

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2019

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00PM in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, Kathryn Norem, and Bryan Cavender present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner President Charlie Chesak at 6:00PM.

BROADBAND READINESS PLAN

Katie Clark with Taylor, Siefker, & Williams Design Group along with their partners Nate's engineering since August on the Broadband Readiness Plan. She advised she is here tonight to give a rundown in the process and what the county can expect within the next several months. She stated that if you are not familiar with this plan, OCRA provided Starke County with a grant to be able to look at a couple of different things. In terms of broadband, high speed internet, and infrastructure they want to make sure they are always looking at the access as far as where infrastructure is and how people can get on it and how it is available to them. The use of how many people are using what we have, what some challenges may be, and how we as a county and a community can improve the broadband system. When looking at these factors we want to look at the demographics, socioeconomic conditions, and broadband challenges that make it a little more difficult to connect everyone. She explained the process has been completed in three key phases. Existing conditions, community survey with 350 responses, which help them document how the current infrastructure is being used and what is needed in the future if things were to improve. She stated that all of this information is getting funneled through Purdue to be a part of a larger State wide survey as a part of this piolet program.

The second phase begins with being all about visioning and an idea development which took them right up through the thanksgiving holiday. They are ready to finish the study and get it back to OCRA for review in late December and January. The plan will then be back to the Board of Commissioners for formal adoption in a couple of months.

She explained that broadband is broken down by speed being upload speed and download speed. When the two numbers are the same that would be optimal working conditions for working at home. She explained that the state has been looking at the digital divide index. This index carries a range from 0-100 and contains two keys parts being infrastructure (what's there what's available) and then the people (how they are using it). Having a score of 0 on the DD Index means there is not a huge divide, it's there and people are using it. Having a score of 100 is not ideal, this means that what is there is hard for people to access for a many number of reasons. She explained that Starke County is in the middle and in the average range. She explained that even though we are in the average range we face socioeconomic challenges and those challenges will need to be tackled. She explained when moving forward with a broadband plan we need to keep in mind for future planning that 17% of our population is over the age of 65, they may need help learning what is available, how to use it, and how to get it into their home. 17% of our population has less than a high school degree, here we may see education challenges or income challenges, and those who are in poverty may not be able to devote money to an internet subscription. 16% of our population has some type of disability and depending on the disability it may have hindering effects on their use of internet.

When you look at those things together there is a mix of things that will need to be considered when moving forward. She went through the charts that gave information on internet speed in each of the different townships within Starke County. She explained that based on the information the entire county is covered and has some type of option for internet service. However, you start to see differences throughout the county when you look into the speed of wireless internet, especially in the western tip of Starke County. She stated that this started to trigger to them that there are some infrastructure challenges within the county regarding broadband. She then explained that when they got to the second phase in regards to where we want to be, the plan is guided by a committee, and the committee has come up with a big vision in what we want broadband to be in the next 5, 10, 15 years. Broadband is a huge thing to consider because a lot of people choose where they want to live based on broadband. We want to make sure all residents and business owners in the county have reliable, affordable, infrastructure access. She explained that the committee then took that vision and completed some key goals. One of the first goals was that we wanted this to be available to everyone, which then led to a starting goal of where we want those areas to be. We want to make sure everyone has minimum speeds of at least 25/25. This will make working from home a little bit easier.

She advised that this exercise told them the cost per township and the cost for the county. What is also starts to show us that there is a solid business case in Starke County. What providers are willing to put in is right around \$2500 per premise. When looking at the townships in the graph for Starke County the cost per residence is lower than that. She explained there are some areas that are higher but there are ways to overcome that as well. The first five sections of the report are finished and they just need to finish the last two sections. They are shooting for the middle of December in submitting this information to OCRA. OCRA will then review it for a month and submit comments. We will then see the plan back here for adoption late January or early February. She advised that to be a part of this process OCRA has mandated that Starke County becomes certified in broadband readiness. This certification sends a signal to providers and anyone else interested in completing broadband work that you've work diligently in trying to become broadband ready. She explained that is a fairly easy process but we will need to select one person in our entity to be a spokesperson for this process. Commissioner Norem asked regarding the certification process, does part of the grant we have, have the ability to help the county with the certification process? Katie explained that they can provide help up to a point but then it would fall on county government to finish the process.

