

Tuesday, July 5, 2011

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in regular session at 9:00am in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Dan Bridegroom, Kathy Norem, and Jennifer Davis present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

RE: PAYROLL AND VENDOR CLAIMS

Kathy Norem made the motion to approve the payroll claim for the pay period ending June 25, 2011, in the amount of \$ 164,988.48, seconded by Jennifer Davis; passing with three ayes.

Dan Bridegroom presented the pay claims for the period dated July 5, 2011. The amount of the claims totaled \$ 91,295.92. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the claims for payment, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: MINUTES

Kathy Norem made the motion to approve a draft of the minutes of the June 16th, June 20th, June 29th, and June 30th meetings, and the final minutes of the June 6th meeting. Jennifer Davis seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with three ayes.

RE: EMS

Mary Lynn Ritchie, EMS Clerk, notified the board of \$ 584.98 collected from Mr. O'Hara and \$1064.47 received from the Starke County Clerk for accounts that were in collections.

Lisa Burger, the EMS Director appeared before the board. She stated they had just been recertified with the State.

RE: COUNTY HIGHWAY

Ken Minett, of Butler, Fairman and Seufert Co. of Indianapolis, IN appeared before the Board to give a report on the status of the county's bridge projects. He stated on Bridge 156, the DNR permit was to be submitted electronically that day, July 5th. Also they did not require divers to locate and inspect the footings. He also advised he will be proposing a spread box beam bridge, for Bridge # 156. He also stated they may not need a DNR permit on bridges 9 & 62.

Steve Siddall appeared before the Board to remind them that Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Bridegroom still needed to do their chip and seal tour. Commissioner Davis set a time of Tuesday, July 6th, at 4:00pm.

Commissioner Bridegroom addressed the issue of obstruction of visibility at the intersections in regards to corn growing too close to the road. Marty Lucas advised if the crop is growing in the county easement, the county could cut it down. Commissioner Norem inquired if a notice needed to be placed in the legals of the newspaper stating the county's intentions, and Marty replied that it is not necessary for a legal notice, only a public service announcement/notice would be sufficient. Commissioner Bridegroom asked Ted Hayes, of WKVI, and Ben Haut, of the Leader to do the PSA.

RE: JAMES COAD/COUNTY'S SAFETY SYSTEMS

James Coad, of the Annex building maintenance, appeared before the Board to discuss the price quotes/proposals he has received to have the Safety Systems tested and inspected. He has received quotes from Simplex Grinnell and F.E. Moran Inc. The proposals received are on file in the Auditor's Office. The proposal would cover the cost of inspecting the fire extinguishers in the Courthouse and the Annex Building. He did advise that the Simplex Co. requires prepayment, as a part of their contract. Marty Lucas, after reviewing the contract, stated he had questions about the contract. Commissioner Norem stated they should have Simplex come to the next morning meeting and submit a quote that includes the jail, courthouse and annex building. They should be prepared to answer questions regarding the contract wording and their prices and payment schedule. If they are interested in pursuing a relationship with the county, they should come to the Aug. 1st meeting. Commissioner Davis stated if they can't change their prepayment requirement of their billing practices, they shouldn't even come to the meeting. If they can't agree to that, Moran should be contacted to give a presentation at the Aug. 1 meeting. The Commissioners did advise James to get the fire extinguishers updated at both the courthouse and the Annex building. If Carl didn't have it in his budget to do both buildings, it would be paid out of the Commissioner's budget. They advised Jim to have the fire extinguishers examined and replace if necessary. It has to be done for the safety of the county. They also advised the Council should consider the Annex Building maintenance, along with the courthouse's maintenance, in next year's budget.

RE: STEVE DODGE

Steve Dodge appeared before the Board to advise them he had conducted research on Marty Lucas serving on the Visitors' Association Board. He stated in his point of view, Marty serving on the Board would not be a conflict. He also stated in doing research he discovered where the Commissions had passed a resolution creating the Innkeepers Tax, but never located a resolution or ordinance creating the Tourists' Board. He advised the Commissioners will need to pass a resolution or ordinance passes by the Commissioners creating the Board, which currently has nine members. Jenny Carter, who was in the audience, stated that the Visitors' Board currently has by-laws that exist. She believed they were created by Charlie Weaver prior to 2008. Mr. Dodge stated he could not locate anything about it in the past Commissioners' minutes. Marty suggested the Commissioners establish a resolution which would state the number of members, and also the objectives of the Board. Commissioner Davis made a motion to have Marty Lucas establish a resolution to create the Visitors' Board. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Marty requested a copy of the by-laws to give him some direction. The new appointments to the Board were postponed to the next meeting. A copy of Mr. Dodge's recommendation is on file in the Auditor's office.

Steve Dodge also discussed the situation regarding his client, Wade Allen and the US Railroad Vest property. He advised Ken Whiles had informed him that US Railroad Vest does have title to that property. Mr. Dodge stated he sees three possibilities of how to handle the situation:

1. Mr. Allen would be shown to be the "marketable" property owner. He wants the county to forgive the taxes and put the property back on the tax rolls.
2. Put all the US Railroad Vest property, that are delinquent on their taxes, to be placed on the tax rolls.
3. Do nothing at all, (which has been what happened in the past).

