

**Monday, February 1, 2016**

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 Kathy Norem and Don Binkley present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Vice President, Don Binkley. Commissioner Kent Danford was absent.

**RE: EMS DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

EMS Director Keith Emigh appeared before the Board to present their Monthly Departmental report. First he advised they had taken Rig # 86 to Dobson Ford in Winamac to be evaluated and was informed beside the engine replacement the actual rig chassis was in relatively good shape needing only greasing. He advised the transmission appeared to be OK based on the fluid check, smell and color, but they noted any further testing of the transmission would be completed after the new engine is installed. Commissioner Norem made a motion to accept the price quote from Dobson Ford, in the amount of \$17,875.18, for the replacement of the engine and to go ahead with the work. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Director Emigh noted Dobson Ford had instructed him though once the new engine is installed the EMS Department should only use Ford oil filters and other Ford replacement parts in the new engine.

Director Emigh advised they had checked on the new Medicare ambulance fee schedule for 2016 and the reimbursement rate is up a little for the 2015 rate. He advised the increase could generate \$2.00-5.00 per run more depending on mileage. He noted most insurance companies base their rates on the Medicare fee schedule.

In regard to Personnel Director Emigh stated he has received two paramedic applications and one EMT application. He noted he will be setting up interviews for those applicants as part of his ongoing process to staff all three bases with ALS personnel, 24/7.

In regard to Education/Training, Director Emigh advised he had recently attended a meeting of the LEPC and also the DPC. He noted their departmental training consisted of a Q & A and also an ACLS training as ACLS is a required Paramedic Certification that is required to be completed every two years.

In regard to Grants, Director Emigh advised he has been working with EMA Director Jacob Lippner and has completed the AFG Grant application. He noted they have also discovered an AEL (Authorized Equipment Grant) and will advise more in regard to this grant at a later date.

In regard to Rig Maintenance, Director Emigh advised they have Rig 3308 in the shop for a new brake booster and new brakes. They had to install two new batteries in Rig 86 in order to transport the rig down to Dobson Ford for its engine replacement. He advised the other rigs have just received their routine maintenance.

In regard to Base Maintenance, he advised the routine maintenance was completed at all three bases. In regard to Safety, he reported no injuries in the month of January. In regard to cost savings from Vendors, he noted due to the changing of their oxygen vendor from Praxair to American Gas & Welding, they have saved a total of \$8,134.00 for the last ten month period. (EMS Director Emigh's written departmental monthly report is on file in the Auditor's Office.)

EMS Clerk Mary Lynn Richie advised they had a total of 186 billed runs during the month of January with the number of transfers consistently averaging between 29-32% of the total number of runs. She noted a total of \$77,163.43 in EMS revenue was received during that month for a substantial increase in revenue over the first month of 2015. She stated a total of \$30.00 had been received from Small Claims Court, and a total of \$1,319.00 from Collections Attorney, Jonathan O'Hara. Clerk Richie advised they had that day received the Final Letter of Notice which requires the Commissioner President's signature. She stated once that letter is returned the County will be receiving their 2013 Medicaid reimbursement. She advised the total amount of the reimbursement is \$116,000.00 but a total of \$38,900.00 goes to the State and the balance of \$77,100.00 is paid to the County.

Commissioner Norem advised she had once again been addressed by a question in regard to the County's Policy on EMS transfers out of the County. Director Emigh and Clerk Richie advised only "medically necessary transfers" are run outside of the County and a Doctor's Order is required. They noted no routine transfers are run outside of the County.

**RE: COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

Highway Superintendent Rik Ritzler appeared before the Board to present the Highway Department's monthly report. The Superintendent advised the department has seen a considerable cost savings due to the mild January, and also due to the prices for fuel and salt being lower this year than last year. He submitted a chart of the diesel fuel usage and price along with the same information for salt, sand, and overtime costs. He advised the total costs for those items last month were \$50,364.97 compared to \$86,180.44 in 2015, and \$130,094.00 in 2014. Superintendent Ritzler noted that the use of salt and sand is not directly related to the amount of snowfall or the number of winter events. He noted it is a difficult thing to measure the success of their winter efforts but they have seen evidence that their efforts are pay off because there were at least two days in January where many schools in the surrounding counties had delayed their start of schools but the Starke County schools did not.

