

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2015**

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 Kent Danford and Donald Binkley present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Vice-President Kathy Norem. President Danford had asked Vice-President Norem to chair the meeting. Commissioner Norem advised the following items will be added to the posted agenda: Request from Recorder Lisa Minix; Monthly Departmental Report from the Veterans' Service Officer, Mark Gourley; vacancies on the BZA Board; and the need to make a BZA board appointment; and the clarification of the Approved 2016 Holidays.

**RE: BID OPENING—BRIDGE # 1 REPLACEMENT**

Highway Superintendent Rik Ritzler appeared before the Board in regard to the opening of the bids received on the Bridge # 1 Replacement Project. County Attorney Marty Lucas verified with Auditor Chaffins that all bids had been received in a timely manner. Auditor Chaffins verified all four bids had been received that day prior to 4PM.

Attorney Lucas opened each bid and read aloud and they were as follows:

Laporte Construction, Laporte, IN. \$394,937.00

Ellis Construction, Gary, IN. \$454,879.16

Northern Indiana Construction, Mishawaka, IN. \$343,554.81

JCI Bridge Group, Laporte, IN. \$460,239.56

Superintendent Ritzler advised the bids will be reviewed by the County Construction Inspector, Bob Lorenz, and Mark Wilson of JPR in the Annex Building Breakroom to verify the bids are in compliance with the advertised bridge specs. He advised he will report back to the Board later on in the meeting.

**RE: REQUEST FOR CULVERTS ON TOTO ROAD AT LINDSTRAND DITCH**

Steve Dodge appeared before the Board requesting the status of an issue that was originally presented to the Drainage Board in August of 2011. The issue involves a signed petition by the landowners along Toto Road, east of CR200E, who requested the Drainage Board to assume jurisdiction of the road side ditch of the south side of Toto Road, which would extend to the Upper West Branch of the Lindstrand Ditch. In October, 2011 Surveyor Dennis Estok presented to the Drainage Board his surveyor's report stating that landowners would need to replace their existing private culverts at their expense before the board would assume jurisdiction over the mutual drain. In December 2011 Steve Dodge sent letters to the landowners who signed the original petition with the cost to upgrade the existing private culverts but he only received money to replace one of the culverts. On April 7, 2015 Steve Dodge appeared before the Drainage Board asking for a resolution because only one landowner had replied to his letter. Surveyor Estok stated he had contacted Superintendent Ritzler, of the SC Highway Department, to see if he would donate any used culverts that they were unable to reuse and the Superintendent agreed. Surveyor Estok recommended that the Drainage Board pay for the installation of the donated culverts but in order for the Drainage Board to do so they would first need to assume jurisdiction of the mutual drain. The Surveyor noted the area is a public safety issue as the culverts are undersized and causing ponding on Toto Road. The Drainage Board agreed to his recommendation. Commissioner Danford advised he would like to see if the water is draining as it should be. Commissioner Norem noted there is no assessment on that drain. Mr. Dodge noted he believed there is funding available for the installation but not for the culverts. It was decided that Commissioner Danford and Superintendent Ritzler will further look into the situation.

**RE: EMS DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

EMS Director Keith Emigh and Clerk MaryLynn Richie appeared before the Board to present their monthly departmental report. Clerk Richie advised the number of runs is staying consistent and the collection of accounts receivable is approximately \$60,000.00 ahead of last year at this time. She noted she has to clear out her the write offs in the 90+ day column of their accounts receivable report as it has not been completed in a while. Clerk Richie noted a total of \$120.00 was collected from Small Claims Court, and \$829.49 from Collections Attorney Jonathan O'Hara. Director Emigh then presented his report and advised:

Operation Procedures: He advised the transition to the ICD 10 codes is now complete and Clerk Richie has been working on correcting and or adding any codes as she encounters them in the billing process.

Director Emigh advised the new SOP's have been completed and have been sent out to all departmental employees for their review. After the review the employees will be asked to sign the SOP that they fully understand the standard operating procedures. The Director advised creation of the SOP will help eliminate any questions and confusion and will allow the Director to follow through in addressing any incidents on SOP non-compliance.

Director Emigh advised the EMS Department has designed a new patch for their service and have ordered new shirts and stocking hats. He noted they had purchased winter coats for the department since the last time coats were purchased was fifteen years ago. Director Emigh advised the coats are the property of the SCEMS Department and are to be returned if the employee leaves their position.

Director Emigh advised he has been working with IT Director Brian Pinson in upgrading the jet packs for the ambulance laptops; and he is also working with EMA Director Jacob Lippner in composing a wants and needs listing for equipment for their department in the event any grants become available.

