

Monday, March 18, 2013

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:

The meeting was called to order by President, Kathy Norem. She advised of the following changes to the posted agenda: replace the Auditor's schedule time with the Ron Lawson grievance, add the County Highway Department report, table the amendment to the travel policy until the next meeting, add the reading of a letter received from Mark Smith, and add the update on the third member chosen to serve on the Board of the Building Corporation.

RE: CR300E PROJECT UPDATE

Starke County Economic Development Director, Charlie Weaver, appeared before the Board to update them on the progress of the land purchasing in regard to the CR300E project. He advised, since the decision of the Board to pursue the eminent domain process appeared in the Leader, they have heard from both of the remaining landowners. The one land owner entered into an agreement, and the other landowner, Paula Hansen, who owns land at the intersection of CR300E and Culver Road, has submitted a request for an additional \$500.00 to the proposed offer. He advised in order to accept her offer, the Board would need to approve the Recommendation for Administrative Settlement, and also sign the letter from the County, on the Highway Department's letterhead, presenting the proposal to the State for their approval. He advised the property owner requested a \$500.00 increase based upon the part of residential land involved in the acquisition was valued at the County's appraisal of \$3,500.00 per acre but she believes it should be \$4,000.00 per acre value, causing a difference of approximately \$250.00. She also felt the tree in the taking was undervalued by \$250.00. He advised the offer would increase from \$9,500.00 to \$10,000.00. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the increase in the offer, and approve the documents as presented. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. The Board then signed both documents.

RE: UPDATE TO RADIO COMMUNICATION EMERGENCY DECLARATION

IT Director, Joe Short, and EMA Director, Ted Bombagetti, appeared before the Board. Director Short advised a mast was installed on top of the shortened County tower, and now the San Pierre link is up and working. He advised he discovered some issues caused by an installation of a previous radio company, but that problem was resolved. He noted, the next day, the Hamlet site was addressed. He advised, after an antenna was installed on the Knox tower, and the equipment at the Hamlet site was reprogrammed, it was discovered the equipment at the Hamlet site was a receiver only, so a radio from the dispatch center was reprogrammed and installed at the Hamlet site. He noted the Hamlet site is up and running. He advised he explained the situation to Oregon Township Trustee, Mark Allen, in regard to the need to purchase a base radio. He advised Mr. Allen stated he did not have a problem buying a base radio for the Koontz Lake Fire Department. Director Short stated once they install their own base radio, the borrowed radio will be moved back to the dispatch center. He advised he had traveled all throughout the County and at various sites he checked the radio signal. He presented a report to the Board of the locations he posted, and the radio signal at each location. A copy of that report is on file in the Auditor's Office. Director Short also advised the next step would be to move the location of the antenna in San Pierre from the side of the water tower to the top of the tower. He noted this was an omni-directional antenna and signals were bouncing off the tower when it is located on the side of the tower. He advised the cost of moving the antenna to be placed on a mast on top of the tower, would be an expense of \$4,024.00. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes. President Norem advised this expense would be paid out of the insurance money received from the July storm damage. President Norem advised she was very pleased that the radio issues are being handled.

Director Bombagetti advised since the radio work had taken most of the two week period of the first Emergency Declaration that was approved at the March 4th meeting, he was requesting an extension of the Declaration for an additional two week period, in order to allow time to submit the required paperwork to the FCC. He advised he will return at the April 1st meeting. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the two week extension, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: RON LAWSON, EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE

Former Sheriff's Department Employee, Ron Lawson, appeared before the Board to request the holiday pay that he felt he should have been compensated for. Commissioner Danford stated he doesn't want to change the past procedure, in which the holiday day was not granted. Commissioner Davis stated she felt the County owes him for that holiday pay from 2012, and also the County needs to update their present policy. President Norem stated the practice that existed in the police department with regard to holiday

pay needs to change. She noted the County has done it that way for fourteen years, and now we need to look at it going forward. But, she added, outside of the fourteen years of past procedure, there was an understanding in the police department and the schedule of working holidays, or not working holidays, works itself out over time. Commissioner Danford made a motion to deny the extra pay for unworked holidays, seconded by President Norem. The motion passed with two ayes, and one nay. (Davis) Mr. Lawson requested a copy of the recordings of the meetings held by the Commissioners with the police department in July of 2012, and then also a copy of the Commissioner meeting of October, 2012. Auditor Chaffins advised she will make him a copy of those recordings.

RE: COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT

County Highway Department Superintendent, Rik Ritzler, Foreman, Scott Dedloff, and Bill Crase, appeared before the Board. Superintendent Ritzler advised they were in receipt of the 2013 Bridge Inspection Report from Beam, Longest & Neff, and he has a document from them the Commissioners need to sign, to state they received the report. The document was signed by the Board. Superintendent Ritzler noted Bill Crase will be reviewing the bridge inspection report especially the recommendations for repair and maintenance. Bill advised he was familiar with the process, since he completed that same task last year. Ritzler advised the report would then be submitted for the final draft. There was a discussion in regard to the request for an interview from Channel 57, from South Bend, in regard to their questioning why the County is not utilizing federal funding in their bridge projects. It was noted only one project was not able to utilize federal funding and that was because the repairs were done in an emergency repair situation, and the federal funding that had been approved for that bridge originally has been transferred to be used for the Bridge 154 project in 2013.

