

**Monday, June 2, 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, Kathy Norem, and Kent Danford 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**

EMS Director, Paul Mathewson and Clerk, MaryLynn Ritchie, appeared before the Board to present their monthly report. Clerk Ritchie advised the revenue was up by \$4,000.00 for the month of May over May of 2013. She advised the County received a check from Attorney Jonathan O'Hara, Collections Attorney, in the amount of \$1,475.44, and a check from the Clerk of Starke County, Small Claims Court, in the amount of \$181.00.

Director Mathewson advised more research is being conducted in regard to the proposed expansion of the ALS, Paramedic program, but they hoped to have the report completed for presentation at the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Council President Dave Pearman advised he has been looking into the deficit of the EMS program's revenue vs. expenditures, and the following losses reported: 2011 -\$584,000.00; 2012 -\$703,000.00; and 2013 -\$658,000.00. He also noted a slight reduction of the ratio of collections vs. billings. He noted over the years he has seen a slight increase in revenue but a slight decrease in collections percentages. Councilman Pearman advised the County has three options, in regard to the EMS program: do nothing and stabilize the existing program, reduce the amount of full time employees due to the cost of employer benefits and work the program with more part time employees. But first they would have to make sure there would be enough part time paramedics to staff the program. The second option would be to expand the paramedic program to the North Judson EMS Base. The third option would be to expend the paramedic program throughout the whole County. He then stated not all of the EMS expense is incorporated into their budget since the employer benefits portion is taken out of the Commissioners' budget within County General as is the EMS budget. He noted due to their huge deficit it is affecting the cash flow in the County General Fund. Commissioner Norem stated the County is not looking to make a profit from the EMS Program, but the County doesn't want to operate the program with a large deficit. Because of that the County may be forced to make cuts to other County Department's budgets, which would cause a reduction in other County services. Councilman Pearman advised they should have the report ready for the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, and he is having the Auditor conduct some research on how some of the surrounding counties handle their EMS Departments' programs. He also noted Commissioner Danford has been very supportive of utilizing the part time employee program.

### **COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

County Highway Department Superintendent, Rik Ritzler, appeared before the Board to present his monthly report. He advised the mowing program is in the second cycle of mowing, utilizing seven part time mowers, which allows the Department to have a five day mowing staff despite being part time employees. Superintendent Ritzler presented to the Board a Road Improvement Report, listing the County Roads along with their PASER System rating. (PASER is the local roads rating system which is a pavement condition evaluation method.) The report was listed by the areas of the County per driver. The Superintendent advised they will be able to increase the estimated number of miles of roadway which will be addressed, from 138 miles to 145 miles. He noted the portion of the County with the largest number of roads needing repair was the San Pierre area, due to the neglect and lack of maintenance in previous years. He advised the roads in that area scored the lowest on the PASER rating. In regard to culvert replacements, he noted the Department has replaced seven culvert/pipes as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, and have six more replacements scheduled for June. In regard to the CR1100E area that was damaged due to the flooding of that area in recent years, since temporary fixes didn't take care of the problem, due to the recent free fill material provided by local concrete plants, the Department was able to build up the roadway and replace a culvert in a few days.

The Superintendent advised, in regard to the four local bridge replacements scheduled for this year, Mark Wilson, of JPR, has submitted the preliminary documentation and cost estimates of Bridges 86 and 31. (Bridge 86 is on CR900S, .2 miles west of CR100W; and Bridge 39 is on CR800E, .2 miles north of CR50S.) He advised both bridges are scheduled for construction bid openings at the July 7<sup>th</sup> Commissioner meeting. Superintendent Ritzler advised, in regard to the Department Safety Program, there has not been a poison ivy claim submitted in over a year. He also reported the Department held a Driving Simulation Training Session last week for the truck drivers which was conducted by Bliss-McKnight, the County's liability insurance carrier.

