

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 9:00AM via Zoom, Knox, Indiana, with Kathryn Norem (in person) and Bryan Cavender (in person) present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Vice-President Kathryn Norem at 9:00AM.

US30 COALITION DISCUSSION

Mayor Joe Thallemer of Warsaw and Laurie Modelin came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss future plans for US30. He explained he is president of the US30 Coalition which is made up of seven different counties and they have been formally organized since 2016. The focus of the coalition is to advocate for safety amidst the increased truck and traffic along US30 and to develop a seven county wide corridor plan. Currently about 30,000 vehicles per day, 20% being semi-trucks, travel US30. INDOT has projected that by 2038 the traffic is to increase to 38,000 vehicles per day and 31% being semi-trucks. He advised the coalition meets on a monthly basis in partner with their consultants, they have two goals: 1. Advocate for commitment by INDOT for a long term permanent solution to a safety problem that will only continue to worsen and 2. Assist county level planning groups to meet and develop a focus plan that will address their local needs. A plan that can be presented to INDOT, not a plan that INDOT will present to the community. Plans from all seven counties will then be put into a corridor plan. He also explained their lobbying efforts with the Indiana Governor. Laurie explained that in a project this size it would take 2 to 3 years to complete an environmental impact study. She further explained that if everything were to get set in place and approved tomorrow it would be about 10 years before construction would be started. She advised that in addition INDOT would have to find the money to fund this project which could cost \$1 billion dollars. She further explained why it is important to begin the planning and now because of the magnitude of the project.

Mayor Thallemer explained Starke County has been very important and critical in supporting the US30 Coalition since it has started. He stated they are at a critical time with legislators in making the push for trying to get the State commitment for this project. Commissioner Norem asked, as the consultant, how they envision that this COVID crisis and the fact that the State has dipped into their rainy day fund, will affect this project. Laurie explained that so far Indiana has been able to keep their projects moving forward and although the rainy day fund is being dipped into the roads projects will continue forward. She stated that the travel has rebounded over 50% of what the travel was impacted by COVID-19. She said short term there may be delays in some projects but because this is a longer term project INDOT will continue with their environmental work for their longer term projects. He explained it has been a difficult decision to either drop this thing or move on amidst the COVID crisis, but with the momentum they have built they are hoping to keep this project going. What they are looking for more than anything is a commitment from the State to move this project forward. Commissioner Cavender advised there are many people in the Hamlet area that are not for this project. Mayor Thallemer advised he understands that people are going to have concerns and they want to make sure that their concerns are reflected in the corridor plan and have a seat at the table rather than INDOT moving forward and saying this is what we are going to do. Commissioner Norem advised that they are short one of their members for today's meeting and what they would like to do is take their comments under advisement and we will work with our highway superintendent on how they will or will not proceed and the Board of Commissioners appreciates both of them for taking the time to come all the way down here to Starke County.

DLZ AWARDING OF BIDS FOR COURTHOUSE 3RD FLOOR RENOVATIONS

John Kirk from DLZ came before the Board of Commissioners for the 3rd Floor Renovations of the Courthouse. He presented the Commissioners a Letter of Recommendation as a part of the bids they had took on May 28th, 2020. They had five contractors submit bids and they had pretty good numbers across the board. The bottom three were interviewed after they had reviewed the bids. He stated that Ziolkowski Construction out of South Bend was the low bid that completed the most work on our priority list for approximately \$299,500. He advised they had a zoom meeting with the Judge, his employees, Commissioner Norem, Jim Coad, and Marty Lucas. He advised there are some items that they can go back and take a look at and change to be able to gain more work completed within the bid price. From the consensus brought forth by Commissioner Norem and Judge Hall they want to get as many items as possible taken care of. We would need to go ahead and sign a contract for the \$299,500

and then amend the drawings by change order as we go. He also stated they could go through all those items now and not sign a contract until everything is amended. Attorney Lucas suggested signing the contract now and making amendments along the way by change order as time is of the essence. Commissioner Norem advised that the fire protection is outside that budgeted number. Mr. Kirk advised that there is a difference of design in the fire protection with the respect only of who would provide the services. Commissioner Norem also advised that one thing they need to include for sure is the seating and technology upgrades. However, with the seating the total contract would be \$369,900.00. They may be able to adjust some of the items on the list to be able to get closer to that figure. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to award the bid to Ziolkowski Construction in the amount of \$299,500.00. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried with both ayes.

