

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00PM in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, Kathryn Norem, and Bryan Cavender present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner President Charlie Chesak at 6:00PM.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

EMS Director Travis Clary and EMS Clerk MaryLynn Ritchie appeared before the Board to present their monthly departmental report. Clerk Ritchie presented the amounts received from small claims being \$998.18 and from Johnathon O'Hara being \$1,884.59. She then presented the runs report for September, she explained the runs were down a little bit but the revenue still stayed steady. Of the runs they had made in September the transfers were 43% of those runs. She stated their department is up \$47,591.02 in revenue from this time period in 2018. She explained their total revenue for the year is \$862,948.34, this is up \$11,000 from the total 2018 revenue and they still have a few months to go. She advised that they did receive their settlement from Medicaid which was a total of \$22,000. She then asked if this could be put in a separate fund to be used for future purchases of costly equipment. The Board of Commissioners agreed that this may be able to be done but she would have to speak with the council as there may be something that they do not know about as to why this is not currently being done. Auditor Oesterreich advised that putting this money into another fund and not the county general fund would alter what they take in as revenue for the year. The revenues have a factor in the approval of the county general budget from the Department of Local Government and Finance. Clerk Ritchie also advised that she and Director Clary have been talking to some other agencies that also do medical billing about the charges that they charge. She stated that currently the charges that EMS charges are the lower than the surrounding area. She advised they will be working on a new price chart. This will not help with Medicare or Medicaid billing but it could bring in more revenue off of the private insurances. Commissioner Norem advised that health care professionals do this on a yearly basis and some do this several times a year.

Director Clary presented his September Report to the Board of Commissioners. He advised his operations continue to run smoothly. They have not hired any additional crew members at this time and they continue to have a full staff of EMT's and Paramedics. He advised he taught a CPR class for Callison's in Hamlet, and they have had their monthly audit & review with Starke Hospital. He advised they have received HAZMAT, and allergic reactions. They will soon be offering ACLS, and PALS recertification classes for their staff. He reported the EMT that suffered a lifting injury last month is back to work without restrictions. They have had no other injuries this month. He stated all of their ambulance units have been running smoothly, and continue to get serviced monthly. They had a minor garage door issue at Medic 1 that was quickly resolved by a local contractor. He advised he continues to be involved with local meetings (STOP, CPT, LEPC, CFRT, OFRT, and many more.) He stated they had their yearly tabletop exercise with LEPC. The event that was held at Hamlet Fire was well attended by emergency services from around the area. They were evaluated by Laporte County Hazmat, and the South Bend Fire Department Captain/Hazmat chief. The tabletop exercise involved a large anhydrous spill at the Co-op in Hamlet, and tested their resources. He attended their quarterly meeting with Laporte Hospital CNO, LO Co. EMS, ED Directors, and our EMS coordinator. He stated they were praised for their services by Starke/Laporte Hospital's and they continue to be happy with the services provided to our community.

Director Clary advised that unfortunately the used ambulance that they were approved for last month was sold. He is currently exploring other options on a gently used ambulance for the transfer operations. He asked the Board of Commissioners if it is okay to use the money that was approved toward the purchase of another used ambulance he may find. Commissioner Norem advised it would have to be approved again because it was approved for a specific vehicle. However, Commissioner Norem asked if they would be able to preauthorize Commissioner Chesak to be the point of contact for Director Clary in the event that he would find another used ambulance. She stated they could possibly put \$1,000 down to hold the vehicle if Commissioner Chesak approves. The vehicle would then be held until the Board of Commissioners met again or they could even have a special meeting to get the purchase approved. Commissioner Norem asked Attorney Lucas if they could use the same approved money for a different purchase. Attorney Lucas stated it would have to be approved again. He also stated it is a better plan that the Commissioners vote to give Commissioner Chesak the authority to make a decision regarding the

purchase of a new used ambulance before their next regularly scheduled meeting. Commissioner Norem made a motion to authorize Commissioner Chesak, after communicating with Director Clary about a new used ambulance purchase. Attorney Lucas then asked how close they could possibly state what the vehicle is and what the vehicle specs are. Director Clary advised they are looking for the standard Chevy 6.6 liter, diesel engine, little below 100,000 miles, and still in the price range of \$39,900. He stated it would be a 165 to a 175 inch box (chasse). Attorney Lucas asked about specific mileage, Director Clary stated he would be looking for somewhere between 60,000 to 100,000 mileage. Commissioner Norem then made a motion that if Director Clary finds a new used ambulance within those specs to call Commissioner Chesak and then if Commissioner Chesak agrees they could then put \$1,000 on the equipment and sign an intent to purchase contract contingent on their next meeting for approval by the Commissioners. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

