

September 16, 2013

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet in a regular session at 5:30PM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman, Mitch Semans, Tony Radkiewicz, Robert Sims, Bryan Cavender, and Freddie Baker present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Dave Pearman. Absent was Councilman Marvin McLaughlin.

RE: MINUTES

Councilman Semans made a motion to approve the August 19th Council regular meeting minutes, seconded by Councilman Baker. The motion passed with all ayes. Councilman Baker made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 6th special session meeting, seconded by Councilman Semans. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: NON-BINDING REVIEW OF COUNTY TAXING UNITS

President Pearman advised the DLGF stressed the importance of the County Council to supply their comments and recommendations in their non-binding review of the County taxing units' 2014 budgets.

North Judson Public Library: The Council noted the budget amount, the proposed levy, and the presented tax rate all exceeded the state and county growth rate. (The state growth rate for 2013 pay 2014 is 2.6% and the County's growth rate for 2013 pay 2014 is 3.60%.) Library Director, Jane Ellen Felchuk was present to answer questions.

California Township: The Council noted the proposed budget and the proposed tax rate both exceed the growth factor, but the levy amount requested does not. President Pearman inquired why a taxing unit that has such vast cash surplus does not attempt to buy down their tax rate, to give their tax payers some relief. Trustee Ahlenius advised they want the cash available each year to have in order to purchase major capital assets without the need to borrow the funding. He inquired why they are requesting a budget for 2014 for their Fire Fund that is 40.87 % increase over the 2013 budget. The Trustee advised they ask for it but never spend it all. Councilman Semans inquired if you don't need such a high budget why even ask for it, noting he didn't understand the game they have here with their budget.

Center Township: President Pearman advised the Township is within the County's growth rate in both their budget and levy, and slightly over for the tax rate proposed. The Center Township Trustee was not present for the meeting.

Davis Township: President Pearman noted the Township exceeds the growth rate in the proposed levy and tax rates, but the increase in the budget requested is in line with the growth rate. The Township Trustee was not present for the meeting.

Jackson Township: President Pearman advised the Township's requested budget, levy and tax rates all exceed the state growth rate. The Township Trustee was not present to answer any questions.

North Bend Township: President Pearman advised since the Township had difficulty with the approval of their 2013 budget for their general fund, it is difficult to establish the current percentages to see if they are in compliance and within the stated growth rate. Township Trustee, Byron Walters, was present to answer questions.

Oregon Township: President Pearman noted the proposed levy looks good, but the proposed budget and tax rates exceed the growth rate. Township Trustee, Mark Allen, noted he was advised by the DLGF Representative, Kurt Ott, to leave the requested Budget amount of \$76,000.00 in the Cumulative Fire Fund, which is an actual 35% increase over the 2013 budget.

Railroad Township: President Pearman noted the requested budget is only a slight increase over 2013, less than 1%, but both the proposed levy and tax rates exceeded the growth rate. Township Trustee, Roger Chaffins, advised Kurt Ott had suggested the maximum levy be requested.

Washington Township: President Pearman noted the Washington Township Trustee did not submit her form by the due date of September 3rd, and therefore that taxing unit will have a budget remaining at the 2013 state approved budget.

Wayne Township: President Pearman noted since there were issues with their 2013 state approved budget, it was throwing off the percentages on the review form. Councilman Semans commended the Township Trustee, Clara Schacht, for keeping the proposed budget consistent with the proposed tax levy amounts.

Starke County Library: President Pearman advised the library's proposed budget and tax levy were within the growth rate, but not the tax rate which was showing a substantial increase. No one was present from the library.

Knox City: President Pearman advised he was quite alarmed when he first read the City's increase in their 2014 budget, but Auditor Chaffins advised in 2013 the state originally approved only one department of their general fund budget, which was throwing off the comparison percentages.

