

MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00PM, 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 6:00PM.

KIRPC – BROADBAND PLAN

Shawn Cain came before the Board of Commissioners, she explained now that they have secured Pam as the person who will be the contact for Starke County for the IADC portion, we now have to pass two resolutions. One is the resolution for OCRA accepting the plan and the second is the IADC resolution. After some discussion between Attorney Lucas and Shawn Cain regarding whether or not both resolution needed to be passed it was decided that the Ordinance the Commissioners passed on May 18th named “Starke County Commissioners Ordinance 2020-015 Broadband Ready Community would be used for the OCRA acceptance of the plan and what still needed to be passed is “Local Resolution Approving the Starke County Broadband Plan Resolution 2020-020. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve Local Resolution Approving the Starke County Broadband Plan Resolution. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

SCEDF REVIEW – THOMAS P. MILLER & ASSOC.

Jack Woods with Thomas P. Miller & Associates advised that he is a project consultant and does a lot of the project management. He also has Matt Roove on the line as well who is their Director of Economic Development. Matt Roove then introduced himself and explained that the firm has been around for about 30 years, they work coast to coast with Workforce Development and Economic Development but their home turf is the State of Indiana. Commissioner Norem explained to both Jack and Matt that the Director and Secretary of the Starke County Economic Development is here in the audience and asked if they would explain the scope of their work and the timeline for that. Mr. Woods explained they will be doing a review of the Starke County Economic Development Foundation in terms of what has been accomplished previously and how they can build off that and focus goals on the future. Also they will look into were efforts should be placed in the future in terms of Economic Development in Starke County. They are looking to complete four things. The first will be reviewing current conditions, the plans that have been currently done, and sitting down with the Board of Commissioners and looking to see what they want to outcomes to be in this process. Second, they will be diving into the data analysis and economic snapshot of existing conditions in the county. Third, they will sit down and do stakeholder interviews and SWOT analysis which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Lastly, they will come together with a summary of the three previous tasks and where they see the direction of Economic Development going for Starke County.

Mr. Woods advised in terms of timeline, they are ready to get going right now and they hope to be completed by mid to late September. Commissioner Norem made a motion to accept the Professional Services Agreement as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

Clerk MaryLynn Ritchie presented the collection report to Commissioner Chesak. The collection amount from Attorney O’hara is \$1,095.62. She advised that their numbers are about the same, people are still reluctant about going to the hospital. However, the transfers from the hospital have increased a bit. She stated that 33% of the runs last month were transfers generated from the hospital. She advised they are down about \$69,000 this year in revenue because they are not getting the normal call volume. Director Clary advised that as our operations continue to run smoothly with four ambulances for 12 hours of the day, and three 24 hour ambulances throughout our county. They continue to keep up to date policies in regards to COVID-19. He stated he has hired two additional part-time paramedics to assist with any open shifts on their schedule. They have continued to keep overtime to a minimum throughout the pandemic, but wanted to make sure we continue on that track. Director Clary advised that they continue to train our staff on the daily changes in regards to protecting themselves against COVID-19. They held their monthly audit and review with Starke Hospital and Doctor Marovich. They mainly

spoke of some summer related emergencies they have been having. He stated they have trained on drowning victims, and how their care differs from a standard medical related cardiac arrest.

Director Clary also stated they continue to provide monthly medical training to Washington Township Fire Department. I recently taught CPR to the SCILL Center, and local physical therapy facility. They will be doing a weekend training this weekend with a couple of their Paramedics who are qualified to teach TCCC course which is a tactical combat casualty course. They will be doing this two day course to help our crews respond to possible active shooter situations, or just how to protect themselves using physical tactics etc. It will be a two day, 18 hour course. The first day we will be doing a classroom session, and the second day will be all hands on scenarios at the school. The scenarios may include you becoming wounded, and having to treat a patient/yourself while getting yourself to safety/ He is excited to be able to bring this course to his staff. Director Clary also advised they have had another injury free month. In ambulance maintenance, the ambulances have all been going in for routine maintenance. 0084 out 2012 used unit we just purchased recently went in for front end work. It has a torn bushing in the right front, and needed struts. They discovered where we has been leaking antifreeze while it was there as well. The cooler was leaking, but then they found the heater cooler to be leaking as well. He stated the truck remains out of service as of this meeting. They hope to have it back in service within the next two days. Director Clary also advised that Medic 5's base recently had a hot water heater go out, but luckily the heater control valve was still under warranty. It was repaired by a local plumber.

