

STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2023

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 Don Binkley via Zoom, 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.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

Nancy Coad came before the Board of Commissioners to present the financial monthly report. Commissioner Chesak advised that they have received \$192.00 from Johnathan O'Hara, \$133.85 from Small Claims, \$2,056.98 from Small Claims, \$197.59 from Merchants Medical, and \$712.24 from Merchants Medical. Jim Garner, Starke County EMS Director, came before the Board of Commissioners to present his monthly report as follows:

Operations: Currently we are operating 4 out of 4 ambulances at certain intervals 3 at ALS level, when ALS Staffing permits as well as 1 BLS transfer when staffing permits. Minimum of 1 ALS staff member at all times scheduled at Medic 3, Knox base, 33% of June Staffing is 2 ALS staffed ambulances. ALS ambulances 67 % is minimum staffing of 1 paramedic at Knox base, I am operating ALS Non-transport vehicle on a 24-hour basis as needed to supplement staffing. State EMS variance waiver for use of EMR drivers to operate alongside of Paramedics to fill in as needed drivers on transfer truck was applied for and granted. NW Starke was contacted and advised to contact us prior to Tri County to resume transfers if staff permits.

Transfers: Are currently on temporary suspension until we secure a replacement ambulance. Planning on September 1 to return to transfer status, transfer crew will be allocated from within existing budget.

Personnel: We have at this time no full-time openings for EMT's (12 on schedule) with 3 part time applications, 0 applicant received application, 4 current full-time paramedics as well as 5 paramedic full-time openings.

Training: Coming in August is a documentation class to be taught by Accumed (our billing company). 08/25/2023 K9 medical class has been rescheduled

Safety: August 5, 2023 1 EMT Fatal Line of duty death, 1 Paramedic off also with no determined release date. Last injury reported was on 04/07/2023

Ambulance Maintenance:

3308-North Judson M1 (2021 Ford Gas Vin:1FXDE4FN2MDC16274 Current mileage: 96775) Up to date and in service

*4230- Knox base M3 (2019 Ford Gas Vin: 1FDXE4FS8KDC09607 Current mileage: 78992) Serviced at Lochmondy at 11,000 miles over due. Currently No known issues or no current repairs needed at this time. Total Loss 08/05/2023

0514 (2015 Ford Diesel Vin:1GB6G5CL5F1268834 Current mileage:200,016) Also recommended replace wheel simulators to repair lug nut issue. (part not available currently). Parts removed from *0085 to repair performance issue, parts were used with same number of miles and still will require replacement. Currently awaiting on service at Lochmondy ford.

*0085 (2013 Diesel Vin:1GB6G5CL4D1146446 Current mileage:194,290) Currently out of service. Glow plug control module. DEF filter, injector Was recommended to replace all 4 rear dual tires (Parts were reallocated to *0514 to place 0514 back into service. particulate filter assembly, reductant fluid injector for an estimate total.

0084-Grovertown M5 (2012 Chevy Diesel Vin:1GB6G5CLXC1117256 Current Mileage: 116176) At Sideline Auto for brake issue and Emissions light currently awaiting estimate.

4149 (2013 Ford Explorer Vin:1FM5K8ARXOG844160 Current Mileage:123886) Requires lower control arms, tires and alignment. Parts are on order as Explorer is currently in use and stocked as a functioning ALS non-transport vehicle as registered with state EMS and being used as an additional Paramedic Unit when needed.

Base Maintenance: looking for estimate for 2 outside outlets to be installed at all medic bases for Spare ambulance to be plugged in.

Grants: Currently have applied for a grant from the Northern Indiana Community Foundation for 1 of the 2 Power load systems needed for the cots. Their meeting will be held Monday 8/21/2023. Also, have

approached the Opioid Abatement committee for the second one needed. Finished closing out the grant that was not completed from the previous director. Applied for grant with Subaru for purchase of Lucas Cpr device as well as winter coats for employees. No new development on the Indiana Senate bill 169 which establishes the rural community ambulance grant pilot program and fund. Searching for grants, donations have become part of a daily routine.

