

Monday, November 17, 2014

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in regular session at 7:00PM in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Kathy Norem, Kent Danford and Jennifer Davis present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

President Davis called the meeting to order.

COUNTY EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL

Holly Horan and Debbie Rykovich of 1st Source Insurance appeared before the Board to discuss the County Employee Health Insurance coverage for 2015. They advised the renewal rate for the Anthem policy originally came in at 29.22% and through negotiations they were able to reduce the increase to 9.67% over the 2014 premium. They advised they had also requested price quotes from both CIGNA and United Healthcare but CIGNA declined to quote them, and United's quote was a 30% increase over the current insurance costs. They advised the open enrollment for county employees is scheduled for December 9th. Commissioner Norem stated when she was preparing the proposed 2015 Commissioner's budget she had budgeted for more of an increase in next year's health insurance expenses. Ms. Horan advised the 9.67% increase also includes the 5.63% in ACA fees the County will be paying in 2015. There was a discussion in regard to points the county employees were allowed to accumulate through CIGNA but will no longer be in effect in 2015 so across the board employees who had the maximum number of points will be seeing a 4% increase in the insurance deduction from their paycheck even before there is a 9.67% increase in the 2015 costs. Auditor Chaffins advised currently the single employee health insurance deduction amount was 15% of the monthly premium while all the other three classifications are at 22%. She inquired if the Board would consider reducing the 22% to 20% to lower the large increase they will be seeing in 2015 especially those who received the points discount in the past. Commissioner Norem responded negatively to that inquiry. Commissioner Davis advised the employees should have known the points would be going away for next year.

Commissioner Davis advised she had met with the 1st Source agents and advised them the County wasn't in the market to shop various companies for health insurance and that the County elected to stay with the same agents. Ms. Horan advised there will not be an increase in the premiums for the dental, vision and life insurance coverage. Deputy Auditor, CarLa Thomas inquired if the County could request that the 30% co-insurance portion of an ER visit be also included in the HRA reimbursement since presently the HRA reimbursement is based only on the deductible portion. They advised that was something they could look into. Ms. Rykovich noted twenty three county employees visited the ER and only 3 employees were admitted into the hospital. The Board also discussed the possibility of allowing the employees to choose from two different plan options. Commissioner Danford made a motion to accept the submitted plan including the HRA. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. County Attorney Marty Lucas advised he would like to review the contract prior to the Board's signing. Commissioner Norem made a motion authorizing Commissioner Davis to sign the necessary paperwork on what was agreed to tonight. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Councilman Pearman inquired if the County could in the future look into consolidating the county with the area city and towns to create a larger pool of employees. Ms. Horan noted that isn't always the best for the county if they merge with an entity with higher risk employees.

ANNEX BUILDING: SIMPLEX FIRE ALARM INSPECTION REPORT

James Coad, the Annex Building Custodian appeared before the Board to discuss the recent Simplex fire alarm inspection reports. He advised all the building's fire alarm equipment passed the inspection except an emergency light on the break room hall which only required a change of battery, and the other was in regard to the sprinkler inspection: the dry system took too long to trip in which they recommended adding a low air pressure switch or the addition of an Accelerator to the dry system. He advised Simplex had provided two price quotes: the first quote was for a dry system low air pressure switch in the amount of \$770.00; and the second quote was for a dry system accelerator in the amount of \$2,010.00. Custodian Coad noted Simplex recommends the purchase of the second quote when in situations where faster response times from fire departments are required. He stated as the City's Fire Department is located within two blocks of the Annex Building there would not be a need for the second item and therefore recommends to the Board the purchase of the switch only.

Custodian Coad then advised of the request from the Park Board to have a key to the Annex Building for when they have their monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of the month. He advised he would recommend having someone from the Park Board pick up a key to the building on the day of the meeting and return the key the following day. He stated if it was alright with the Auditor's Office he would have the key in their office the day of the meeting to make it easier for the Park Board instead of trying to locate where he would be working. The Commissioners stated they were fine with his proposal and signed his key authorization document for the Park Board's key.