STARKE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES UPDATE

Mark Rippy, Treasurer for the Starke County Community Services came before the Board of Commissioners to provide an update regarding the services provided by Starke County Community Services. He explained prior to the COVID they have been around since 1977 mainly the underserved and elderly is who they provide for. They provide transportation, homemaker services, energy assistance, and the food pantry. They are made up of 15 board members, 6 full time employees, 11 part time employees, and over 20 volunteers. Going back to when the COVID happened in March they had to make some adjustments in their finances. Their transportation was down because there was not a need for transportation during the COVID. So still serving people our revenue was cut so they had to lay off a lot of their employees. However, during the shutdown they were considered an essential service and they called back their people because if they were not working they would not be eligible for funding. He stated then around April when the government food program came in they were contacted a couple times initially but he was not involved. He stated looking through things people see a lot of money coming into the county and the board had questions for to him that he could not get the answers to. He advised that through the whole set up of the meal program they were not included in the planning of that. With the food delivery program they had made deliveries twice, the first day took three people, four and a half hours to service 12 clients. He stated that is not very efficient. In addition they had four hours of administrative time that they have to report to KIRPC for use of the vans. Based on their recommendation the second day that they delivered they serviced 22 clients in one hour. They had offered to get volunteers but the questions came up of who would deliver the meals and in what vehicle.

He advised they never did get an answer back and now they have picked up their normal routes with the same number of employees. They serve about 180-190 people per month and drive over 11,000 miles per month. He stated Community Services is dedicated to the people of Starke County and he wishes they would have been actively included in a lot of the planning for the COVID aid to the county. He is here today to explain why they are here and thank the board for the aid they have brought into the county but they really feel that they could have helped more if they would have been involved initially. Commissioner Norem advised that the aid process came down quickly and we are forging new territory so as far as a well-defined plan on how to get this done there wasn't one. We had an opportunity to seize some money from the State in form of a grant and they seized upon it without knowing if they would get it or not get it. However, we did get it and we quickly responded to it. She stated my apologies to you if you felt you were slighted in any way because they did not include you in the planning because there was not much planning to be done. Their mission was to feed people that needed food and also to help out our local restaurants who were suffering from not being able to work. Commissioner Norem asked if Mr. Rippy had any particular questions today that he would like to ask. He advised he does not feel slighted about the grant money coming in but when he read the article about a not for profit because they are the local in his mind not for profit. He said he researched this and in turn had spoken to ORCA who then told him to speak with his county. Commissioner Norem advised that OCRA provides grants to governments but not non-profits.

Mr. Rippy asked who administers the money. Commissioner Norem advised that the county and OCRA administer the money. Mr. Rippy stated the question in his mind is the City of Knoxville received money and they paid KIRPC to administer it. Commissioner Norem advised we pay KIRPC as well to administer the money. Commissioner Norem advised she is very pleased to have the county be able to provide that service to the citizens who needed it during this time and she thinks Rachel did an excellent job on that, it was given to her without warning, she is an Auditor not a social service person but she did a wonderful job. Mr. Rippy stated that he wanted to let you guys know that we know how to provide the service and it was not done as well as what it could have been. Commissioner Norem advised it was disappointing that they did not get as much help from their organization as what they could have received. Mr. Rippy stated that they may have been able to provide more services if they would have

gotten answers to their questions as he reached out and had gotten volunteers for the food deliveries but they never got a call back. Commissioner Cavender stated that he had heard they did not have enough vans to get the deliveries done. Auditor Oesterreich advised for the record the second day she had given Community Services their spreadsheet of deliveries they had contacted her and said they would no longer like to do this.