Superintendent Ritzler advised on January 21<sup>st</sup> they had applied salt brine to the County roads for the first time ever in the history of the Department. He stated they was one of their new and/or improved techniques that they have tried in an attempt to save money and increase the level of service they provide in crack sealing, fog sealing, dust control, etc. He advised they had applied the brine to three centerline miles and then monitored the performance during the snow removal process of January 27<sup>th</sup>. He noted the brined portion of that road was easier to plow and clear to bare pavement than untreated roads of a similar type. He advised it also worked well on the hot mix asphalt section of Range Road and the chip sealed portion of the road also cleared better than most untreated chip sealed roads. He stated they are very encouraged by those results.

In regard to the County's Frost Law Ordinance they have placed the frost law signs at all intersections where a County Road meets a State Road and at all intersections that border other counties. The ordinance states the Frost Law goes into effect on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and ends 90 days later, which in 2016 will be on May 1<sup>st</sup> because of it being a Leap Year. He noted they had received four requests for permits the day of that meeting. Superintendent Ritzler requested a change in the frost law ordinance allowing the Superintendent to adjust the effective days, and then submit it to the Board for their consideration first. County Attorney Marty Lucas advised he would like to first review the State's Ordinance.

In regard to Safety, Superintendent Ritzler advised they had implemented a safety program in March of 2013 based on the Federal Highway Administration's toolkit for improving safety of rural roads and it consisted of three major parts: 1. Evaluating the inventories, inspections, ratings, and crash data. 2. Selecting the improvements (better signage, brush clearing, more effective snow and ice removal procedures, etc. and 3. Implementing and monitoring. He noted it wasn't always easy to monitor the results but they did receive some statistics from the LTAP and reported that the number of accidents in the county has been recently decreasing. He advised in the year 2014 there were 128 reported accidents compared to 196 in 2012 and 245 in 2009. He noted in a study involving the number of accidents in the year 2014 in the county and their surrounding counties the number of accidents per 1,000 residents and the number of accidents per 100 miles of roadway, Starke County came in 2<sup>nd</sup> in all three categories. Commissioner Norem inquired if those types of statistics would help county residents see a savings in the cost of their auto insurance. They decided it was a question for the County Insurance Agent.

In regard to Training, the Superintendent advised they have been working with Work One and their OJT Program and have received their first reimbursement from them. He noted they could receive up to \$6,000.00 per employee hired through this Work One Program. He also noted the department has continued with their weekly safety trainings. He also stated he will be attending the Annual Truck Show and also the Road School. He noted the County Surveyor will also be attending the Road School with them. In regard to Bidding Procedures, he stated he had met with Auditor Chaffins and Attorney Lucas to coordinate on the creation of a purchasing policy in order to create better transparency in purchasing. He advised the policy is a work in progress and hopes to have it completed in the next few months.

In regard to Major Road Collectors, the Superintendent advised they are suggesting the submission of the following County Roads: CR700E from SR10 to US30; Range Road from US 30 to SR14 in Pulaski County; and CR700S from US421 to SR39 which connects North Judson and San Pierre. He advised a Major Road Collector is a county road that connects two State roads and the MRC designation is required in order to qualify for federal funding of that road.

Superintendent Ritzler advised after meeting with Auditor Chaffins they have decided in 2016 to account for the expense of diesel fuel purchasing differently than the way it has been done in the past. In the past when diesel fuel was purchased any department that received any type of fuel was billed for the fuel use regardless of the type of fuel it was. Beginning in 2016 only the

departments that use diesel fuel will be expensed out on the diesel fuel invoice and then expensed for their actual gasoline usage on the gasoline fuel purchase invoice. He noted gasoline is usually purchased on the average of once every four months where diesel fuel is purchased more frequently. He stated they will advise the departments of their gasoline use on a monthly basis so they can estimate that expense for their budgets. The Superintendent also submitted as part of his monthly written report a mapping of all the stop signs in the County and also a mapping of stop signs around Koontz Lake. He noted Terry McIntire is the County's Sign Man and has done a good job of inputting all 2,500 stop signs into the GIS Program. The last page of the Superintendent's written report contained the figures for Starke County of the monies received from the various revenue sources: MVH, LRS, and Cum Bridge. The report also listed the surrounding counties' revenue amounts they had received and he noted Starke County's revenue is the lowest. The Auditor inquired if the other counties also receive CEDIT Funds as Starke County does for their bridge repair programs since that source of revenue wasn't listed on the report. Superintendent Ritzler stated the other counties do not have that source of revenue. (Superintendent Ritzler's written monthly departmental report is on file in the Auditor's Office.)