Donations: Northern Indiana Community Foundation has reached out to me on Friday with information of an anonymous \$15,000 donor and asked of a list to be sent for needs.

Mark Baileys donated a new washing machine for medic 3 to replace the old one that has been broken.

PPE: The standing is good for most all personnel protective equipment.

Director Garner advised he has received several quotes for a new ambulance purchase. The first quote was a used 2014 Ford E450 with 125,000 miles for \$22,000 from Osage Ambulances. Director Garner stated this particular ambulance is an older LaPorte County unit and was well maintained. The second quote was a 2022 refurbished unit on a brand-new Ford E450 that has been completely brought up to current specifications. The quote came from Elite Ambulance Sales in the amount of \$180,850. The third quote brought forth was for a 2023 Ford E350 in the amount of \$197,000. The final quote received came in at \$229,565 for a 2025 Ford E450. Director Garner advised he would like to go with the 2014 Ford E450 with 125,000 miles for \$22,000 from Osage Ambulances with the donation money from the Northern Indiana Community Foundation and also the 2022 refurbished unit from Elite Ambulances in the amount of \$180,850. He advised we have a check coming from the insurance company in the amount of \$156,600 to help with the purchase of the Elite Ambulance. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2014 Ford E450 in the amount of \$22,000 and the 2022 Ford E450 in the amount of \$180,850 with any balances to be paid from the Cumulative Capital Development Fund. Commissioner Binkley 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 to present his monthly report. He advised they are still at full staff in his department. He advised that for CCMG 2023-1, central paving should be starting on that project on September 5th. They are going to do about 43 miles of chip seal with the first call. Superintendent Dipert advised that the build slots for trucks are opening up at the end of the month. He provided the Commissioners with a sheet that shows the freightliners they currently have in the fleet, he also gave the Commissioners two quotes from Lindco for Chassis. One quote from Lindco came is at \$121,810.00 for a 2023 International HV507 SFE Tandem Axle and the second quote was for \$125,675.00 for a 2024 Freightliner 114SD Plus. Commissioner Gourley asked what the total cost of the truck is. Superintendent Dipert advised the total cost of one truck would be around \$240,000 if they went with the freightliner. Commissioner Gourley asked when payment would be due if they approved this today. Superintendent Dipert advised these would be leased vehicles just like the other two leased vehicles they have been paying on for a year now and they have not received those trucks yet either. He stated that they should have received the other two trucks at this time right now but they have been pushed to the 1st quarter of 2024. So, we will not be receiving those trucks until sometime next spring. Superintendent Dipert advised if we order these trucks now it could be the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025 when we actually receive the vehicles.

Commissioner Chesak asked what these additional payments would bring the fund down to in case they do need to purchase other equipment. Superintendent Dipert stated this would leave them about \$30,000 in truck purchases and then they have \$140,000 in "other road equipment". All three Commissioners expressed the distaste they have for agreeing to purchase two more trucks when they have not received the first two trucks yet. Commissioner Binkley asked if Dan has been looking around for used trucks. Superintendent Dipert stated he was looking and did go view one used truck but it was not set up correctly. Superintendent Dipert advised that he is wanting to get a build slot now because it may not be until 2026 if we wait. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to table the leased truck discussion until the next meeting. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Superintendent Dipert advised they have been continuing to chip seal and they have also been out hanging low cutting branches that the schools have been calling in. They have also been cleaning intersections up cutting corn. They are working on PPE requirements for cleaning up brush and brush work overall pertaining to poison ivy. They would like to have a PPE requirement list for each piece of equipment, they have done some stone brimming on 800 S. Commissioner Binkley asked

Superintendent Dipert if the mowers are still out and working. Superintendent Dipert stated he has 4 mowing roadsides and 1 is cutting brush back. He advised they will be out through September.

