

MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2019

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00PM in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Kathryn Norem and Bryan Cavender 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 6:00PM.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

EMS Clerk MaryLynn Ritchie appeared before the Board to present their monthly departmental report. Clerk Ritchie presented their runs and billings report, she stated that for the month of May they have done really well at a total of 219 runs, 30% of those runs are transfers from the hospital. She advised that they are up a total of \$43,870.37 from this time last year and their collection total is \$102,202.83. Commissioner Norem asked if the department was up a total of \$102,202.83 for the year; Clerk Ritchie advised that this amount was only for the month of May and their year to date total has increased \$111,821.50 from this time last year. Clerk Ritchie presented the collections report. Commissioner Norem read the collections reports as follows: \$1,729.50 from Small Claims Court and \$1,234.01 from Collections Attorney Jonathan O'Hara. Clerk Ritchie then presented the operation report. She stated the main remark in the operation report is that they have recertified through the State of Indiana, this recertification will be good for the next two years.

COUNTY HIGHWAY MONTHLY REPORT

Rik Ritzler, Superintendent of the County Highway Department, appeared before the Board to present his monthly departmental report. He reported that May 2019 was, as you are aware, very wet. The weather dictated more than half of their maintenance/improvement efforts during this month. They had spent much of the month dealing with drainage issues, downed trees, and potholes. Although they did finish a major project, the CR210/600S intersection improvement. They were also able to replace a few culverts and they have begun making their cold mix asphalt. They hope to see better weather in June so they can get their paving and chip seal operations in full gear. He reported that the 1st round of mowing of the landfill is complete and will be mowed next in late June early July, the six mowers they have out mowing roadside are behind due to the rain, the road crew started today weed eating around signs and bridges, roadkill disposal, and trash pickup. He advised they have been out with the bucket truck a lot, especially on the roads they will be paving, the brush chopper has been out as well. They will have the whole summer to get caught up on that as well. They have not started the dust control yet because of the rain and they have been patching the best they can to get caught up and they will continue to patch as needed.

Superintendent Ritzler reported that in road improvements they have finished the CR210/600S intersection improvement. The project on CR25N from 600E to SR23 will begin either late this week or early next week. Chip sealing has been delayed due to the rain and temperature, they will be completing two rounds of chip sealing, they are making the cold mix asphalt now and this should be done either later this week or early next week. He explained the cold mix needs a few weeks to cure and when it is ready they will begin part one of their paving operations. He reported that the hot mix asphalt/truck plan route with the community crossing projects will be 250N from US35 to Range Rd., 50S. from SR39 to Knox City Limits, 400S from 650W to US421, and Range Road from SR10 to Toto Rd. He stated all of these may not be done this year, it just depends on how much money they receive from the Community Crossings Grant. He stated the Boa Shores Crosswalk will be done in July. They are also continuing the process of rebuilding 1100E from 150N to 300N, they are hoping to be able to reopen that this year. He stated they will also be crack sealing in August this year which helps preserve the hot mix roadways. He reported they have had a lot of drainage issues because of the rain and will continue to work in various areas of the county.

He advised that they have replaced four culverts this month, they have a total of 21 culverts they would like to get done this year. They have finished the culvert cleaning, they cleaned 44 culverts and will continue as needed. He advised they are looking into buying an old fire truck from the Bass Lake Fire Department to be used for future culvert cleaning projects. Bridge cleaning is complete for this year and bridge sealing will begin in the fall. He reported that Bridge Number 154 on 100E is very close to being completed, Bridge Number 140 on 200E will have a bid opening on June 17th, and Bridge Number 7's

plan are being revised. He advised this month, besides their usual weekly morning meetings, they had sent employees to the following trainings: LTAP Chain Saw Training and Temporary Traffic Control. He stated this week he will be going to the IACHES Conference, during this conference they will have LTAP Road Scholar class #1 Asset Management and some of his employees will be attending this course. He advised that the LTAP Road builder awards are this week at the IACHES Conference,

Superintendent Ritzler presented the Annual Hwy Report to the Board of Commissioners for review and signatures. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to accept the Annual Hwy Report as presented for signatures. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed. He stated the US30 Coalition has not had much change in the status, the coalition is looking into "lobbying" our local state representatives. He advised they have selected a consultant for the Steller Communities application they have selected DLZ and will be meeting with Jodi Coblenz tomorrow to finalize the contract. He stated they will be developing committees such as a Bass Lake Committee, Koontz Lake Committee, and Arts Committee. He advised that the public is welcome to attend and especially the public from these different areas. Attorney Lucas stated the committees will be able to hold the meetings within their own areas as well. He stated that Larry Wickert and he gave a presentation at the Bass Lake Property Owners Association recently, he asked if the Koontz Lake Property Owners Association would like this presentation as well. Commissioner Norem advised she has already spoken to the Koontz Lake Property Owners Association and they do not need a presentation as Bob Alloy is taking care of everything for them for the Steller Communities.

