

**Monday, October 6, 2014**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in regular session at 9:00AM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana with Jennifer Davis and Kathy Norem present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

Commissioner Danford was absent from the meeting.

President Jennifer Davis called the meeting to order and advised of the following changes to the posted agenda: Kathy Robb was not available to attend the meeting, and the CADA Proclamation has been moved to the beginning of the meeting.

### **CADA PROCLAMATION**

Wendy Elam of CADA, the Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, appeared before the Board with a proclamation naming the month of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. President Davis read the proclamation to the Board. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes; the proclamation was signed by President Davis, and sealed by County Attorney, Marty Lucas. President Davis inquired as to the events CADA planned for the month of October. Ms. Elam advised the City of Knox' Mayor will issue a proclamation also, and there will be exhibits on display at the Starke County Library.

### **BID OPENING—REPLACEMENT CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES 70 & 79**

County Attorney Marty Lucas verified with Auditor Chaffins that the bids had been received in a timely manner per the bid posting. Auditor Chaffins advised they had all been received that morning prior to 9:00AM. Attorney Lucas advised the first bids were for the Bridge 70 Replacement Project, the bridge located on CR50S over the Smith Ditch. He opened the bids and advised of the bid amounts: JCI Bridge Group, LaPorte: \$430,668.63; LaPorte Construction, LaPorte: \$396,104.50; and Northern Indiana Construction, Mishawaka: \$436,869.43.

He then advised the next bids were for the Bridge 79 Replacement Project located on CR450S, over the Smith Ditch. He opened the bids and advised the following: JCI Bridge Group, LaPorte: \$365,062.56; LaPorte Construction, LaPorte: \$317,515.40; Northern Indiana Construction, Mishawaka: \$320,737.10. County Highway Superintendent, Rik Ritzler, advised Mark Wilson, of JPR, will start reviewing the bridge bids to see if they are in compliance with the advertised bid specs and he would join him following the Superintendent's monthly report. He advised they will report back to the Board later on in the meeting.

### **COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

Superintendent Ritzler presented his monthly departmental report. He advised the summer road improvement program is almost complete after improving a total of 120.32 miles of roadway: 63 miles of chip sealing, 9.27 miles of fog sealing, 11 miles of asphalt paving/wedging, 30.55 miles of re-graveling, and 7.5 miles of crack sealing. He noted they have an additional 18 miles of improvements planned for the remainder of the year. He advised sealing cracks is an inexpensive way to keep water from prematurely deteriorating the roadways, and it costs about \$750.00 to crack seal a mile of roadway. He noted a fog seal eliminates dust from a chip sealed road, helps seal in the chips, helps ice/snow melting in the winter, and looks better than a chip sealed road. He advised the cost to fog seal is about \$1,500.00 a mile.

In regard to Safety, he advised during the time period of June 21<sup>st</sup> through September 21<sup>st</sup> there were no reported accidents or injuries to the employees of the County Highway Department. He advised all the drivers will be attending the IPEP annual safety training which will be held in Valparaiso on October 21<sup>st</sup>. He noted they also have scheduled a winter operations safety training through Purdue-LTAP that will be held at the County Garage on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Superintendent Ritzler advised LaPorte Construction has begun replacing Bridge 31, on CR800E over the Eagle Creek, .2 miles north of CR50S; and will begin replacing Bridge 86 which is located on CR900S over the Bogus Ditch, .2 miles west of CR100W in the next few weeks. He noted both bridges have a November 30, 2014 completion date. He also noted an RFP has been sent out for the design of replacing Bridges 1 & 71 which are being planned for the summer of 2015.

The Superintendent advised they will be installing the four way stop at Sporty'z on Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>. He noted warning signs will be in place through next summer to alert drivers to the change. He also advised the department is beginning to prepare for the winter months. They will begin hauling in sand next week, and will be receiving their first load of salt this month. He stated new plow routes have been established based on the information the local schools provided to them. The new routes will focus on having the main roads, bus routes, and business routes open first. President Davis advised she had received a thank you from residents at Boa Shores thanking the County for the road maintenance.