Director Clary advised that he recently reached out to Stryker (our ambulance cot manufacturer) to see about getting our cots serviced. He found out that unfortunately they can no longer get our cots serviced due to their age. He stated he has been exploring grant opportunities which are very hard to find at the local level. All of our cots are between 19-20 years old, and we need to reach a decision on the replacement of the cots. Director Clary provided Commissioner Chesak a copy of the review of the cots from Stryker. He stated he would need 3 cots which would come at a cost of \$20,000 to \$25,000 per cot. He advised they do have financing options available. Commissioner Norem asked if we would get a trade-in value on the old cots. Director Clary advised they would give us about \$3,000 for trade in on all three cots. Director Clary advised that they recently had 3rd graders from North Judson schools, and 2nd graders from Knox schools visit their Knox base. He stated they got to explore their career, check out the ambulance, and the helicopter flew in for a presentation. He stated they have participated in the recent homecoming parades for Knox, and North Judson schools. They have attended the "Hometown Hero Night" at the NJSP football game recently. He continues to be heavily involved in our local schools, and I am now training all 3 local schools on stop bleed. He will have all of the schools completed by the end of October. Every school building in the county will then have 3 stop bleed kits per school building. The Stop the Bleed kits were funded by a school safety grant through the State of Indiana.

Director Clary also stated they will be participating in some local trunk or treats in the coming weeks, and will continue to be heavily involved with the public. He advised he has submitted an impact grant to the community foundation for a 4th Lucas device to outfit their transfer unit. They will be looking into the funds next year for that particular request as they are out of funds for the current year. Firehouse subs will soon be offering a grant for bullet proof vests, and he will be working on that for his staff. The job as a first responder continues to become more dangerous. They are seeing more & more fire/ems departments getting this type of ballistic protection for their staff. He is hopeful that they can add this protection with the grant by the end of the year. He also reported that staff training starts tomorrow in Valpo, and they will continue to offer the classes for the rest of the week. He stated they are excited for the team to be forming, and we will be talking more about it later tonight with Sheriff Dulin.

HIGHWAY MONTHLY REPORT

Rik Ritzler, Superintendent of the County Highway Department, appeared before the Board to present his monthly departmental report. He advised he will be meeting with INDOT on Thursday regarding the Bridge #7 Replacement. It was supposed to begin late next year but they may be able to move it up a little. He stated that the construction on Bridge #140 will begin next week. On October 21, 2019 they will be opening emergency bids for the bridge on 700E, he is hoping the bridge will be finished before December. He stated they will be finishing the culvert replacements up when they have some time later this month. He advised the bridge cleanings are done and the bridge sealing is almost done. They complete bridge sealing 1 to every 3 years, so far this year they have completed 50 of the 58 bridges. Superintendent Ritzler stated that because they had to cancel the first round of chip seal this year they have extra gravel that they are going to use to stone some gravel roads when the weather gets too cold to pave. They will be focusing on North Bend Township and California Township. They are going to continue their cold mix paving operations, they will be picking that up on Friday again and go through next week as well as the week after. He stated they have completed about 20 miles of paving and 9 miles of crack sealing. When the weather gets bad they will begin the project of rebuilding and reopening of 1100E from 150N to 300N again. He advised this year in chip sealing operations they completed 44.86 miles. He advised they have received the equipment to the crosswalk at Boa Shores at the end of August but they will not be beginning this project until the beginning of next year.

