

**STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

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 Don Binkley, Charles Chesak, 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 Don Binkley directly at 9:30 AM.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT – VEHICLE REQUEST

Frank Lynch, Starke County Health Nurse, came before the Board of Commissioners to ask for the purchase of two vehicles for his department. One will be for the Food Inspector and the other one will replace what they currently have for the Environmentalist. Health Nurse Lynch presented several different quotes as follows:

2018 Chrysler 300 from Rice Ford, Inc. in the amount of \$20,210
2020 Ford Explorer from Rice Ford, Inc. in the amount of \$26,950
2016 Chevrolet Silverado from Knox Chevrolet in the amount of \$26,128
2021 Ford Explorer from Lochmandy Ford in the amount of \$24,995
2018 Ford Focus from Lochmandy Ford in the amount of \$13,995

After further discussion Commissioner Chesak made a motion to approve the 2021 Ford Explorer from Lochmandy Ford in the amount of \$24,995 as well as the 2018 Ford Focus from Lochmandy Ford in the amount of \$13,995. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PLANNING COMMISSION – DISTILLERY ZONING AMENDMENT

Mary Beaver, Planning Commissioner Clerk, came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss a subdivision plat and a Distillery Zoning Amendment. Mrs. Beaver explained the Subdivision plat is for Eagle View Estates in the Koontz Lake area. It does not have lake access. After further discussion Commissioner Chesak made a motion to approve the Eagle View Estates subdivision. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Mrs. Beaver then explained the Distillery Zoning Amendment the Planning Commissioner is requesting approval on. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve An Ordinance Amending the Starke County Unified Zoning Ordinance to Allow for the Distillation and Storage of Spirits within Agricultural Zoned Districts in Starke County. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

EMS MONTHLY REPORT

Nancy Coad, Starke County EMS Clerk, came before the Board of Commissioners to present the financial report. Commissioner Binkley advised they have received \$267.32 from Merchants and Medical, \$441.49 from Merchants and Medical, and \$370.54 from Johnathan O’Hara. Jim Garner, Starke County EMS Director, came before the Board of Commissioner to go over his monthly report.

Operations: Currently we continue operating 3 out of 6 ambulances 1 at ALS level 100% with 2 operating ALS when ALS Staffing permits along with full time Paramedic chase car staffed at 100% of the time, 1 Paramedic/ EMS Director car running as a backup as well. 1 Transfer truck also available as an additional Ambulance when not doing transfers. Minimum of 1 ALS staff member at all times scheduled at Medic 3, Knox base, 73% (increase of 25%) of January staffing is 2 ALS staffed ambulances. 26% coverage of 3 paramedic at all bases had paramedic coverage. Marshall, Pulaski, Starke and lower St Joseph counties were contacted and advised of emergent and non-emergent transfers have resumed as well as returning to routine transfers.

Transfers: As of last monthly report in January 68 out of 72 requests, with a total of 68 transfers completed 4 to Memorial and 3 to Indy, 2 to Fort Wayne

Personnel: We have at this time no full-time openings for EMT’s (12 on schedule) with 2 part time applications received and 1 new part-time EMT hired, 1 new applicant received applications, 4 current full-time paramedics as well as 4 paramedic full-time openings. 2 new drivers for transfer truck.

Training: 2024 training schedule First half written.

02/20/24 Traumatic brain Injury with bloodborne pathogens

Safety: Last injury reported was on 08/05/2023

Ambulance Maintenance:

3308-North Judson M1 (2021 Ford Gas Vin:1FXDE4FN2MDC16274 Current mileage: 110992) Out of Service for leaf springs at Sideline Auto

4925- Knox Base Medic 2 (2014 F450 Gas Vin: 1FDXE4FS8EDA90672 Current mileage 138906-Out of service at H and S Fleet getting powerload system installed

4926- Knox Base M3 (2024 F350 Gas Vin: 1FDXE4FN1RDD21556 Current Mileage: 5420 In service

0514-M2 (2015 Ford Diesel Vin:1GB6G5CL5F1268834 Current mileage:204421) Currently operating as transfer truck.

*0085 Grovertown Base M5 (2013 Diesel Vin:1GB6G5CL4D1146446 Current mileage:205089)

Currently in service, needs a rear step replaced, current step rusted and repaired with new step being built. Scheduled for shop 03/04/24

0084-North Judson Base M5 (2012 Chevy Diesel Vin:1GB6G5CLXC1117256 Current Mileage: 127704) Currently in service.

4149- Knox base M-41(2013 Ford Explorer Vin:1FM5K8ARXOG844160 Current Mileage:136107).

Explorer is currently in use and stocked as a functioning ALS non-transport vehicle as registered with state EMS and staffed by Shift Captains used as a Paramedic Chase Unit.

4747 EMS -1 (2019 Chevrolet Tahoe Vin: Current mileage: 73031 Directors car as well as fully stocked and state registered ALS non-transport Paramedic unit.

Base Maintenance: Still awaiting Jason to install 2 outside outlets to be installed at all medic bases for Spare ambulance to be plugged in. New door entry systems (key card entry) Still in progress awaiting Maintenance Director to free up.

Grants: We have written 4 new Grant requests to purchase new Power load Stairchairs for a total of \$72,000. As always searching for grants, donations have become part of a daily routine.

Donations: None for this reporting period.