Commissioner Norem asked if they will be providing a time frame for each plan within each township moving forward. Katie explained they will be providing the county with a 12-18 month plan in how to continue the work that was done in this initial plan. They will also offer information on how the county can facilitate infrastructure improvements.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

Director Travis Clary and Clerk Mary Lynn Ritchie came before the Board of Commissioners to present his monthly report. Commissioner Chesak read off the collection report, they have received \$1,951.32 from Johnathon O'Hara and \$432.00 from Small Claims. Clerk Ritchie explained they have been consistent with the numbers they have been receiving. 41% of their total runs are transfers out of the hospital. She stated that their revenue for this month was \$83,141.93 and their total revenue for the year as of November 30th is \$1,032,186.06. They are up about \$263,015.70 from this point last year. She presented a Stryker contract to the Board of Commissioners with a balance of \$5,000. She explained that this was for training on their new system and it was a part of the contract that was sign last year by Commissioner President Don Binkley. Commissioner Norem made a motion to pay the Stryker bill from the Cumulative Capital Development Fund. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Director Clary then began with his report. He advised they have reached a financial status that they have never reached before at Starke County EMS passing the 1 million dollar mark. They are very excited to see how this progresses next year with a full year of operation of the transfer unit.

He explained he has recently hired a part-time EMT to help minimize overtime. He held another ACLS class for our Paramedics. Advanced Cardiac Life Support is a mandated certification for Paramedics to have. It is a certification that must be taken every 2 years similar to CPR. Paramedics learn how to treat different cardiac rhythms, and are then tested out with a written test/mega code hands on scenario. We then held our monthly audit & review with Starke Hospital. He reported they have had another injury free month in November. All ambulances have been going in for routine maintenance. They have had no major repairs in the month of November. He reported they experienced electrical issues at our Medic 5 station in Grovertown. NIPSCO, and local electrical contractor were able to fix it in a day. They had to end up replacing the existing meter box, and some other minor issues. All of our other bases had no issues for the month of November. He continues to be involved with local meetings. He also has our quarterly meeting with Starke/Laporte Hospitals this upcoming Thursday. He stated will be meeting with the CNO, and directors from the emergency departments for updates. Director Clary advised he is looking to obtain the Board's approval to hire 2 more full-time employees. He is looking to hire one more full-time Paramedic, and one more full-time EMT to help staff our units. We currently have 10 Full-Time EMT's and 10 Full-time Paramedics. The addition of the transfer unit has caused somewhat of a shortage in staffing. He believes that with the numbers we are seeing we want to keep that unit staffed.

Commissioner Norem asked if the part time staff and full time staff made the same amount per hour. Director Clary advised that the Paramedics make the same amount per hour whether they are part-time or full time but the part time EMT's make less per hour than the full time EMT's. Commissioner Norem stated that in her experience part time staff would tend to make more per hour because they are not being offered the benefits like the full time staff are. Commissioner Norem made a motion to authorize to proceed with the request of 1 full time paramedic and 1 full time EMT. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