Superintendent Ritzler advised that the Starke County Highway Department was recognized by the Association of Indiana Counties during their 61st annual conference. Superintendent Rik Ritzler was named "Outstanding County Highway Superintendent 2019" at the October 2nd awards banquet at French Lick Resort. The award reflects the department's implementation of an asset management approach to improving and maintaining the county's 1,400 lane miles of roads, which is part of the 10-year road improvement plan toward a long-term goal of creating a county-wide truck route. This was all completed without a wheel tax, and any other tax hikes, or any money from the general fund. It was all completed with our existing budget. He advised that in 2013 the Commissioners wanted to move to a roadway asset management perspective, being one of the reasons he was hired. He stated when he started in 2013 the county's average road rating was 4.23. This year it is 6.2, this was done all within our existing budget. This is what has separated us from other counties, other counties have had to ask for money. He then presented the Board of Commissioners a listing of road improvements going back to 2008. He stated they just about have all of their equipment updated. In future years they plan on completing 50 miles of chip seal, 5 miles of fog seal, 25 miles of asphalt paving, 10 miles of crack sealing, 10 miles of re-stoning gravel roads, and 5 miles of hot mix paving. He explained that in 2016 the State mandated that county highways use an asset management system to rate the roads, inventory the roads, and come up with a road improvement plan. He stated that sometimes people question why they do roads that they do, he stated many factors are included in choosing the roads such as: road ratings, average daily traffic, crash data on the roadway, and how many people live on the road.

Superintendent Ritzler advised they have 3 people trained in doing the passer ratings, he stated the State does come and check the passer rating that were given to our roadways. He stated there is a 5 year plan that is submitted to INDOT and we are held to that plan but there is some flexibility in adjustments that may need to be made. He advised one exception to this is the gravel roads. They do not perform passer ratings on gravel roads as you can make a poor gravel roads a good road in 1 day by grading the roadway. Superintendent Ritzler then presented the Commissioners with the 5 year asset management plan for the years of 2018 through 2022. He explained that the average passer rating throughout the State is 5.9 but we are currently above that at this time. Approximately 40% of the roads in the State are rated 5 or below, but Starke County is only at 30% that are rated at 5 or below. He advised that safety is a top priority for the highway department. The seasonal mowing crew works diligently to maintain right-of-way visibility at intersections and keeps vegetation down along local roadways, and our plow drivers put in long hours to clear roads of snow and ice during the winter months. He advised that his department is also very responsive to citizen concerns about traffic safety and works closely with Purdue LTAP to conduct safety studies of dangerous intersections as a first step toward making improvements. One such project was the redesign of the intersection at CR210 and SR10 at Bass Lake. The county received a Community Crossings Matching Grant from INDOT to reengineer that intersection, straighten the curve, and add stop signs for improve visibility.

Superintendent Ritzler advised that the bridge asset management plan is almost complete. They are just about down to zero deficient bridges. Our county was rated 88th for deficient bridges but now we are in the top 10 of the 92 counties. The bridge asset management plan was also done without extra money or taxes. All of these things, the roadwork, Ricky Fisher and Dale Conley have done a lot as far as the operations. That is their job in the field, my job is to plan it and provide materials for them and then their job is to complete the work. He stated they have done a tremendous job on road improvements and they are trying to get better at what they do all the time. Every road they do they want to do better, and they are doing that. The chip sealing that they completed at the end of this summer was better than it was at the beginning. Ritzler stated those two individuals are working very hard at what they do and so are all of the drivers. He explained that the department also has in place a sign asset management program as well as a vehicle asset management program. He advised that we have one of the best mechanics in the State of Indiana (as far as highway is concerned), he keeps the trucks on the road for snow plowing and all other operations. He stated when he goes to conferences the other Superintendents always complain about their Maintenance Departments. He stated no body is perfect but Cary gets things back on the road for the department and he also saves them a tremendous amount of money. He advised that they also have a personnel asset management program. This program has reduced the Workman's Comp and liability costs, other departments have a factor in this as well as Director Clary and Sheriff Dulin are a part of the county's safety program.

Superintendent Ritzler presented a Letter of Achievement to the Commissioner's that he would like them to sign so that he can put this in every employee file of the Highway Department. The Commissioners agreed to sign the document. He also advised he was asked by the SCEDF to add the Division Rd. intersection improvement to the Community Crossings applications for 2020.

Commissioner Norem stated she was told by SCEDF that they would be able to find their own money to fund that project. Commissioner Chesak stated they would not be approving this request at this time.