Personnel: Director Emigh stated a new full time paramedic began employment last week and it is a full time process to cover the 24/7 ALS Service at all three bases.

Education: Director Emigh advised the department is participating in continual departmental training and is also working with District Two Coordinator, Ted Bombagetti, in planning a MCI table top event.

Rig Maintenance: He advised at the 1<sup>st</sup> Commissioner meeting in October the Board had approved the EMS Director to move forward with the process to purchase a new ambulance. He advised he was told to obtain price quotes and present them to the County Council to obtain funding for the ambulance purchase. He advised on October 19<sup>th</sup> they presented the price quotes to the County Council and the Council tabled the issue until more quotes could be obtained and a source of funding is identified. Commissioner Norem requested he obtain a mechanics report to record the current issues with the ambulance he is requesting to replace and obtain their opinion of the possible future expenses to that vehicle. Once the Board receives that information they will be able to prioritize the needed county purchases. Director Emigh then discussed the fuel issue they are experiencing with the County Highway. The Highway Department allows them to fuel up during the day but they don't have access to the pump after the Highway Department's work hours. He stated during that time they purchase the fuel at the BP where they have a charge account. He advised he received a credit card account application for BP and gave the application to the Auditor to complete. Auditor Chaffins inquired if the Board would approve the opening of the card account. The Board advised only if BP would remove the gas tax would they allow the application of the account otherwise the BP purchasing would continue as is. If the BP card account is established the Board advised controls will need to be established as to control over use of the BP card.

Director Emigh advised routine cleaning is done on a weekly basis at all three bases; there were no accidents or injuries during the month of October; and they are constantly looking for ways to save money of their supplies and equipment.

Following the Director's report there was a discussion in regard to his purchase of coats for the department. Commissioner Norem inquired if the Highway Department furnished coats to their employees and Superintendent Ritzler advised that they do. Commissioner Binkley also noted the Sheriff provides coats for his department also.

### **RE: COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Superintendent Ritzler advised they had reviewed the bridge project bids and recommends the project be awarded to Northern Indiana Construction who had the lowest price of \$343,554.81. He noted the County's Construction Inspector had previously worked with that construction company. Commissioner Danford made a motion to award the Bridge # 1 replacement project to Northern Indiana Construction. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

In regard to his departmental monthly report, Superintendent Ritzler advised their 2015 road improvement program is complete. He noted they were able to pave twenty five centerline miles of roadway; chip sealed over 20 centerline miles of county roads and crack sealed over 20 lane miles. (The Superintendent's written report lists all roads which were repaired. A copy of the report is on file in the Auditor's Office.) In regard to pipe/culvert replacements, the Superintendent advised they replaced and or repaired over 1200 feet of corrugated pipe culverts this past summer. Over 30 of the County's 652 culverts were replaced. The written report lists the locations of all replaced culverts. In regard to the 2015 mowing the Superintendent advised most of their tractors have been put away for the winter but they are still cutting brush with their brush chopper and double mowing all County roads with their large John Deere tractor mower. In regard to equipment, he noted they are still acquiring quotes for a new loader; adding he is waiting on a quote from John Deere. The Superintendent stated, in addition to the Bridge # 1 replacement project, they will be receiving the designs for the repair work on Bridges # 36 & 38. Price quotes for those repairs will be requested next week. In regard to winter preparations, the Superintendent advised their salt agreement has been completed and they will be paying \$65.92 a ton compared to \$72.63 they paid last winter. He noted they have hauled in approximately 4,000 tons of sand and will need to haul in an additional 3,000 tons more to be ready for winter use. He advised they have made 1,000 tons of winter patch to use for road repairs; and their full complement of trucks is ready and available for use.

Superintendent Ritzler stated in regard to his request to create new job positions for their 2016 budget, he had originally requested one foreman but now is requesting two foremen in 2016. He noted when his original job positions were not approved Auditor Chaffins had combined all the budget appropriations into the budget line for truck drivers and that appropriation portion will need to be transferred into the foreman budget line. He noted of the 15 truck drivers he is proposing paying \$1,500.00 extra a year to the truck driver who is also their Sign Man, and an extra \$1,500.00 a year to the truck driver who would also serve as the Equipment Operator. He noted he has eliminated the positions of crew leaders and senior crew leaders. Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve his proposed budget changes and job positions, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes. The Superintendent advised in regard to the position he proposed out of the Cumulative Bridge Fund instead of creating the Bridge Project Manager budget line with the appropriation amount of \$10,000.00 he is now requesting the amount be broken down into \$2,500.00 increments. The first \$2,500.00 would be for training and would not be paid through payroll. The second \$2,500.00 is for construction inspection administration; the next \$2,500.00 for the inspection field technician and the last \$2,500.00 for inspection clerical. He advised if there were no construction projects in 2016 those budget lines would not be needed. Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve the budget appropriations and positions, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes.