They also stated they could not use their employees or their vans but they could possibly get one or two of their own volunteers with their own personal vehicles but not the Community Services vehicles. That is when we had to go through our insurance to see if it was possible to do that. Commissioner Cavender advised that sometimes the use of personal vehicles is a touchy situation when it comes to liability. Commissioner Cavender advised that he has delivered five or six times and he had over 40 meals, he was able to have it done within a few hours but he understands that it can be tough finding your way around the county. Mr. Rippey stated when they had the long day they were delivering food to Koontz Lake from restaurants in Bass Lake. Commissioner Cavender stated he knows he did that too. Commissioner Cavender stated that he has picked up at the Irish Pub in North Judson and even helped them prepare the meals and then went to Koontz Lake. Commissioner Norem advised that this program was just not to feed the folks who needed it, it was to provide financial support local restaurants all over Starke County. Attorney Lucas advised that for the record they did get substantial funding from OCRA and the COVID relief but also a substantial amount from the Northern Indiana Community Foundation which is a not for profit but they were funding the program and there were several contacts made, maybe not with Mr. Rippey, but with his organization.

IT-QUOTES FOR SECURITY CAMERA

Commissioner Norem advised that they have some revised quotes from Vermillion Systems. One is for an upgrade to the memory for the security cameras that courthouse security utilizes for \$15,619.00. The second quote is for the memorial camera installation for the amount of \$2,788.00 but this will be paid for by the Veterans Memorial fund. Commissioner Norem advised that rather than the \$95,000 quote they will now only need \$15,619.00 which will be sufficient for the memory upgrade to the security camera system. She said this quote includes labor and installation and we can also add cameras to this upgrade down the road if they choose to. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to accept the quote from Vermillion Systems in the amount of \$15,619.00. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried. Commissioner Norem advised to pay for this through Cumulative Capital Development.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

Travis Clary, Director of Starke County EMS and EMS Clerk MaryLynn Ritchie came before the Board of Commissioners to provide their monthly report. Clerk Ritchie provided a three month report of transportations they have had during this time. She advised the run volume was pretty consistent but a little lower than normal during this time period. She advised they are billed up as of Friday but the processing seems to be running a little slower. She stated they still had 36% of their runs come from Starke Hospital in transfers. She advised that the revenue for the three month total was down compared to the three month total of 2019. She then presented Commissioner Norem with the record of Collection payments. Commissioner Norem stated from Starke County Small Claims Court they had received \$2281.55 and from Attorney O'Hare they have received \$852.31 for a total of \$3133.86. Director Clary stated that our operations continue to run smoothly with 4 ambulances for 12 hours of the day, and (3) 24 hour ambulances throughout the county. They continue to operate a full-staff with no vacancies. We have not hired any part-time staff since the pandemic has started. He stated they have had one part-time EMT recently tested out, and successfully passed her paramedic exams. She is now in the orientation phase of becoming a Paramedic in our system. She will go through some orientation time with our captain/training officer. She will then take a protocol test, and be tested out skills wise on our ventilator and other ALS equipment.

Director Clary stated in-person training has really become difficult with the current situation. They have been doing more virtual training, and holding our audit and review with the hospital virtually. We have obviously been training on COVID-19 related procedures and blood borne pathogen overviews to continue to keep our crews safe. He advised they have had injury free months since we last met. We have been getting our trucks in for regular service. We also had Medic 5 aligned at Total Alignment, and batteries were replaced in 0086 our spare unit. We have had no major base issues lately. He advised we have received our new ambulance stretcher that was purchased with the help of a \$17,500.00 grant from the Hardesty Memorial Fund. The newest cot is in service at our Medic 1 station in North Judson. We

will continue to search for more grant opportunities in the future. A lot of grant funding for equipment has come to a halt to focus on more PPE related items. He advised they are not changing any of their cardiac arrest protocols. They are not making any changes to that and they are moving up their PPE protocols. Director Clary also presented to the Board of Commissioners a list of extended thank you to individuals assisting his department in getting PPE gear and meals to the crews the list included Frank Lynch, Jay Nier, Dale Lanham, Dr. Joseph Marovich, Starke Hospital, 1st Choice Insurance, Bliss McKnight, MaryLynn & Butch Ritchie, North Judson Fireman, Family Dollar, Fingerhut Bakery, Dr. Reichart & Dr. Ratliff from Knox community Schools, Eric Wappel, Calvary Baptist Church, Chamber of Commerce, Jerry Wilson, and Vera Krsek.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT

