

February 16, 2015

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet in a regular session at 5:30PM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman, Robert Sims, Bryan Cavender, Freddie Baker, Brad Hazelton, Jennifer Davis and Pam Stalbaum present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Freddie Baker.

Councilwoman Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19<sup>th</sup> regular meeting. Councilman Sims seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

#### **APPROPRIATION REQUEST OF CEDIT FUNDING**

Starke County Economic Director Charlie Weaver appeared before the Board to request appropriation of the 2015 CEDIT revenue, and the 2014 unexpended carryover balance of CEDIT funding. His original request was for the Council to appropriate a total of \$1,220,731.99 of 2015 revenue, and the 2014 balance of \$1,052,884.74 for a total of \$2,273,615.74. Director Weaver had presented to the Board the breakdown of the appropriations and they were: 1112.30207 SCEDF Consulting Contract: \$180,000.00; 1112.30306 SCILL Center \$80,000.00; 1112(no revenue number) SCEDF Shell Building \$75,538.69; 1112.30425 SCEDF SR8 Intersection Project \$114,959.92; 1112.30506 County Commissioners Fund \$180,340.35; 1112.30510 Division Road Intersection Improvements \$5,004.70; 1112.30610 County Bridges \$1,291,811.48; 1112.30712 Hamlet Fire Well \$16,227.68; 1112.30909 SCEDF CR300E Project \$128,596.85; 1112.31006 County Commissioners CR300E Project \$93,361.94; 1112 (no accounting number) SCEDF Hamlet Industrial Park Sewer/Water Extension \$57,774.13; 1112 (no accounting number) SCEDF Knox Lead Track Rail Project Addition \$50,000.00. Director Weaver advised historically 50% of the CEDIT funding was appropriated for County Bridges, 37.5% to the SCEDF, and 12.5% to the County Commissioners. Councilman Pearman advised last year the Council only appropriate the CEDIT funding per project and not all at once as he is requesting again this year. Director Weaver noted they were being pro-active this year. Councilman Pearman inquired as to why there was still an expense for the Hamlet Fire Well. Director Weaver stated the amount budgeted was for the ongoing utility and security expenses for the fire well. Councilman Pearman then inquired about the appropriation request for the shell building. He explained that when Director Weaver first spoke of the construction of a shell building in the Knox Industrial Park he advised the County Council that the City of Knox would be contributing towards that building and now he is requesting the appropriation of County funding. Director Weaver stated he explained it before that the City of Knox would be getting a loan through REMC and the USDA and the County would be the backup source to make the payments on the building in the event it doesn't sell right away. He added after the Knox building they would also like to construct a similar building in the Hamlet Industrial Park but first sewer and water lines would need to be ran to that area. He stated currently there is no product available for prospective clients as neither the old Stelerema Building nor the old Thermo Products Building are the size specification they are requiring. He noted the Economic Development Foundation is about preparation, and the need to be moving forward or the County is just standing still. Auditor Chaffins inquired as to the shell building and the last two projects on the list not being approved by the County yet but yet he is asking for the funding of the projects. Director Weaver stated he had already previously proposed the Shell building to the Board and in regard to the other two projects that was what he was doing now, having them approve the projects. Auditor Chaffins noted the Board of Commissioners never approved the projects, none of the three had ever even been presented to the Commissioners, including providing the payments for the Knox shell building. Director Weaver advised the Auditor she was supposed to be getting him the accounting numbers for those projects. Commissioner Norem stated this was the first time the Board of Commissioners (who were all in attendance) had heard of asking for the County to commit to paying for the building. She also noted the County Commissioners may need more funding than their 12.5% because she has been made aware of the very brittle electrical wiring at the Courthouse and advised the County could need the CEDIT Funding to update completely the Courthouse's wiring. Director Weaver stated the economic develop is to create an increase in the tax base not to be maintaining what the County currently has. Councilman Pearman inquired as to the Hamlet shell building or the expansion of the Hamlet utilities, how much would the Town of Hamlet be able to contribute of those expenses. Director Weaver stated Hamlet has nothing; they wouldn't have any money. Councilman Pearman stated the Board should only fund the real projects now. Director Weaver asked if he should come back to the Board with an engineering report, and Councilman Pearman stated he should. Director Weaver stating in the last ten years or so the CEDIT budget has been including the County Bridges appropriations. He stated he would be willing to have working sessions with both boards and himself in regard to the CEDIT funding. Councilman Pearman stated both County Boards need to take a more active role in the economic development in the County. He stated the County is changing a lot and now they need to look at funding some of those changes. He advised the SCILL Center may one day be able to stand on its own and not need this funding. Director Weaver stated any unused portions of both the SR8 CR300E Intersection Project and the CR300E Project could be transferred into the Division Road Intersections Improvement Project when those two projects are completed. Auditor Chaffins stated she thought those two projects had been completed. Director Weaver advised even though the work has been completed the projects are considered completed until grant agencies give the final word. Councilman Pearman noted the Division Road Improvement Project had not yet been approved either. Commissioner Norem stated she didn't see why you would appropriate funding for those two projects that were already completed. Director Weaver advised he would like to see it appropriated now so that it isn't spent on anything else, that the funding would stay together and be accounted for. Councilman Pearman made a motion to appropriate the following: 30207 \$180,000.00; 30306 \$80,000.00; 30425 \$114,959.92; 30506 \$180,340.35; 30510 \$5,004.70; 30610 \$1,291,811.48; 30712 \$16,227.68. Councilman Cavender seconded the motion. Before the vote was taken, Commissioner Norem asked that the appropriation of