He advised, in regard to the uniform contract for the Department, Aramark is revising their contract in regard to County Attorney Marty Lucas' suggestions. He noted if Aramark does not agree to the recommendations, he will be pursuing a possible contract with Cintas. He noted, in regard to the Golf Cart Ordinance, at Bass Lake, and at Koontz Lake, the roadways are being redesigned to comply with the new County Ordinance, and are reducing the speed limit on CR625E between Bass Lake and Toto Road from 45 mph to 35 mph. In additional reporting, he advised due to an improved addition at Sporty's Restaurant at Bass Lake, it has resulted in compromising the view from the CR210 access unto SR10. Therefore, he is looking into the possibility of the establishment of a four way stop at that intersection, and is requesting the LTAP through Purdue University, to conduct a traffic study for the County, and will work with INDOT in regard to the results of that study. County Council President, Dave Pearman, inquired if a traffic study could also be held at the intersection of CR700E & CR200N since there have been a number of issues recently at that intersection. The Superintendent stated he would see if Purdue can look into that one also. The Superintendent also noted the Department had been chosen to participate in a pilot program for winter operations. He advised the criteria was established through the APWA (American Public Works Association).

At this time in the presentation, Mark Wilson, of JPR, appeared before the Board also and presented the Project Specifications for Bridges 31 and 86 Replacements. (Copies of the complete Project Specifications Reports for both bridges are on file in the Auditor's Office.) Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Project Specifications of both bridges, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes, and the documentation was signed by the Board. Mr. Wilson noted the Project Specifications of Bridge 79 will be submitted at a later date.

### **SHERIFF'S REQUEST TO PURCHASE SQUAD CARS**

Brack Rowe, Sheriff's Department First Deputy, and Office Manager, Chris Smith, appeared before the Board to present the Sheriff's request to purchase two new squad cars. Ms. Smith advised the two new vehicles would be replacing the 2008 Dodge squad car which currently has 146,000 miles on it, and the 2009 Dodge squad car which currently has 124,000 miles. Commissioner Norem inquired as to the status of the Police Department's pick-up truck. Ms. Smith advised the pick-up, vehicle # 7511, is driven by Officer Kelly Fisher, and currently has only 82,000 miles on it. Commissioner Norem stated the County's Insurance Company has recommended the County's Police vehicles be replaced after obtaining 100,000 miles. There was a discussion in regard to the funding source to pay for the vehicles, and the options included the Sheriff's Commissary Fund, the Cumulative Capital Development Fund, the CEDIT Fund, and also possibly the Rainy Day Fund. Councilman Pearman inquired if it was necessary to purchase both vehicles now or possibly just replace one. President Davis advised the County always purchases two police vehicles a year and not just one. Commissioner Norem advised she knows the importance of the County's Police Department driving reliable squad cars, but stated she would like to see the complete squad car expense, including the vehicle price quotes, noting they will need more than just the one price quote submitted, and they should also include the actual cost to detail the vehicle signage, and the installation of the additional lights on the squad car. She noted the Council will have to appropriate the funding for the purchase of the vehicles, once the Board of Commissioners makes their recommendation. Auditor Chaffins was advised to place that item on the Council's agenda for their June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Councilman Pearman advised there will be a meeting with Porter Starke on Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 9AM to discuss issues at the jail; and also there will be a meeting at 10AM to discuss the 2015 Jail budget out of County General. He stated they will look into any possible increases to jail staffing after the operations begin at the New County Jail, and how those changes will be incorporated into the 2015 budget. He also noted he has spoken with James Coad, Annex Building Custodian in regard to his possibly becoming the main maintenance person at the Jail, and also incorporating a part time maintenance person into his 2015 budget. Commissioner Norem advised the topic of a part time maintenance person was already discussed at the jail meetings, and it will be incorporated into the 2015 jail budget. Councilman Pearman also advised another issue they would be addressing is the question of the 911 dispatchers also working as jailers when there are female prisoners.