HWY MONTHLY REPORT

Stephen Ritzler, Superintendent of the Starke County Highway Department came before the Board of Commissioners to present his monthly report. He presented the board with a spreadsheet showing the Highway Department's MVH draws. He advised that their July draw was down 18% than the year before but June was 25% so they are on a downward trend. As of right now they are down about 7.2% for the year which is about \$140,000. He stated that the worst case scenario would be that they would be at a 15% loss (\$500,000) for the year. They will still be able to absorb this amount and would not have to make a drastic changes. He advised they have cut the budget by \$221,000 for next year. Superintendent Ritzler advised that productivity remains good. They have completed 55.715 miles of various types of road improvements. They have begun paving their first round of CMA. They will be chip sealing later this month and crack sealing in September. They are currently on pace for about 85 miles of road improvements, if all goes well. This would allow us to come close to last year's total of 88.75. He then presented a chart of the bridgework, roadwork, and other activities; he also presented the 2020 Road Improvement List. He advised the mowing pace is on target for at least four passes for the year. The brush chopping is on pace for two passes for the year. However, they have been experiencing increased expectation from the public and they are doing the best they can do to accommodate additional mowing requests but it is beginning to take away from other areas that need it.

Superintendent Ritzler then explained the tree call-out procedures. He stated earlier this month they had 32 tree call outs in a 24 hour period. We rarely speak about this and we thought it would be a good time to discuss it. The Superintendent answers each phone call from dispatch. He then contacts either the operations foreman Dale Conley or Ralph Saine. Ralph and a crew leader, Reid Barnett were commended because each of them personally appeared on clearing more than 15 trees. He also advised that for gravel road conversions, they are going to hold off recommending next year's gravel road conversions to chip seal until out new gravel road ratings are complete, Ritzler presented a gravel road chart to the Commissioners for a quick review on how those ratings are completed. He explained that the remaining bridges 137, 7, and 59 are still in design and will not be completed until 2021 and 2022. Superintendent Ritzler presented the Board of Commissioners with an example of a culvert inspection worksheet. He explained that they have completed their 2020 culvert inspections and have completed the 2020 culvert inventory. They found 8 additional culverts that need to be replaced and 103 that need to be cleaned, out of the 625 culverts in Starke County. They have already completed 14 culvert replacements so far this year and 5 of those were done in conjunction with the Surveyor's Office. He advised that the two intersections that they have been asked to review, are taking a little more time with LTAP, but they are going to make recommendations to make changes to both of these intersections. They are just not sure yet on how much of a change they are going to recommend. The intersection of 700E & 200N has had 3 accidents within the last year. This will basically mandate a change at this intersection and 100E & 500S will probably be changed as well. He advised they should have those recommendations by the end of the month.

Superintendent Ritzler advised that he was at the KIRPC Board meeting the other day and Edwin Buswell had mentioned a County-Wide transportation safety grant. He has volunteered for this, it will

consist of a formalized safety plan. He advised Edwin gave the go ahead so they will start going for the grant for the formalized safety plan. He stated he will be meeting with INDOT on Thursday to discuss potential intersection improvement at SR23 and US30. He also advised there is a US30 Coalition meeting on Friday, he has spoken to the Mayor of Columbia City, and he explained to him that Starke County will not be paying their dues for various reasons, he stated they will talk about this as well at the meeting on Friday.

ENGINE/COMPRESSION RELEASE/JAKE BRAKES

Superintendent Ritzler advised that in April of this year he received a request from a citizen in San Pierre to ban engine brakes on US421 through San Pierre, because US421 is a state road, he contacted INDOT about their engine brake policy. As that attached letter indicates, INDOT actually sees a benefit in using such brakes and prohibits signs banning engine brakes from being placed on state roads. INDOT does, however, allow local communities to place signs on state roads enforcing local noise ordinances. The community must complete a few requirements for this to be allowed to happen. Superintendent Ritzler presented the INDOT memo to the Board of Commissioners. He explained that to do this there is criteria you have to meet, you have to have a decibel level you want to hold it at and then you have to have a device that measures that level. They would have to buy a device and put it on US421 to measure that. Commissioner Chesak asked if the ordinance would cover the whole county. Superintendent Ritzler advised it would probably cover the non-incorporated areas. Attorney Lucas advised they may be able to designate residential unincorporated areas or particular stretches of road. After further discussion regarding different stretches of road throughout the county it was decided that Superintendent Ritzler would inquire with INDOT about the placement of the signs and the cost of the device. Attorney Lucas will also look into the question of designating a particular stretch of road.