TREASURER KASEY CLARK'S REQUEST TO SET DATE FOR NEXT CERTIFICATE SALE

Treasurer, Kasey Clark, appeared before the Board to request approval to hold the next Tax Certificate Sale on February 17th, 2015. She stated there are presently 53 parcels on the listing and they will be sold for \$35.00 each. Commissioner Norem inquired if anyone on the Board had yet reviewed the listing. As no one had yet seen it Commissioner Norem took a brief review of the listing and noticed there were still some of the US Railroad Vest properties still being listed for sale. Attorney Lucas advised he would like to look into the listing first to see what could be worked out with some of those railroad properties. Treasurer Clark noted she had been in contact with surrounding property owners of those railroad parcels and also noted Deputy Auditor Suzanne Sims has also looked at those railroad parcels on several occasions. Commissioner Danford made a motion to set the date for the Certificate Sale on February 17th. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Norem and passed with all ayes. Attorney Lucas advised the listing can be modified at any time up to the time of the sale. Auditor Chaffins inquired

if there was anything the County could do to reduce the amount of fees the County has been paying to SRI to hold the County's tax sales. Treasurer Clark advised the County is now getting caught up with the tax sales from the years the former Treasurer was not holding tax sales, and was only expecting to hold two sales next year compared to this year. Attorney Lucas stated he felt it was worth the cost of their fees as that would be an additional workload if the County would process the sales themselves.

AUDITOR BUSINESS: VENDOR CLAIMS, PAYROLL CLAIM, MINUTES, MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 3rd meeting, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the payroll claim for the pay period ending on November 8th, with a pay date of November 14th, in the total gross amount of \$184,762.16. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the CR300E-SR8 Intersection Grant claims docket in the amount of \$230,447.01. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket in the total gross amount of \$365,665.06. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Danford and passed with all ayes. Auditor Chaffins advised all departments submitted their monthly financial reports and all departments are in compliance with the monthly financial reporting ordinance. Auditor Chaffins advised this year both Thanksgiving and Christmas Day fall on Thursdays in 2014 and the County Offices will be closed on the following Friday also for both holidays. Both of those Fridays are scheduled pay days she wanted permission to distribute paychecks on the Wednesdays prior to the Thursday Holidays. Attorney Lucas noted since the pay period ends on the Saturday prior to the week of the holiday he did not see an issue with the actual pay day being on the Wednesday instead of on the Friday. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve both November 26th and December 24th as being special pay dates instead of November 28th and December 26th in 2014. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. In regard to the approval of the listing of the 2015 Holiday schedule that was tabled from the last meeting, Commissioner Norem stated she did not see why there needed to be a trade for the lack of any election days in 2015 for the addition of two newly recognized County Holidays: Columbus Day and Martin Luther King's Day. Commissioner Davis advised she was in favor of including both of those holidays in the County's holiday schedule. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the 2015 Holiday Schedule as presented with the exception of Martin Luther King Day, but including Columbus Day. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the Planning Commission's request to amend the Code of Starke County dated 1991, Use of Semi Van Trailers and Intermodal Shipping Units as Permanent Storage Structure, 6-12-3-5-E(6)B(2) as follows: one unit is permitted on lots of 5.0 acres to 9.99 acres in area; one unit per 10 acres is permitted on lots with 10 acres or more in area; on more than 8 units are permitted on parcels of 80 acres or more in area. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem, after asking Deputy Auditor CarLa Thomas for her recommendation made a motion to switch the Workers' Compensation Physician Services back to Healthline from Knox Winamac Community Health Center as was tabled from the last meeting. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

IT Director Joe Short appeared before the Board to present an update on the information of the communication link between the old jail and the new jail, and also out to the highway department. He advised he has been working with Maple Net Wireless for the point to point 100 megabyte system which would have the capability to increase the speed for an approximate \$2,200.00 additional expense. He advised the total cost of this system is \$46,808.92 and after discussing this with Auditor Chaffins is proposing using the remainder of the Storm Fund which has a balance of \$36,169.75. He noted that would leave a balance of \$10,639.17 and discussed the balance with the Highway Department Superintendent to see if the highway department would have any unexpended appropriations left in their budget, or else the balance could be paid out of the CEDIT Jail Fund, or the Jail Bond Construction Fund. Highway Superintendent Rik Ritzler inquired if this was going to give the highway department any better reception than they are now experiencing. Director Short noted there will still be issues during times of heavy rains and storms. Commissioner Danford inquired as to how quickly this system will become obsolete. Director Short advised he had not researched that but noted he will be obtaining a FCC license for this system so in the event there is any interference the problem can be reported to the FCC. Commissioner Norem stated since the balance of \$10,630.17 is less than 1/3 of the total cost of the project the remaining balance could be paid out of the new jail funding, but if the highway department could cover part of that balance it would be even better. She noted the new jail construction funding could not pay for 100% of that communications expense since it is not completely a jail issue.