the Commissioners' portion be stricken from the motion, # 30506 \$180,340.35 and the Board of Commissioner will request appropriation as needed throughout the year. Councilwoman advised she will be abstaining from the vote and so did Councilman Hazelton. County Attorney Marty Lucas inquired as to the conflict for Councilman Hazelton. Councilman Hazelton noted he was the Assistant Fire Chief of the Hamlet Fire Department and they access water from the Hamlet Water Tower. Attorney Lucas advised that was not a conflict. Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve the revised motion, seconded by Councilman Hazelton. The motion passed with 6 ayes.

## **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT WAGE SCALE PROPOSAL**

County Highway Superintendent, Rik Ritzler, appeared before the Council with a proposal to reduce the hourly base rate and reorganize the wage scale for truck drivers. He advised currently the new drivers that are hired into the Department are hired in at the same rate of pay as their most experienced drivers. He stated he believes it was unfair to the older drivers and it does not give an incentive to the new drivers to excel and or to remain at the department. He also pointed out by lowering the starting rate and using it as the basis for future County-wide raises it will, based on their average employee turnover, save the County money by reducing the overall payroll and lowering the amount of the overall pay raises. Also, he noted, the longevity and performance based elements of the proposal will give the existing drivers more of an incentive to stay with the department and excel. He advised there are three elements to his proposal and they are: 1. Lower the starting hourly pay rate for new drivers from the current \$16.32 an hour to \$14.32 and adding a \$1.00 an hour raise each of the first two years for the driver. 2. Initiate a longevity incentive of \$.06 per year beginning with the 6<sup>th</sup> year and continuing through the 25<sup>th</sup> years for a maximum of \$1.20. 3. Initiate performance/position raises for crew leaders, heavy equipment operators, the sign supervisor, and bridge/culver technicians. The incentive would be \$0.15/hour. The Superintendent stated he believes this would create loyal employees who are willing to stay with the department and would reduce the turnover rate. Councilwoman Davis inquired as to why the County would implement this program in only the Highway Department when a study had already been completed for all the County departments. Superintendent Ritzler advised this proposal was a simpler plan than the original proposal. Commissioner Norem noted the Commissioners are in support of such a pay scale but was uncertain and not familiar with all the requests from other departments. Councilwoman Davis suggested the Board puts this on hold and allow time for each department to present their proposal to the Commissioners at their meeting in two weeks, so that they would be ready then to present it to the Council at their next meeting. Commissioner Norem asked that the Departments send the information out to the Commissioners prior to the meeting, to allow them time to review it. Auditor Chaffins advised the Board the Highway Department does have the extra funding in his 2015 budget to fund his proposal but the County General 2015 Budget does not. Superintendent Ritzler stated the present wage scale is unfair to the seniority workers. Councilman Sims made a motion to table this issue for now and allow the other departments to also get on board. Councilwoman Davis seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