Superintendent Ritzler explained that Sourcewell is a cooperative purchasing government agency that combines the purchasing power of multiple government agencies across the country. SBOA has given its approval as long as the County Attorney agrees that the bidding rules for Minnesota meet the Indiana state purchasing rules. The service is free and the county is not bound by Sourcewell prices. We can still bid products on our own. He advised this would give them a starting point on the bidding process. Attorney Lucas stated that it is his understanding that to use this service you have to use it as a designated purchasing agent. Superintendent Ritzler is the designated purchasing agent for the highway department but virtue of an ordinance in 2004. Commissioner Chesak advised if other departments are able to utilize this service they should look over the information before they approve this service. After further discussion Superintendent Ritzler explained that they are still making purchases locally, they are just getting the Sourcewell prices as being a member of this cooperative agreement. It was discussed that they could possibly pass this for the highway department tonight but if other departments want to utilize this service they would have to come before the Board of Commissioners for their approval. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the highway department to become a member of Sourcewell. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PROSECUTOR – JOB DESCRIPTION/GRANT APPLICATION REQUEST

Prosecutor Leslie Baker came before the Board of Commissioners to request a change in the Job Description for the DART officer and to apply for a grant. She advised that she had emailed the board the updated job description for the diversion officer that included the language that we all agreed upon concerning the compensation and how the position was funded. Commissioner Norem advised she could not open the attachment and asked Prosecutor Baker to state what was added. Prosecutor Baker stated she added “The salary of the pretrial diversion officer is funded exclusively through grant funding that has been awarded to Starke County, if the grant funding is no longer available to Starke County it is essentially impact the compensation of the position. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the request for the updated job description. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Prosecutor Baker advised that her office is in the process of applying for additional grant funding for the victims advocate called Stop Violence against Women. She explained it is a grant program that they would like to use to enhance the Victims Advocate program by the way of salary. The victims advocate would be on call and be contact by law enforcement when they had crimes relating to domestic violence. The idea is that if they can have face to face contact with the victims from the onset of the crime they believe that they will see less recanting and be able to get their victims connected to services faster. She explained that this would open up the position to be beyond the hours of 8-4. She would like to apply for this grant and if it is received the county would need to match the grant 25%.

Commissioner Norem asked what the amount is that is being requested. Prosecutor Baker advised they are requesting \$25,000, which would include an additional amount for salary, as well as benefits, \$2,500 for mileage, also an on call cell phone and her own service plan. Commissioner Norem advised she does not feel prepared to approve this request today. She stated she believes this is a good idea and this would be wonderful but at the last council meeting and at the budget hearing there was a discussing regarding a hiring freeze. This idea behind this was that in 2021 the county is going to have less revenue coming in because of the COVID pandemic. She advised that the budgets are so slim right now that the only way to carve more out of them is to start laying people off. She is reluctant to fund a position an additional amount of \$25,000 when there is a possibility that we will have to cut staff next year when our funding is reduced. Commissioner Cavender agreed. Prosecutor Baker stated this would be more money coming into the county. Commissioner Norem stated that she is unable to give her blessing at this time for an additional \$25,000 for salaries. She also stated that this should not prohibit Prosecutor Baker from applying for this grant in the future if the financial circumstances change. Councilman Pearman stated that just so the media knows the county does currently have a victim's advocate position and this request is just additional salary for that position because of the additional working hours. He sees a lot of value to this but it is just not good timing in terms of funding it. He said if it is possible to find that money within her budget she may be able to work it out. Prosecutor Baker clarified that the grant amount they have requested is \$25,000 but the county match would be around \$6500.