Town of Hamlet: President Pearman advised their figures were exceeding the growth rate in each of the three categories. Councilman Semans noted the Town, after twenty years of not increasing their budget only first had an increase in 2013.

Town of North Judson: President Pearman noted the Town's requested budget is just slightly over the growth rate but both the proposed levy and tax rates exceed the growth rate.

Oregon-Davis Schools: President Pearman stated they had recently met with the new Superintendent of the Oregon-Davis Schools and noted the Superintendent's interest in learning about the budget process. He noted OD Schools were showing increases in all three categories and will be working at buying down the referendum that passed.

North Judson-San Pierre Schools: President Pearman reminded the Council the School was required to have a binding review since they have an appointed school board. The NJSP 2014 was adopted at the Council's September 6th meeting.

Knox Schools: President Pearman stated the School is showing a dramatic increase over their 2013 budget especially in their Capital Projects budget. He stated his concern with what effect a school system has, with their large budget, on the total tax levy for the County. He also noted he would like the Council to meet with the Schools to discuss their budgets.

Bailey-Cox-Newton Conservancy District: President Pearman advised their proposed budget and levy were within the growth rate, but is showing a substantial increase in their tax rate.

Starke County Airport: Charlie Weaver, President Jim Long, and Vice-President Lionel Smead appeared before the Board to discuss their 2014 budget.

RE: REQUEST FOR APPROPRIATIONS/TRANSFERS

Wendy Elam and Linda Molinda of Drug and Tobacco Free Starke County (DTFSC) appeared before the Council to request the following appropriations of the ICJI grant proceeds: \$5,661.00 to the Knox Police Department, recording equipment; \$3,000.00 to DTFSC, Prevention & community education; \$750.00 to North Judson-San Pierre Schools, prevention funds; \$700.00 to Starke County Youth club, family day dinner; \$750.00 to Moving Starke County Forward, prevention & education symposium; \$5,000.00 to Porter Starke Services, prevention. Councilman Baker inquired why the NJSP Schools was the only school in the County to receive funding, and Ms. Molinda advised they were the only school to apply. She advised typically the schools will learn of the available funding through their Guidance Counselors. Councilman Semans made a motion to approve all the appropriation requests, seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes.

The County Surveyor, Dennis Estok, appeared before the Board to request a transfer of appropriation in the Surveyor's Department of the County General Fund: \$600.00 from budget line item, 1000.10300.000.0006, extra help to budget line item 1000.20100.000.0006, office supplies, in order to purchase a new printer for that Department. Councilman Baker made a motion to approve the transfer request, seconded by Councilman Radkiewicz. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: PTABOA BOARD MEMBER REPLACEMENT

President Pearman advised the Council had received the resignation of Jody Czerniak from the PTABOA Board effective September 30th, 2013, since she has accepted the position of full time Deputy Assessor. He also advised they had received a letter from Rebecca Ferch stating her interest in being appointed to the PTABOA Board. Ms. Ferch is presently a part time Deputy Assessor, and is a Level II Certified Assessor. Councilman Semans made a motion to accept the resignation of Jody Czerniak from the PTABOA Board, and appoint Rebecca Ferch to the Board. Councilman Baker seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

RE: 2014 BUDGET ADOPTIONS; SALARY ORDINANCE ADOPTION

Councilman Semans made a motion to adopt the Starke County 2014 budgets as listed on Starke County Ordinance 2013-0916A, seconded by Councilman Cavender. The motion passed with all ayes and the 2014 Budget Ordinance was signed by the Board. President Pearman commended Auditor Chaffins on the great job in preparing the 2014 budgets.

Councilman Semans made a motion to adopt the budget of the Starke County 2014 Solid Waste Management Department, Starke County Ordinance 2013-0916C. The motion was seconded by Councilman Baker and passed with all ayes. The 2014 Budget Ordinance was signed by the Board.

