

Monday, November 3, 2014

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in regular session at 9:06AM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana with Jennifer Davis, Kathy Norem, and Kent Danford present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by President Jennifer Davis.

EMS DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

EMS Director Keith Emigh and Clerk Mary Lynn Ritchie appeared before the Board. Clerk Ritchie advised they have collected a total of \$476.00 from Small Claims Court and \$676.91 from Collections Attorney Jonathan O'Hara. She submitted the monthly report of runs in October, noting the number of runs for the month was down from September. She also noted they are still working on the on-line transmitting of information on runs for billing. Clerk Ritchie advised the Medicaid reimbursement will be processed on November 2nd and the County should be receiving the money soon. She inquired in regard to billing on non-transport patients. Commissioner Danford stated it could be a flat fee or possibly bill the patient if the cost is over \$50.00. There was a discussion of if the flat fee should be \$50.00 or \$100.00 but they also need to evaluate the medical supplies used and possibly charging the patient for the supplies also. Commissioner Norem advised she would like to review it carefully first before making a decision. President Davis advised to include this issue on the agenda for the December morning meeting. Clerk Ritchie advised the fees collected are on target for the amount of estimated revenue predicted for 2014.

Director Emigh advised he has hired 15 part time paramedics and hopes to hire another five to eight. He stated Base 5 will become an ALS base also on January 1st and inquired if he could begin purchasing medicine and supplies in preparation for the ALS program in that location. President Davis advised him to review his budget to see if he has any extra 2014 funds and have Commissioner Danford assist him. Commissioner Norem inquired in the transfers to nursing home are in the County only and Director Emigh advised that was correct that there are no nursing home transfers out of the county. President Davis asked Director Emigh to stay for Coroner Elect Adam Gray's presentation to the Board.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT

Superintendent Rik Ritzler appeared before the Board to present his monthly report. He advised the summer road improvement program is completed, noting they improved 138.5 miles of roadway: 63 miles of chip sealing, 15 miles of fog sealing, 13 miles of asphalt paving/wedging, 39.5 miles of re-graveling, and 8 miles of crack sealing. He stated that represented the highest total on record at the Highway Department. In regard to Safety, he reported during the month of October there were no reported accidents or injuries at the Highway Department, the last reported accident or injury was in February. He noted a letter of commendation is being placed in each driver's file for their part in achieving an accident and injury free summer. He stated the drivers attended the IPEP meeting in Valparaiso on October 21st, and they have scheduled an in depth winter operations safety training through Purdue-LTAP that will be held at the highway garage on November 25th.

Superintendent Ritzler stated LaPorte Construction has begun replacing Bridge 31 and they are about 50% completed. He advised they have also begun replacing Bridge 86. He noted both bridges have a November 30th completion date. He added the bids for Bridges 70 and 70 were awarded to LaPorte Construction last month. He also advised they have sent out an RFP for the design of two bridges to be constructed next summer, Bridge 1 on CR700N over the Robbins Ditch, .3 mile west of CR500E, and Bridge 71 on CR100E over the Smith Ditch, .5 mile south of CR500S. The deadline for the submittals of the RFP is November 14th. He advised the four way stop at Sporty's has been completed and seems to be working well. He also noted they are prepared for the upcoming winter, stating they have plenty of salt and sand stockpiled. He added they have readied all necessary winter equipment such as plow blades, underbody blades, and tires. Superintendent Ritzler advised 2014 marked the first year the Starke County Highway Department completed a comprehensive Bridge maintenance program. All 58 bridges were cleaned, repaired, and inspected by the bridge crew. The funds spent on the effort were less than the cost of replacing one bridge. He advised an estimated average of five years of service life were added to each bridge which amounts to an average of 250 years of service life. He noted one bridge replacement adds about 50 years of service life.

Superintendent Ritzler proposed an agreement with the SCILL Center in which they would provide basic maintenance to County vehicles such as brake changes, oil & filter changes, etc. He noted there are 81 county vehicles that need to be routinely maintained. He stated the work would be completed by the students of the SCILL Center but under instructor supervision. Commissioner Norem made a motion to have the Superintendent prepare a written agreement with the SCILL Center. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

The Superintendent also advised of a situation at Bass Lake. The Chief of the Bass Lake Fire Department, Les Jensen, who was also present stated there is a situation with the access road to SR10, the route the fire department uses to fill up their water trucks, which is south of the beach, on the curb. He advised a property owner next to that access road has blocked off the road not allowing access to the road. Superintendent Ritzler asked for permission to go out and speak with the property owner. There was a brief discussion as to who controls the access. The Board stated the Superintendent has their permission to talk to the property owner.

