

**STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2022**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council at 4:30 PM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman (via zoom), Brad Hazelton, Kay Gudeman, Howard Bailey, Todd Leinbach, Don Binkley, and Don White present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Council Vice-President, Brad Hazelton at 4:30 PM for the Starke County Council Regular Session.

US 30 COALITION

Mayor Joe Thallemer and Laurie Maudlin attended the Starke County Council meeting to talk about the US 30 Coalition. Mayor Thallemer explained that they feel that freeway solution is the only way to not only improve safety but also to improve traffic flow, to improve economic development along the corridor by making it a safer route. Last year of February 2021 the Governor's Office and INDOT agreed to formally study the problem with a PEL study. The route will be studied from the Ohio State line all the way to State Road 49, including all seven counties. The State also agreed to put a new interchange located in Allen County. Mayor Thallemer talked about more projects that the state has approved and actually has given them designation numbers. Those projects, located also in Allen County, will begin in 2027. He stated the freeway is coming to US 30 and is actually here with all the activity starting in Allen County. Towards the end of this month and beginning of next month there will be a lot of marketing materials and information that will be going out to all the counties about these programs. A PEL evaluates the roadway or corridor through your county and will look at the safety concerns and environmental concerns. A big part of the PEL is to sit down with the community members, stakeholders, and other individuals to understand what the vision is in your county for US 30. Mayor Thallemer advised the US 30 Coalition has been working with communities locally to try and help them sit down and look at their needs. He is here today to ask if the Starke County Council would consider supporting the US 30 Coalition. He explained we have had representation since they had started. It is important to have a unified group working together. The PEL should take about 18-24 months to complete throughout the corridor. He stated it is a \$12,000 per year per county cost. Some counties split it up with cities and towns. Each county has 2 voting members and they will be adding a 3rd member, someone through the business side of things, someone that each county will choose. They meet once a month on zoom. Laurie Maudlin advised that the coalition does not want to come in a dictate how US 30 should look like in each community. Each community will decide that for themselves. The coalition takes those plans and puts it into one comprehensive view into the entire project. She advised INDOT views the PEL study as a guide for the US 30 for the foreseeable future, it will not be redone, and this will be the plan.

Councilman Leinbach stated the first project to be "let" will most likely be 15 years out and he asked what Starke County gets for all those years paying into the coalition. Mayor Thallemer stated that he is not sure that Starke County would be paying in for 15 years and the paperwork that they have done in each individual county, there is a cost to that. They are just asking for an even support amongst the counties for that. Councilman Leinbach asked if the funding they pay and all the other counties pay goes toward the work that the consultants do. Mayor Thallemer advised that is correct that is all it is for. Councilman Leinbach asked if anything else, within this project, has been approved to be funded by the State other than the PEL. Mayor Thallemer explained there is a project at Fall Road that is set for 2024 and the four projects that he mentioned for Allen County are set for 2027. Laurie Maudlin stated that there are no projects to be funded yet beyond Allen County because they do not know what type of projects they will be doing, really what comes out of the PEL study is what will be funded. State Representative Jim Pressel spoke up and stated the coalition that has been put together has really driven this to the fore front. Allen County is going to get some improvements but they are about five years out. He thinks it is important to be with the coalition and Starke County has been involved since the beginning and did pay dues for several years. State Representative Jim Pressel stated he wants to see more projects at this end and working toward Allen County because he is afraid LaPorte County and Starke County will be left out when all of the big dollars get spent toward the East of us. We need to figure out what is happening here and how that is going to impact us before they drive all that interstate traffic back towards us. State Representative Jim Pressel asked if LaPorte County were members and Councilman Binkley and Councilman Leinbach asked if they were paying members. Mayor Thallemer

stated they have received one check from them. After further discussion between Mayor Joe Thallemer, State Representative Jim Pressel, and the council members Councilman Leinbach made a motion that we continue to be a part of the coalition, to attend the public meetings, to be involve through our State Representative and any other way we can be involved, but not to make a motion to pay the dues. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

SCEDF – APPROPRIATION REQUEST

Lisa Dan, Director of the Starke County Economic Development Foundation and Mary Perren, Assistance to Director Dan came before the Starke County Council to continue to request for an additional appropriation. Director Dan advised that they no longer need the money for the sign by the highway that is going to be replaced by the individual who owns those buildings. Director Dan introduced Jennifer Craig from Great News Life which is the \$2500 they are asking for to have a half of year subscription on one of their platforms. Director Dan advised they also got a second quote on the laptop from the Starke County Government IT Department so they have adjusted the request accordingly. Councilman Leinbach stated he thought at the last meeting they have money in the budget for equipment. Director Dan stated they have a total of \$1000 per year for assets. Jennifer Craig from Great News Life gave a rundown of their program, their audience, and their demographics. Councilman Leinbach asked if their partnership with LaPorte County is funding through the Economic Development Foundation or if the county funds that. Jennifer advised she has one partnership with the Economic Development Foundation itself with LEAP and also one with the city in LaPorte. Councilman Binkley asked Director Dan about it benefiting us. Director Dan stated that it is a great outreach tool and it is all good news stuff and how we can draw people here. They will also come to four of their events in person for the 6-month contract.