Superintendent Ritzler advised that there are several areas of concern involving INDOT he would like to mention. He has already contacted INDOT about these issues but will be following up with them. The Koontz Lake Fish & Wildlife area mowing, State maintenance done by the county, Koontz Lake flooding Iroquois/SR 23, Bass Lake realignment of SR 10, and no passing zone on US 35 near 500S. Commissioner Cavender asked Ritzler if he could add the pot holes that are at the intersection of 200S and US35 to the list as well.

SCEDF MONTHLY REPORT

Larry Wickert, the Director of the Starke County Economic Development Foundation appeared before the Board to present his monthly report. He advised he had a good meeting with Ball State the other day and presented the logo to the Board for the Constellation of Starke. He explained that within the logo all the stars represent communities within the county and the bird is a sand hill crane. He explained they are still working on a project list, and how they are going to do the projects as well as pay for those projects. All this needs to be done for the preliminary draft that is due in July. He stated another issue he would like to mention to the Commissioners is the Norton expansion. The SCEDF owns the building and the property and they had to get a bond. The bond payments will be charged as lease payment to Norton. They are going to be putting up a 40,000 square foot addition, this is a 2.27 million dollar project. Of the 2.7 million dollars 1.7 million will be financed with the bond. There will be about 20 jobs over the next 3 years added. He advised the average wage at Norton right now is \$13.23, the cash value being \$19.20 with the benefits added in. He stated they had a real good SKILL graduation a few days ago. They had 400 people in attendance with about 75 of those being the graduates, this is 20 more than last year.

Commissioner Norem advised Larry Wickert of a few items, one being that it takes \$15.00 an hour for someone to get out of the poverty level. With this being said, she hopes that they will consider increasing their wages at some point. Director Wickert advised that they did increase their wages a couple dollars an hour last year and they have made strides from where they were. Commissioner Norem stated we need to keep making more strides otherwise we will never break out of the poverty cycle. Commissioner Norem advised another issue that was brought up during the budget workshop that will be brought up at the next council meeting is the possibility of the county buying the Sysco property and marketing that. She stated we need to talk about what we need to do to get some economic development and that property is developed and can easily have a lead track brought in. Director Wickert stated he believes this is a good idea as Sysco is wanting to sell it in one lump sum and he believes this will not be possible. He believes that over the next 30 years there would be a possibility of having 30 users come into that property.

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Matt Noonan and J. Nier the EMA Director came before the Board of Commissioners with an update of their progress regarding radio communication. Mr. Noonan asked if the Board had received and reviewed the Communication's Committee proposal he had sent by email. Commissioner Norem

advised she had not gotten a chance to fully review but she did forward the document to Dave Pearman and Brad Hazelton for review as well as they are both fireman that have a stake in this and they are both on the County Council. Commissioner Norem advised Mr. Noonan to provide a cliff note version of the document during his presentation. Mr. Noonan explained they had a small plan in place prior to developing the proposed current plan, this plans would provide a physical copy to everyone involved and holds procedures they can follow. The plan is in place to stop individuals from contacting the commissioner's and to start contacting the communication's committee when they are experiencing radio problems. They have a chain of command that is to be followed. For example, when the fire department has an issue they would bring the issue to the Fire Association and then the association can bring the issue to the Communication's Committee or the president of the Fire Association should bring the issue up with the Board of Commissioners. The proposed plan is going over what they have in place and what the committee can assist with EMA wise. He advised there are 4 members currently on the communication committee.

Mr. Noonan advised he works very closely with Motorola out of Chicago at the Motorola headquarters, he stated he also works with Kenwood as well as J & K Communications. He believes we lack having communication with the system. He stated it is nothing against the Board of Commissioners or the users of the system, but if we don't understand our system or what is in place with our system then it is hard to fix the system. He stated this is new and there can be changes made to the proposed document. He believes this will help individuals understand what systems we have and what our dispatchers can do and what us as the user can do. He feels training is an important factor and he has spoken to fireman, EMS, and firemen that don't understand how to use their radios in the proper way. As a Committee himself, Kenny Pfof, and Dave Tolson are going to work hard on the training aspect of the radio system so that people know how to use their radios correctly. He advised he is also working on grant funding with Motorola solutions. After further discussion about tone findings, radio channels, and the possibility of being able to program our own radios in Starke County Mr. Noonan stated we currently have a good system in place, he explained our system is based off of Columbia City. When J & K built the system for our county it was based off of their own system in Columbia City.

Commissioner Norem asked if this plan were to be approved what the next steps are. She also asked if the Communications Committee is requesting the Board of Commissioners to sign and authorize the proposed plan but she would like wait until Commissioner Chesak is present as well. Mr. Noonan stated this plan would but base lines on many things, it puts out a responsibility on what the county would be responsible for and what the jurisdictions and departments would be responsible for. Commissioner Norem asked if this plan would be presented to the fire departments and would the committee be doing this before or after the commissioner's approval. Mr. Noonan stated they would be taking this plan to the fire departments after the approval as it is a definite document that would need to be followed. He advised this would not just be for fire departments, this would include EMS and the sheriff's department as well. Commissioner Norem asked what happens when a complaint comes in. Mr. Noonan explained that if the Commissioners were to receive a complaint they could refer them to contact Mr. Noonan instead. Commissioner Norem asked if the committee has plans on replacing Ted. Mr. Noonan advised the committee has not met yet since Ted's passing. Commissioner Norem advised that the Sheriff felt that someone from the Sheriff's Department should be on the committee. Director Nier stated that the Communication's Committee has invited the Sheriff several times to their meetings. Mr. Noonan stated there should be an individual from every department on the Communications Committee.

