submitted a request to transfer \$50.00 of the CASA money that had been receipted into the County General Fund, 0101, be transferred to the Clerk's Trust Fund. Councilman McLaughlin advised it is a court order that she refunds that amount accordingly. Councilman McLaughlin made a motion to approve the request; seconded by Councilman Pearman. The motion passed with all ayes.

Jennie Carter, of Drug and Tobacco Free Starke County, appeared before the Board to request approval for the appropriation of the following:

Fund 1140: 000-3000.19 North Judson-San Pierre High School Project Hope, Freshman Mentoring Program: \$1,000.00; 000-3000.20 Knox Middle School Rocking to a Drug Free Beat: \$1,800.00; 000-3000.22 TAR WARS "Beware of Tobacco": \$2,000.00; North Judson-San Pierre Middle School "Project Alert" \$1,000.00; City of Knox Neighborhood Watch "National Night Out" \$200.00, totaling \$6,000.00. Councilman McLaughlin made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman Radkiewicz. The motion passed all ayes. The second request was for 000-3000.06

Knox Middle School TASC treatment program \$2,500.00; 000-3000.18 Porter Starke "Prime for Life" program, \$3,500.00; totaling \$6,000.00. Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman McLaughlin. The motion passed with all ayes. The third request was 000-3000.11 Knox City Police Community Night Operations \$3,975.00, and Starke County Probation \$1,000.00, totaling \$4,975.00. Councilman Benninghoff made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman McLaughlin. The motion passed with all ayes.

**RE: COUNTY CORRECTIONS FUND**

Kim Kennedy, of Starke County Community Corrections, was present at the meeting. President Smith inquired as to the amount of funding SCCC would need for this year. She stated billings were approximately \$2800.00. Smith advised the billings should be submitted as the need requires, and he would like to see the Sheriff and SCCC cooperate with each other in regard to the spending of the funds of 0526, County Corrections Fund. Smith stated no requests for the use of that fund, was presented to the Board.

**RE: BANK DOCUMENT**

Mark Smith advised he has a form from 1<sup>st</sup> Source Bank which required his signature, to authorize the County Auditor to view the county's checking account, on line; to watch for daily transactions, EFTS deposits and expenditures. Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve the signing on the document; seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes, and the document was signed.

**RE: FORENSIC AUDIT**

President Smith requested a motion be made to conduct a private audit regarding the issue with the Treasurer's Office. He stated he will contact the AIC to get advice on locating a forensic auditing firm. He stated the Rainy Day Fund could be used as the funding for the audit. He would like to see some action taken, and not wait until the next monthly meeting of the Council. Commissioner Norem stated the treasurer's bond was canceled effective August 11, 2011. Pearman inquired if the bond company would be sending in someone to do an audit. Marty Lucas advised not to count on it. Even if the bond company sends someone in, the county should have an independent audit conducted. Marty estimated the cost of the forensic audit would be approximately \$70,000.00--\$80,000.00. He also stated a super majority, of the council, was needed to spend monies from the Rainy Day Fund. After a discussion, Mark Smith stated he was making sure everyone was on the same page to spend money to get the audit done.

**RE: BUDGET HEARINGS**

President Smith advised the next council meeting is set for Monday, Sept. 19th but he doesn't recommend they conduct the county's department's budget hearings at that meeting. He suggested a special meeting be set sometime during the week of Sept. 12th. He stated he prefers not to go through the budgets, line by line with the department head. A discussion followed regarding the possibility of freezing the 2011 budget figures for 2012; or advising the department head of the total amount of approved budget they will receive and it would be up to the department head to fill in the line items. Smith stated the Budget Hearings will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 14th, starting at 8:00AM. Smith advised they will not be posting a time schedule per department. If the need arises, they will call in the department head to discuss their budget. He also passed out copies of the 2012 proposed budgets, by department. The report shows the 2012 proposed budget; the actual 2011 budget, and the 2011 actual YTD expenditures. He advised they would have a chance to review the requests before the September budget hearings. He also stated on Sept. 19th, they will be conducting the non-binding budget reviews of the other taxing units. He advised the auditor will be sending out those budget reports before the meeting on the 19th. The meeting of the 19th will begin at 5:00PM, instead of the usual time of 6:00PM.

There being no further business, Councilwoman Benninghoff made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Radkiewicz. The motion passed with all ayes and the meeting was adjourned.

**AUG. 15, 2011**

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Mark Smith, President

ABSENT \_\_\_\_\_  
Mitch Semans, Vice President

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Judy Benninghoff

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Marvin McLaughlin

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Dave Pearman

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Tony Radkiewicz

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Robert Sims

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Katherine Chaffins, Starke Co. Auditor &  
Council Secretary