Councilman Semans made a motion to adopt the 2014 Starke County Salary Ordinance, 2013-0916B, seconded by Councilman Radkiewicz. The motion passed with all ayes. President Pearman advised the IU Intern had worked throughout the summer on the issue of the County's Salary Ordinance, but Commissioner Davis noted the work of the intern will not go into effect until the County's 2015 Salary Ordinance. She advised the Intern, Evann Coad, would like to give a presentation to explain the proposed changes in the County's salary structure. President Pearman asked he be added to the agenda of a future meeting, based on Mr. Coad's schedule.

RE: 2015 STARKE COUNTY SHERIFF'S SALARY

President Pearman stated the Council needs to address the salary of the newly elected County Sheriff that will be taking Office on January 1, 2015, since it would only be fair to the Sheriff's candidates in the 2014 election to know what the pay rate will be in 2015. He advised he had sent out a spreadsheet to all Councilmen listing the pay the surrounding counties' Sheriffs are currently receiving. He noted he had received an email from Councilman McLaughlin, who due to illness could not be present at this meeting, but advised he is recommending the 2015 Sheriff's base pay rate be \$87,500.00/year. Councilmen Semans, Baker and Sims all agreed with that amount, but Councilman Radkiewicz stated he thought the \$87,500.00 base rate was too high. Councilman Sims made a motion to set the County Sheriff's base pay rate at \$87,500.00 effective January 1, 2015. Councilman Cavender seconded the motion. The motion passed with four ayes, and one nay (Radkiewicz). President Pearman asked Attorney Lucas to prepare an ordinance to that effect.

RE: REQUEST FOR AN AMMENDMENT TO THE 2013 SALARY ORDINANCE BY THE COUNTY HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

County Highway Department Superintendent, Rik Ritzler, appeared before the Board. He advised recently they had one of their two mechanics resign. He noted the 2013 Salary Ordinance lists the present pay for a Highway Department Mechanic as \$18.26/hr. He advised he has an applicant, a recent graduate of the SCILL Center he would like to hire as the second mechanic, but due to his lack of experience he was proposing the following: To

hire him on at the rate of \$13.50 for a three month probationary period, evaluate him and then raise his pay to \$15.50 for a nine month apprentice period. He added, after another evaluation at the end of the apprentice period, his pay would be increased to \$17.50/hr. He noted that would allow them to see he is a good fit for the department before paying him the full mechanic pay rate. Councilman Radkiewicz made a motion to approve the change in the mechanics pay as stated in the current salary ordinance, seconded by Councilman Semans. The motion passed with all ayes. President Pearman commended the Superintendent of the great job he is doing.

RE: HOSPITAL UPDATE

Commissioner Davis reminded the Council a letter had been sent to IU-Health in response to their proposed plans for the future of health care in Starke County. She advised the County had received a letter of response from Dan Evans, the CEO of IU-Health which was very encouraging. She noted the Council had already appropriated funds to hire a consultant for the County in regard to the future of the hospital in Starke County, and now the County is ready to sign the paperwork to hire a consulting firm, out of Indianapolis, in the amount of \$30,000.00.

President Pearman advised in regard to the issue of funding the Sheriff’s Department Pension Plan, he advised the present plan is 80% funded, but since the Council had promised to find a way to fund the pension plan with additional monies other than the Riverboat revenue, he is proposing to appropriate funding from the CAGIT Certified Shares Fund for both 2013 and 2014. He noted, he would like to speak with an actuary before suggesting the amount of funding to appropriate. He also pointed out, contrary to what the County had been told by the former pension fund representative a pension plan that is 80% funded is a good thing.

With there being no further business, Councilman Baker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Semans. The motion passed with all ayes and the meeting was adjourned at 7:02PM.

September 16, 2013

Dave Pearman, President

Mitch Semans, Vice President

Bryan Cavender

ABSENT_____
Marvin McLaughlin

Tony Radkiewicz

Robert Sims

Freddie Baker

Katherine Chaffins, Auditor &
County Council Secretary