### **RE: STARKE COUNTY EMA DIRECTOR MONTHLY REPORT**

Jacob Lippner, the Starke County EMA Director, appeared before the Board to present his first departmental report. He advised he had received a request for an 800 MHz radio from the County Coroner, Danny Hoffer. Director Lippner stated in his research those radios are only to be used by Emergency and Public Safety Employees/1<sup>st</sup> Responders use but he did state anyone can purchase an 800 MHz radio. Commissioner Norem noted in the past the County Coroners belonged to a fire department who supplied them with a radio and that is why this was never an issue in the past. She noted how there would be a need for the Coroner Hoffer to have a radio. Director Lippner advised the cost of such a radio is approximately \$2,500.00 and he is presently researching for grant funding to cover the expenditure. Commissioner Binkley asked Director Lippner to check with the State to see if there is a need for the Coroner to have a radio. Commissioner Norem stated if there is a State mandate to provide a radio for the Coroner and grant funding is not available then the funding should come from the Cumulative Capital Development Fund. Director Lippner noted the Highway Department is also requesting VHF radios for his

department which will be paid out of the Highway Department's budget. Director Lippner noted he had previously been asked by the Board to look at both the Crown Vic and the Dodge Charger to determine which vehicle will be used by his Department and he advised he will stay with the Crown Vic as it is a rear wheel drive vehicle. He gave a brief report on trainings he has completed since being in the position as Director. He also noted he had asked for a listing of departmental wants and needs from the Fire Departments, EMS Department and the Sheriff's Department and is still waiting for a response from the Sheriff's Department. He advised he will be continually researching for possible grant funding for their requested supplies and or equipment.

#### **RE: CORONER'S DEPARTMENTAL REPORT**

County Coroner Danny Hoffer appeared before the Board to submit his first departmental report. He advised he had created a new logo/lettering for the County Coroner vehicle and presented it to the Board for their approval. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the logo/lettering design, seconded by Commissioner Binkley. The motion passed with all ayes. Coroner Hoffer noted he is paying for the vehicle lettering out of his own personal funds and is donating it to the County. Coroner Hoffer then presented a price quote for the installation of lights and siren on the Coroner vehicle. He noted the price quote was from Chief Deputy Sheriff Kenny Pfof and includes the cost of installation also. The price quote was in the amount of \$1,096.95. Coroner Hoffer stated he was advised by the State the vehicle should be marked with lights when it is at the scene of a traffic accident. He noted the quote is for window lights and not a light bar. Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve the price quote for the lights and siren. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and is passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem advised the Coroner should work with Auditor Chaffins to see if he has any funding available in his Coroner budget for this expense and any remaining balance could be paid out of the Cum Cap Fund. Coroner Hoffer presented a written report on the number of coroner cases he has handled since taking office in the beginning of September. He also stated he had purchased uniforms for himself and his deputies and also personally paid for that expense also. The Coroner advised he had been contacted by WSBT requesting an interview regard drug overdoses in the County. He stated he refused to give an interview and referred them instead to the County Prosecutor. EMS Director Keith Emigh advised he was still waiting to settle up with the Coroner's Department in regard to the former Coroner, Adam Gray, and use of the spare ambulance to transport bodies to Fort Wayne for autopsies. He stated he would like to see a fuel credit on his budget fuel line from the Coroner's budget. Commissioner Norem suggested they both get together with the Auditor to determine the dollar amount of fuel used by the Coroner's Department. Coroner Hoffer stated he is still working on cleaning up old, outstanding invoices left from former Coroner Adam Gray.

#### **RE: ATTORNEY LUCAS' 1<sup>ST</sup> READING OF THREE PROPOSED COUNTY ORDINANCES**

County Attorney Marty Lucas advised in compliance with the recent OCRA/KIRPC grant application the County is required to have updated Drug Free Workplace and Fair Housing Practices Ordinances adopted. He presented the updated version of the Starke County Commissioners' Ordinance 2015-Fair Housing Practices, and the updated version of Starke County Commissioners' Ordinance 2015-Drug Free Workplace and asked that the actual 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the ordinances be waived. He noted the proposed ordinances will be posted on the County's website and available for review on Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. He also advised in regard to the Sheriff's request to establish an inmate process fee, the proposed ordinance: Starke County Commissioners' Ordinance 2015-Jail, Convicted Inmate Reimbursement of Costs of Incarceration is also being presented for its 1<sup>st</sup> reading. He advised all three ordinances will be presented at their November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting for their 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, their public hearings, and then for adoption.