## **REQUEST FOR EQUIPMENT FROM SHERIFF DULIN**

Sheriff Bill Dulin, Matron Chris Suprenaut, and Chief Deputy Kenny Pfof appeared before the Board. The Sheriff advised he was requesting appropriation of the purchase of two vehicles and the supplemental additional equipment that would be needed to equipment the two new vehicles. The Sheriff was reminded that the Commissioners had only approved the purchase of one SUV and corresponding light bar and that was all. He was advised he could not request funding for the purchasing of equipment that he had not yet received approval to purchase. The Commissioners advised they would probably approve the purchase of one more vehicle at their meeting that evening but then the Sheriff would need to ask for the funding for that vehicle at the March Council meeting. There was a brief discussion in regard to the source of funding in order to purchase the approved SUV and light bar. Auditor Chaffins suggested the Council could appropriate a portion of the 2014 unexpended portion of the CAGIT Certified Shares Fund. She estimated an unexpended balance of approximately \$135,000.00. The Sheriff stated, in addition to this SUV, he actually will need two more additional vehicles in 2015 since he has three vehicles that will need to be replaced that are over 100,000 miles. He also stated they would need to purchase a new dog kennel that would fit in the SUV for the new K-9 dog. He stated the first SUV will be replacing the Department's Durango which will be transferred to the Coroner's Department, after it is painted a one tone color. Commissioner Norem advised the Sheriff and Council that the Commissioners had only approved the purchase of the Explorer SUV and corresponding light bar and did not approve the remainder of his requested equipment. There was a brief discussion as to the amount the Council should appropriate for the Sheriff's purchasing of equipment. Commissioner Norem stated she believes the Commissioners will approve the purchase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> vehicle and suggested only the appropriation of \$65,000.00. The Sheriff said he couldn't do that; it wouldn't be enough since the vehicle would need a mobile radio too. Commissioner Norem stated at their last meeting only the purchase of the SUV and light bar was approved but no other equipment. Attorney Lucas advised the Board when making a motion to appropriate the funding it should state the specific dollar amount. Councilman Sims made a motion to appropriate \$29,750.00 for the purchase of the SUV, and \$2,471.99 for the purchase of a light bar. Councilman Pearman seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Sheriff Dulin then requested the creation of the position, Detective Sargent. He advised the Detective would be working the night shift, and would be hired from within the Department. The pay would be equivalent to a Patrolman's pay plus \$750.00. Matron Suprenaut advised they are now asking for an additional appropriation of the \$750.00 in order to pay for that position. Attorney Lucas pointed out though at the last Commissioner meeting when the Sheriff presented the idea to that Board he had advised he would be transferring the additional amount out of his overtime budget line item. The Sheriff stated he didn't believe he had. Auditor Chaffins reviewed the draft of the minutes from the last Commissioner meeting and that had also been recorded in the

minutes, the Sheriff would transfer it out of his overtime budget. Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve the creation of the Detective Sargent position with the additional pay to come out of the overtime budget.

Councilman Sims seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

Sheriff Dulin then presented the creation of the Part Time Maintenance person. He stated he does have a budget line item of Cook/Custodian with \$24,000.00 appropriation in his 2015 budget, but he noted that will not be enough for this year. He advised the pay for a cook was \$11.79 per hour but he would like to see the pay of the maintenance person to be \$20.00 to \$25.00 an hour. It was brought to his attention the Commissioners had approved the creation of the position with a pay of \$15.00 to \$20.00 an hour. Councilwoman Davis made a motion to approve the creation of the part time maintenance person, seconded by Councilman Hazelton. The motion passed with all ayes. Attorney Lucas stated the motion should state the actual pay rate and appropriation. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to set the pay not to exceed \$20,000.00 yearly at an hourly rate of \$15.00 to \$20.00 per hour. Councilwoman Stalbaum seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Attorney Lucas noted an amendment to the Salary Ordinance will be required.

The last request from the Sheriff was in regard to the appropriation of the Misdemeanant Fund, # 1175. Matron Supernaut requested an amendment to the Resolution created in 2009 calling for that fund to be shared between the Sheriff's Department and Community Corrections. Attorney Lucas objected to the amendment to the resolution as he would like time to research it first to see if their request could be allowed. The Matron advised in the history of the Starke County Community Corrections, (SCCC) they have never requested any of that funding, and is now asking for the balance of that Fund to be appropriated for use by the Sheriff's Department. She advised the current balance as of Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> was \$16,365.32. Councilman Sims made a motion to appropriate \$16,365.32 of Fund 1175 for use by the Sheriff's Department. Councilman Hazelton seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Auditor Chaffins advised the next annual payment for that fund will be approximately \$16,000.00 and is received in the fall.

With there being no further business, and no public comment, Councilwoman Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Pearman. The motion passed with all ayes and the meeting adjourned at 7:18PM.

**February 16, 2015**

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Freddie Baker, President

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Dave Pearman

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Bryan Cavender

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Pam Stalbaum

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Jennifer Davis

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Robert Sims

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Brad Hazelton

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Katherine Chaffins, Starke County Auditor and  
Secretary to the County Council