

**STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 9:30AM, in person at the Starke County Annex Building, Knox, Indiana, with Bryan Cavender, and Mark Gourley present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Vice President Bryan Cavender directly at 9:30AM.

**VETERANS MEMORIAL REQUEST**

Kathy Norem came before the Board of Commissioners to request the creation of the Veteran's Memorial Fund. She advised that originally the Northern Indiana Community Foundation was our judiciary and they hold all of the donation that were made. They still have those donations and they are specifically for the monument. She stated they decided to change their process and instead of sending the individual vendor checks they want to send the total payment to the park board and then the park board pay out the vendors. To make sure we do not get those monies crossed a separate fund is needed. Kathy also gave an update regarding the CVC board. She stated that they have had two meetings and their third meeting will be held tomorrow. They have approximately \$28,000 in their fund because none of the monies have been spent over the last year so the fund has grown. They saw a big increase in innkeeper tax money last summer. She hoped this is what they will continue to see moving forward. What they decided to do was take 12 rolling quarters and spend it at that rate, that way they will always have that chunk of money in case they have something big come up that they want to spend it on. Kathy advised that they have also decided to spend money on a larger ad in the 2022 Indiana Festival Guide. On top of that they have decided to provide the festival committees within Starke County with \$300 if they wanted to apply for a bigger ad in the 2022 Indiana Festival Guide. She presented the Board an example of the half page ad that the committee has purchased. Kathy advised that in addition to those ads they have decided to provide grants as well as according to the money available in the rolling quarters, for things that promote tourism and visitors in Starke County. She advised that the grant applications are due May 30<sup>th</sup> and they will be looking to distribute \$6,600 as soon as they go through those applications. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to suspend the rules and approve to pass the Ordinance establishing the Starke County Veteran's Memorial Fund. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**SCEDF – MONTHLY REPORT**

Lisa Dan, Director of the SCEDF came before the Board of Commissioners to provide a monthly report. She advised that she wanted to give an update on the Rural Opportunity Zone Initiative that the Foundation applied for. They were chosen as well as five other communities in Indiana to be a part of the second round of the Opportunity Zone Initiative. She stated the goal of this initiative is to market the opportunity one, and Starke County has a very large opportunity zone. She explain that an opportunity zone is land that investors like to invest in because of the tax benefits. Some items that were discussed was housing because Starke County does not have enough housing. Some of other opportunities may include more industry, recreational, and more medical and dental practices. She advised that she has been in contact with a group called IN VETS, they are a group that is trying to promote getting veterans and their families into jobs. She recently did a poll with some of the businesses within Starke County and there are over 120 jobs available and no one to fill them. SCEDF also participated in a job fair with Work One a few weeks ago and they only had 6 individuals participate. She stated that she has been receiving an influx of prospective companies that want to locate here but it is hard to sell our community to a company if we do not have people for jobs. Last month we were the 5<sup>th</sup> highest on unemployment within the state because we have over 400 people sitting that could be working. She is always looking for ideas if anyone has any to address that issue. She advised that she is working with all of the communities within Starke County about revitalization and trying to market ourselves.

**EMS MONTHLY REPORT**

Director Travis Clary, Clerk Mary Lynn Ritchie, and Clerk Nancy Coad came before the Board of Commissioners to to give the EMS Monthly Report. Clerk Ritchie provided the EMS report of collections report to the board. She stated that they are standard with the amount of runs they are doing. 37% of the runs that they did last month were from the hospital. She explained that their revenues this

past month are up from the previous year by about \$20,000. She advised that this will be the last official Commissioner's meeting for her as she is retiring on May 31<sup>st</sup>. She has worked for the county for 25 years. Director Clary then gave his operations report he advised we have had no changes in our operational status. They continue to operate 4 ALS ambulances out of 3 stations throughout our county. They have their longtime office manager retiring on June 1st. Marylynn Ritchie will be retiring after 25 years of service with us. She will be greatly missed. We had posted her position approx. 2 weeks ago, and another longtime employee of ours Nancy Coad who has been part-time in our office for 24 years will be moving up to Marylynn's full-time position. He would like to wish Marylynn the best on her future endeavors! He will be having a small "covid friendly" farewell party for her on Tuesday May 25th from 11-1 here in the commissioners meeting room. He looks forward to having Nancy with us for another 24 years. Marylynn will continue to help part-time as needed, and has been more than willing to answer any of Nancy's questions as she starts the new position. I also accepted the resignation from a long-time Paramedic of ours who initially started with our service when we became an ALS agency in 2011. He has most recently been with our service as a full-time Paramedic for the last 3 years. He is moving out of State to pursue a different opportunity. We are currently now looking for a new full-time Paramedic to fill his now vacant position. He has hired an additional part-time EMT, and Paramedic to our service to help fill shifts open in our schedule.

