

**STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2021**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 9:30 AM, in person at the Starke County Annex Building, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, Bryan Cavender, and Mark Gourley 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 at 9:30 AM.

**EMS MONTHLY REPORT**

EMS Director Travis Clary and Clerk Nancy Coad came before the Board of Commissioners to provide their Department's monthly report. Director Clary presented the Board with his financial report and his operations report. He advised that his transfers make up about 38% of their runs last month and it has been a busy month in general making their total billed for last month significantly higher as well. Director Clary then presented his operations report.

Operations: We have had no changes in our operational status. We continue to operate 4 ALS ambulances out of 3 stations throughout our county. I am still going out as well with my ALS Non-Transport vehicle, and providing Covid-19 vaccinations to those who are non-ambulatory, or simply don't have transportation to go to a local clinic. Frank & I had thought that we had come to an end with that, but we are seeing some folks that are still wanting to get vaccinated who can't make it into a clinic. Vaccination rates do seem to be coming up in comparison with surrounding counties.

Personnel: I still have one vacant full-time Paramedic position left to fill out of the 2 most recent Paramedic resignations. I will be presenting a proposal for wage increases to the council at their meeting tonight. I will show them the same comparisons that I did with surrounding counties. I will also give them a few different options to get us up to where those surrounding counties are. I hope that we can become more competitive with our wages to retain our current employees, and attract new individuals to our service.

Training: We held our monthly audit & review with the local hospitals. We also held a quarterly Advanced Cardiac Life Support Course (ACLS) for our Paramedics. It is a certification like CPR that has to be renewed every two years. We give our Paramedics 4 times a year to come to a class from one of our on-roster instructors. The certification is required to be a Paramedic.

Safety: We had an injury free month in the month of July, and are doing well up to this point in August.

Ambulance Maintenance:

3308 (2021 Ford Gas Engine) No repairs/service needed.

4230 (2019 Ford Gas) was originally supposed to go into Mark's body shop on August 5th, but now went into their shop today after the availability of some decals weren't immediately available. No other repairs/service needed.

0514 (2015 Diesel) Is currently out of service, and is in the process of having a new fuel tank installed at our county highway department. It was quite the challenge to get a fuel tank for this vehicle at a reasonable price.

0086 (2009 Ford 6.0 Diesel) will be going in for service as soon as we get our normal fleet back into their service areas.

0085 (2013 Diesel) Had no major repairs for the month, and has been in service at our Grovertown base for the last several weeks while 0514 waited for the fuel tank to arrive.

0084 (2012 Chevy Diesel) Will be going in for brake repairs with our county highway department when we get 0514 placed back into service.

4149 (2013 Ford Explorer) Received a full-service oil change.

Base Maintenance:

We finally had our new generator installed at our Medic 5 base in Grovertown. It has already served us well in my eyes. In just the first week the station lost power twice, and the generator worked beautifully. It kept the station powered to continue normal 24/7 operations. I hope to get a grant in the near future so we can outfit our other two stations in Knox/North Judson with them. It is definitely a needed piece of equipment for emergency services.

Grants- I have turned in two additional grant requests to Georgia Pacific & NiSource. One of the requests I hope to outfit an additional station with a generator. The second request would be for an additional Lucas Device for our Medic 2 transfer unit. We continue to explore community Paramedicine grant opportunities. Received \$5,500.00 Indiana Medicaid grant.

PPE- We are currently stable on all personal protective equipment.

Commissioner Chesak advised the payment from Johnathan O'Hara is \$420.25.