SOLAR ENERGY ORDINANCE

Terry Stephenson, the Planning Commissioner appeared before the Board of Commissioners for the approval request of the Solar Energy Ordinance. Commissioner Norem advised she appreciated having the extra two weeks for review the ordinance and she did visit Larry Wappel's property to see his operation of solar usage, Mr. Wappel also spent much time with Commissioner Norem educating her about the operations and usage of the solar panels. Commissioner Norem advised she would like to see two things clarified in the ordinance. The first being about the road damage, she would like to see something in the ordinance that states if they damage the roadways they will pay to have them repaired. The second being a special use permit so that when they come in they would have to meet with the planning commission to go over there plans so the planning commission can see them in advance. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the Solar Energy Ordinance with the two clarifications of being responsible for the road damage and using a special use permit. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Other Business

Commissioner Norem advised Stephenson about phone calls she has been receiving about garbage pile up in one of the heavily populated areas in Starke County and there seems to be confusion on the ordinance that would handle this situation. She stated it was said that they had three days to clean the garbage up and in that time rats have become a problem. Commissioner Norem asked Stephenson if the garbage will be cleaned up before the end of the week. Stephenson stated that they had given the property owner three days to clean it up and they have also submitted and accepted bids to clean it up. He stated for some technical reasons it did not get done. Commissioner Norem asked Attorney Lucas if this can be considered an emergency and would need to be completed right away. Attorney Lucas advised he believes they can if there have been vermin sighting at that location. Attorney Lucas asked Stephenson if he agrees that this is a serious problem and this person has been notified previously and properly. Stephenson agreed. Commissioner Norem made a motion to deem this situation as an emergency on North Street, a dumpster should be immediately put on site and the contractor to have the location cleaned up. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion passed.

SOLID WASTE RENTAL AGREEMENT

Commissioner Norem advised that the Commissioners have built a building on the grounds of the highway department for the solid waste district and the Commissioners need to lease it to them. Attorney Lucas has prepared a lease for solid waste which is an inter-government lease whereby the Starke County Commissioners lease to the Solid Waste Board and our Solid Waste District. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the Inter-Governmental Lease for Solid Waste as presented. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed.

IN OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Glenn from SRI came before the Board of Commissioners for approval of their contract with Starke County for tax sales. Commissioner Norem asked Attorney Lucas if he had a chance to review the contract. Attorney Lucas stated there seemed to be a steep hike in price for their services. Glenn explained that they have been with Starke County for over 13 years and in those 13 years the fees have only gone up a total of \$15.00. He advised that court costs have gone up, improvements to technology, and improvements to services they have decided to raise the fee from \$75 to \$100 this year. He stated they have added additional services to help assist their clients with needs they may have and there are no additional costs when they receive calls or come to our location to help with issues with tax sales or sheriff sales. He also explained that this is not a cost that the county absorbs, this cost is paid for by the taxpayer who is behind in their taxes or the individual who would be the tax sale buyer. Furthermore, if the county never collects the money SRI does not charge the county.

Meeting Moved Outside Due to Fire Alarm

Continued....

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the Tax Sale Services Support Addendum. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

AUDITOR'S BUSINESS: MINUTES, VENDOR CLAIMS DOCKET, PAYROLL DOCKET

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the Claims Docket as presented for the amount of \$236,944.65. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the Payroll Claims Docket for the pay period ending on 05/18/19 with a pay date of 05/24/19, in the total gross amount of \$258,258.02. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 6th meeting. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

IN OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Commissioner Norem advised that she had met with John Kirk today and they expect the State to be here to inspect the elevator within two weeks. Once the State comes out and it is approved the elevator will be operable. She advised we received a letter from DLZ, because there was a few changes around

the second and third floor entryway. The letter states this will not affect the historical nature of the building.

Commissioner Norem advised the Commissioner's 2020 budget was turned in for the budget hearings that were held today in the Annex Building Meeting Room. She stated both herself and Commissioner Cavender worked on the budget together. She stated the budget was preapproved today with an increase of about \$124,000.00 which is related mostly to insurance costs. '

Commissioner Norem advised that one other thing that was brought up during the budget meetings today was if the county would be interested in the Moose building, this building is up for sale and would be a perfect site. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to have Commissioner Norem call the realtor to see what the deal is about the Moose building. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed.

There being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Cavender made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

JUNE 3, 2019

ABSENT

Charlie Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

Bryan Cavender

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