

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2020

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 7:10PM, due to the lateness of the Starke County Council/Commissioner Joint Session, in person at the Starke County Annex Building, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, 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 President Charles Chesak directly after the Joint Session with the Starke County Council at 7:10PM.

FACE COVERING MANDATE

Health Nurse Frank Lynch and Dr. Browne, Health Board Officer came before the Board of Commissioners to speak about the Starke County Health Departments Public Health Order for Face Covering Mandate. Health Nurse Lynch advised that they are going to follow suit with LaPorte and Marshal Counties in issuing as Public Health Order, Face Covering Mandate. This is to try and help slow the spread of COVID-19. Commissioner Norem advised she did review the order and it looks very similar to what the other counties have issued. Commissioner Cavender stated he does not agree that we should mandate wearing a mask. He advised that over 75% of the public, that he has spoken to, does not agree with this mandate. He understands that they can mandate this without the Commissioners approval but he does disagree with it. Health Nurse Lynch asked for any other suggestions on how we get people to wear masks if not by this order. Commissioner Cavender advised that all they can do is ask. Health Nurse Lynch stated that is what they are doing, without enforcement, with this order. Commissioner Norem advised she does agree with the order and she is glad the Health Department is taking a firm stand on it and she understands that there is not any penalty. We are not going to arrest people and put them in jail and no fines. He stated it is an incredibly strong reminder that they should be wearing them. It is a far more virulent virus that kills more people than the H1N1 or anything else. She advised it is interesting as well, everyone knows that we have had an employee tests positive at the Annex Building and they have had one in Pulaski County as well, it is going to happen, but some of the people who are the most vocal against masks, suddenly wanted to protect everything. If they would just wear the mask and follow the CDC guidelines we would not be in this boat.

Commissioner Norem advised that we have enough exceptions to the order, she read them as follows:

1. any child aged two years or less (a face covering may cause such a child to suffocate);
2. any individual who has a physical disability that prevents easily wearing or removing a face covering;
3. any individual who is deaf and needs to remove the face covering to use facial and mouth movements as a part of their communication;
4. any individual who has been advised by medical professional that wearing a face covering may pose a risk to the person wearing the face covering for health related reasons;
5. any individual who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance;
6. any individual who is directed to remove a face covering by a law enforcement officer;
7. any employee engaged in a work-related activity where a face covering would present or exacerbate a hazard as recognized by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration;
8. any employee in a manufacturing or other work environment where management has determined that high temperatures or concurrent use of other protective gear make mask wearing impractical, unsafe and where virus transmission is being prevented by social distancing;
9. any individual whose religious beliefs prevents them from wearing a face covering;
10. any restaurant or bar customer while they are dining; and.
11. any individual who (1) is not in an area open to the public and (2) can maintain at least 6 feet from all other individuals not residing in his or her household.

Commissioner Norem stated as a nurse she believes in the science, she does not want her husband to get it and she would appreciate courtesy from other people that they wear their face mask, and she herself is in the high risk category. She feels that individuals need to be part of the solution not part of the problem. She advised Dr. Browne that she appreciates him doing this. Councilman Hazelton asked when this mandate will go into effect. Health Nurse Lynch advised it will go into effect Wednesday, July 22, 2020. Councilman Hazelton then asked if they have any idea of when they may lift this mandate. Health Nurse Lynch advised it would be when the number start leveling out. He advised this is an alternative to the stay at home order. He is not saying this is going to beat it or stop it but for right now this is all that

they can do to try and slow it down as much as they can. Dr. Browne advised that social distancing and hand washing are still to remain as a critical factor.

Dr. Browne advised that several counties around us has already implemented this and 30 states within the United States, have already done this. He believes we are seeing a significant rise in cases throughout the county and locally as well. He would like to see a significant improvement in cases within the county before they would rescind this mandate. Commissioner Norem advised that she hears teachers are starting to panic because they are about to go to the schools and there is no masks being required for the kids to wear or them and she believes it will go ramped through the schools. Councilman Hazelton asked if with this order the kids in the school would have to wear a mask. Dr. Browne stated yes they would. Dr. Browne read the mandate as follows:

Every individual must properly wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when they are at:

1. any indoor area open to the public, including public transportation, schools, churches and indoor places of work or business;
2. any outdoor public area where a distance of 6 feet from individuals outside of their household cannot be maintained or is not consistently being maintained; or,
3. any private indoor or outdoor area where a distance of 6 feet from individuals visiting from outside of their household cannot be maintained or is not consistently being maintained.

An adult should supervise use of face coverings by children aged 3 to 12 to avoid misuse. A properly worn face covering is one that fully covers the individual's mouth and nose, fits snugly against the sides of the face with no gaps, is secured (i.e. straps, ear loops) to prevent slipping, and allows for breathing with no restriction.