## **IN OTHER BUSINESS**

Annex Building Custodian, James Coad, appeared before the Board to request approval of the renewal of the County's three year contract for fire alarm monitoring to Simplex. He advised the present three year contract will expire at the end of July. He stated he had prepared a spreadsheet listing the current contract rates and then the new, proposed contract renewal rates. He noted all the other contract conditions will remain the same. Commissioner Norem inquired as to why there is a 73% increase in the cost of the Highway Department's renewal, from \$168.00 to \$291.00. She stated she would like this added to the next agenda, so the increase in pricing could be researched. Mr. Coad advised there will be an Office Safety Training Class by Bliss McKnight that afternoon at 1PM, and again at 2PM. Councilman Pearman advised he had been receiving complaints in regard to the condition of the railing on the stairwell going to the basement of the Jail, where the Prosecutor's Offices are located. He advised he along with James checked out the railing and advised it is in stable condition. The railing has been corroded due to the large amount of salt it receives in the wintertime, and noted one section of the railing, on the lower part of the stairway, is rusted through and sharp. Also, he noted, James will be installing a chain to chain off the dock area at that location, to prevent anyone from accidentally stepping off the dock.

County Clerk, Evelyn Skronski, appeared before the Board to request approval to increase the amount paid to the food vendors hired to prepare the food for the election workers at the various polling places on election day. She noted the present cost is \$25.00 and she is requesting it be raised to \$35.00, which would increase her budget line item of her 2014 budget in the amount of \$582.00. She advised she could transfer the additional amount required from her postage budget line item to the food vendor line item, to cover the increase. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve her request to increase the food cost by \$10.00, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem inquired if the City of Knox pays for the expense of holding a City election. Clerk Skronski advised, in the past, no, but will look into those costs.

Clerk Skronski also advised she had received a request from Paul Warnke, of the Koontz Lake Sewer District to sign an agreement in regard to utilizing the Koontz Lake Sewer District building as a polling place, and the issue of liability. Attorney Lucas stated he doesn't understand why the agreement would be required since it is a public building which already was being used by the public. President Davis advised she will speak with Mr. Warnke about the reason for the agreement and the timeframe of the agreement. Attorney Lucas stated it appears they would like to see the liability issue be moved to the County's liability insurance carrier instead of theirs.

Attorney Lucas advised, in regard to the Maple Street area of Bass Lake, he has not yet received a response from the DNR as to who was in control of the "public" area on the north side of the lake, and which agency would be in control of the placement location of piers on the lake. He also advised the parties involved, who were in attendance at the meeting that other areas of the lake have handled similar issues with boats and piers and arrived at a solution through neighborly agreements. Mike Risner stated he would like to see the Board of Commissioners make the decision in this issue. Commissioner Norem advised they need to establish who has the rights, and Attorney Lucas need to clarify the issue with the DNR before proceeding. President Davis asked the Auditor to add this item to the next meeting's agenda. Attorney Lucas also noted, in regard to the location of piers on the lake, they must allow for a ten foot clearance on both sides of the pier.

President Davis advised the Board has received paperwork from the Starke County Community Services, the agreement for Starke County to provide funds in the amount of \$10,000.00 to Community Services of Starke County for the fiscal year of January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes and the agreement was signed by President Davis. Commissioner Norem noted the claim for payment to the SCCS was included in the vendor claims docket for approval at today's meeting.

President Davis advised they had received a request from Assessor Rhonda Milner for herself and her two Deputies to attend the Level Three training class to be held September 15-19<sup>th</sup>. Assessor Milner advised she has the funding in her budget for the cost of the training. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem advised the Bass Lake Property Owners' Association had received an invoice from the Starke County Sheriff's Posse in the amount of \$150.00. She noted, the first day to schedule golf carts inspections and issue the new golf

cart ordinance permits was in conflict with the schedule of the County's Police Department and no County Officer was available. Because of the scheduling conflict the Sheriff's Department contacted the Sheriff's Posse to have them cover the six hour period. She stated the invoice of the Sheriff's Posse should be paid out of the monies received from the golf cart permits and not the BLPOA. She noted the Posse's invoice should be submitted in the vendor claims docket for the next meeting of the Commissioners.