Rik Ritzler, Superintendent of the Starke County Highway Department came before the Board of Commissioners to present his monthly report. He advised they are back to the summer operations and two weeks ago they got back to full staff. Bridge #7 is in design and construction will begin next year. Bridge #137 is in the consultant selection process and construction should begin in 2022, possibly 2021. They have cleaned all 57 bridges this past month which keeps the bridges in much better shape if it is done every year. Culverts will be inspected when the water goes down a little later. Iroquois Road in Koontz Lake will be worked on as it has been a problem in drainage in that area over the last couple of years. In culvert replacements they had eight scheduled at the beginning of the year and they will most likely have more after the culvert inspections. Paser ratings have been completed for this year. The roadwork on 50S is 90% done, and the next two community crossings projects are as follows: Range Rd. between SR 10 and Toto Rd will be done in late July or August and CR250N between Range Rd. and US 35 will also be done in late July or August. They have been able to use the grindings they have received to apply and reshape some gravel roads. Currently they have completed 27 miles of gravel roads. They are going to begin the crosswalk at Bass Lake beginning this week. They are about halfway done with their first round of mowing throughout Starke County as well as the brush cutting. He advised they have received about 3 million dollars in grants over the last year and a half. They have maximized their ability to match these grants with his budget and may have to ask to match grant money if they are approved for more grants. The trainings they have been doing have been all virtual.

Superintendent Ritzler advised that gravel road applications were due today. They have received two and are supposed to get a third one today. They will be reviewing them and providing the Commissioners with those applications for selections for next year. He advised they have finished their portion of the Veteran's memorial work. In roadway funding he advised they had received about 3% less in May 2020 than we did in May of 2021. We anticipate up to a 40% reduction in our MVH receipts for the next three months. The 2021 budget has been submitted and we are reducing the budget by 5.58%. He advised they should be able to maintain our current production as long as the economy recovers by the middle of 2021. He advised the annual report has been submitted. The two different MVH categories proved to be a challenge again and he will be contacting Jim Pressel to see what he can do to help us. Superintendent Ritzler advised that for the Constellation of Starke-Stellar Communities they will be receiving the \$333,000 and they have narrowed it down to one project that encompassed four different communities it will include Bass Lake Trailhead & Restroom, Knox Wythogan Park Shelter, Koontz Lake Lion's Park Restroom, and North Judson Norwayne Field Restroom. There are two projects that will require a county match. That is the Bass Lake Trailhead & Restroom and also the North Judson Norwayne Field Restroom. He advised the county match will be \$39,600 and Bass Lake Property Owners had committed to doing some of the match. However, they will need a commitment from the Board of Commissioners for at least \$39,600 but most likely it will be less. Superintendent Ritzler advised the roadway part of the CEDIT has enough in there if the Commissioners wanted to use that.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the \$39,600 as the match, which may be less, and the fund or funds that is to come from is to be determined. Auditor Oesterreich suggested using the Roadway line item in the CEDIT funds as that money is already appropriated and the Board of Commissioners would not need to go to the council. Commissioner Norem agreed to this. She suggested that each entity take control of their own shelter to maintain and that possibly the Park Board can take control of the Bass Lake Shelter. Attorney Lucas advised right now that area is under the county jurisdiction and is not Park Board property. However, it does make sense to transfer it at some point but it has not happened yet. Commissioner Norem advised that would be her suggestion to someday transfer that to the Park Board.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AGREEMENT

Commissioner Norem advised Community Services had sent an agreement for the Board of Commissioners to sign for an amount of \$10,000. Commissioner Norem explained the \$10,000 that the Board of Commissioner has provided every year is not an agreement it is a gift. If the board chooses to give it to them they will give it to them but if the board chooses not to give the money to them they do not have to give it to them. Commissioner Norem advised she is not inclined to sign an agreement for that. Commissioner Cavender agreed. Commissioner Norem made a motion to not sign the agreement as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion carried.

