

**STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2021**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council at 4:00 PM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman, Brad Hazelton, Kay Gudeman, Howard Bailey, Don Binkley, Don White, Todd Leinbach present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Dave Pearman at 4:00 PM for the Starke County Council Regular Session.

President Pearman advised that there will be an addition to the agenda tonight. EMS will be present to discuss further efforts in pay raises.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Councilman Hazelton made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2021 minutes. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

NORTH JUDSON SAN PIERRE SCHOOLS REDUCTION RESOLUTION

Councilman Hazelton made a motion to approve the Appropriations Reduction Resolution for the Rainy Day Ordinance in the amount of \$468,814.00. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

TRANSFER REQUEST – PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Councilman Hazelton made a motion to make a reduction in 1000.30100.000.0021 in the amount of \$940.92 and an additional appropriation in 1000.20202.000.0021 in the amount of \$940.92. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PROSECUTOR CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING GRANT POSITIONS

Prosecutor Baker came before the Starke County Council to continue the discussion regarding the grant positions for her department. Councilman Pearman advised the discussion was left off at having Attorney Lucas look into statutes stating that if the council were to approve this position and the grant went away we would have to sustain that pay. Attorney Lucas advised he had no problem with the position if it were made to include terms and conditions regarding the duration of the position and how the position would be affected if the grant cycle ended. Prosecutor Baker stated she would suggest having an annual renewal of the investigator position and make a waiver of the particular IC code that states an investigator position cannot be disbanded without the approval of the Prosecutor. The position could be contingent on the grant money that is coming in. Attorney Lucas advised he believe that any commitment the current prosecutor makes would be binding on the successor as well. He asked if Prosecutor Baker agrees with this position. Prosecutor Baker agreed, but she believes there is room to fight on that one. However, she advised she would agree to an annual review.

Councilman Hazelton asked when this would start and when the grant cycle would end. Auditor Oesterreich advised the grant cycle is for a fiscal year of 10/01/2021 through 9/30/2022. Councilman Pearman asked about the second funded position, the one that he believe Prosecutor Baker would like to give a raise to a current employee through the second part of the grant. He asked how they are not going to get into problems with OT and the fact that the particular position is already grant funded through a different grant. Auditor Oesterreich advised she has spoken with Prosecutor Baker. The Victims Advocate position is already a fully funded grant position and the position would not be able to take on extra duties during the day 8-4, extra duties would have to be overtime. Prosecutor Baker advised she could change one of the current unfilled positions such as the clerk in her office and change it into an entirely new position with the added duties. Councilman Pearman asked if they can meet her halfway and approve the investigator position and adding the other to one of her other positions.

Councilman Pearman asked about the pay rate for both of these positions. Auditor Oesterreich advised that Prosecutor Baker stated she will be getting \$5700 per month through the grant but that would have to cover the salary, PERF, FICA, and Health Insurance. Councilman Hazelton suggested using a range

based on what benefits package they choose. Prosecutor Baker stated she would like the salary range to be commiserate to a road officer. Prosecutor Baker went on to further explain how she would change the clerk position within her office to incorporate additional duties related to truancy. Councilman Pearman suggested taking the \$19,000 from the second portion of the grant and set a salary for that position as well as use part of the money for the benefits for that position. Prosecutor Baker asked if the grant funding goes away then what will they do in that case. She also asked if the council did not want to approve the full amount she does have other ideas for the money if she could not get it approved for salaries. Auditor Oesterreich stated Prosecutor Baker should check with Mimi with Healthline to see if that would even be a possibility. Councilman Binkley asked how many employees she has in her office and would giving one individual a raise affect the other employees who did not get a raise. Prosecutor Baker did not comment.

After further discussion regarding what to formally do with the second part of that grant, the \$19,000 portion, whether it should be for a part time person, raise for current position, restructure of an existing position, or for a partial raise for an existing position. Councilman Pearman suggested approving her request contingent upon the Board of Commissioner approval of the job description and also Mimi's approval for the use of the grant funds. Auditor Oesterreich advised that because she is taking a Clerk Position and changing it into something else with additional duties, she would not be able to start that new position until 1/1/2022 as the money in the Clerk line item has already been transferred to another line that was negative. Auditor Oesterreich suggested not moving on that decision at this time as they do have time to approve this before the beginning of the year and that way the Prosecutor Baker can get the job description approved first with the Board of Commissioners as well. However, for the investigator position it was decided for Prosecutor Baker and Attorney Lucas to work together to come up with some type of contract and possibly revisions to the job description reflecting terms and annual renewals. Councilman Leinbach made a motion to approve the money for the grant for the investigator position for the prosecutor's office with a yearly starting salary of \$47,058.96 contingent on the employee agreement that is given to the employee ahead of time knowing that if this grant goes away the position will go away as well. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion. Councilman Hazelton had discussion regarding the motion. He stated that they should make it as instead of a salary of \$47,058.96, it should read no more than \$47,058.96 in case there is not enough to cover the benefits in the \$68,400.00. Councilman Leinbach amended his motion to state that the salary shall be no more than \$47,058.96, contingent on the benefit package and the tax rates Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilman Pearman advised that the new EMS Director has given her resignation today. He stated that Brad and I will take over the roles of acting EMA Director until they find someone else for that position.

With no other business or public comment to come before the Starke County Council, Councilman Hazelton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 PM. Councilman White seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OCTOBER 4, 2021 STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL

Dave Pearman, President

Brad Hazelton, Vice-President

Kay Gudeman

Don White

Howard Bailey

Don Binkley

Todd Leinbach

Rachel Oesterreich, Starke County Auditor and
Secretary to the Starke County Council