President Davis advised the Park Board needs to be advised in regard to the removal of garbage at the beach and campground.

Commissioner Norem stated Superintendent Ritzler is the best Highway Superintendent ever in the County's history. President Davis stated they would like to propose an employment contract with the Highway Superintendent. Commissioner Norem agreed with the proposal. Commissioner Danford stated he disagreed stating he felt they would be opening a can of worms that would affect other appointed Department Heads. He asked they place the issue on hold, to table it until the next meeting. He stated if they enter in to a contract now if the superintendent is fired he will ask for severance pay.

President Davis inquired if he had any suggestions as to what could be changed in the proposed contract. He stated he has a problem with the idea of the contract but he has no plans to terminate the Superintendent. President Davis noted in the past the appointment of the Superintendent position was a political pawn; it was the old days of political appointed job patronage.

STARKE COUNTY COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS BUDGET REVISION REQUEST

SCCC Director Robert Hinojosa and Clerk Kim Kennedy appeared before the Board to request an additional appropriation to this annual budget in the total amount of \$2,310.00. Director Hinojosa advised the SCCC received \$2,310.00 from programs of Drug and Tobacco Free Starke County. He noted the SCCC Advisory Board has already approved the budget additional but the State DOC requires Board of Commissioners approval also. But, they noted the letter requesting Commissioner signature had an error in listing the total budget amount. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the budget additional appropriation, seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes. Clerk Kennedy advised she will forward the revised letter to Deputy Auditor Carla Thomas to have her print it out on the Commissioners' letterhead, for their signatures.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS REQUEST TO AMMEND ORDINANCE

Planning Building Commissioner, Terry Stephenson, appeared before the Board requesting approval of a revision to an existing planning commission ordinance. However, the Planning Commission did not provide the original ordinance, presented was only the wording of the revision. President Davis advised they will need to see the existing ordinance and then the revision and suggested it be placed on the agenda for the next meeting but Mr. Stephenson need not be present for the meeting.

APPROVAL OF ORACLE COURTHOUSE ELEVATOR SERVICE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Carl Goodrich, Maintenance Custodian of the County Courthouse appeared before the Board to present the modified contract for their approval. He advised Attorney Lucas has been working on the revision of this contract and it has finally been modified by Oracle. He stated the contract is for a period of three years and they will be providing the maintenance service on the Courthouse elevator. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the contract seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes. Attorney Lucas advised to attach to the contract all the email communication there was with Oracle.

REQUEST TO CHANGE THE W/C PHYSICIAN HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Kathy Robb, Director of Knox/Winamac Health Center appeared before the Board to discuss the request to transfer the Workers' Compensation cases to another healthcare provider. She advised she was not aware of any problems with any of the cases, but they have developed a procedure their employees will now follow and they will provide same day service. She noted they have three physicians on staff: Dr. Fritz, Dr. Heinsen and Dr. Alexander Platts, and one Nurse Practitioner. President Davis advised they will take the issue under consideration and would like to have Deputy Thomas review the information.

REPORT FROM THE CORONER-ELECT, ADAM GRAY

Coroner Elect Adam Gray appeared before the Board and advised he had requested a price quote from the Tennis Reiss Construction Company but it still waiting on the response. The price quote is for the addition to the Grovertown EMS Base. President Davis inquired if there any other possibilities. Coroner Elect Gray advised he has contacted the Marshall County Coroner, Bill Clevenger, and they could possibly rent space at the Plymouth Hospital where there is space for three bodies. Marshall County is also utilizing that space. He also noted the Jasper County Coroner has also offered assistance if needed.

EMS Director Keith Emigh inquired as to what will happen with the portable cooler at the first of the year. Adam Gray suggested the cooler be stored at the Glove Factory unused, for storage only.

Commissioner Norem advised him to work with Terry Stephenson to come up with the set of plans for the building expansion and to obtain more than one price quote. Commissioner Norem advised him to review the list of registered contractors which is on file in the Planning Commission Office. They would also like to see a report of historical numbers on the number of Coroner cases. He advised in regard to his also holding the position of Deputy Sheriff, if he were to receive a call while on duty for the police department, he will have a Deputy Coroner and two other local assistants. Also, in the event there would ever be a homicide in the County while he was on police duty, he would call in the Coroner of Marshall or Jasper County, who would also be deputized to work in this County, so there would be no conflict in the investigation. He noted he will provide a written contract with Marshall and Jasper Counties and he will be deputized to assist them in their counties also.

Commissioner Norem advised him to review the list of registered contractors which is on file in the Planning Commission Office.

