

**September 19, 2011**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet in regular session at 5:00pm in the Annex meeting room, Knox Indiana and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President, Mitch Semans. Council President, Mark Smith, was not present.

**IN RE: MINUTES**

Councilman McLaughlin made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15<sup>th</sup> meeting; seconded by Councilwoman Benninghoff. The motion passed with all ayes; and the final minutes of the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting were also signed.

Vice-President, Mitch Semans, stated they had a paper presented to them, which would enable the County Auditor, Katherine Chaffins, and Deputy Auditor, Ruth Jensen, to be the county's representatives to work with the county's PERF plan. Councilman Sims made a motion to approve the signing of the form; seconded by Councilman Radkiewicz. The motion passed with all ayes, and the PERF form was signed.

**IN RE: NON-BINDING REVIEW OF THE BUDGETS OF THE OTHER TAX ENTITIES IN THE COUNTY**

Vice-President, Mitch Semans, stated it was council protocol, to review and sign the non-binding reviews of the other taxing entities in the county. He advised each one of those entities, who submitted a form for Council approval, has their own Board that approves their budget. The council reviewed the township forms and Councilman Radkiewicz made a motion to approve the non-binding reviews; seconded by Councilman McLaughlin. The motion passed with all ayes. Next to review was the Town of North Judson, Town of Hamlet, and City of Knox. A motion was made by Councilman Pearman to approve those forms, along with a statement that the numbers on their forms were confusing, and unintelligible. Councilwoman Benninghoff seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Next to review was the budget form from the Bailey, Cox, Newton Conservancy: A motion was made by Councilman Pearman, and seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes. North Judson Library: A motion was made by Councilman Pearman and seconded by Councilman McLaughlin. The motion passed with all ayes. Starke County Library: The motion was made by Councilman Radkiewicz and seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes. Starke County Airport: The motion was made by Councilwoman Benninghoff, and seconded by Councilman Pearman. The motion passed with all ayes. Starke County Environmental Management District: the motion was made by Councilman McLaughlin, and seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes. All the forms were signed by Vice-President Mitch Semans.

**IN RE: COUNTY BANKING FEES**

Auditor Chaffins stated the County has received approximately \$2,500.00 so far this year in banking fees from 1<sup>st</sup> Source Bank, for the county's checking account. The SBOA will be advising on Tuesday, as to how those fees should be properly recorded. Her question was, if the SBOA requires the fees are recorded separately from the bank account's interest earned, whose budget would be charged for those bank fee? The past procedure had been to post the interest at the net amount (gross interest received minus the monthly banking fee). It was decided, with no motions, the decision on recording the expense would depend on what the SBOA advises on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. Also the Council commented on the rate of interest earned on one of the county's investments, which is earning .25%. They advised the Auditor to look into what other banks in the area offer, concerning both the charging of bank fees and the interest rate paid.

**IN RE: TRANSFER REQUESTS**

Since there was no one in attendance from the Health Department, the request to transfer funds within the Health Department budget was tabled. The motion was made by Councilman Sims, and seconded by Councilwoman Benninghoff. The motion passed with all ayes. Since there was no one in attendance from the County Highway Department, the request to transfer funds within their budgets, was tabled. The motion was made by Councilman Pearman, and seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes. Carl Goodrich, the Courthouse Maintenance Person, was on hand to explain an appropriation request in the amount of \$300.00 from the Cumulative Capital Development Fund. He advised the lock jammed on the evidence safe in the Small Claims Office. Councilman McLaughlin stated he believed that was considered part of the courthouse building, and that would be why they should consider paying that expense out of the Cum. Cap. Dev. Fund, and not out of the Judge's budget, from the County General Fund. Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve the request and pay the expense from line item 2391-000-3000.15, of the CCD Fund. The motion was seconded by Councilman McLaughlin, and it passed with all ayes.

There was a request from the Starke County Sheriff, Oscar Cowen requesting the Council approve the expenditure of the monies received from the Riverboat Wagering Revenue Sharing Fund, in the amount of \$108,514.32, to be used as the annual payment to the County Police Pension Fund. The Sheriff was not in attendance at the meeting, but was being represented by Chief Deputy, Bill Dulin. When asked by the Council if that amount hadn't already been approved earlier this year, Auditor Chaffins advised them that the previously approved amount was actually the monies received in 2010. This money was received in August, 2011 and the Sheriff was contacted right after the money was received. Councilman Pearman announced he would like to see a committee formed to look into the funding by the county, of that police pension. He asked that issue be placed on the agenda, to be addressed at the next council meeting. Councilman Pearman then made a motion to approve the request by the Police Department; seconded by Councilman Sims. The motion passed with all ayes.