Commissioner Norem made a motion to send that particular parcel to tax sale and or certificate sale. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

RE: PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE NEW COPY MACHINE:

County Prosecutor, Nick Bourff, appeared before the Board to request approval to purchase a new copy machine for the Prosecutor's office. He advised currently they have a lease on a Canon IRC3170 copier, and are paying \$ 189.30/month. He stated the company would buy out the old contract. The new copier is a Canon IRC2030, and would cost \$ 188.00/month. He advised everyone in the office would be networked to that printer, which is a color printer and also serve as a fax machine. The 48 month lease would be paid from the Pre-trial Diversion Fund. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the purchase, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes. A copy of the agreement is on file in the Auditor's office.

Also in front of the Board was a request from an employee in the Prosecutor's office, Amanda Marsh, to take a 6-8 week, unpaid leave of absence. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: LIABILITY INSURANCE & WORKMAN'S COMP.:

Bridget Dunn Markin, of 1st Source Insurance, appeared before the Board to discuss the county's renewal for the liability insurance. She stated she could offer a 3 year guaranteed rate if the county could keep the loss ratio at 18%. She was before the Board requesting approval to renew the insurance coverage. Commissioner Norem made a motion to renew the policies for both the liability (property & casualty) insurance and workman's compensation. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

At this time in the meeting, Commissioner Norem made a motion to amend the agenda. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. The meeting was then opened to the Public.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

Sheriff Oscar Cowen appeared before the Board to receive approval on his fee schedule that he proposed at an earlier meeting. He stated he has been contacted by CASA to run background checks. He advised the Sheriff's Department can't run background checks through IDEX for employment. He stated if the County contracted Ron Lawson, as a private detective, to run the background checks, at a fee of \$10.00 each, the police department could do the fingerprinting. There would be a \$ 40.00 fee per background check, payable by the employment applicant. The Sheriff advised of the \$ 40.00 fee, the \$ 10.00 would go to Ron Lawson, and the \$30.00 would be receipted into the County General Fund. He advised it would need its own revenue number so that the amount receipted from background checks could be properly recorded.

Commissioner Bridegroom stated that Ron Lawson should file a Conflict of Interest form with the County Clerk's office. Marty Lucas advised there would not be a conflict of interest for the county to enter into a contract with Ron Lawson. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the Sheriff's request to contract Ron Lawson to do background checks. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. The Commissioners advised Sheriff Cowen to have Ron submit the proposal in writing to Marty. Also, Ron would need to conduct the background searches on his own time. In reference to the other fee requests: copies of accident reports would increase from \$ 5.00 to \$ 10.00; case reports from \$ 5.00 to \$ 10.00; fingerprinting would now be \$ 10.00; background checks locally \$ 10.00; Registering sex offenders \$ 50.00; and updating the sex offender register, \$ 5.00. Marty stated he did not see any problem with the increase request. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the fee requests; seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes. The Commissioners inquired as to what the status was with purchasing a new squad car, and the Sheriff advised he was waiting on the 2012 bids.

(Note: The account was established to reflect the fees collected for background checks: revenue line item: 0101 000-6650).

Brenda Stanojevic, the Republican Party Chairman, appeared before the Board to announce the resignation of Charles Paulsen, from the Railroad Township Advisory Board, effective July 1, 2011. She stated Michael Lawecki would be replacing Mr. Paulsen, and he has been sworn in by County Clerk, Evelyn Skronski.

In reference to the County Option Dog Tax, the Auditor advised her office has volunteered to be the collection agent for the tax. She will communicate with the Clerks in North Judson and Knox to learn their process and obtain a supplier of forms and tags. The Commissioners advised her to notify the Council of this, and also when the Dog Tax process begins, to notify the Veterinary offices in the County, and also the Humane Society.

The next item to be discussed was the distribution of checks by the Auditor's office. The Commissioners stated they would like the Auditor to mail out all of the checks processed, and not return them back to the department who had requested the claim. If the department requested, a copy of the check could be given to them.

The next item discussed was the notice received by the County of an unemployment claim filed by the part time helper in the Treasurer's office, Jenny Norem. A discussion regarding part time hours, vs. being underemployed, was held. Commissioner Davis stated she believes the county needs to redefine the part time status in the county employee's handbook.

In regards to a request for approval on contracting with Mike Nielsen, of Government Fixed Asset Services, for next year, they advised Mr. Nielsen would need to appear before the Commissioners at their Aug. 1st meeting.

Commissioner Bridegroom advised of the request from a taxpayer to pave the gravel road in front of their residence on CR100W, south of CR800S. The Commissioners advised there is not enough traffic on that stretch on road to justify paving it.

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the signing of the Congressional School Fund Report, a state report, showing the balance as of May 1, in the amount of \$ 14,720.35. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

The Commissioners announced they will be taking a tour of the Marshall County Jail, that afternoon, on July 5th.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

July 5, 2011

Dan Bridegroom, President

Kathy Norem, Vice President

Jennifer Davis

Katherine Chaffins, Auditor & Secretary to the Board of Commissioners