Commissioner Norem stated she agrees with Councilman Pearman that if she can find this amount in her budget the board may be able to consider that. Attorney Lucas asked how this would deal with the potential overtime liability. Prosecutor Baker said she would not get overtime, they would structure her normal working hours during the week around the call outs she may have received so she would not go over the 35 working hours per week. Commissioner Norem stated then this individual would be still working the 35 hours work week but receiving a \$25,000 raise, she would not be in favor of this. She also stated that this individual is a victim's advocate whether they are called out and meet the victim in the emergency room or in the office. Prosecutor Baker stated she believes it is a little different scenario when you are on call 24/7 rather than just working 8-4. She stated the idea of this was not that she would necessarily work overtime but that she receives an increase in salary because of an increase in expectations, duties, and additional duties. Commissioner Norem advised she is not in favor of this at this time but Prosecutor Baker can still get with the Auditor to go over her budgets to see if she has the additional funding. Both Commissioner Cavender and Commissioner Chesak agreed.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$994,899.46. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the payroll docket in the amount of \$265,014.61, including deductions in the amount of \$80,590.37 for the pay period ending on 7/25/2020 and pay date of 7/31/2020. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the minutes from July 6th and July 20th, 2020. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Auditor Oesterreich came before the Board of Commissioners to request their approval for purchasing an additional add on to their LOW System. She explained that one portion of the CARES Act provide federal grant money to the states and then the states then distribute the money to the local entities. Starke County has been allotted \$744,000. We have until December 31st to spend this money. She explained that it would cover PPE for their employees, sanitizing purchases, technology upgrades, and meal deliveries. Auditor Oesterreich advised she would like to add LOW Tax Info to their current program. She explained that currently researchers, attorneys, and public come into the Auditor's Office to find transfer dates, amounts owed on taxes, deductions amounts, previous owner information, and much more. LOW Tax Info is a site that individuals can access at home rather than coming into the Annex Building. She advised that other Auditors have mentioned that the CARES funding will pay for this program. The set up plus a one year fee is \$27,167.00. Every year after for the maintenance agreement is \$10,000. She said that in the scenario that the CARES funding does not pay for this we have enough LOW training money to pay for this system as well as the maintenance on this system for seven years. After further discussion regarding what the LOW Tax Info System can provide Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the quote as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the 2020 Employee Recognition Event Resolution. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Auditor Oesterreich advised that if we are to use some of the COVID funding for meal deliveries we should have an updated ordinance from the Board of Commissioner that states that they feel there is a continued need for this program. Commissioner Norem asked what funding we are currently using for the meal program. Auditor Oesterreich advised we have used all of the OCRA Funding of \$75,000 and we have only used about \$1,000 of the NICF Grant. However, we are currently using the CARES funding for meal deliveries. Commissioner Norem commended Commissioner Cavender for the time he puts into this program every single week. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the COVID-19 Relief Food Delivery Program Extension. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Norem gave an update on the Veterans Memorial. She advised the last she has given an update they were working on a matching grant that they had applied for through the Indiana Housing Urban Authority in the amount of \$50,000. They had to raise \$50,000 in 60 days, not only did they get the \$50,000 they actually raised \$66,000 which will be matched with \$50,000. She advised the entire committee has been overwhelmed by the generosity of the entire community. Every craftsman to date has donated their time on the construction part of this monument. She advised they did approve last week the final draft of wording that will be on the monuments. Commissioner Norem presented the posters located on the wall in the Commissioners Room. She explained that one will reflect the first donor being the Knox VFW, one will give the names of the Board of Commissioners and Park Board, and one will reflect Frank Ono. She stated that the main stone will be 7 foot tall at the apex, the center will read the Veterans Memorial Plaza and it will have the various branches of government, this will be black granite. The sides will be berry gray and it will contain the names. At the bottom will be a brief description of each of the conflicts. There will be six benches. Doug Allen has donated his time to do the concrete work, his goal is to finish it by September 1st and it take 28 days to cure. The stone is then set to arrive in eight pieces at which time a crane will lift them up over the corners and set them onto the plaza. All of the pieces are scheduled to arrive between October 15th and October 30th.

Commissioner Norem advised that Jeff Berg paid, out of his own pocket, for a forester to come down and take a look at the trees. There were three trees that are located inside the orange fence and there was concern that during the excavation the roots were damaged too much. She advised that the woman had told them the roots were not damaged but the trees were severely rotted and something needs to be done about them. Commissioner Norem stated they will be removing all three trees and the forester gave them a rough sketch of what they should do to put new trees there and new landscaping. She said they do have sufficient funds to buy the trees since they were able to get so much money. She advised that this project is on time and on budget. They will have a dedication ceremony on Veterans Day. The only thing they do not have yet is someone to lay the paver bricks. Jeff Berg then spoke about the changes that were made to some of the monuments. He explained he gave the Veterans eight different paragraphs to choose from for one of the monuments. He read aloud what was chosen "This plaza honors and expresses gratitude all who served and bestows this sacred remembrance under those offering their last full measure of devotion." He explained that through this entire process he has learned about every single name and what, when, where, and how they had died. Commissioner Norem stated that Jeff and Lori Smith spent so much time researching and vetting the names.

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 7:43 PM.

AUGUST 3, 2020

Charlie Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

Bryan Cavender

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