Commissioner Norem stated she is probably the Commissioner that has worked with Superintendent Ritzler the longest and she remembers when the Board of Commissioners at that time first interviewed him. She stated he has far exceeded the expectations they had at that time and is far better Superintendent than anything that they ever had in Starke County. She stated he is, with no doubt in her opinion, the very best highway superintendent that we have ever seen in Starke County, in Northwest Indiana and even the best in the entire State.

DECLARATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH

Commissioner Norem read the Starke County Commissioner's Proclamation for October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month:

WHEREAS, domestic violence is a serious violent crime that includes both physical and emotional abuse. It is frequently hidden from public view. Many victims suffer in silence, afraid to seek help, or not knowing where to turn.

WHEREAS, domestic violence is more than the occasional family dispute. It is the repeated actions of one person to gain power and control over another person, and

WHEREAS, the traumatic effects of domestic violence extend beyond the abused person, impacting family members and communities. Children often witness the violence or become victims themselves.

WHEREAS, we live in a world where 1 in 3 Women, and 1 in 7 Men are victims of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, every minute 24 people become victims of domestic abuse; and

WHEREAS, domestic violence is not a private issue, the harmful effects of domestic violence are far reaching, undermining justice and safety in all areas of society.

WHEREAS, we urge the courts, churches, schools, and elected officials, to work together because only a coordinated community effort will put a stop to this heinous crime; and,

WHEREAS, Domestic Violence Awareness Month provides an opportunity for citizens to: Mourn those who have died because of domestic violence, Celebrate those who have survived, and Connect with those who work to end violence.

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the impact that domestic violence has on the health and wellbeing of our county, We, the Starke County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the month of October 2019 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month and urge our citizens to work together to eliminate domestic violence from our county. Signed on this date, October 7th, 2019.

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR/EQUIPMENT QUOTES

Jim Coad, Director of Maintenance, came before the Board of Commissioners to present equipment quotes for the purchase of a piece of equipment to use at the Courthouse, Annex 1, and Annex 2 for snow removal and etc. Director Coad advised he had gotten quotes for a snow thrower and a snow blade. He believes having a snow thrower would be more beneficial to the set-up of these buildings. After further discussion regarding what type of set-up would be most beneficial to the county buildings in the process of snow removal Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the purchase of a 2019 Kubota RTV with snow blower attachment minus the snow blade attachment from Rigg's Outdoor Power Equipment in the amount of \$28,181.75, payable from the Cumulative Capital Development Fund. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Auditor Oesterreich presented quotes for the snow removal from an outside source for the three buildings and also advised that they will need to make a decision in the future of how the EMS Base in Knox will be handled, whether it would be by hiring out the snow removal or by removal with this piece of equipment.

MOBILE RESPONSE TEAM

Sheriff Bill Dulin and EMS Directory Travis Clary came before the Board of Commissioners to further discuss the acceptance of the creation of the Mobile Response Team in partnership with Healthline. Director Clary explained that Mimi from Healthline reached out to them last week and they want to begin moving quickly with the plans going forward. He stated they are holding trainings this week and

hopefully want to get the program started by the end of the month. Clerk Ritchie stated she spoke with Auditor Oesterreich, and she advised a separate grant fund would have to be established. Also, Mimi from Healthline stated we would have to send them an invoice weekly to receive repayment for the expenses of this mobile response team (MRT). Mimi also stated it would be the county's responsibility to take care of the W'2s or 1099s that will need to be issued for those employees who work the MRT. Commissioner Norem inquired about the hourly employees who would be going to calls, she asked Attorney Lucas how we would handle that if the employee would technically be eligible for time and a half for OT. Sheriff Dulin explained that they do have training on this on Wednesday and they can ask Healthline more questions during this training. After further discussion regarding the Memorandum of Understanding presented by the Sheriff's Department and the EMS Department Commissioner Norem advised EMS that they will need to structure their MOU in the same manner as the Starke County Sheriff's Department.