HIGHWAY MONTHLY REPORT

Office Manager Mary Perren appeared before the Board of Commissioners to go over the monthly report for the highway department. She stated that November tends to be a relatively straightforward month when it comes to field operations. It is mostly winter prep, winter plowing and material hauling for next year's paving operations. After a successful summer paving program, we are looking to smoothly transition to an equally successful winter operations season. It is a little more hectic for our office staff. Cost summaries for this year's summer operations, grant writing, road assessments for next year's paving operations, State of Indiana reporting requirements and development of the maintenance/road improvement training scheduling for next year are just a few of the things keeping the administrative staff busy in November. Overall, November's snow/ice events went well. However, we will need to make some adjustment to the timing of our material application. The optimum times to apply material are just before and during the storm. If you do not apply enough salt-sand prior to and during the storm you will need to use more after the storm than should be necessary. The salt needs to bind water on the roadway to create brine in order for it to be successful. If a driver waits until there is hard packed ice on the roadway before applying material, it will take longer for the brine to take effect (hard packed ice doesn't "give up" its water as easily as falling or freshly plow snow). Our new drivers are having most of the problems with timing. Our supervisors will continue to work hard with these drivers was right where we want it to be (between 17 and 22 MPH). Normally the drivers plow too fast during the first snow events of the year. This year, that has not been a problem.

Last month, Starke County was awarded over \$700,000 of Community Crossings Grant funds for the asphalt resurfacing of CR50S from SR39 to the Knox City Limits. The construction bids for this project will be opened during the December 16th, 2019 Commissioners' meeting. Construction will begin sometime next spring. Our Office Manager, Mary Perren, is close to finishing the necessary Community Crossings closeout procedures for the asphalt paving of 25N from CR600E to SR23 that was completed this summer. Once this closeout is approved by INDOT we will be eligible to apply for Community Crossings grant funds during January 1st call for projects for 2020. We have three applications complete and ready to submit:

1. CR250N from US 35 to Range Road, asphalt resurfacing.
2. Range Road from SR10 to Toto Rd., asphalt resurfacing.
3. CR400S from just west of CR650W to US421, asphalt resurfacing.

No other proposed project has all application requirements complete, thus they will be left off the January application list. The next Community Crossings application call for projects will be next July. Office Manager Mary Perren then presented the 2019 road improvement plan chart and explained that the highway has improved 91.55 miles. She also presented a breakdown of the paving costs for the day-to-day costs associated with our paving operations. The per-mile costs will be presented during next month's report. Last month, the Board approved the roadway conversion application process (converting gravel roads to chip seal roads). As of today, we have received two requests for the 2021 applications. Once these are completed and turned into our department, we will review and score each application. The deadline to submit applications for the 2021 roadway conversions will be June 1, 2020. Application and instructions can be picked up in our office during business hours. We can also send them via email or USPS.

Bridge 158 CR700E over the Jain Ditch, north of CR600N re-bid- The high bids last month were primarily because of the contract required the contractor to finish this year. It also included a clause on using concrete during cold weather that may have shied contractors away. We anticipate a savings of over \$100,000 when we amend and rebid the contract to include an early spring start date and relaxed concrete restrictions. The rebid will take place at the February Commissioners' meeting.

Bridge 140 CR200E over the Robbins Ditch, just north of CR480N – Construction is 80% complete. JCI Bridge Group will have the bridge open for traffic with gravel approaches by the 1st of the New Year. The paving of the approaches will be done in the spring.

Bridge 7 CR1200E over the Yellow River just north of 250S – We have received one consultant proposal for the RFP we sent out last month. The submittal will be scored and we will recommend a design award to the Commission at the December 16th Board meeting. The project is now set for a fall of 2022 bid opening.

Bridge 137 CR300E over the Yellow River just south of CR50N – Although this bridge is not yet structurally deficient in terms of sufficiency rating, it probably will be by 2025. The superstructure of the bridge is already rated a 4 out of 10 and is eligible for INDOT funds. Recently, INDOT announced a

call for projects for the 2025 fiscal year (This is separate from Community Crossings). This is one of the most important bridges in the county due to its proximity to the industrial park. Because of this and that the anticipated deficiency, I am submitting this bridge replacement project for the 2025 call.