Councilman Binkley asked if the SCEDF board is in favor of the Great News Life Partnership. Director Dan stated that yes they are. They are really looking forward to the photography portion of this partnership, this is going to help them immensely during the events the SCEDF holds. She explained the \$2500 is for a 6-months contract with Great News Life to try it out and see how they like it. Councilman Leinbach asked why this is not a part of SCEDF doing business, why it is not a part of their cost of operations as the county already provides money to them and has a contract with them. Director Dan stated it absolutely is and last year they had a staff of three and now they only have a staff of two, too them this would be an assist. There was some discussion regarding how the SCEDF is funded, how much money the county gives them, and what that extra \$40,000 was for that was set aside earlier this year. There was a misunderstanding about what that money could be used by the SCDEF. Councilman Bailey asked Director Dan that if they funded the first \$2500 for the Great News Life Partnership, where will future funding amounts to Great News Life Partnership, come from. Director Dan advised that they will work on future funding sources. Councilman Leinbach asked if we funded the 6 months when does that start. Jennifer advised that it would start whenever they would like it to start, she has been able to get entities started within 3 days if they is what they are looking for.

Councilman Bailey asked that if the council funds this for 6 months, who will take over the next 6 months. Director Dan advised that they will find another funding source. They are only asking the council to fund this one time. Commissioner Gourley advised that as an overall package the Board of Commissioners where ok with what they were purposing. Councilman Leinbach advised he does not have a problem with trying the Great News Life Partnership and the \$2500 because it will benefits the county but what he does not agree with is that they have to wait until their budget time to go back to their board to ask for money. If departments need money at any point in time here in county government, they come all throughout the year. Also, he will not go along with the computer either. After further discussion Councilman Bailey made a motion to allot \$2500 to the Great News Life Partnership for a one time trial basis and if it is positive the Economic Development board will and should look for a way to create the \$2500 out of their own budget in the future, this is a one-time expenditure of \$2500 to the Great News Life Partnership and recommended by the Starke County Council to the Starke County Economic Development Foundation to find a way in their own budget after the first six months to fund this on their own. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Binkley made a motion to approve the purchase of the laptop for \$803.73. Councilman White seconded the motion and the motion did not pass with 2 ayes and 3 nays.

2023 PUBLIC HEARING FOR BUDGETS

Councilman Hazelton made a motion to open the public hearing for the 2023 Budget of Starke County at 5:35 PM. With hearing no public comments Councilman Leinbach made a motion to close the public hearing at 5:35 PM. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to open the public hearing for the 2023 Budget of Solid Waste at 5:36 PM. With hearing no public comments Councilman Bailey made a motion to close the public hearing at 5:36 PM. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Hazelton made a motion to open the public hearing for the 2023 Budget of North Judson San-Pierre School Corporation at 5:37 PM. With hearing no public comments Councilman Leinbach made a motion to close the public hearing at 5:37 PM. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

CLERK – PAY INCREASE FOR PART TIME

Bernadette Manual, Starke County Circuit Court Clerk came before the Starke County Council to ask for an exception with the part time pay policy. Currently the part time pay policy states that a new part time employee starts at the unskilled rate and after 90 days they move to the skilled rate. Clerk Manuel would like to have the ability to give her part time employees raises when she feels necessary. Boz Williams, the Planning Commission Director advised he agrees as his part time employees is talking about leaving due to being at the unskilled rate. Clerk Manuel feels that the Department Head should be able to give raises at 30 days or 60 days if the employee is going above and beyond the unskilled rate. After further discussion Councilman Binkley made a motion to leave the Part Time Pay policy as is. Councilman Bailey seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

MINUTES

Councilman Leinbach made a motion to approve the minutes from July 18, 2022. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

TRANSFER REQUESTS

Councilman Leinbach made a motion to approve the EMS transfer as follows: Additional Appropriation 1000.30805.000.0020 Software in the amount of \$20,600 and a reduction in 1000.10300.000.0020 Extra Help in the amount of \$20,600. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Bailey made a motion to approve the Recorder transfer as follows: Additional Appropriation 1000.20100.000.0004 Office Supplies in the amount of \$55.89 and a reduction in 1000.30200.000.0004 Mileage in the amount of \$55.89. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business or public comment to come before the Starke County Council, Councilman Hazelton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 PM. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

AUGUST 15, 2022 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