AUDITORS BUSINESS

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims as presented in the amount of \$384,796.40. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Payroll Claims Docket for the pay period ending on 09/21/19 with a pay date of 09/27/19, in the total gross amount of \$244,578.95 and deductions in the amount of \$75,028.92. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion, the motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the minutes of the Monday, September 9th, 2019 meeting. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement for Stellar Communities. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Auditor Oesterreich presented the 2020 Holiday Schedule to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the 2020 Holiday Schedule. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Auditor Oesterreich came before the Board of Commissioners to request an Employee Appreciation Event, being the 2019 Christmas Party. She stated they are requesting Friday, December 13, 2019 as Councilman Sims aka Commander Sims has donated the use of the VFW in Knox. Possible times could be 11:00AM- 1:00PM or 1:00PM – 4:00PM. She advised she has researched other counties on how they provide the meals for their Employee Appreciation Events and there are a few different ways the Commissioners could proceed with one being the employee pay their own admission. Commissioner Norem felt that employees should not have to pay for their own Christmas Party. Commissioner Norem asked Attorney Lucas if it would be a problem if vendors donated the food for this event. After further discussion regarding this event Attorney Lucas and Auditor Oesterreich are to look into the laws regarding employee appreciation events. Commissioner Norem also asked Auditor Oesterreich to look into which time periods the employees would rather have for the event.

Auditor Oesterreich presented the Board of Commissioner with the employee handbook updated suggestions presented by Waggoner, Irwin, Scheele & Associates. Auditor Oesterreich then presented the Commissioners with a proposal for the recently retired sheriff's vehicle and making it into a department conference/training vehicle. To continue to carry full coverage on the vehicle it would be \$714.00 per year and for Comprehensive Coverage it would be \$417.00 per year. It currently needs an oil change, rear brakes, rotors, and tires. Other than the minor repairs the vehicle is in good condition. She stated she spoke with our liability company, 1st Choice Insurance, about the plans we may possibly want to set in place regarding this vehicle. She stated Mrs. Block wanted to advise the Commissioner that coming from a liability standpoint having the employees use a company vehicle to travel to training, conferences, or anything pertaining to work is the safest coverage you could possibly have. Commissioner Norem suggested to try the vehicle out for 6 months and then reevaluate what they have spent. She would also like to compare the use of the vehicle to how much is paid out to employees in mileage when they use their own vehicle. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to try out the conference vehicle and have Auditor Oesterreich keep track of departments use, gas money, and mileage in comparison to paying out mileage to employees for a 6 month period. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to use

Cumulative Capital Development money to pay for initial repairs mentioned on this vehicle. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem mentioned that Jeff Berg was here to speak a little bit about the memorial that is being planned for the courthouse lawn. Mr. Berg advised that the Southwest corner of the courthouse square is long overdue for renovation and updates in relation to the war monuments. He stated he has created a committee to help with the plans to renovate that area. They are going to update all the monuments and create monuments for the wars that are not there. He advised that they need some land for the augmentation to be conducted and he is here tonight asking for that land. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to donate the Southwest corner of the courthouse square for the purpose of renovating the war monuments. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem wanted to mention that she had a brief meeting with DLZ about the 3rd floor courtroom renovations. She presented some examples of lighting fixtures, seating, and other items to Commissioner Chesak and Commissioner Cavender. She also presented a time table to the Board regarding the project. She stated there will be another meeting on October 21st to look at the preliminary documents that DLZ is now preparing. The documents will be up for approval November 4th, then the project will go out for bid. The bid phase will be November 18th through December 16th, she stated the Commissioners will then be opening the bids the morning of December 16th and then discuss the bids at the December 16th joint meeting with the council. At that point the project will be awarded before Christmas with the construction beginning around January 6th, 2020. She advised they are allotting for a 20 weeks construction phase.

Attorney Lucas advised that Recorder Mandy Thomason stated she would like to raise the bulk user fee to the statutory max of 20 cents per page. It is currently right now at 10 cents per page. He also advised that the 207K calculation schedule is on a weird fiscal year. Mrs. McDonald would like to change that to a 1/1 calendar year. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to raise the Recorder's bulk user fee from 10 cents to 20 cents. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to change the 207K calculation schedule to a 1/1 calendar year. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Surveyor Crase advised there will be a live fire extinguisher training tomorrow morning at 9:00AM at the Annex Building Parking Lot.

OCTOBER 7, 2019

Charlie Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

Bryan Cavender

Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor
& Secretary to the Board of County Commissioners