### **EMS DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

EMS Clerk Mary Lynn Ritchie advised the Department had received a total of \$246.00 from Small Claims Court, and a total of \$954.71 from Collections Attorney, Jonathan O'Hara. Clerk Ritchie advised she has contacted surrounding Counties to see how they handle a fee for doing assessments without transporting, and read some of the statistics from those counties. Commissioner Norem suggested since there wasn't enough information at that time that the issue of non-transport billing be tabled for now. The information reported by Clerk Ritchie is on file in the Auditor's Office. Clerk Ritchie also advised she had received updated information in regard to the County's Medicaid reimbursement. She noted the reimbursement will be delayed due to October 1<sup>st</sup> beginning a new federal government fiscal year.

EMS Interim Director, Keith Emigh, advised he had checked with the surrounding Counties to see their policies in regard to working a 48 hour shift. The research showed working a 48 hour shift is the exception and not the norm, with working a 48 hour shift only in emergency situations. Commissioner Norem noted since it is the exception rather than the rule, it is her opinion to try to keep the 24 hour shift and only work 48 when in an emergency situation since they are not guaranteed to be able to rest during a normal shift. Director Emigh also advised they have hired three more part time paramedics so now they have 19 part time paramedics and two full time paramedics. President Davis advised Interim Director Emigh has done a great job and the Board had interviewed a number of candidates for the position of EMS Director and was astonished at their commitment. She inquired if the Interim Director was still interested in the Director position. He advised he was and would accept the position, and then he inquired in regard to the pay as the position was posted at a pay range of \$38,000.00 - \$45,000.00. Commissioner Norem made a motion to appoint Keith Emigh as the EMS Director and to set the pay at

\$40,000.00 annual salary, with a 90 day evaluation, and then based on the evaluation a possible \$1,000.00 pay increase. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Director Emigh inquired if he would still be expected to also work the truck as Commissioner Danford had stated he wanted to see the Director work the truck so he sees what is going on in the department. President Davis advised since it would be difficult to do both it would not be necessary for him to work the truck.

### **REQUEST FOR OCRA PLANNING GRANT FOR THE SCILL CENTER**

Charlie Weaver and Ron Gifford of the Starke County Economic Development Foundation, and Emily Gross of KIRPC appeared before the Board. They presented a request for the County to be the sponsor for an OCRA Planning Grant to examine the present SCILL programs and explore other training opportunities such as Automation, Robotics and Equipment Maintenance Training Program. Director Weaver advised the estimated cost of the proposed project is \$16,700.00, \$15,000.00 would be from the grant funding, and the local match of \$1,670.00 would be paid from the SCEDF portion of the CEDIT Fund. Commissioner Norem made a motion to accept the obligation and agree to be the Administrator of the Grant. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. President Davis signed the proposed letter to OCRA. Ms. Gross advised she need to submit the original letter directly to OCRA, but will email the Auditor a copy of the letter. Ron Gifford then gave a brief presentation on the SCILL Welding Program.

### **RECAP OF BRIDGE BIDS**

Superintendent Ritzler advised they had completed the certification of the bridge bids and are recommending the Board accept the bids from LaPorte Construction for both bridge projects. He noted that the bid for the replacement of Bridge 70 was higher than that of Bridge 79 because the 70 project includes extended paving up to and from CR500S. Commissioner Norem made a motion to accept the bids from LaPorte Construction for the replacement of Bridges 70 & 79. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed with all ayes. The Superintendent advised he will notify LaPorte Construction.

### **GSA-FEDERAL SUPPLY SCHEDULE PURCHASE ORDER**

IT Director, Joe Short, appeared before the Board to request approval of the renewal for the next year, October 2, 2014 for twelve months through 2015 at the same renewal rate. He advised the vendor is Verizon Wireless. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the renewal, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes.