SHERIFF-NEW POSITION REQUEST

Jack Rosa, Starke County Sheriff and April Wilhelm, Matron of the Starke County Sheriff's Department came before the Board of Commissioners to request two new full-time positions within their department. He advised that they had lost the Healthlinc grant for the officer and the Social Worker. He stated they are going to get the social worker position back but the person they had doing all that is also their evidence technician. He advised they are asking to replace the officer and then for an evidence technician. The officer pay would be along with everyone else and the evidence technician would be \$37,000 which is the same pay they pay the clerks. Commissioner Gourley asked if they found a licensed social worker. Sheriff Rosa advised that Healthlinc is helping them with that process. Sheriff Rosa presented job descriptions for evidence tech and the road officer. He advised they are having trouble just filling the schedule and they are eating up their overtime budget. All three Commissioners had a brief discussion regarding the need for a road officer but not necessarily the evidence technician. Commissioner Binkley asked if the new officer position would need a new vehicle. Sheriff Rosa advised that for the immediate future they should be fine because they just got the two new durangos. After further discussion Commissioner Binkley asked this to be tabled until their second meeting in September, he would like Jack to use part time help to fill the jobs. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to table the discussion. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

LIABILITY RENEWAL 2023-2024

Carrie Block with 1st Choice Insurance came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss the liability insurance renewal for Starke County Government 2023-2024. Carrie presented the Board of Commissioners with three Workman's Compensation quotes as follows:

BITCO – Current Carrier- \$153,724.00
IPEP – Indiana Public Employers Plan - \$138,843.00
Assigned Risk Worker's Compensation - \$126,086.00

After much consideration the Board of Commissioners agree to go with IPEP. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to accept the proposal from IPEP in the amount of \$138,843.00 Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to to approve the quote from Bliss McKnight in the amount of \$588,636 minus the amount of \$153,724 for Workman's Compensation as the Board has chosen a different carrier. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PLANNING COMMISSION – ORDINANCE APPROVALS

Mary Beaver with Planning Commission came before the Board of Commissioners for approvals regarding the following ordinances Ordinance Establishing Definitions and Criteria for Dwellings, Ordinance Establishing Definitions and Criteria Structures, and Amendment to The Code of Starke County. She advised that the dwelling ordinance establishes the dwellings and what they are defined as and also taking a lot of information that is spread out and combining them into this one ordinance so that when they have someone who questions the dwelling definition it will be together in one area. This was passed at the Planning Commission meeting on August 9th. Commissioner Gourley asked what was the driving factor in making these changes. Mary advised that the Planning Commission Board asked her to do this. Commissioner Gourley agreed he would like to see things more organized but he does not know if piecing it together is the right way to do it. Public discussion was held regarding the chipping paint and the placement of containers. Discussion was also held about the how the variance process works. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to table this discussion for further review of the Ordinance requests. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$773,191.14. Commissioner Binkley 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 \$296,724.95 including deductions in the amount of \$78,229.18 for pay period ending 08/05/2023 and payroll date of 08/11/2023. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve two sets of minutes from two different meetings on August 7th, 2023. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the easement requested as presented by NIPSCO. However, they had questions regarding the easement and have asked Auditor Oesterreich to have a representative at their next meeting so that they can ask questions prior to the approval.

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve An Ordinance to Consider Vacation of a Public Alley and to Extinguish he County’s Claim to a Public Causeway. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve A Resolution of the Starke County Commissioners Accepting State Public Health Funding. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public discussion was held regarding the solar ordinance as it is written today regarding the notifications by certified mail of each project. The public expressed concerns for never getting any certified mail for the projects that are currently being constructed. Attorney Schramm will be looking into what exactly triggers the certified mail notifications. A solar ordinance example was presented to the Board of Commissioners by the public attending the meeting, everything in red is a change to the existing ordinance. Public discussion was held regarding some of the key changes presented in the solar ordinance.

Several individuals came from the Koontz Lake area to talk about a fireworks disturbance they had the weekend before. They advised that a gentleman (not a part of their group) had loaned their house out for a party and at this party they were setting off illegal fireworks and into very early hours of the morning. He advised after several calls he was not able to get help from the Sheriff’s Department as they were busy with other calls. He advised he does not think we have a county ordinance addressing fireworks either.

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Gourley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 AM.

MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2023

Charles Chesak, President

Mark Gourley, Vice-President

Don Binkley, Member

Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor and Secretary to
the Board of Commissioners