

**STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2022**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 9:30 AM, in person at the Starke County Annex Building, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, Mark Gourley 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 Charles Chesak directly at 9:30 AM.

**VETERANS MEMORIAL PARKWAY**

Don Ensign, as representative from the Friends of the Veterans Memorial Parkway, came before the Board of Commissioners to request funding for the Middle East Memorial Project. He explained that the Friends of the Veterans Memorial Parkway and officials from the Town of Hebron official dedicated 1.5 acres of land for a permanent memorial to those who have served and sacrificed in Middle East conflict conflicts from Northwest Indiana. The memorial will honor those from Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Newton, Jasper, Starke, and Pulaski County. Mr. Ensign advised they are requesting \$1,500 from Starke County for this project. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the request of \$1,500 for the Friends of the Veterans Memorial Parkway. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**PURDUE EXTENSION**

Julia Miller from Purdue Extension came before the Board of Commissioners to ask for approval of the Purdue Contractual Services for 2023. Attorney Schramm has reviewed the contract and everything is in order. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the 2023 Purdue Contractual Services. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**KIRPC – BASS LAKE PROJECT**

Shawn Cain from KIRPC came before the Board of Commissioners to request \$1,700 for Troyer Group for additional time spent on the work for the Stellar Project. Commissioner Gourley advised that he would not grant that because of how mismanaged the project has been. Commissioner Chesak agreed. Shawn then provided the formal change order for taking the roadway approach and reconstructing it for the Bass Lake Project. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the change order. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Shawn then presented pay applications 2 and 3 for the Stellar Projects. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve pay application 2 and 3 as presented. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**TREASURER – COMPUTER PURCHASE**

Laurie Venckus, Treasurer of Starke County came before the Board of Commissioners for ask for a computer purchase in the amount of \$6,902.77. This would be for 3 new computers and 2 new laptops. Commissioner Gourley asked if she has any money left in her budget that she could help put towards the purchase. Treasurer Venckus advised that she might have some money and will review that with Auditor Oesterreich. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to table the request. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**HIGHWAY – MONTHLY REPORT**

Dan Dipert, Starke County Highway Superintendent came before the Board of Commissioners for his monthly report. He advised one of his drivers was lost in a single car vehicle accident. They have now 13 full time drivers and 1 part time driver. The road mowing crews are done this year. They still have the brush chopper out 3 days a week. Community Crossings Grant 2021-02 has been completed that they are submitting the bills, the squeezed two big projects out this year being 2021-02 and 2022-01. That was over 10 miles of hot asphalt done. They are still waiting for the 2022-02 call, those have not been selected yet. The 2023-01 call will open on January 23, 2023 ad run through January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. For the 2023-01 call, it is due December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and he had an engineering assessment done on Bridge #13, it will come in at a cost of \$1.8 Million, our share of that would be \$450,000. Bridge #13 is up on CR600E

over the Robbins Ditch. He also did an engineering assessment on another bridge and that came in at \$1.4 million. He advised that it is rated as a 4 right now. If it is rated as a 5 or higher they would not deem it as necessary. A discussion was held regarding the necessity to get an approval for the funding from council as well since this bridge would not be completed until 4 years from now. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve submitting Bridge #13 under 2023-01. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Superintendent Dipert then presented information regarding the total tank, he submitted the pictures of the tank and the warranty for the tank to the Board of Commissioners. After some discussion regarding the location of the tank, delivery of the tank, and the warranty of the tank Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the purchase of the total tank in the amount of \$36,750.00. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Superintendent Dipert advised that they have completed 27 miles of chip seal, 4 miles of crack seal, and 7.5 miles of fog seal this year. He stated that October 5<sup>th</sup> they had chainsaw training with LTAP and they ended up doing some one on one training as well with new employees on chainsaw training. They also completed snowplow training with the simulator as provided by Bliss McKnight. He advised that Jessica White and he was in Lafayette for Safe Road Training. There is a program that if we adopt a Safe Road Policy that would open them up for eligibly for special grants. Superintendent Dipert advised that in regards to the solar projects they have put up signs for solar traffic 35 MPH to keep the traffic slowed down. There is physical damage to the roads from the project, but it will be monitored and will continue to work with the solar companies to keep the roads safe.