### **REPORT OF THE SHREDDING OF COUNTY RECORDS**

Jim Coad, Annex Building Custodian, appeared before the Board to present the report of the shredding of the County's public records. He advised the Company, Rapid Shred, was at the County Warehouse Building on Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> to pick up the records to be destroyed. He advised a total of 18,523 lbs. were picked up. Robin of Rapid Shred advised the cost is .12/lbs., with the total expense being \$2,222.76. Custodian Coad advised he had taken pictures of all the skids of records prior to their being picked up and then after the truck was loaded they were padlocked into the truck. He stated he doesn't believe this shredding of public records has ever been done in the past and would like to see a regular schedule established, and possibly to do this again within two to three years. He stated he hoped each department could participate in the process. Auditor Chaffins advised one of the things her department has encountered in the attempt to purge out old records that could be destroyed based on the retention schedule is that in the past items were stored based on the calendar year all together in one box. She suggested when storing away old documents, if at all possible, to file and store them based on the retention schedule. President Davis noted the newly elected officials will need to be advised of this retention process.

### **VENDOR CLAIMS, PAYROLL CLAIM, MINUTES**

In regard to the draft of the minutes of the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, President Davis asked Auditor Chaffins to remove the personal comments that were included in the minutes. There was a brief discussion in regard to the narrative of the Bass Lake Beach & Campground business at that September meeting, and the documenting of the issues addressed by the Board which could be utilized as a reference for future Boards. Attorney Lucas stated, in theory, the Board is speaking through their minutes. He added, the minutes are the actual official statement of what transpired at the meeting. President Davis made a motion to approve the minutes after the personal comments were removed. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the payroll claim, for the pay period ending on September 13<sup>th</sup>, with a pay date of September 19<sup>th</sup>, in the total gross amount of \$187,266.24. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the payroll claim, for the pay period ending on September 27<sup>th</sup>, with a pay date of October 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the total gross amount of \$187,742.57. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the vendor claims in the total gross amount of \$409,168.49. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Auditor Chaffins distributed copies of the Statement of Fund Balances as of October 6<sup>th</sup>, and the Report of Estimated Revenues for the County General Fund, as of 10/6 14 and for their comparison, a copy of that same report dated 10/6/13. Auditor Chaffins advised she will be attending the SBOA County Auditors' Association Conference from October 21-24 in Indianapolis. She advised the Board of the situation with some of the County Auditor's presently under investigation due to alleged credit card fraud and theft. Commissioner Norem noted the County had made the decision not to implement the use of credit cards for County business and it was made on Auditor Chaffins' recommendation. Auditor Chaffins also advised her department's Payroll Deputy has transferred out of her office and will be working as the Clerk at the Highway Department. She noted the open position has been posted, and in the meantime, since they were all trained in the processing of payroll, she did not expect any disruption of normal business.

### **PROPOSAL FROM THE CORONER ELECT**

Adam Gray, the Coroner Candidate for the November election who is running unopposed, appeared before the Board to discuss the location of the Coroner's Office. He noted he was asked by the current Coroner, Kris Rannells, to move the Coroner's equipment from the Rannell's Funeral Home by the afternoon of January 1<sup>st</sup>. He also stated the earlier proposed plans for locating the Coroner's Office & cooler in the basement of the current jail was not feasible. He presented a drawing of plans for locating the Coroner's Office as an expansion of the EMS Base at Grovertown, possibly on the west side of the