## **LIABILITY RENEWAL**

Carrie Block with 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Insurance came before the Board of Commissioners for present the annual review for liability and property. She advised that the training sessions they did about every other month were just resumed because of the pandemic situation, they just did a training in July of infectious disease in which 30 attendees attended between the two sessions which was very good and will be good to show the risk manager from Bliss McKnight of these sessions and the attendance as well. She advised that they did reach out to the Indiana State Police about an active shooter training but at this time they are not completing these trainings. Carrie went through the September 2019-2021 Summary and Summary of Claims, she advised that Auditor Oesterreich has more detailed claim information if they would like to review those as well at any point. She explained that there was nothing too bad in looking through the summary of claims, there were a few severe losses as far as the amounts. She also explained the Workman's Compensation experience modification. The losses in the experience modification has come down by over 25%. Carrie went through all the current coverage amounts for the 2021/2022 insurance renewal proposal. The current property package blanket limit we are at is \$46,569,100. She then went through the schedule of locations and premium summary as well as what they are insuring at each location. She explained that some of the supplements they have are earthquake and flood insurance.

Carrie explained the Workers' Compensation Schedule, Classification, Code, and Rate per \$100 based on the classification. She explained that our improved experience modification has reduced the Workman's Compensation amounts by \$33,000. She advised the current premium is still down from where it was when they first took over our account. There has been some increases in certain lines and then some decreases in other lines. The property insurance did increase in some areas this year due to adding the Veterans Memorial and also a 3% increase in property values. There has also been quite a few automobiles added this past year as well as some older units being replaced with newer units. The overall premium is up about \$8,000 which did not feel this was bad compared to the losses that have been paid out this past year. She also provided information to the Board regarding all the trainings that are offered by Bliss McKnight. She advised the total renewal premium would be \$440,821.

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the liability renewal from 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Insurance as presented. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

## **SCEDF – FOLLOW UP**

Lisa Dan, Director of the Starke County Economic Development Foundation came before the Board of Commissioners to follow up with them about last meetings discussion regarding how many members are on the Economic Development Board. Commissioner Chesak advised that they are currently looking at all their at large members and how many at large members they currently have. She advised that she knows they will be losing at least two at large members by the end of the year. Director Dan agreed that they do have a large Board but she feels they have an effective Board as well. Commissioner Chesak asked if they have reduced their Board already in any way. Director Dan stated that they did have 28 members and they are currently down to 23 members. She did advised they had another gentleman resign from the Board a couple weeks ago because of his attendance and he is just too busy with other things at the time. Commissioner Gourley advised he is thinking about being a little more hands off with their Board and giving them the freedom to partner with other groups who would want a representative member as a part of their Board.

Commissioner Gourley did advised that he believes Commissioner Chesak is on the right track in looking at the at-large members. Commissioner Chesak advised that have more representative from towns or other representative members that may be more effective for their Board. Commissioner Gourley suggested that the Starke County Economic Development's requirements or a plan regarding this manner has been fulfilled. Commissioner Cavender advised having enough people on their Board that have different expertise and different skill sets. Director Dan advised Ron Gifford will be off of their Board as well at the end of the year. He will no longer be with the SCILL program as well.

Director Dan advised that in the next couple of months she will start working on the new contract. She advised that she received communication from Mat from the IEDC asking to get a letter of support from the Board of Commissioners for the Mammoth Solar Project which is the solar project at Bass Lake. She asked the Board if they would be interested in providing a letter. Commissioner Gourley suggested having Director Dan make up a letter and then forwarding it to the Commissioners for review. She advised that Kommon Kolabs still plan on moving forward in coming to Starke County. She has been in touch with them on a weekly basis. She advised that the SYSCO property is a part of their rural opportunity zone initiative. They are focusing on industrial development on that site as well as housing in the Hamlet area. The Mammoth Solar project is expecting to break ground in October. Director Dan advised that the Park Superintendent is on their website and if there were any other positions throughout the county that needed posted they would be glad to post those as well. She advised that in regards to Hamlet Fire Well they are still under about an \$1800 credit for the Hamlet Fire Well, their last bill was in the \$150 range. Director Dan advised this year's pitch competition is going well and they have about 6 contestants and they almost have \$10,000 in prize money for the event. She also gave an update regarding broadband infrastructure and manufactures day. Director Dan also advised that she had been told that there is land for sale around the Starke County Justice Center, she suggested using this land for the possibility for a future youth center for Starke County.