AUDITOR'S BUSINESS: MINUTES, VENDOR CLAIMS, PAYROLL CLAIMS

Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the vendor claims in the total gross amount of \$204,985.38. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Norem and passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the payroll claim for the pay period ending on October 25th with a pay date of October 31st, in the total gross amount of \$181,112.04. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 6th meeting, seconded by Commissioner Davis. (Commissioner Danford was absent from that meeting.) The motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Danford made a motion approve the minutes of the October 20th meeting, seconded by Commissioner Davis (Commissioner Norem was absent from that meeting.). The motion passed with all ayes.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

FORENSIC FLUIDS AGREEMENT

First Deputy Auditor, CarLa Thomas, presented to the Board an agreement with Forensic Fluids, the company which preforms the pre-employment drug screenings. She advised the agreement has been modified due to the increase in cost for the shipping envelopes. She noted even though Forensic Fluids had announced a price increase this last summer, raising the cost of the drug screenings from \$20.00 to \$40.00 each, they have agreed to keep the cost to the County at the \$20.00 fee but have added an additional \$5.00 fee per screening to cover the cost of the remittance envelopes. Commissioner Danford made a motion to approve the modification to the agreement, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes. Deputy Thomas advised it is an open-ended agreement having no term limit.

Commissioner Norem advised Auditor Chaffins she would like to start receiving copies of the Budget Status Report prior to each meeting for the major funds, County General, Highway Department, Health Department, and Reassessment, until the end of the year.

FINDING FOR USE OF CEDIT SPECIAL LEGISLATION

Attorney Lucas advised the Board of Commissioners will need to "make a finding" that the Jail Special Legislation CEDIT revenue could reasonably be used to finance any remodeling to the Courthouse in order to accommodate the move of the Prosecutor's Offices from the basement of the current jail to the Courthouse. He noted also the Clerk's Offices in the Courthouse will need to be re-structured. He advised letters have been received from Circuit Court Judge Kim Hall, Prosecutor Nick Bourff, and Starke County Community Corrections Director Robert Hinojosa stating their views of how the Courthouse remodeling, and the remodeling of the present jail to accommodate the SCCC and Probation Department Offices, are tied into the whole new Jail Project and therefore justifying the use of the CEDIT Special Legislation funding. He advised Lisa Lee of Ice Miller advised of this procedure and to request the Board of Commissioner approve the use of the CEDIT Special Legislation funding to pay for the cost of the remodeling of both the present jail and the Courthouse Offices. Commissioner Danford made a motion that the County finds that both of the remodeling projects, the Courthouse, and the present jail are related to the total new jail project and it does justify the use of the CEDIT Special Legislation funding to cover all expenses. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Attorney Lucas advised the Auditor to include all three letters in the minutes of this meeting.

2015 PROPOSED HOLIDAYS

The proposed 2015 Holiday schedule was presented to the Board by the Auditor for their approval. Two of the holidays were included that aren't normally recognized by the County, Martin Luther King Day and Columbus Day. Also included in the proposal was the request to close the Offices of the Annex Building and the Courthouse during lunchtime, Noon to 1PM, on both Administrative Assistants' Day in April, and Bosses' Day in October. Commissioner Norem advised this year the County had closed on the days of the primary election and the general election but in 2015 there will be a City & Town Election and it is not necessary that the Courthouse be closed for those elections. She stated it would be alright with her to allow the County to be closed on MLK Day and Columbus Day to make up the two holidays in 2015 that will be lost due to the city/town election. Commissioner Danford stated he has always been opposed to making Martin Luther King a County Holiday. A brief discussion followed, and Commissioner Norem made a motion to table this issue until the next meeting. Commissioner Danford seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes.

REPORT OF PARK BOARD MEETING

Debbie Mix appeared before the Board to present a report of the recent meeting of the Park Board. Ms. Mix advised the Park Board met on October 30th and organized the Board. The Park Board President is Marcia Bedrock, Vice President is Skyler Ellinger, and Ms. Mix is the

Secretary. She advised the Park Board will be meeting on the third Tuesday of each month; the next meeting will be on November 18th, and the December meeting on the 16th. She noted there were ten people from the public in attendance for their meeting. Commissioner Danford stated he had received an email from the State Inspector, Bob Bronson, and a copy of the last inspection of the Bass Lake Beach and Campground. President Davis asked Ms. Mix for a member of the Park Board to present a report to the Commissioners at their monthly day meeting. She asked the Auditor to notify Attorney Dave Wallsmith of the monthly Park Board meetings. President Davis also advised she has yet to receive a copy of the letter Mr. Callahan had given his campers.