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

Commissioner Norem advised the Building Corporation met that morning and approved the last Claims Docket for the Jail Construction Project, which was the last invoice from Larson Danielson for the jail project in the amount of \$189,530.85. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the payment of the Building Corp. Claims Docket. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Binkley and passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the payroll voucher for the pay period ending on January 16<sup>th</sup>, with a pay date of January 22<sup>nd</sup>, in the total gross amount of \$212,416.25. Commissioner Binkley 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 \$322,321.58. She advised the claim docket includes the two mileage claims that were tabled at their last meeting. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem noted that Auditor Chaffins had distributed a copy of the County's Travel Policy which states all mileage claims need to be submitted for payment within thirty days of the travel. She asked Auditor Chaffins when the next Department Head Meeting is scheduled. Auditor Chaffins advised she is still waiting on a schedule of the meetings from Commissioner Danford but noted she does send out to the Department Heads a summary of what occurs at the Board meetings on the morning following the meeting. So, she advised she would relay the information in regard to mileage claims, to the Department Heads.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem then made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 26<sup>th</sup> Special Session. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem advised Auditor Chaffins had submitted to the Board a copy of the County's 100R report which is a listing on all employees who received pay and the amount of pay received during the year, 2015. Auditor Chaffins advised the State set a new policy this year in which this report and the Financial Report by Fund need to be presented and approved by the Board of Commissioners prior to its publication both through Gateway and in the local newspaper. Commissioner Norem made motion to accept the 100R report and approve its submission for publication. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem advised that the Financial Report by Fund lists the beginning balance, the receipts, the disbursements, and the ending balance of each fund in the County and she noted there are at least 150 various funds. Commissioner Norem made a motion to accept the Financial Report by Fund and to approve its submission for publication. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Auditor Chaffins noted she had also presented a copy of the report of Fund Balances as of that day for the Board's review only.

### **IN OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD**

Sheriff Bill Dulin appeared before the Board to advise of the meeting that took place that morning at the Jail in regard to the issues they have been experiencing with radio and 911 communications. He advised it appears the issues have been caused by the wireless internet system that was installed at the time of the jail construction. They had elected to go with that

system instead of the installation of a fiber optics cable at that time in order to keep the costs down. Now it appears that is the only solution that would take care of those “internet storms” which he explained happens when too much data is transmitted over the internet at one time. He noted those internet storms will cause the system to crash and it has already crashed now twice since they have been in the new facility. The Sheriff advised when the jail was constructed the estimated cost to install a fiber optics cable was \$80,000.00. There was a discussion in regard to the source of funding to pay for the new cable and to have IT Director Brian Pinson obtain price quotes of the purchase of a fiber optics cable. Commissioner Binkley suggested 911 funding to be used to pay a portion of the expense and Commissioner Norem suggested the remaining balance could be paid out of the Cumulative Capital Development Fund which currently has a balance of \$121,000.00. The Sheriff advised he will only need to purchase one squad car this year and it could wait until later on in the year. Auditor Chaffins advised she could let the Board know the next morning as to what the available balance of the 911 Fund would be after taking into consideration the amount of their 2016 budget and their proposed 2016 revenue. Commissioner Binkley made a motion to go ahead with obtaining the information on the purchase of the fiber optics cable. Commissioner Norem seconded the meeting and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem advised this meeting could be recessed until they have the price quote information and they can then reconvene the meeting and make the decision on the purchase of the cable. Sheriff Dulin advised J & K Communications would be called to see if there was a temporary fix for the system in order to make it better in the meantime. He advised he will let the Board & Attorney Lucas know what is going on with J & K Communications’ recommendation. Sheriff Dulin also advised they will begin the intake of DOC Inmates the next morning for the Therapeutic Drug Program.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Attorney Marty Lucas advised he had received a refund from the Muskegon River Youth Opportunities LLC, the agency which housed the Juveniles sentenced from Starke County. He noted the refund was in the amount of \$9,725.00 and was for the unearned fees portion of the County’s 2015 paid contract with that agency. (The check was receipted into the County General Fund by the Auditor’s Department.)

There being no further business, Commissioner Norem made a motion to recess the meeting. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. The meeting was recessed at 6:55PM.

**February 1, 2016**

ABSENT \_\_\_\_\_  
Kent Danford, President

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Kathryn Norem

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Donald Binkley

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