

**STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021**

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

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

**ASSESSOR – BID ACCEPTANCE**

Starke County Assessor Michelle Schouten came before the Board of Commissioners regarding the bid opening during their last session for the Contract for Annual Adjustments and Cyclical Reassessment. Assessor Schouten advised that all documents and specs provided are in order with what she had advertised as a part of the bid. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the Contract for Annual Adjustments and Cyclical Reassessment as provided by Accurate Assessments Inc in the amount of \$164,100.00 per year. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**SCEDF- CONSTELLATION OF STARKE**

Mary Perren from the Starke County Economic Development Foundation came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss the Constellation of Starke/Troyer Group Agreement. She wants the Board to consider approval of an additional \$4500 in consultant expenses to Troyer Group. This is for the Constellation of Starke finalist project. The Bass Lake Trail Head and Koontz Lake pavilion was previously bid and came way over budget, which lead to the Board rejecting the bids. They are in the process of revising the bid specs and looking to have those out to bid early next year. Commissioner Chesak stated that it is this far along so he would be in support of this request. Auditor Oesterreich advised that when this all started it was discussed that the county's match would be coming from CEDIT Roads and Bridges. Mary advised that they are restructuring the way the bid documents are being done so they do not run into the same situation. Commissioner Gourley asked what happens if conditions are not favorable and we wind up in a situation as before when the Board had to reject the bids. Mary stated from what they have told the SCEDF, they have to have complete projects so if the projects have to be altered in some way but still considered complete. So instead of a paved parking lot for the Bass Lake Trail Head they may need to do a gravel parking lot. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the addition funding request from the SCEDF in the amount of \$4500.00 to be paid through CEDIT Roadway and Bridge.

**HWY – USI CONTRACT**

Dan Dipert, Superintendent of the Starke County Highway Department came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss a new consultant contract with USI for an on-call agreement to help out with Community Crossings. Maggie from USI Consultants advised there are two items to be executed. The first is the on-call agreement pre-approval. To then execute the on-call contract the Board will then sign the agreement to execute the contract and move forward with the 2022-1 community crossings applications. They would help scope the contract, prepare the applications, and once it was awarded they would design the project, prepare the bid documents, notice to bidders, and limited construction inspection. Auditor Oesterreich asked how much the contract would be and where Superintendent Dipert plans to pay this from. Superintendent Dipert advised he was not sure. Auditor Oesterreich advised she just wants them to keep in mind that they only have \$750,000 to spend in 2022 on consultants and grant matching and wants to make sure we can match everything they are going for. Maggie advised they can help Dan with the the review of the budget as well. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the on-call professional services agreement as presented by USI Consultants. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Superintendent Dipert also wanted to bring up the Road Usage Agreement and were we are at on that. Attorney Lucas stated he does have the purposed agreement with Barnes & Thornburg which he does suggest the Board of Commissioners move forward and approve the agreement tonight. There is an understanding with the agreement that their fees are going to be paid for by the developers and if for some reason this project does not happen they will not expect the county to pay that. Superintendent

Dipert advised that he would like to get Starke County, Pulaski County, and White County together with the Commissioners, the Highway Superintendents, and the lawyers for everyone to be on the same page. Attorney Lucas advised that Barnes and Thornburg already has a Road Usage Agreement prepared, they are just waiting for the agreement for hire to be approved. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the contract with Barnes and Thornburg for Solar Energy Matters. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Superintendent Dipert would also like to increase the part time pay help for CDL drivers to \$18.50 per hour. Auditor Oesterreich will add Superintendent Dipert to the next council agenda for this request. Councilman Pearman asked Superintendent Dipert about the winter operation training that is provided to the drivers and what is being planned. Superintendent Dipert did advise that the drivers went through a simulator training and they have sent there drivers out with plows to run their areas a couple times. He will be reaching out to Kosciusko County Superintendent as he does snowplow training for LTAP.

#### **AUDITOR BUSINESS**

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$240,709.72. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the payroll claims in the amount of \$263,288.13 including deductions in the amount of \$76,945.44 for pay period ending 11/27/2021 and payroll date of 12/03/2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the payroll claims in the amount of \$248,654.42 including deductions in the amount of \$73,543.59 for pay period ending 11/13/2021 and payroll date of 11/19/2021. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes from November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes from November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Attorney Martin Bedrock came before the Board of Commissioners with a concern regarding a concern about the payment of an investigator through the Commissary fund and it was determined the Starke County Council will investigate the rules about Commissary payments.

Councilman Pearman who is also the Chairman of the EMS Advisory Board gave an update on the trainings and exercises they have had in the last month.

The Board of Commissioners also took public comments regarding the future solar farm projects in Starke County. Specifically how they may or may not be harmful to drinking water if the panels themselves were broken or destroyed.

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Gourley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021**

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Charlie Chesak, President

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Bryan Cavender, Vice-President

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Mark Gourley, Member

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Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor and Secretary to  
the Board of Commissioners