Superintendent Ritzler also advised he has met with each driver and mechanic and has spent approximately one hour with each. He is also scheduling riding with each driver on their entire route and drive every mile of the County's roads, which, he advised, would take approximately two to three hours for each driver's territory. He also advised he is reviewing operations at the Highway Department and will be preparing recommendations to be presented at the next meeting of the Board. Commissioner Danford advised the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum has received funding to replace the rails of the tracks in the County, and he inquired if the Highway Department could assist in repairing the two railroad crossings located in English Lake, since that is not include in the funding the Museum received. President Norem inquired if the railroad crossings were numbered, and Superintendent Ritzler advised they are numbered by INDOT. The Superintendent advised yes the County Highway Department could assist in repairing those crossings since it is a safety concern.

RE: PAYROLL AND VENDOR CLAIMS, MINUTES, MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 4th meeting, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the pay claim for the pay period ending March 2, in the gross amount of \$175,731.95. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed with all ayes. President Norem advised, in regard to the vendor claims presented for approval, two of the claims were flagged by Deputy Auditor Thomas: the earnest money payable to Mark Bailey in the amount of \$10,000.00 due to insufficient documentation, and the check to Pro-Forma for the postage of the mailing of the 2013 tax billings. She suggested approving the claim to Mark Bailey but to hold the check since Mr. Bailey has not yet signed a purchase offer, and in regard to the postage check, to approve the claim not to exceed \$7,000.00 so that when the total dollar amount of postage required is calculated by the Pro Forma Company, a check could be sent to them in order for the tax billings to be mailed promptly. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the claims with the stipulations as suggested by President Norem. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. The total of amount of vendor claims approved: \$176,145.13.

President Norem advised she had met with the Auditor in the Auditor's Office and reviewed all the monthly financial reports. She noted they were all submitted in a timely manner and all except for the treasurer's report were in balance. Auditor Chaffins advised the treasurer's report shows a discrepancy of \$1800.00, but that she is still working on the difference, and there has been much improvement in the Treasurer's records since the first of the year.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

HEALTH OFFICER APPOINTMENT

President Norem reviewed the fact Dr. Alexander had submitted her resignation as the County's Health Officer, effective March 18, 2013. She advised the Health Board has offered the position to Dr. Brown, who has accepted the appointment. She noted his term will expire at the end of 2013. She advised now the Board of Commissioners need to ratify the appointment of the Health Board. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the appointment of Dr. Brown as the Health Officer, seconded by

Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes. President Norem advised the certification will be sent on to the State.

LETTER FROM MARK SMITH

President Norem read for the record the letter the Board received from Mark Smith, in regard to damages to his property caused by the Contractor of the Yellow River Debris Clean-Up Project. Mr. Smith stated he was contact in 2012 by Surveyor Dennis Estok, advising him of the project and Mr. Smith requested he be notified when the Contractor was ready to begin the work, and accessing the river through his property. Mr. Smith stated he was never notified, and the Contractor just cleared a passage by chain sawing down dozens of his hardwood trees which were fifteen to twenty feet tall and also numerous other trees, when dead trees could have been removed instead. As a result, Mr. Smith has stated he is no longer giving authorization to access the Yellow River through his property as of March 15, 2013. President Norem advised the letter will be sent to the Drainage Board for their recommendation. Commissioner Davis made a motion to formally acknowledge the letter from Mark Smith by written communication to Mr. Smith. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Danford and passed with all ayes.

BUILDING CORPORATION UPDATE

President Norem advised the Building Corporation held its first meeting on March 5th. Present at the meeting were Ron Henigsmith and herself, both Board of Directors, and County Attorney Marty Lucas. Auditor Chaffins was present to record the minutes of the meeting. President Norem noted that originally Bill Dulin was named as a member of the Building Corporation but he was not eligible since it is stated in the Corporation By-laws, not more than one county employee and or elected official may serve on the Board of Directors at the same time. She suggested naming Ben Osinski to the Board of Directors of the Building Corporation. She advised, Mr. Osinski, a Democrat, lives in the North Judson area, Mr. Henigsmith, a Republican, lives in the Oregon-Davis area, and she, Commissioner Norem, a Republican, lives in the Knox area. Commissioner Danford made a motion to appoint Ben Osinski as the third member of the Building Corporation Board of Directors. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. President Norem noted that the terms of the Directors are staggered with her term being for one year, Mr. Henigsmith's for three years, and Mr. Osinski's for two years. She also advised, any future appointments will no longer be made by the Board of Commissioners; they will be made by the Board of Directors of the Building Corporation.

PUBLIC BUSINESS:

Clyde Haniford of Bass Lake had a couple of issues he wanted to discuss: his concern in regard to the number of campers at the Bass Lake Campground who appear to be residing there year round, and his concern with firewood coming into the campground that may be infected with the Emerald Ash Borer. Commissioner Davis advised she will contact the DNR in regard to the possible infestation of the Ash Borer. Commissioner Danford advised he has been attempting to contact Mr. Callahan, the leasee of the Bass Lake property, but has not yet been successful.

There being no further business, Commissioner Danford made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50PM.

March 18, 2013

Kathy Norem, President

Jennifer Davis, Vice-President

Kent Danford

Katherine Chaffins, Auditor &
Secretary to the Board of Commissioners