AUDITOR PAYROLL, MINUTES, AND CLAIMS

Commissioner Norem advised she would at a minimum hold the amount requested from Community Services on the claims docket. She stated they may want to put that toward the food service program. If the board wants to deny that claim that amount could go towards transportation or other items that would benefit the food service program. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to hold the \$10,000 request for now. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket less the \$10,000 to Starke County Community Services for a total in the amount of \$280,598.54. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the payroll docket in the amount of \$269,963.66, including deductions in the amount of \$80,098.14 for the pay period ending on 5/16/2020 and pay date of 5/22/2020. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the minutes from May 11, 2020. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried. Auditor Oesterreich presented the Low Associates financial software upgrade request. The quote amount is \$3,308.00. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to accept and approve the quote from Low Associates in the amount of \$3,308.00. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Sheriff Dulin came before the Board of Commissioners to continue the discussion regarding the salvaged vehicles. He advised there is some discussion that these vehicles are totaled with frame damage. He stated these are not the vehicles they are buying. He advised they are just cosmetic, fenders, bumpers, airbags, and things like that. Nothing with frame damage or flood damage or electric damage. He explained they are just as safe as the vehicle they currently have and may even be better than the ones we have. Sheriff Dulin explained that they currently have 13 vehicles and 10 of them have over 140,000 miles. Commissioner Norem asked if salvage vehicles would be safer than high mileage vehicles. Sheriff Dulin advised that if they allow him to do this they could be replacing four vehicles rather than just two. Attorney Lucas had asked if our liability insurance was contacted about this situation. Sheriff Dulin advised he had contacted them 2 or 3 months ago when they first started this discussion and they had said as long as the vehicle is operable and it cleared the inspection they would insure it. Sheriff Dulin stated he will get that documented for the file. Commissioner Norem advised she would like to make sure Commissioner Chesak is available and at a meeting for this decision as well plus they would like to see the documentation from our insurance company. She would like to table this discussion until the next meeting as she would like all three commissioners to be present. Sheriff Dulin advised he would like to keep the vehicles they will be taking out of service rather than selling them at the auction for the use of parts which would save them money down the road. Commissioner Norem made a motion to table this to the next meeting. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Norem advised that the Findings of Fact to Thomas DeCola's Claim on behalf of Argento, LLC was brought to the Board of Commissioners. Attorney Lucas advised that Commissioner Chesak and Commissioner Cavender voted on the motion that was made during the last meeting. He does not believe there is anything wrong with Commissioner Norem voting for it as it is a separate action but it would still be good to have Commissioner Chesak vote on this as well. Attorney Lucas also mentioned the Proclamation of Consecration and Dedication Veterans Memorial of Starke County, Indiana. He advised the Commissioners could approve that as well. He would like to record this document with an affidavit signed by Commissioner Chesak stating he had signed the proclamation. Commissioner Norem agrees that the document should be recorded for posterity. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to have the Proclamation of Consecration and Dedication Veterans Memorial of Starke County, Indiana recorded. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Norem advised there is a vacancy on the hospital board that they need to fill, it would need to be a Democrat, and it would be for the remaining term of Jerry Wilson.

Clerk Bernadette Manuel came before the Board of Commissioners to advise that with the riots going on she is not sure what to expect. She has seven inspectors in charge of seven different locations. She wants to believe that we will not have an issue here in Starke County but she is going to speak with the Sheriff today as well as the Chief of Police of Knox to have a plan in place if something does happen.

Commissioner Norem advised that as one of the inspectors she has attended all the trainings she had for all of the positions and she advised that Clerk Manuel has done an excellent job with this as well as the election board and hopefully things will be smooth tomorrow.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Cavender made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 10:47AM.

JUNE 1, 2020

Charlie Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

Bryan Cavender

Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor
& Secretary to the Board of County Commissioners