Director Clary advised they held our monthly audit & review with Starke/Laporte Hospital. We have two upcoming mandatory trainings coming up for our Paramedics. They are mostly related to the airway which again is the most important part of our jobs as EMS providers. If the patient does not have an airway, we have not done our job. It will be going over new equipment that was obtained through grant funding, and making sure everyone gets hands on with that equipment and checked off by myself or a trainer.

Safety: They had an injury free month in April. In ambulance maintenance:

#### Ambulance Maintenance:

3308 (2021 Ford Gas Engine) Received a full-service oil change from the Knox Ford garage. No other repairs noted for this ambulance.

4230 (2019 Ford Gas) received four new rear tires. No other major repairs for this unit. It will go in this week for a full-service oil change at Knox Ford.

0514 (2015 Diesel) is currently out of service for auto body repair at Mark's Body shop after thankfully a minor accident last month. It will be out of service until at least the end of this week. The hold up there will be fitting it in with the original graphics company to match up the decal work on the ambulance after the repairs are complete.

0086 (2009 Ford 6.0 Diesel) Remains out of service for electrical repairs to the rear of the ambulance. Signal 10 equipment from Knox is handling those issues.

0085 (2013 Diesel) Originally went to Knox Ford to see a diesel technician there, but it was a software issue with the DEF system. It was then repaired at the Auto Park GMC/Chevy of Plymouth. The unit had gone into limp mode.

0084 (2012 Chevy Diesel) We have a new alternator on order for this ambulance, as it is starting to show signs of failure. We hope to have that replaced after getting another ambulance back in service.

4149 (2013 Ford Explorer) received new tires, had recall work performed and had some suspension work completed. Suspension work consisted of new ball joints, bushings, a spindle, rear shocks and a tie rod. It also received an alignment after the initial work was completed.

Director Clary stated they had no major base maintenance issues in the month of April. He advised he continues to assist Frank Lynch with the Health Department on mainly Wednesdays & Thursdays. I am a vaccinator, support staff or just medical staff on the days he has his clinics at the community center here in Knox. I have also continue doing some home visits to vaccinate those who are non-ambulatory. Those individuals have been extremely thankful for that service. I am happy to say that the State of Indiana EMS Commission re-certified our ambulance service as a BLS, ALS and ALS Non-Transport service for another 4 years. I had previously mentioned that I wanted to get that turned in approx. 60-90 days early so we were sure we had everything in order. It was also important for the billing aspect of things. We will need to get our new certification paperwork showing our new expiration date to all of the insurance companies we deal with so we can continue to get payments on the invoices for patients utilizing our ambulance service.

Quarterly EMS Meeting- We continue to have a great working relationship with local hospitals that come to this quarterly meeting at Laporte Hospital. They have been with not only our staff, but the new proactive this we are doing with our service. Porter Regional/Laporte/Starke CNO's & ED Directors are in attendance.

Grants & Fundraising- We held a recent fundraiser with the American Legion Post #356 out of Hamlet. They were gracious enough to donate the evening's proceeds on May 7th. I am happy to report that we were able to get \$1,500.00 from them hosting that fish fry for us. It was an amazing turn out!

Director Clary advised that they have received a grant from the Indiana Department of Health for 100 doses of Narcan. The grant should save our department approx. \$8,000.00 as the grant not only includes the Narcan, but atomizers are also included. Our current cost through the pharmacy would range anywhere from \$30-\$40 per 2 milligram dose. The price of atomizers is currently at \$15 per device. Director Clary presented the Board of Commissioner with purposed rate increases as follows:

Proposed Rate Increase		
BLS Non-Emergency	\$506.00	No change request
BLS Emergency	\$600.00	Approx. 18% increase
ALS Level One	\$1,000.00	Approx. 3% increase
ALS Level Two	\$1,400.00	No change request
CCT	\$1,400.00	No change request
Loaded Mile Charge	\$15.00/mile	20% increase
Treatment No Transport	\$150.00	50% increase