Office Manager then presented a chart to the Board of Commissioners for the 2019 Culvert Replacement Master List. On November 12th, the Constellation of Starke Stellar Executive Committee formally presented its application proposal in Indianapolis. After the presentation there was a question and answer period that consisted of all the relevant state agencies asking the executive committee questions related to the application. All involved thought it was a successful endeavor and look forward to the final grant award decision. This Thursday, OCRA (The Office fo Community and Rural Affairs) will be announcing this year's recipient of the award. If chosen, the Constellation of Starke will immediately start working on the development of the approved Stellar projects. If not chosen, the executive committee will discuss how to use the "consolation" award of \$333,333 and most likely will begin the process of applying for the 2020 regional Stellar grant. Our office is currently working with WTH/GIS on a revision of our county map. Our Asset Manager, Laura Morlock, has been leading this effort on our end. She compared the existing INDOT inventory of Starke County roads, the county's existing inventory of these roads and what was actually shown on the previous map. Whenever all three did not match on a specific road, a discrepancy was noted. Laura found over 300 such discrepancies. We are currently reviewing and resolving each one before we send our revised data to WTH for inclusion in the new map. Office Manager Perren lastly presented a copy of the furl reports year to date.

IT-INFRASTRUCTURE PRESENTATION

IT Director Richard Franks came before the Board of Commissioners with Kyle Oakley from Golden Technologies. He had requested that Gold Tech take a look at our infrastructure to see if the data makes sense as far as our current use and what we will be using. Mr. Oakley explained they had taken a look at the proposal that Dell had put together for the county. He explained we are facing a couple of challenges in the very near future. One being the total amount of the storage space we have, we are at approximately less than 10% of the total space in what is available. The second, being a much bigger issue, is the end of life for server 2008 and Windows Exchange 2010. The deadline for this January 14, 2020. What that means is at that point Microsoft will no longer provide patches or security updates for those versions of the operating systems. The solution suggested by Dell would give the county a significance boost in performance capabilities of the environment and allow for you to grow in the future. He stated it would be a recommendation of theirs to develop a strategic plan on how to address the storage space, which is normally done through adding storage space or doing some sort of data management. He believes the plan that Dell put together is a solid plan and there is redundancy built into it, but they would recommend a long term plan discussing the needs of each department and taking the resources we currently have now and how to build on those resources to meet the future needs of the departments.

Commissioner Norem asked Director Franks what was the amount of the quote we had received from Dell. Director Franks stated he believes it was over \$60,000 for equipment and an additional \$40,000 for licenses.

Commissioner Norem then addressed Mr. Oakley and advised they need a plan that says what they are going to need a when. She said we should have had a plan like this in place two years ago. Mr. Oakley advised that his company does do this for his customer base. He advised Starke County is not a current customer of theirs but they could put together a 2-3 year plan for Starke County. Commissioner Norem advised another thing they need to look into is that they need to get more than one bid for this project. Attorney Lucas recalled that other vendors was considered but Dell was the recommendation made by Director Franks. He also explained that using a different vendor in this situation is a little different because we are primarily a Dell infrastructure right now. Mr. Oakley stated that different vendors are going to have different solutions at how to go about fixing the problem. He explained that his company partners with certain vendors that is streamed lined for their customer base and Dell is a partner of theirs. Commissioner Norem stated that they need some sort of strategic plan and if they have to do something like this she wants to see three quotes from 3 different vendors not what your idea of the best quote is. Then the Board of Commissioners can go through the quotes in a public meeting to decide which is best for Starke County.