There was a brief discussion on the Board in regard to a potential payroll issue, a possible overtime situation in the creation of a K-9 Officer in the Sheriff's Department. Auditor Chaffins advised the Officer was first attending K-9 training later on in November and will not complete the training until December. She stated she was advised by the Sheriff's Department Office Manager that the K-9 program will not begin until training is complete.

Commissioner Danford advised he received an email from Weaver & Boos in regard to gas monitoring at the landfill site. He stated Weaver & Boos has recommended the County move out the location of the gas probe but still be in the location compliant with IDEM to see if the gas monitoring levels are affected by the location of the probe. Commissioner Norem stated that location would also show if the gas have migrated. The location would be on the side of CR750E. Commissioner Danford made a motion to allow Weaver & Boos to install a probe in the new location, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes.

President Davis advised she has been asked by IU-Health Starke to approve a letter stating their recommendation in regard to the Starke physician recruitment. The letter is in regard to physician Sabrina Beecham who will be a Primary Healthcare Physician and who qualifies for a J-1 waiver. Commissioner Norem made a motion to approve the letter seconded by Commissioner Danford. The motion passed with all ayes. President Davis asked the Auditor to print out the letter on the Commissioners' letterhead.

President Davis advised she will be meeting with the County Council this month to request additional funding for the Hospital Consultants, as the originally approved funding was for \$50,000.00 and she will be asking for an additional \$40,000.00. She advised the consultants were addressing the future of Healthcare services in the County. She advised the funding request will be from the Save the Hospital Fund and will require both the County Council approval along with the approval of the Hospital Board of Directors. Commissioner Norem stated she would like to see a report as to what the \$40,000.00 was going to provide for the County and she would like for the consultants to present a report to the Board. She stated she is not clear on what the goal is and feels there is a need for more discussion as to what they want to achieve; what is the County's vision of expectations from this consulting work going forward. President Davis advised they are not looking for someone new to take over the hospital or to partner with anyone; that the primary goal has always been the relocating and recruiting of physicians to this area. Commissioner Norem recommended a joint meeting to be scheduled with the County Council, the Hospital Board and the Hospital Consultants.

Auditor Chaffins inquired as to the status of County Employee Health Insurance for 2015. President Davis advised she met with the representative from 1st Source Insurance who advised the insurance company will be getting price quotes together and will be ready to present them at the November 17th meeting.

Veterans' Service Officer Terry Turner advised he was contacted by the American Legion in regard to his receiving notification when a local veteran's claim has been reviewed. He stated he would need a secure/dedicated fax line in order to receive that notification. He noted currently he does not receive the information on how the claims are processed and/or approved. He stated the IT Director, Joe Short, is currently looking into a dedicated fax line.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Les Jensen, the Bass Lake Fire Chief, advised they have an issue with the radio license for their fire department. Commissioner Norem advised him she looked into the situation following the telephone call she had received from him. She advised since the Bass Lake Fire Department chose to no longer be a part of the County's Fire Association they no longer are covered by the Association's radio license. He stated they first requested a separate license in 2011 and wanted to know what happened to that. She stated she had spoken to the IT Director and was told the FCC denied their request. Fire Chief Jensen stated it was the County's responsibility to obtain the license. She also noted the County Fire Association is the owner of the license not the County and he might want to consider reapplying for their own FCC license since his department is no longer a member of the Association.

Council President, Dave Pearman, inquired if he would have permission from the Board of Commissioners to talk to the newly elected Clerk in regard to possibly implementing the use of Odyssey Software in the Clerk's Office. He also asked permission to tell EMS Director Emigh to go ahead with purchasing supplies for Medic 5 in the preparation on ALS Service on January 1, 2015. Commissioner Norem advised they already had that discussion with Director Emigh and he had received their approval. Council President Pearman also asked permission to speak with Sheriff Cowen and the newly elected Sheriff in regard to creating a new position, a maintenance employee for the new County Jail. He also suggested Jim Coad, the Annex Building Maintenance/Custodian be used as a maintenance backup employee at the new jail.

Debbie Mix inquired if the County could consider purchasing supplies locally instead of purchasing supplies from out of county. The Board responded that the County was already purchasing locally when possible and even created a pricing differentiation in order to do so. Commissioner Norem stated she would like to see the Chamber/Tourism/CVC, and she knows Ms. Mix is involved in all those organizations, to participate on a local level, with the State in preparation of the State's Bi-Centennial Celebration. Ms. Mix advised she will look into it. She noted the Bass Lake Festival Committee has already held a discussion in regard to their involvement in that celebration.

There being no further business, Commissioner Danford made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Norem. The motion passed with all ayes and the meeting was adjourned at 11:28AM.

November 3, 2014

Jennifer Davis, President

Kent Danford, Vice-President

Kathy Norem

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