In a related issue involving the Highway Department Superintendent, Commissioner Danford advised in regard to offering an employment contract to Superintendent Ritzler he is willing to look into the contract that was proposed by Attorney Lucas. But, he noted, he does not want to entertain any other departmental employee contract. Commissioner Danford advised he will meet with Attorney Lucas next week to work on the contract proposal and would like the phrase "terminate for just cause" added to the contract. Attorney Lucas advised the employment contract will have mutual benefits for both the County and Mr. Ritzler and he will circulate the amended contract to the other two Commissioners when it is completed. President Davis asked the issue be added to the December 1st meeting's agenda since it will require a vote.

President Davis advised the Board recently met in an Executive Session in regard to a filed employee grievance. Commissioner Norem made a motion to allow the employee to withdraw their resignation and to be reinstated without back pay and into their previous position; to be reinstated back into the employee health insurance group

and allowed to keep their seniority experience and original date of employment. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem advised she will set up a meeting with the employee and Superintendent Ritzler for Tuesday, 11/18/14 at 3:30PM. Attorney Lucas advised he will write up their findings for the employee's employment file.

President Davis advised the County Employees have been invited to a buffet luncheon to be held in honor of the City and County Employees; a thank you for their work on Wednesday, November 19th from 11:00AM-1:00PM, at the Green Room of the Trinity Assembly of God Church, on the corner of Washington and Shield Streets in Knox. President Davis noted it was nice of the church for the recognition they are giving to the workers. Attorney Lucas noted, for the record, the church is not affiliated with any vendor of the County.

Commissioner Danford advised he had received a notice from IDEM that the County is no longer required to monitor the ground water at the old county landfill but is still required to monitor the emitted gases and that is why Weaver and Boos had proposed the installation of a gas probe in another location.

Commissioner Norem advised she had received word from Judge Kim Hall that he was clearing out some old law books that he has had in the circuit court. Commissioner Norem stated as the County had no need for them she suggested the County donates them to the Starke County Historical Society and if the Historical Society would elect to sell any of the books they should be allowed to keep the sale proceeds. President Davis advised the County Clerk will be keeping the old marriage books though.

Commissioner Norem advised she is currently working on the update of the appointment listing in preparation for the 2015 appointments. She advised once the report is complete she will send a listing to the newly elected Commissioner, Don Binkley.

Commissioner Norem advised due to the resignation of Chad Rushing, the County Extension Agent there is now an opening on the County's Planning Commission and BZA Boards. She noted the position is to be held by the County's Ag Extension Educator but she was advised by the Extension Board that it could be a while until the replacement County Extension Agent is named. Attorney Lucas advised the Extension Board, in the meantime, could name a replacement to serve on those boards as long as the replacement is a property owner in the County with agricultural interests.

Commissioner Norem advised in a follow up from the last meeting, in regard to a blockage of an easement at Bass Lake, the Highway Department Superintendent advised the access blockage was removed but the Property Owner is stating that it is not an easement. She asked Superintendent Ritzler to share the paperwork he has regarding this issue with Attorney Lucas, for his review.

Commissioner Norem advised there appeared to be a gap in the County's Inmate Catastrophic Insurance coverage. She stated when the County changed their insurance coverage from 1st Source Insurance to 1st Choice Insurance it appears during the transition the provider coverage was dropped and 1st Choice Insurance does not have available coverage. Commissioner Norem made a motion to direct Commissioner Davis to contact 1st Source Insurance and renew the policy they previously had in effect. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

Attorney Lucas advised he had prepared a document for the Park Board Meeting, an explanation of The Land and Water Conservation Fund and its applicability to the Bass Lake Beach and Campground. He inquired if the Board felt his attendance was required at the Park Board meeting. Commissioner Norem advised she felt this was another "Lucas Masterpiece" and felt his attendance at the Park Board meeting would not be required.

With there being no public comment and no further business Commissioner Danford made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40PM.

November 17, 2014

Jennifer Davis, President

ABSENT _____
Kent Danford, Vice-President

Kathy Norem

Katherine Chaffins, Auditor &
Secretary to the Board of Commissioners