

## **TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2021**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet in a joint session with the Starke County Board of Commissioners at 5:30PM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman, Kay Gudeman, Brad Hazelton, Don White, Howard Bailey, Don Binkley, Todd Leinbach Charles Chesak, and Bryan Cavender, Mark Gourley present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Council Vice-President, Brad Hazelton at 5:30PM.

### **2021 REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD**

Councilman Bailey made a motion to approve Dave Pearman as the President of the Starke County Council for 2021. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilwoman Gudeman made a motion to approve Brad Hazelton as the Vice-President of the Starke County Council for 2021. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to approve the minutes from December 21, 2020. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to retain Attorney Martin Lucas as the Attorney for the Starke County Council for 2021. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

Councilman Pearman asked Roger Chaffins, who was attending via zoom if he is understanding the situation correctly that Terry Stephenson was terminated by the Planning Commission. Furthermore, the Planning Commission would like to take the current office person and change her to the old role and then make the building inspector a separate position and then basically flip flop the salaries. Chaffins agreed that that was correct. Councilman Pearman has asked for a testimony from Terry Stephenson as to the events that led up to this scenario. Former employee Terry Stephenson gave a testimony regarding allegations against Surveyor Bill Crase, Roger Chaffins, who is the President of the Planning Commission, and Mary Beaver. Councilman White made a motion to have the Auditor audit the bills, fines, and collections fees of the Planning Commission. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Pearman asked Mr. Chaffins is Mr. Stephenson's testimony was consistent to his recollections. Mr. Chaffins agreed to everything other than the Trailer moving. A discussion was then held regarding the Planning Commission Board and whether or not the Board is just an advisory board. Mr. Chaffins gave a statement about why the Planning Commission did not reappoint Mr. Stephenson to his position. Mr. Stephenson gave further testimony regarding allegations against Surveyor Bill Crase, Roger Chaffins, and Mary Beaver. Surveyor Crase then gave his response to those allegations. After further discussion with council member Councilman Pearman would like the record to reflect that Councilman Bailey did not realize the full extent of the motion he was making at the last Planning Commission meeting regarding appointment of the job positions.

Councilman Pearman asked Auditor Oesterreich how it came about that the job descriptions changes and the salary ordinance changes were supposed to be on the agenda tonight. Auditor Oesterreich advised that Pam had called her and said that she was now the Administrator/Clerk. She advised Pam that the current job descriptions are label and (1) Clerk and (2) Planning Commission Administrator/Building Inspector. If they would like to change these labels and job descriptions it would need to be brought forth to the Board of Commissioners for approval as well as have to be brought forth to the Starke County Council for any salary changes. Auditor Oesterreich then explained that all the documents presented to both boards tonight regarding the job descriptions and salary has been provided by Pam. Councilman Pearman read the termination letter that was sent to Mr. Stephenson but it was not signed by any of the Planning Commission Board members. Testimonies were given by Doug Allen, Larry Simoni, Tim Howard, Don Deguard, Tennis Reise, Ray Stephenson, Mark Matthews, Gina Howard, Gary Stacy, Jack Campagna, Jack Lovely, and Larry Mann regarding Mr. Stephenson's job performances and also the interactions they have had with Roger Chaffins and Surveyor Bill Crase. A discussion was then held regarding the deck that was installed at the Harbor House at Bass Lake.

Councilman Pearman advised the Board of Commissioners that they can move on the discussions first before the Starke County Council. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to deny the Planning Commission's request to make the changes to the job titles and job descriptions of the Clerk/Planning

Administrator and Building Inspector. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to have taken the arguments and testimonies made today as an appeal from Terry Stephenson and to move to grant to appeal by means of to cancel the administrative leave of Terry Stephenson and reinstate his employment effective January 11, 2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

## **2021 COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

Councilman Binkley made a motion to appoint Councilman Hazelton and Councilwoman Gudeman to the Economic Development Board for the term of the current contract. Councilman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to appoint Councilman Leinbach to the KIRPC board. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Binkley made a motion to appoint Councilman Bailey to the Planning Commission Board. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to appoint Mark Allen to the BZA Board. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to appoint Justice Edgell to the Starke County Library Board. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to appoint Kenny Wallace to the Alcoholic Beverage Board. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. There was no appointment to be made at this time to the PTABOA Board as the Council had no requests for this position. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to appoint Karl Swihart to the Park Board. Councilman Bailey seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to appoint Councilman Pearman to the Marshall-Starke Development Board. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

## **SCEDF CONTRACT DISCUSSION**

Councilman Pearman stated they will be discussing the financial portion of the SCEDF Contract. Commissioner Gourley asked how much the council had budgeted this year for the SCEDF contract. Councilman Hazelton stated it was about \$157,000. Councilman Pearman advised and State Representative Jim Pressel contacted him and he wanted to come to the meeting and say a few words. State Representative Jim Pressel advised that there seems to be a lot of confusion with advisory boards and what they are allowed to do or not allowed to do. He will be making this a mission this year to try and get the IC on advisory boards straightened out. State Representative Jim Pressel advised that he was not here as the State Representative to talk about the SCILL center but he himself would like to advise both the Starke County Council and the Board of Commissioners that he is fully in support of this program and this program needs to continue. A discussion was held regarding the SCILL center funding and the different areas this funding comes from. Commissioner Binkley suggested splitting the \$157,000 between the SCEDF and the SCILL program. Councilman White made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to include in the SCEDF contract to pay up to 50% of the \$157,000 to SCILL and the remainder go to SCEDF. Councilman Bailey seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Prosecutor Baker came before the Starke County Council to advise that they are currently working through a backlog of non-violent cases that they have had through both Circuit Court and City Court to get people moving through the system. She advised they have been able to start scheduling people for hearing again through Zoom and they are starting to get things moving again in the court. She is hopeful that as things improve with COVID soon which will then allow their processes to improve further as well.

Commissioner Cavender advised the Board of Commissioners are applying for a \$250,000 grant from OCRA through KIRPC. He advised this would be toward a food program and money to help businesses. He advised that we get points toward the approval of the grant if the county puts in a 10% match. The match would be up to \$25,000. Attorney Lucas stated that OCRA would also want an advisory board to approve the applications that would come in from the businesses applying for help. Councilman Pearman advised that Attorney Lucas suggested that the council agree to fund it contingent upon the Northern Indiana Community Foundation possibly funding a portion of this as well. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to fund the 10% match. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Attorney Lucas advised that they need to come up with some type of

a mechanism for this five person board as well. Commissioner Cavender advised he would like to be on the board and Councilman Pearman advised he would like to be on the board. Three more members will also need to be chosen.

**JANUARY 19, 2021**  
**STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Dave Pearman, President

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Brad Hazelton, Vice-President

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Kay Gudeman

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Don White

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Howard Bailey

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Don Binkley

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Todd Leinbach

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Rachel Oesterreich, Starke County Auditor and  
Secretary to the County Council

**JANUARY 19, 2021**  
**STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charlie Chesak, President

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Bryan Cavender, Vice-President

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Mark Gourley

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