Auditor Oesterreich asked how this affects county employees. Commissioner Norem stated they are bound by the obligation of this and are required to wear a mask to work. This also include any public persons that would come into the county buildings. Health Nurse Lynch stated we have a total of 65 new active cases now for the month of July and it is only the 20th. He advised that in June they had 36 new cases, May they had 22 new cases. He also advised that 66 cases in Starke County are still symptomatic fighting COVID. Dr. Browne stated that at least 40% of the cases are coming from individuals who don't know they are carrying the virus. He advised that unlike the flu were you can only transmit after you begin your symptoms this can be transmitted before symptoms even start. An individual in the audience asked how many people came to the free testing. Health Nurse Lynch advised 77 came last Tuesday and 83 on Wednesday. He advised the free testing will still be there Tuesday, July 21st through Saturday, July, 25th. He also stated he is working on a grant right now to be able to have regularly based testing in the county. Dr. Browne advised that the Starke County Health Department feels this mandate is in the best interests of the people in Starke County. The masks does not only protect you from another individuals it protects that individual from you as well. If we can block some of the transmission of the virus from the masks we are going to be better off and if you do get a case of the COVID it may be a less serious case your chances of surviving are much better. Commissioner Norem advised she believes the Starke County Health Department did a good job at researching all the information that needed to be researched for this mandate and as a nurse, grandmother, mother, and wife she is glad they have

ANNEX 2 TREE QUOTE REQUEST

Maintenance Director Jim Coad came before the Board of Commissioners to present quotes for a tree removal on the Annex 2 property. The quotes are as follows:

TNT - \$1200.00

C & J Affordable Tree Service - \$800.00

TD Tree Service - \$875.00

Commissioner Cavender asked if all of these quotes included the cleaning of everything up except for the grinding of the stump. Director Coad stated yes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to accept the quote from C & J Affordable Tree Service. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PLANNING COMMISSION – DRIVEWAY PERMIT

Starke County Surveyor Bill Crase came before the Board of Commissioners to present a purposed Driveway Permit for the Starke County Planning Commission. Surveyor Crase advised that they have been talking about this for a long time and what this is going to protect is us from people flooding people out, to make sure driveways are safe for the county, and to make sure they have control to stop this before it happens. This would give us the authority to make sure they are installed properly, whether they need culverts, or they don't need culverts, and not to mention the transmission of where the driveways meet the roads. He advised that the only change they have made is in section 6.1 where it says there will be no cost for the driveway permit. It has been recommended that there should be a small cost for the permit of \$25. Commissioner Norem agreed that we do need a permit process in place because they have run into some troubles, especially over at Bass Lake. However, she would like to see Superintendent Ritzler have some sort of involvement in the permit process especially if the driveways are coming onto the county roads. Commissioner Norem advised she would like to have two weeks to see if he has any thoughts or suggestions on it. Other than that it seems pretty straightforward. It was decided that this will be discussed again at the next meeting. Commissioner Chesak asked about the fee they wanted to charge. Surveyor Crase advised they can do a correction to the purposed permit to include the fee they want to charge. Attorney Lucas advised it would be good to include a citation to the permit that gives them authority to charge the fee. Surveyor Crase also mentioned that they had made a change to 7.2 in the fine section but he would like approval tonight to section 7.3 where it states that 100% of the fines collected will go into the unsafe building fund because they really need revenue coming into that fund. Commissioner Norem agreed that yes they do need revenue coming into that fund but is not sure if that can be done. Attorney Lucas advised he will look into the authority regarding what fund the fine collection can go into.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the payroll docket in the amount of \$277,226.21, including deductions in the amount of \$83,419.82 for the pay period ending on 7/11/2020 and pay date of 7/17/2020. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$244,032.23. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to appoint Joshua Pits to the Community Corrections Board for the remainder of the term of Jessica Venice. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem advised they have received two quotes for the Starke County Economic Development Performance Review. One was from Structure Point out of Indianapolis and the second one was from Thomas P. Miller and Associates. Commissioner Norem stated she did share both of these with Director Wickert and asked his opinion. They both agreed that the Thomas P. Miller would be the best. She feels their personal would be better suited for what they wanted to experience in a rural setting and specifically she thought their approach would be better suited for us. They will be doing a review of existing conditions and an economic snapshot as well as stakeholder interviews and a SWOT analysis. After the review they will have a recommendation presented to the Board of Commissioners. The cost will be \$10,000 and our share will be a little more than \$5,000 with Economic Development paying just under \$5,000. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the proposal by Thomas P. Miller and Associates to start as soon as possible and to pay the entire \$10,000 out of CEDIT, and then bill Economic Development Foundation. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Norem 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 8:00 PM.

JULY 20, 2020

Charlie Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

Bryan Cavender

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