

Monday, April 7, 2014

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in regular session at 9:00AM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana with Jennifer Davis, Kent Danford, and Kathy Norem present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

President Jennifer Davis called the meeting to order at 9:00AM, following the meeting of the Starke County Building Corporation.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

Director Paul Mathewson and Clerk MaryLynn Ritchie appeared before the Board. Clerk Ritchie presented to the Board the March, 2014 report of total EMS runs: a total of 129 billed runs, of which 49 were ALS runs and 55 were BLS runs. She advised the number of billings were down due to the internet problems the County was experiencing and their bases were not able to submit the information to her. Clerk Ritchie also noted a total of \$830.10 received from Collections Attorney, Jonathan O'Hara, and a total of \$2,644.20 received from the County Clerk through Small Claims Court. Director Mathewson advised during the month of March the EMS Department was hit hard with the flu bug, and they had to work around that. He also noted he will be a guest speaker at Career Day presentations that will be held at the Culver Schools and the Knox School Youth Club. Commissioner Norem inquired as to the procedure for filing Medicare claims. Clerk Ritchie advised the process is completed all electronically. Once they receive the notification of the Medicare processing the information is automatically sent to the patient's secondary insurance for submission. Commissioner Norem also advised of the meeting to be held in Koontz Lake that evening involving the medical calls being dispatched to fire departments in addition to the EMS Department. Director Mathewson advised he will be attending the meeting, and Commissioner Danford nodded in agreement when asked if he will be attending the meeting also.

COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT

FINAL WINTER OPERATIONS

Superintendent Ritzler appeared before the Board to present his monthly report. He advised in regard to the winter operations and snow plowing, over 150,000 miles of roads were plowed, and another 35,000 miles were traveled in support roles. A total of 44,500 gallons of diesel fuel and 11,452 gallons of gasoline were used. He noted the County did not run out of their supply of sand and salt as other counties had, thus saving the County from paying the premium prices for their added supply. He advised their total salt cost was \$48.00 per ton throughout the winter, as many other agencies were paying as high as \$200.00 a ton by the end of the winter. Superintendent Ritzler advised thus far they have been able to absorb the extra expense in overtime by their 2014 budget and not having to ask for any additional appropriations. But, he noted, they will now need to make adjustments to the proposed paving program. He advised they will still be able to repair more road miles than last year, but they will be only at a maintaining level in regards to the county's roadway system, instead of improving the system. The Superintendent noted the County will not be receiving any reimbursement of costs from FEMA as not even the State of Indiana qualified for FEMA reimbursement.

BRIDGE REPLACEMENT/REPAIR PROGRAM

Superintendent Ritzler advised that Mark Wilson of JPR has begun designing four County bridges, # 31, on CR800E just north of 50S (over Eagle Creek); # 79 on CR450S just west of Range Road (over Smith Ditch); and # 86 on CR900S just west of 100S (over the Bogus Ditch). He advised the surveys are nearly complete and the soil borings will be completed in the next two weeks. He noted the three bridges will be closed for one day while the borings are being completed, and those days are as follows: April 10th—Bridge 31; April 14th—Bridge 86; and April 15th—Bridge 79. Superintendent Ritzler advised the County's five year plan to replace all structurally deficient bridges in the County is on schedule and there is enough money in the CREDIT Fund to fund the projects. The Superintendent presented, as part of his monthly report, a listing per year since 2003 as to the number of bridges that have been repair or replaced each year, and also added the total number anticipated to be repaired or replaced in the future up to 2018. (A copy of the report is on file in the Auditor's Office.)

ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Superintendent Ritzler advised the Highway Department has completed its final recommendations for the 2014 road improvement list. He noted the original list contained 191 miles of improvements but the amended list now has 138 miles on it, due to the winter operations expense. Also on that report he provided information on the projection of the next two years. He advised they are looking into other sources of funding and will be working with the Council to discuss the possibility of implementing a wheel tax. The revenue would be completely directed to the building and improvements of the Starke County roads. The Commissioners were in complete agreement to pursue the possibility of the implantation of a wheel tax.

INDOT CALL FOR PROJECTS

The Superintendent advised there is a May 12th deadline for the INDOT 2018 call for projects. He advised he will be submitting at least three additional applications for federal aid projects: Bridge # 27 over the Yellow River on CR700E, just north of SR8; a road widening on portion of CR500N; and the possible creation of a shared use golf cart path on SR10 around Bass Lake. Also being considered is a road reconstruction project on CR600E.

CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR POSITION

Superintendent called Robert Lorenz to appear before the Board. He explained the position for Construction Inspector was posted, but he had only one candidate to apply for the position, and that was Robert Lorenz. He advised Mr. Lorenz would initially be working on the construction inspections of the CR300E SR8 project. President Davis inquired if their decision to hire Mr. Lorenz could be taken under advisement. Commissioner Norem inquired as to why delay it when he was the only applicant and in hiring him it would drastically cut the amount of inspection costs the County will be required to pay. She inquired as to what there was to take under advisement. President Davis noted she was concerned with nepotism being a potential issue with Mr. Lorenz' hiring, and inquired is this was discussed with County Attorney, Marty Lucas. Commissioner Norem noted the position of Construction Inspector is to report to the Board of Commissioners and not the Highway Department Superintendent. Superintendent Ritzler noted Mr. Lorenz is his wife's uncle. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the hiring of Robert Lorenz pending Attorney Lucas' approval. Commissioner Danford seconded

the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem noted his position is structured for him to report to the Board of Commissioners.

In additional business, Superintendent Ritzler advised the Highway Department Facebook page is updated nearly every day and has been successful in promoting the Department and keeping the County citizens informed. He also noted summer operations have begun. They have moved their mowing and paving equipment from the storage area to the Highway Garage and are getting them ready for use. They have also hauled in most of the material they will need for the summer road improvements.

He requested approval in his proposed termination of the contract the Highway Department has with Ziker Uniform Company. He noted Attorney Lucas had reviewed the contract. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the termination of the contract, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes.

VENDOR CLAIMS, PAYROLL CLAIM, MINUTES

Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 17th meeting, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the payroll claim for the pay period ending on March 15th with a pay date of March 21, in the total gross amount of \$185,887.65. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the payroll claim for the pay period ending on March 29, with a pay date of April 4, in the total gross amount of \$184,130.59. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

President Davis advised there are some issues with the vendor claim that need to be addressed before its approval: payment of the invoice from SRI for the tax sale costs would cause the budget line item of the Commissioner's budget to be over-expended; Kim Kennedy of SCCC asked that four of their claims, in the total amount of \$1,776.38 be pulled from this vendor claim, and the invoice from Kone Elevator in the amount of \$298.26 be pulled since it is for the March service agreement contract, and Attorney Lucas worked out a settlement with Kone, and as part of the settlement agreement the service contract expired on Feb. 28, 2014. It was decided to pay the SRI invoice and look into making a transfer from within the Commissioner budget into that budget line item. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the vendor claims with the exception of the SCCC claims and the Kone invoice, in the total gross amount of \$153,885.20. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

ASSESSMENT CONTRACT

County Assessor, Rhonda Milner, appeared before the Board and presented the proposed contract for the state required four year cyclical assessment. She advised twenty five percent of the County's properties will be assessed each year. She noted Attorney Lucas had worked with her with the bid specs and advertisement, and also he assisted her in reviewing the bids and the proposed contract. She presented documents showing her analysis of the bids received and the bids compliance with the specifications that were advertised. (That document is on file in the Auditor's Office along with the copy of the Contract for the Cyclical Assessment Annual Trending & Annual New Construction for the Years 2015, 2016, 2107, & 2018). Assessor Milner recommend the County contract with Accurate Assessments who is the current assessment vendor. She advised Attorney Lucas had reviewed the contract and has approved it. He also asked it be documented in the minutes as to why the company was chosen which was documented in the analysis report. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the proposed contract, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes and the contract was signed. Assessor Milner advised now the contract will need to be approved by the DLGF.

CADA PROCLAMATION

Wendy Elam of CADA, Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, appeared before the Board to present a proclamation naming April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. President Davis read aloud the proclamation. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes and the proclamation was signed and sealed.

PLANNING COMMISSION REQUEST FOR CREDIT FUNDING

Surveyor Dennis Estok, in his position as President of the Planning Commissioner, appeared before the Board. He advised in March the Planning Commission established an Unsafe Building Ordinance and has also established an Unsafe Building Fund. Now, he noted, they need initial funding in order to start the project and he is officially requesting their recommendation in obtaining \$20,000.00 of CREDIT funding as seed money for this project. He advised there are approximately 120 buildings considered unsafe in the County. He noted that not all of them are houses. He advised this will need to be a joint effort between the Commissioners, the Council, and the Planning Commission to remove the blight and unsafe structures in the County. He noted they plan on addressing the most unsafe houses first and also noted the County will need to either own the house or make a purchase agreement in order to own the house. Commissioner Norem stated in her five years as being a County Commissioner Denny has taken the most pro-active approach with the planning commission. She suggested the Commissioners approve taking \$20,000.00 of the Commissioner portion of the CREDIT Fund. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the appropriation recommendation of the CREDIT Fund seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes. Planning Commissioner President Estok advised he will now appear before the Council at their next meeting to request the appropriation of the \$20,000.00 from the CREDIT Fund.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Emergency Director Ted Bombagetti and Safety Committee Chairman Jim Coad appeared before the Board to discuss the plan for the County's Emergency Preparedness. Director Bombagetti requested the Board not sign the plan today because he instead would like to incorporate the plans he has received from various departments into one County plan. Director Bombagetti advised he would like to incorporate the following departments into the same plan: Annex Building, Courthouse, Jail, and Community Corrections using the same common verbage. He stated they plan to be able to present the Emergency Preparedness Plan at the May 5th meeting.