There were two requests from the County Highway Department to have monies appropriated in their Cumulative Bridge Fund, 0790, but since no one was in attendance from that department, Councilman McLaughlin made a motion to table their requests; seconded by Councilman Radkiewicz. The motion passed with all ayes. Auditor Chaffins advised the Council, in reference to a request from the County Highway Department to add back into the County Highway Department budget, the amount of fuel reimbursement received from other county offices. Chaffins stated, according to Kurt Ott, of the DLGF, the budget can not be increased without obtaining an approval from the State for additional appropriations. The money has been deposited into the County Highway Department Fund.

In reference to a request from Judge Kim Hall asking permission to appropriate \$12,000.00 from Fund, 0529, Supplemental Public Defender Fund, Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve his request. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Benninghoff, and passed with all ayes.

Jennie Carter, representing the Drug Free Community Fund, appeared before the Board to request approval for an appropriation in the amount of \$1,000.00, line item, 1140 000-3000.40 Knox City Police Drug & Evidence. Councilman Radkiewicz made a motion to approve this request, seconded by Councilwoman Benninghoff. The motion passed with all ayes.

Marty Lucas advised he had received an email from Council President Mark Smith, asking him to address the requirements in regard to the county purchasing a used vehicle. Marty stated the county department making the request would need to list specific specifications for the vehicle, and then receive competitive bids. He stated that there was no rule against doing that, but it is very difficult to get comparative bids on used vehicles. Commissioner Norem stated the issue being discussed was the County Police Department's previous request to purchase a used vehicle. Bill Dulin, of the County Police Department, also added they had originally wanted to use the insurance proceeds from a damaged squad vehicle, to purchase a used vehicle. They have since changed their minds in regard to that purchase.

**IN RE: VISIT FROM STATE SENATOR, JIM ARNOLD**

State Senator, Jim Arnold, appeared before the Council. He advised the Council due to the redistricting of townships, effective after the election is 2012, he will be covering five townships in Starke County: Center, Jackson, Washington, Oregon and Davis. He stated the dividing line is Toto Road, to the south, and SR39, to the east.

**IN RE: STARKE COUNTY LIBRARY REQUEST**

Commissioner Davis gave a committee report in reference to the Starke County Library Project. She advised Mark Smith and herself had discussed the project with Todd Samuelson from Umbaugh. He advised the effect on the circuit breaker would be minimal. Sheila Urwiler, the Acting Director of the Starke County Library, and a representative from Umbaugh & Associates, Curt Pletcher, appeared before the Board to request approval, for a proposed library renovation project, which had been tabled at previous meetings. A discussion followed in regard to the specific cost to the taxpayer for this proposed project. Also discussed was the effect of the circuit breaker if the county is to have two bond issues at the same time, the library and possibly the Jail project. Also discussed was the increasing demands for internet usage at the Library, because of the laptops given to the Knox School students, and those students who do not have the internet in their homes; they go to the Library to use the free internet service. Also addressed was the increasing number of home schooled students. Vice-President Semans stated he has spoken to taxpayers in the Oregon & Davis Townships, and they are concerned those townships have not been receiving their share of Library dollars in the local branches. Meeting attendees who spoke in favor of the Library Project included Commissioner Dan Bridegroom, Commissioner Jennifer Davis, and Starke County Development Foundation Director, Charles Weaver. Councilman McLaughlin stated everyone is always against the county seat and want their taxes to be lower, but however, they are elected to look at the whole picture, and what is best for the county as a whole. He believes the amount of taxes, in regard to the library project, are minute and the Council should shoulder the criticism and they should not reject the project because of the amount of taxes. Councilman Pearman made a motion to approve the proposed library project, seconded by Councilman McLaughlin. The vote on the motion was four ayes, and two neys. The four casting ayes were Councilmen Sims, McLaughlin, Radkiewicz, and Pearman; casting neys were Councilman Seman, and Councilwoman Benninghoff. The motion passed.

In other business, Jim Shilling appeared before the Board to advise them of a situation at the County Courthouse in which he believes there are murals painted on the inside walls of the dome, which over time have been covered with several layers of paint. He advised the County could receive grant funding to test to see if the murals actually exist. He also passed out to the Board, DVD copies of the courthouse tours.

Commissioner Norem made a request to schedule a special meeting of the Council and the Commissioners to discuss both the hospital lease renewal and the report on the Denver Jail Conference. Councilman Radkiewicz made a motion to schedule the meeting for Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 5:00PM. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Benninghoff, and passed with all ayes. Ms. Sutkowski, of IU Health—Starke Hospital, stated they would be sending the Council packets of information, to their home, which will include the hospital's vision and a proposal.

There being no further business, Councilman McLaughlin made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Pearman. The motion passed with all ayes and the meeting was adjourned at 7:08PM.

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2011**

ABSENT \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Smith, President

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Mitch Semans, Vice President

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Judy Benninghoff

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Marvin McLaughlin

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Dave Pearman

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Tony Radkiewicz

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Robert Sims

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Katherine Chaffins, Starke Co. Auditor &  
Council Secretary