BLS Non-Emergency Basic Life Support Transfer to a Nursing Home Etc.  
BLS Emergency Basic Life Support 911 Response from scene to hospital.  
ALS Level One Advanced Life Support Emergent Response with routine ALS Care.  
IV, O2 & Monitor... Less than three medications given by the Paramedic.  
ALS Level Two Emergency 3 or more medications given by the Paramedic.  
Paramedic may perform an invasive procedure (intubation/chest decompression)  
Critical Care Transport (Patient on a ventilator, or multiple drugs via IV Pump)  
Treatment on scene with no transportation to the hospital. (D-50 Refusals)

Commissioner Gourley asked if these rates are competitive with Pulaski and Newton County's. Director Clary agreed. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the purposed rate increases as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

### **SHERIFF HEALTHLINK GRANT**

Sheriff Dulin and Matron McDonald came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss a HealthLink grant opportunity. Matron McDonald explained that they have worked with HealthLink for a few years now and they continue to have a great relationship with them in continuing to get new grants. She advised that HealthLink has purposed a grant for 2 new positions being an additional Sheriff Deputy and also a Social Worker. Matron McDonald advised that this grant would be providing all benefits and salaries for those two positions. This grant would take us through October of 2022 and then she would reapply for the grant. She advised HealthLink has been able to get this grant for the past three years and they do not expect to see any changes in the grant. The additional Sheriff Deputy would help cover vacation hours of the existing deputies. Commissioner Cavender advised that as long as we have the grant he does not have any problems with it but if it runs out and we don't get it again we may need to look at it again. Commissioner Gourley asked Pam what they would do in that situation if they did not receive the grant again next year. Matron McDonald advised they would either have to remove the officer or find a different way to fund it. She also stated that they could put it in the contract of the social worker that the position would cease to exist if the grant money was taken away. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the creation of the additional patrol officer and social worker contingent on receipt of the grant and after the job descriptions are forwarded to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

### **PROSECUTOR NEW POSITION REQUEST**

Prosecutor Baker came before the Board of Commissioners to request a new Investigator position within her department or change one of the existing job positions in her department to an investigator. She advised right now we have one detective in Starke County and as Pam had said we have over 800 calls within the county. This person would assist in preparation for trials and meeting with victims. She would also help law enforcement with their jobs. If she is unable to get an entire new job position created then she would be willing to change one of her existing positions to an investigator position. Prosecutor Baker advised that if that is the case she would like that salary the same as the other detectives within

the county. Commissioner Gourley asked if the Sheriff would be keeping his staff of detectives at one. Prosecutor Baker was not sure but it is her understanding they are still looking for another one. Commissioner Gourley asked if she had planned on shifting funds within her budget or are looking for them to pull funds from somewhere else to get it. Prosecutor Baker advised they would have to pull funds from somewhere else. After some further discussion Commissioner Gourley advised they will table this discussion to give Prosecutor Baker some time to come up with a proposal of what she wants to do. They will then take action once the board has reviewed the complete proposal. Commissioner Cavender agreed. Commissioner Gourley made that motion to table. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

#### **JOHN SALYER/DISCUSS 700S BETWEEN 850E & 975E**

Mr. Salyer came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss 700 S. between 850 E. and 975 E. He talked about certain roads that were improved within North Bend Township. He advised he talked to Bob and he stated they thought they could chip and seal it two times this year. He advised that he had spoken to Rik before and Rik had stated he was going to pave the road. He advised the highway department had put all this base down on their road to prep this and they have not been back to finish the job. He stated by putting this off the busses are making the road washboard. After some further discussion he wants to know if the road is going to be done or not and when. Asset Manager Perren advised they are on the schedule for chip seal in August or September and that will not change, their road will be done this year.

#### **OPIOID LITIGATION**

Attorney Lucas explained the multi-state opioid litigation representation, opt-out review to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the multi-state opioid litigation representation, opt-out review resolution as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

#### **AUDITOR BUSINESS**

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$389,134.54. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the payroll docket in the amount of \$246,265.22, including deductions in the amount of \$75,019.68 for the pay period ending on 05/01/2021 and pay date of 05/07/2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilman Pearman gave an update about the candidate the EMA Advisory Board interviewed for the position of EMA Director. He requested the acceptance of the Board of Commissioners to approve to appointment of Hannah Lueth as EMA director, part time with a potential of becoming full time. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the appointment of Hannah Lueth, EMA Director. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Gourley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM.

**MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021**

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Charlie Chesak, President

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Bryan Cavender, Vice-President

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Mark Gourley, Member

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Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor  
& Secretary to the Bo