He advised Jim and himself will meet with the Departments and work out the incorporated plan. He also noted no date has been set yet to conduct the County severe weather drill.

In other business, Jim inquired as to the Board's plan to hold another County auction to sell off items accumulated again in storage. The Board advised they would like Department Heads to compile lists of available items for the auction and

possibly hold an auction at the end of the summer. Jim requested permission to replace the large wooden table not presently used in the Annex Meeting Room with a smaller table and chairs that was at the jail site. He noted the large wooden table would be placed into storage.

COUNTY CLERK ELECTION PRECINCT RELOCATIONS

County Clerk, Evelyn Skronski, appeared before the Board to give notice of two polling relocations for this year's election. She noted the North Judson Wayne IV precinct polling place has been moved from the NJ-SP Administration Office to the Atrium Area of the NJ-SP High School. She advised handicap parking is available on the east side of the parking lot. She noted the open windows will be covered with paper so voters will not be seeing the politicians or campaign workers who are campaigning outside. She also advised the Koontz Lake precinct of Oregon III who formerly voted at the Koontz Lake Lion's Club Building will now be voting at the Koontz Lake Regional Sewer District Building since the Lion's Club Building has been torn down and the Sewer District Building was constructed at the same property location. She advised the new structure is ADA accessible and HAVA compatible. Clerk Skronski officially requested approval of the HAVA report she presented to the Board and once they approve it, the report will be sent to the Indiana Election Division of the State for their compliance. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the report, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem advised the Clerk to notify all voters in those precincts of the voting location changes. The Clerk advised she has the letters ready to go.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

President Davis advised Attorney Lucas had settled with Kone Elevator and the problem of the outstanding invoice to Kone has finally been resolved. The service contract with Kone terminated as of Feb. 28, 2014; and the outstanding invoice amount due by the County was reduced to \$277.00.

President Davis advised the County had received a request from Cedarbridge Treatment Center dba Cedarbridge Youth Center of Muncie, Indiana to assign the active contract the County has with the Cedarbridge dated October 21, 2013, to Muskegon River Youth Opportunities, dba Muskegon River Youth Home of Indiana of Ladoga, Indiana. President Davis advised the Probation Officer has approved of the assignment, noting he stated there are no alternatives and he expects the price to increase at renewal time. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the assignment and modification of the contract, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem advised in regard to the State's Bi-Centennial Celebration, Debbie Mix attended the last meeting since she could not attend. Ms. Mix advised the Chamber of Commerce is not interested in being the chair coordinator of that program. Commissioner Norem stated the County will only be able to commit to participating in the torch relay but that is it. President Davis inquired as to whom else had attended the meeting also inquiring if the Historical Society would be interested in chairing the program. Commissioner Norem noted this area of coordinating this project was not her forte and she will call another meeting with a variety of people. She asked President Davis to be in charge of the Bi-Centennial Committee and the President passed on the idea.

Council President, Dave Pearman, was present at the meeting and brought the Board up to date on the issue which would be discussed at that evening's meeting at Koontz Lake (the meeting EMS Director Mathewson and Commissioner Danford had stated they were attending). He advised the issue has to do with some fire departments taking issue with the Sheriff's call in which Dispatchers are to only dispatch medical calls to the EMS Units and not the area fire departments as was being done. Then if the EMS Unit requests assistance from that area fire department the Medic Unit will ask for assistance.

Craig Felte of IU-Health Starke and Brian Donnelly, Chief Strategy Officer of IU-Health LaPorte appeared before the Board to discuss their plan in recruiting primary care physicians throughout 2017. Mr. Donnelly advised they are expecting four retirees by 2017 and expect to add one new physician and one to two nurse practitioners during both 2014 and 2015. He noted currently there are 9 providers which include both physicians and nurse practitioners. Mr. Donnelly stated there is a problem with recruiting physicians for Starke County as it is considered an under-served area and LaPorte County is not. He advised Dr. Curtis Bejes, through the IU-Health Network, serves as a mentor for medical students during their General Practitioner round of their medical education.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

County Veteran's Service Officer, Terry Turner, advised he was absent from the office last week since he was attending a conference, and advised a lot of changes are happening involving the electronic filing of claims through the Internet. He also advised the new Hamlet Bridge will be dedicated in honor of World War II Veteran Frank Ono and will officially become the Frank Ono Bridge at the dedication on May 24th, at 1:30, at the new Hamlet Bridge. President Davis asked him for his monthly activity report from the VA Service Office.

Council President Pearman advised the Board that the Merit Board President and himself had a meeting with an attorney last Friday in regard to a County Personnel issue. He also noted President Davis, Auditor Chaffins and himself met with representatives of the DLGF to discuss budget issues and the preparation of the County's 2015 budgets. President Pearman also made note of Auditor Chaffins', President Davis' and his own participation in a Leadership meeting that was also held that last Friday.

There being 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 11:30AM.

April 7, 2014

Kathy Norem, President

Kent Danford

Jennifer Davis

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