

STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 6th, 2023

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 5:00 PM, in person at the Starke County Annex Building, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, Mark Gourley, and Don Binkley, 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 5:00 PM.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OF STARKE COUNTY

Cindy Benke, Director of Community Services of Starke County came before the Board of Commissioners to give an update of their program. She thanked the Board of Commissioners for the funds they had recently received. It has been the first time in three years that they had received funds from the county and explained it will help a lot. She advised that they have done a lot of reorganizing including reorganization of their board. They have also revamped some of the staff and the staff they have now is very professional and are dedicated to the community. They have a few staff that are still in training but are showing a lot of promise. They currently have a Facebook page up and running, they were the Knox non-profit of the year, and they celebrated their 45 anniversary, were the Chamber Business of the Month in November and at the end of the year they won the James R Hardesty award. She stated that the contract with over 100 entities to provide services. Ms. Benke advised that they provide transportation for Starke County and she has had a hard time making people understand that they are public transportation; it is not only for elderly and for handicap.

Ms. Benke advised they do have an aging fleet and some of the vehicles are starting to rust and have over 200,000 miles on them. When she took over, they have two vans on back ordered for 2021 they still have not received. At that time their cost was supposed to be zero, now they are telling her that if they ever do receive the vehicles the cost will be \$22,000 per vehicle. She advised they had applied for another grant last year for a vehicle and if they get that vehicle, they will need to pay \$14,000 towards that purchase as well. Therefore, they are looking at roughly \$60,000 that they have to come up with out of pocket for vans. Mr. Benke advised that they are still getting 10-20 calls a day for energy assistance even though it expires in May. They also have a health equipment loan program and for some reason has recently really taken off. They have run out of wheelchairs and potty chairs. They have the elderly services nutrition education where they provide nutritious lunches. She stated one of her goals she wanted to accomplish going into her position is that she wanted to change the meals and she has done that they now have gourmet meals. They also provide socialization to the seniors. They also have a call-a-day program in which they call seniors who live alone to check on them and speak with them for a little bit.

Ms. Benke advised that the food pantry has gone through major changes and taken a major hit. If it was not for the community, she does not know what she would do. When she advertises what she needs within a few days the community provides those items. They have gone on average two to four pallet every month from the Northern Indiana Food Bank to receiving only two pallets every two months. She praises our community for the help they have given to the food pantry lately. She advised that in February they took in 450 pounds of food and distributed 3,626 pounds of food. Since July 2022 they have been averaging a 2,000 to 3,000 pound deficit every month. In 2021 they fed 335 families for the year, that was 808 people and an average of 28 families per month. In 2022 they fed 1,102 families, that was 3,166 people and an average of 94 families per month. In the first two months of this year so far they have fed 112 families, which is 610 people and an average of 56 families per month and the numbers are only to keep going up. Ms. Benke advised they are still looking to put a site in Hamlet and in the past year the Food Pantry in North Judson has closed so they are looking for a site to do distributions there as well. They are also looking to start a cancer support group here. The first meeting for this will be March 22 to get this going.

TREASURER VENCKUS – SOFTWARE & MONITOR PURCHASES

Treasurer Venckus came before the Board of Commissioners to ask for software and monitor purchases. She provided a quote for the Board to review. The software purchase came to a total of \$944.04 and the computer monitor quote from Dell was a total of \$2,122.53. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve \$944.04 for software and \$2,122.53 for computer monitors and

accessories to be paid from Cumulative Capital Development Fund. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$442,361.39 with the exception of the Swan Lake claim in the amount of \$119.00. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve the payroll claims in the amount of \$281,604.43 including deductions in the amount of \$76,241.96 for pay period ending 02/18/2023 and payroll date of 02/24/2023. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes for February 20, 2023. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Chesak asked if we had heard from the hospital board. Auditor Oesterreich advised Renay did call her from the hospital and said she does not believe they have policies in place but they do have a conflict of interest and she would need to speak with the CEO and get back to her.

Commissioner Binkley made a motion to appoint Mark Allen and Tiffany Nagai to the CVC Board. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Auditor Oesterreich asked about hiring a HR Consulting Service to update the county handbook. She advised the current handbook is out of date and here are several areas that need to be updated. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the New Focus HR contract for HR services. Commissioners Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve the South Shore GIS, LLC contract. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

A discussion was held about the opioid settlement and the ability for work with Porter-Starke coming up with a plan for the use of the opioid settlement money.

Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve the raising of the concrete and to be paid from the Cumulative Capital Development fund. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Binkley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 PM.

MONDAY, MARCH 6th, 2023

Charles Chesak, President

Mark Gourley, Vice-President

Don Binkley, Member

Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor and Secretary to
the Board of Commissioners