## **EMS – MONTHLY REPORT**

Nancy Coad, EMS Clerk came before the Board of Commissioners to present the monthly financial report. She handed out the reports for August and September for Accumed billing for revenue they have generated. Commissioner Chesak advised that they had received \$822.92 from Johnathan O'Hara, \$50.00 from Small Claims, and then another \$724.05 from Johnathan O'Hara.

Larry Brock, Starke County EMS Director came before the Board of Commissioners to present his monthly report. He advised that when he looks at the revenue he looks at the revenue verses their expenses. He presented a report showing their revenue verses expenses for the last three months. He advised it is improving. In October they only had a \$5,200 loss. The biggest thing is improving the revenue is cutting the overtime. They had their biggest expenses in overtime. They are busy right now with some projects that have been started but never finished. He is happy to report that they have 13 full time EMTs and 8 Full Time Medics. Their schedule is currently full. They are short 2 medics from all trucks staffed with medics. They staffing pattern is that they have 2 paramedics on at all time. He advised as far as staffing is concerned they are doing much better. Director Brock advised he did receive a contract from the hospital regarding transfers. He advised that there was a couple areas that they could not meet. One area was that they wanted 24/7 coverage and the other issue was they wanted a dedicated truck for the hospital.

He advised another issue was that if we could not take the transfer they wanted us to contact another provider and we would have to pay the provider to take the transfer. He has sent them a letter addressing those issues. He also asked the hospital and their administration if they can guarantee three ambulance calls a day. With three calls their department would break even with costs and even over three they would be doing well. He also asked if they cannot guarantee three can they pay them what they don't run. This would balance the loss on the overtime. He has not heard a response yet but once he has he will notify the Board of Commissioners. Director Brock stated he wanted to stress to the Board of Commissioners that he is not denying any emergency transfers. They will take them where they need to go within the guidelines. Director Brock advised he is purposing to have a new position within the department, it would be the medical transport driver. What they would like to do with this position is hire at least first responders to drive the ambulance for us. The purpose of this is the transfer truck is costing overtime. If they can put these individuals on the transfer truck it would cut down the overtime.

He advised he is also looking to join with Porter Hospital for EMT and Advanced EMT. The hope with the EMT class they would be able to bring up the part time pool of people. Commissioner Gourley asked where the council would stand on creating new positions. Councilman Pearman advised that they had frozen the creation of new positions. Director Brock advised they found that some of their documentation is not getting through to Accumed, so they made the rule that when employees are at the end of their shift they are to fax their stuff over to the EMS office so that they can the process the paperwork and send it to Accumed.

## **AUDITOR BUSINESS**

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$414,288.69. 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 \$292,757.54 including deductions in the amount of \$77,986.68 for pay period ending 11/12/2022 and payroll date of 11/18/2022. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes from November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the contract with Schramm Law Group. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Gourley asked what was going on with the Know City Council and City Court discussion. Councilman Pearman advised that he had a meeting Friday with the City of Knoxville. He advised Judge Hall also reached out and stated that maybe we could house city court and if the county was willing to pay for the expenses Knoxville City Court. What they are looking at is about \$118,000 in expenses. Councilman Pearman advised that financially it looks like this would be the best option for our county today. If they went to a Superior Court or even having to add another Magistrate it would cost several hundred thousand dollars. He advised that this would begin in 2024 as they are have an approved budget for 2023. It would be that it would start out at \$118,000 and they would need to notify us by May of the current year for the next year if that amount would need to be different. They would also be reporting to us what the revenue would be. Attorney Schramm will be working with Attorney Ferch on the Interlocal Agreement.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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 11:01 AM.

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2022**

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Charlie Chesak, President

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Mark Gourley, Vice-President

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Bryan Cavender, Member

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Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor and Secretary to  
the Board of Commissioners