building. He advised he had met with Surveyor Denny Estok, Planning Commissioner Terry Stephenson, and EMS Director, Keith Emigh to discuss this proposal. He stated the minimal plans were drawn as a 20 ft. x 20 ft. building, with metal walls and a concrete floor, and could also work as a free standing building, and estimated the cost to be between \$30,000.00-50,000.00. Commissioner Norem noted there were no electrical, plumbing, or heating/AC requirements included in his plans and suggested he work with Terry Stephenson in reviewing these plans. She also noted the possible source of funding will need to be researched. Adam Gray stated the one requirement he had was the need for 12 – 16 feet accessibility in front of the cooler. EMS Director Emigh stated if the Coroner’s Office is attached to the Grovertown base he is requesting a back-up generator in the event the electrical power is lost and there would happen to be a body in the cooler. Coroner Elect Gray also stated another location possibility could be on the adjoining property, at the site of the new County Jail, since that would be a secured facility. Commissioner Norem advised she has already been contacted by police officers who do not want it located at that property, and not located in the new jail either. Coroner Elect Gray stated Marshall County does not have a facility for their Coroner and has been renting space to store bodies in South Bend for a fee of \$200.00 to 250.00 a day, and stated he saw a possibility to house bodies for Marshall County as that could be a source of revenue for Starke County. President Davis inquired as to the present status of the Grovertown EMS Base. Director Emigh stated it is an old pole barn that requires space heaters in the restrooms during the winter months to eliminate frozen pipes. There was a brief discussion in regard to the funeral home directors renting out space in their funeral homes, but was told by Coroner Rannells no one would be willing to cooperate. Coroner Elect Gray stated he would personally speak with the Funeral Home Directors within the County to get their opinion. He noted in the meantime, the County needs to establish a plan for the temporary use of the Coroner. Commissioner Norem advised him to explore the variety of options including the location plans, obtain price quotes from local contractors and then report back to the Board. Attorney Lucas stated the bid process is required if the project would exceed \$150,000.00. President Davis advised him, when prepared, to get back on the agenda for a future Board meeting, and also to obtain prices on renting space. Council President Dave Pearman stated it could also be an opportunity for the County to update the existing EMS building for Medic 5, at Grovertown, as the Coroner could take over the use of the existing EMS base, and then create a new building for Medic 5.

### **IN OTHER BUSINESS**

President Davis advised, due to the resignation of Taylor Davis from the Health Board, there is a vacancy which will require an appointment by the Board of Commissioners. She noted since the Board requires a political balance, and Ms. Davis is a Democrat, the applicant must be a Democrat and stated that position requires a health care professional, as Ms. Davis is a nurse. President Davis asked the media to post the opening on the Health Board.

Commissioner Norem advised she has drafted a letter to be sent to the recent appointees to the newly created County Park Board, asking for them to hold an organization meeting. She noted she had spoken to their appointee, Marcia Bedrock, asking her to coordinate that first meeting, and lead the organization of the Board. Commissioner Norem asked that when the letters are sent to the Park Board appointees also included would be a copy of the IC code covering Park Boards, a copy of the Bass Lake Lease, a copy of the Trust creating the Starke County Forest and a copy of the forestry plan, a copy of the administrative code pertaining to campgrounds that will be furnished by Attorney Lucas, and also possible grant funding opportunities. She also noted the possibility of relating the Park Board to the State’s Bi-Centennial Celebration. She advised she will be sending the letter to the Auditor’s Office to have them send out the information to the newly appointed board members.

President Davis inquired as to the status of the complaint from Dallas Hester that was addressed at the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. As Sheriff Cowen was not in attendance for the meeting, President Davis advised she will discuss this with the Sheriff to see how it was handled.

Veterans’ Service Officer, Terry Turner, gave a brief report of the activity of his Department. He advised the electronic filing of veterans’ claims is now available but he just needs to purchase an electronic signature stamp at the cost of \$250.00. President Davis asked that he submit these reports on a monthly basis.

Council President Pearman advised of the Council’s Special Meeting which was scheduled for 4:30 that afternoon, in which the Council will conduct the Non-Binding Budget Reviews of some of the County’s taxing units, and a review of all the County’s Taxing units’ Budgets in regard to the State’s Pilot Program.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments and there being no further business, Commissioner Norem made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by President Davis. The motion passed with all ayes and the meeting was adjourned at 11:05AM.

**October 6, 2014**

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Kathy Norem, President

ABSENT \_\_\_\_\_  
Kent Danford

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Davis

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Katherine Chaffins, County Auditor  
& Secretary to the Board of County Commissioners