

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Special Session in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Kathy Norem and Don Binkley present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

Commissioner Vice-President Norem called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. Commissioner President Kent Danford was absent for the meeting. Commissioner Norem advised the purpose of this Special Meeting was to address a couple of litigation issues affecting the County. County Attorney Marty Lucas advised, after negotiating with Attorney Elizabeth Knight and Jenna Throw, along with the attorney representing Officer Robert Gray, he is recommending to the Board of Commissioners the following agreement:

“The Starke County Board of Commissioners approve settlement with Robert Gray in the amount of his total back wages, retroactive reinstatement of health and life insurance to the date these benefits were discontinued, and retroactive reinstatement of pension benefits to the date these benefits were discontinued. In exchange Robert Gray agrees to dismiss his lawsuit against Starke County presently pending in the United States District Court for the Northern district of Indiana”.

Commissioner Binkley inquired if this agreement would affect the Merit Board hearing on the Officer Gray matter that has been scheduled to take place on October 27th. Attorney Lucas advised the Merit Board hearing will not be affected. Commissioner Binkley advised he begrudgingly would approve the recommended settlement agreement with Officer Gray. Commissioner Norem advised she would begrudgingly second the motion. The motion passed with all ayes.

Attorney Lucas advised the second issue was in regard to the age discrimination complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) by former County employee, Terry Turner. Attorney Lucas stated the settlement agreement states: in exchange for the County to agree to offer to Mr. Turner a Neutral Reference regarding his previous employment with the County which would limit the County to respond to potential employers with only his name, position and dates of employment; in exchange Mr. Turner agrees not to institute a lawsuit regarding the charge of discrimination and will not retaliate against the County in the future. (A copy of the complete Negotiated Settlement Agreement is on file in the Auditor’s Office.) Commissioner Binkley made a motion to accept and approve the proposed settlement agreement with former employee Terry Turner. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

Recorder Lisa Minix appeared before the Board in regard to a recent agreement with the FIDLAR Software Company scanning in older records of the Recorder’s Office. Recorder Minix stated the FIDLAR representatives will be working in her office on October 6-8th and would like permission to continue working during that timeframe on a 24 hour schedule until completion. She advised if the Board does not approve their working after regular business hours then the Company would need to set up a trailer outside and take out the records that will need to be scanned. She noted other surrounding counties have authorized the after hour work schedule for that company including both Marshall County and Jasper County. Commissioner Norem advised she was not comfortable with allowing them access to the building after hours and would like email verification first from other counties as to this process, before agreeing to it. Recorder Minix advised she would provide the information to her.

There being no further business, Commissioner Binkley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:43PM.

October 1, 2015

Kent Danford, President

Kathy Norem, Vice-President

ABSENT _____
Kent Danford

Katherine Chaffins, Auditor &
Secretary to the Board of Commissioners