### **HIGHWAY MONTHLY REPORT**

Daniel Dipert, Starke County Highway Superintendent came before the Board of Commissioners to give his monthly report. He advised they currently have 5 open positions for drivers but did just hire one individual so now they are down to 4 open drivers' positions. He advised they still have one mechanic position open and they have advertised this position with little response. He advised they have reapplied for community crossing for two projects being hot mix on 700 E between SR8 and 625 E and Bridge #13. Superintendent Dipert advised that the insurance company had paid \$7500 for wrecked truck #63, they currently have 5 trucks that needs major work done to them, and two mowers are currently down as well. He advised that the bridge inspections will begin being in October, half of the bridges have been washed and cleaned, they plan to finish these after chip seal in completed. They have three bridges that are in the process of being replaced #7, #137, and #59. Superintendent Dipert advised that they have completed cold mix on 100 W between 400 S and 500 S half mile, on 750 S between 1100 E and 1200 E half mile, Race Street in Ober, and they have laid wedges on 12 different roads, many of which had multiple wedges, he also advised they are almost out of cold mix. Superintendent Dipert stated that they have also completed hot mix on 600 W Co Line/Robbins Ditch (HMA Truck Route), they have laid wedges and the binder course, they are waiting to apply the finish layer of hot mix, this will come from the LaPorte location. Finally after that is completed they will berm the road with #73 stone. Superintendent Dipert also advised that they are waiting on new distributor truck, they do have a limited budget and are hoping to get 5 miles done. They are hoping to start around September 1. He stated 6 employees visited Marshall County to watch how they chip seal there roads. They will be completing 700 S between 850 E and 975 E.

### **SRI-FALL SALE UPDATE**

Glenn from SRI came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss the fall 2021 Tax Sale. He advised that we currently have 127 properties on the list. 76 of those properties are a first time being on the sale, for 24 properties this will be the second time, 8 properties it will be the third time, and there are 19 that have been on for four or more years. He presented the Board of Commissioners with a list of the 2021 tax sale properties for their review. Glenn also presented the Board with photos of the properties that have been on the sale more than once. Glenn advised the Commissioners that if they would like to take deed to any of these properties that do not sell on the September 30<sup>th</sup> sale they would need to complete the notices and other legal paperwork within 90 days so by December 29<sup>th</sup>. He explained the Board of Commissioners also have the ability to assign the title of the property to a city/town as well. Glenn explained his main purpose here today is to advise the Board of Commissioners of the 19 properties that have been on the sale for 4 or more sales. He would like to stress to the Board to come up with a plan of what they may want to do with these properties in the future.

### **AUDITOR BUSINESS**

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$164,190.94. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the payroll docket in the amount of \$240,276.04, including deductions in the amount of \$7,342.79 for the pay period ending on 08/07/2021 and pay date

of 08/13/2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes from August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Attorney Martin Lucas presented the Establishment of a new fund, the ARP Grant Fund for the Receipt of Funding from the American Rescue Plan as Adopted by Congress in 2021. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the ordinance as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Attorney Lucas explained the proposed amendment to the county employee handbook would allow community corrections officers with firearms qualification to possess firearms in county facilities. Previously, only judicial officers and law enforcement officers were included. The amendment would appear in Section 13.1 (p 36).

The proposed amended language is as follows:

### **13.1 Firearms**

Except for authorized judicial officers, law enforcement personnel, and firearms qualified community corrections officers, County employees are prohibited from possessing firearms in any County facility. County employees shall comply with all state and federal firearms statutes and regulations.

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the amendment as presented to the county employee handbook. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mike Parker made a public comment regarding flooding issues at a storm drain located at 3416 S. CR 210, Knox, IN. Commissioner Cavender will be meeting with Mike and the Highway Superintendent today at this location.

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Gourley 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 10:50 AM.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2021**

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Charlie Chesak, President

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Bryan Cavender, Vice-President

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Mark Gourley, Member

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Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor  
& Secretary to the Board