#### **RE: AUDITOR'S BUSINESS: MINUTES, PAYROLL CLAIM, VENDOR CLAIMS**

Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket in the total gross amount of \$166,240.98. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the payroll claims docket for the pay period ending on October 24<sup>th</sup>, with a pay date of October 30<sup>th</sup>, in the total gross amount of \$206,719.04. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the Building Corporation Claims Docket in the total gross amount of \$229,667.60 which had been approved by the Building Corporation at their meeting earlier that morning. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem advised after the checks are processed the Building Corporation authorized the checks to vendors Circle R Electric and Pauly Jail be held until they are released by Dion Katsouras of Skillman since both vendors have issues that need to be addressed before they can be paid in full. She also advised all the escrow retainage has been paid out except for the Larsen Danielson Company.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, seconded by Commissioner Binkley. The motion passed with all ayes.

Auditor Chaffins advised she had distributed copies of Statement of Fund Balances and the Misc. Revenue report. She also stated she had been asked to prepare an explanation as to the shortage of the cash balance of the County General Fund in 2015 compared to 2014. She advised she had distributed copies of the findings and to summarize the results: there is a shortage between the two years totaling \$444,000.00 of which \$31,000.00 in the difference in misc. revenue, a shortage of \$135,000.00 in the spring settlements of property taxes; and an increase of the expenditures in that fund in 2015 or \$278,000.00 mostly as a result of increase in insurance costs, and EMS & Jail personnel. Commissioner Norem requested another review be completed after the fall property tax settlement is completed. Commissioner Norem also requested a copy of the Budget Status Report to be ran after the vendor claims dockets were processed for the County General Fund and the Highway Department Fund.

#### **IN OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Norem stated the Board had received a request from Assessor Rhonda Milner for her Department to attend a Level III Class/Training November 30-December 4<sup>th</sup> in Indianapolis, at a total cost of \$1,038.00.

Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Binkley. The motion passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem stated the Board had received a request from Recorder Lisa Minix to allow the FIDLAR Company 24/7 access to her department as they will be returning December 1-9 at which time they will be scanning in the microfiche records. She advised the Recorder noted both Jasper and Marshall Counties allow the 24/7 access of their Recorder Department for such scanning. Commissioner Norem advised she will speak with one of the Marshall County Commissioners to get their input on this issue and will report at their next Board meeting.

Commissioner Norem reported that they have a vacancy on the BZA Board due to the resignation of Nathan Marcum but also now the BZA Board has another vacancy due to the resignation of EJ Rogers, who was a Council appointment. She advised she has composed a press release and will be forwarding it to the members of the press to advertise the positions. She suggested, since there is only one month remaining in this year and the Commissioner appointment would expire at the end of 2015, that the new appointee's term have an expiration date of 12/31/2019.

Commissioner Norem advised she had been asked by the Auditor to clarify the approval of the 2016 Holiday Calendar. She noted in 2016 Christmas Eve and Christmas will fall on a Saturday and Sunday, and the county offices will be closed on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> for the Christmas Holidays. She noted though the departments who work 24/7 will be recognizing the Christmas Holidays on only December 24<sup>th</sup> and December 25<sup>th</sup>, and only those two days.

Commissioner Norem advised the Board had received a written copy of the October Veterans' Service Officer's report.

Starke County Economic Development Foundation Director Charlie Weaver and the SCEDF Board of Director's President Diane Thalmann appeared before the Board to present their "Five Year Strategic CEDIT Infrastructure Plan". (A copy of the report is on file in the Auditor's Office.) Director Weaver presented a brief explanation as to their needs for CEDIT funding for their proposed improvements to the industrial park and roadways. Commissioner Norem stated the Board will take their proposal under advisement as it is a lot to absorb and will be helpful in planning for the County's future needs. Director Weaver stated he wants to work with the County in regard to spending the CEDIT funds on the Courthouse project. He also advised job creation is the only thing that will change this county. Director Weaver inquired if he could present his report information to the County Council also and they noted he should.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

George Dotlich inquired as to the purpose of the proposed updated Fair Housing Ordinance for the County. Attorney Lucas advised it was strictly a requirement for the OCRA/KIRPC grant application, and is also required by HUD.

There being no further public comment and no further business, Commissioner Danford made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. The meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.

**NOVEMBER 2, 2015**

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Kent Danford, President

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Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

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Donald Binkley

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Katherine Chaffins, County Auditor  
& Secretary to the Board of County Commissioners