Commissioner Norem explained that the Board of Commissioners are not IT experts and need guidance in what will need to be done now and in the future relating to Starke County Government's infrastructure. Attorney Lucas explained that he agrees and understands the request for multiple bids but it is a little different from that if, for example, you are buying a mile of asphalt according to corporate

specifications low bid wins; in this context it is a more complex equation and the Board of Commissioners may not buy from the lowest bidder, but you should still have competing proposals on your desk. Mr. Oakley agreed that information technology is a field of that you get what you pay for. He explained that if you buy the lowest end still in IT you are typically going to have user and performance problems. One of the things his company does is provide a roadmap as well as justification as to why they have chosen a certain provider. They examine what are needs are as a whole and then slice that up into what would fit our entity. Commissioner Norem asked how much this would cost them. Mr. Oakley explained that a 2-3 year roadmap is a flat rate of \$1500.00. They will only go a few years out as the landscape changes frequently with information technologies. Commissioner Norem asked if our current hardware is capable of being upgraded to the needed Microsoft. Director Franks advised it was not. Mr. Oakley stated the only other option in storage would be data management. Commissioner Norem asked Auditor Oesterreich who much is in the Cum Cap fund. Auditor Oesterreich stated that they have about \$35,000 left within their appropriated budget, the cash balance is more but the appropriated is not. Commissioner Norem advised if they were to spend over \$100,000 they would need approval from the council as it is over their appropriated amounts. Commissioner Norem asked if any of this would be related to the Jail. Director Franks stated it would be difficult to view each and every operating system. He stated everyone in our county relies on these servers. All the departments use these servers differently. Attorney Lucas asked if Director Franks could generate a report that shows for example, what is being driven by the Sheriff's Department. They would need this report in terms of the funds they will be using. Director Franks stated that he will look into a report showing what each department is utilizing on the server. Commissioner Norem stated the plan going forward is that Mr. Oakley will be providing a quote on what needs to be done now and also IT management going forward in the future. Mr. Oakley would recommend putting together the strategic plan first and then present that to the Board of Commissioners. After further discussion regarding cyber insurance and what may happen if the January 14th deadline is not met Commissioner Norem made a motion to table the discussion until December 16th, 2019 when the information about the quote, the additional quote, the proposal for the strategic plan can be provided and how this is going to come down before the 14th and what the alternatives are. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims in the amount of \$445,024.38. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the payroll claim for the pay period ending 11/16/2019 with a pay date of 11/22/2019 in the amount of \$252,580.51 and a deduction/garnishment amount of \$76,864.18. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Chesak brought forth the Leave of Absence request for extension. Commissioner Norem asked if this was the request in which they had granted a 12 week leave of absence because the employee was not eligible for FMLA as they had not been an employee of Starke County long enough. Commissioner Norem advised that the reason FMLA is in place is to protect the employee, the initial 12 week leave they had granted the employee initially did not have to be done. However, they did grant the employee a 12 week leave which was the same 12 weeks that an eligible employee would be granted. By the same token the Board of Commissioners are obligated to protect the service to the public as well. Commissioner Norem advised that when this employee is able to come back to work they are welcome to apply for an open position if one exists at the time. Commissioner Norem made a motion to deny the leave of absence extension request. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion pass with all ayes.

Commissioner Cavender stated he had received a call from a bus driver today as did Commissioner Norem, about leaves being burnt on a county road. He stated he has spoken with Superintendent Ritzler and he advised there is no ordinance preventing burning leaves on a county road. Commissioner Norem advised they may need to come up with an ordinance that states you cannot burn leaves on the road or you cannot obstruct the roadway. Commissioner Norem stated that they could have Rik or the driver go to the individual's home to tell them they need to stop burning on the roadway. Attorney Lucas agreed that the Superintendent can make an executive order to not burn on the roadway. Commissioner Norem agreed that the Commissioners will have Superintendent Ritzler speak with this individual and if it continues to be a problem they can address the issue then. Commissioner Norem advised she will be getting the lists of appointments together and then will email it to both Commissioner Chesak and

Commissioner Cavender for review. Attorney Lucas gave a summary of the first meeting of the Starke County Employee handbook committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

With there being no public comment Commissioner Cavender made a motion to adjourn at 8:12 PM. Commissioner Norem seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

DECEMBER 2, 2019

Charlie Chesak, President

Kathryn Norem, Vice-President

Bryan Cavender

Rachel Oesterreich, County Auditor
& Secretary to the Board of County Commissioners