Attorney Lucas advised he has not yet received a revision of the Oracle Courthouse Elevator Service Maintenance Contract. He also advised he has received the documentation in regard to the vacating of Lemon Street in the Monterey Resorts, and Beach Street, in the Lausten Sub-division area of Bass Lake. He noted Attorney LeRoy Gudeman had begun the vacating process, but the process was now being completed by Attorney Dave Wallsmith following Attorney Gudeman's retirement. He noted he would like to have the Auditor's Office verify the legal descriptions listed on the vacating requests before the vacated roads are approved by the Board.

President Davis advised the Board had received the Monthly Activity Report of the County's Veteran Service Officer for the month of May, which was submitted by Terry Turner.

### **COUNTY AUDITOR'S BUSINESS: MINUTES, PAYROLL CLAIM, VENDOR CLAIMS**

In regard to the minutes of the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, President Davis advised she did have a correction: it stated in the minutes she had advised Commissioner Danford to contact Attorney Dave Wallsmith if he could not reach the Callahans in regard to issues at Bass Lake. But, she noted, she had actually advised Commissioner Danford to call Attorney Wallsmith directly when he has an issue at the Bass Lake Beach and or Campground instead of attempting to reach the Callahans. Commissioner Danford stated he still should be able to call the Callahans directly. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the payroll claim in the gross amount of \$186,179.84, for the pay period ending on May 24<sup>th</sup>, with a pay date of May 30<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. President Davis advised they have a vendor claims docket in the total gross amount of \$205,877.34, and the following CR300E-SR8 Project Grant claims: Phend & Brown, construction contractor in the amount of \$13,050.00; and a claim, in the amount of \$6,025.00, payable to the Treasurer of Starke County, from the CEDIT fund for the 50% county portion of the grant. That \$6,025.00 will be receipted into Fund 4995, the CR300E SR8 Project Grant Fund. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the vendor and grant claims, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes. Auditor Chaffins advised the preliminary budget forms have been submitted to the Department Heads to start on their 2015 budget planning. Councilman Pearman advised they were requested to reduce their 2015 budget from their 2014 budgets, and not to include any payroll raises at this time. Commissioner Norem stated she will prepare the Commissioners' proposed 2015 budget paperwork. President Davis asked Auditor Chaffins to send a copy of the Summer Intern, Evan Coad's spreadsheet to the larger departments for reference, the Sheriff's, Highway, and EMS departments.

Commissioner Norem advised she had been contacted in regard to the Glenn Flaherty Koontz Lake issue in regard to lake access. She advised no decision has been made in that issue since they are in litigation. Attorney Lucas stated Starke County may also be named as a party in the lawsuit. President Davis advised this is the alternative process to follow when an agreement can't be reached in a neighborly fashion when there are arguments involving lake issues.

Auditor Chaffins advised the County had received a letter from the City of Knox requesting \$100.00 donations for the Starke County Fireworks which will be held at the Starke County Airport on Saturday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. The Board stated the County will not make a donation but following a brief discussion they advised all three Commissioners and Councilman Pearman will be making personal donations, dividing the \$100.00, four ways. (Note: Councilman Pearman's donation was in the amount of \$31.00, so a total of \$106.00 was passed on to the City of Knox.)

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Betty Dotlich inquired if the County knew anything in regard to what appears to be a fairly new looking Koontz Lake Fire Truck which is sitting at the Howard Coffin Salvage Yard. The Board advised the County Commissioners do not have jurisdiction over a township fire department since that is township authority, and she should contact the Oregon Township Trustee, Mark Allen.

There being no further business, Commissioner Norem made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by President Davis. The motion passed with all ayes and the meeting was adjourned at 11:10AM.

**June 2, 2014**

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Kathy Norem

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Kent Danford

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Jennifer Davis

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