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

Director Garner then advised that he would like to turn two of the 13 EMT positions into an EMS Driver positions. If this goes through he will have 9 paramedics, 11 EMT's, and 2 EMS Driver positions. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion for the creation of the EMS Driver positions. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PROSECUTOR – JOB DESCRIPTION

Leslie Baker, Starke County Prosecutor, came before the Board of Commissioners to revisit the Deputy Prosecutor job description. Prosecutor Baker presented the description to the Board of Commissioners and after a final review Commissioner Chesak made a motion to approve the job description as presented for the Deputy Prosecutor. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Prosecutor Baker then asked for a new Full Time Child Support Clerk. The board of Commissioners did hold a discussion but the consensus was no as there is still a hiring freeze in place.

STELLAR PATHWAYS

Mary Perren, Assistant Director of the Starke County Economic Development Foundation, and Bob Aloï with Territorial Engineers came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss the Stellar Initiative. He explained how much money and the projects the money went to during the last round of Stellar when we were 2nd runner up. He explained that the next phase of Stellar is called Stellar Pathways. He stated it is very similar but there are some differences. Mrs. Perren advised in order to be eligible a county wide entity must lead the Stellar Pathways effort. This would be county government or a non-profit that serves the county. That lead must also partner with at least two additional municipalities. She advised North Judson and Hamlet already stated that they wanted to do this. All of the participating communities must participate five years to the program. Mr. Aloï went through the different areas of eligible projects, this includes enhancing qualities of space, stormwater and wastewater projects, gateway beautification, human wellness, healthy food markets, health and wellness, substance use and abuse initiative, and strengthen local economy. After further discussion Commissioner Chesak made the motion for Mary Perren and Bob Aloï to move forward with Stellar Pathways to obtain more information. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT – VEHICLE PURCHASE

Frank Lynch, Starke County Health Nurse, came before the Board of Commissioners with a vehicle update. He advised the 2018 Ford Focus from Lochmandy Ford in the amount of \$13,995 was no longer available but they do have a 2021 Nissan Versa available. Commissioner Chesak made a motion to accept the purchase of the 2021 Explorer and the 2021 Nissan Vera as presented in the amount of \$15,078. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

IT – SOFTWARE REQUEST

Stanley Budd, Starke County IT Director, came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss a new software he is looking into. He advised that the company, SpyGlass, is a company that will come in and assess all of our phone and internet billing and see if there are any areas that they would be able to save us money with. He advised that all of the costs that would be associated with this company would come from the savings that they could provide us. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to table this until their next meeting. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Director Budd also stated he will be working on a VPN policy for the county.

HWY – MONTHLY REPORT & VEHICLE PURCHASE

Rachel Oesterreich, Interim Superintendent of Starke County Highway, came before the Board of Commissioners to give a monthly report. She advised mother nature has been good to us these past few weeks. Crews have been out patching pot holes and doing brush work. I am very proud of the progress we have made within the highway department and especially how the drivers have been learning and adapting to this progress. On February 12th we helped with a culvert installation that went through the Surveyor's Office, this was on 150 W. between 800 S. & 900 S. The road has started caving in so we worked as quickly as we could to get the installation process moving. This culvert was massive in size it was 8' wide and 65' long. She also advised that every Monday morning we have a safety meeting and we have implimented showing training videos. This morning (because we were off yesterday) the drivers had a training on Exterme Weather Driving, this program is designed to help drivers understand the basic driving techniques that will help them safely operate a CMV when driving in extreme weather and not just winter weather. We have had a lot of fog lately as well.

Interim Superintendent Oesterreich also stated that High Star Traffic which was formally known as TCS has asked permission to train their employees on some of our roadways. I have listed the things they are planning to do to our roadways within our county.

- 1) The intersection of CR210 and CR600S/Old SR10 at the Bass Lake pocket; (Thermoplastic)
 - a) Grooving: 8,000 LF
 - b) STOPBAR: 36 LF
 - c) LIA: 2
 - d) White solid 4": 4,000 LF
 - e) Yellow 4" 4,000 LF
- 2) CRC50S/Pacific Ave from the end of the pavement markings on 50S to the railroad tracks on Pacific. Long lines and stop bars at the intersection of Pacific and Kloeckner/300E. (Epoxy & RPM)
 - a) Yellow 4": 6,500 LF
 - b) White solid 4": 6,500 LF
 - c) RXR: 1
 - d) Stopbar: 80 LF
 - e) RPM: 40
- 3) 350W from 400S to 500S. (Paint)
 - a) White Solid 4": 10,400 LF
 - b) Yellow Solid 4" 10,400 LF
- 4) Crawfordsville Parking lot (Paint, Preform)
 - a) Preform plastic 4": 140 LF
 - b) Paint Yellow 4": 2,750 LF
 - c) ADA Paint: 4
 - d) Blue 4" 180 LF

Interium Superintendent Oesterreich then stated that Prior to 2019 (MVH) Motor Vehicle Highway was one fund. All State MVH revenue went into 1176. State legislation changed that December 18, 2018 to two funds. MVH 1176 and MVH Restricted 1173. MVH restricted can only be spent on construction, reconstruction, and preservation of roadways. Prior too 2019 the MVH Balance was fully executed during the year as it should be. Those funds should be put into the roadways. As an example, the carry over balance over the years have been the following when it was all one fund:

2016 = \$337,875

2017 = \$272,223

2018 = 384,467

These are reasonable cash balances to carry over into the new year. Since the creation of MVH and MVH Restricted in 2019 we all have been learning how to use MVH Restricted through our audits. Currently MVH restricted has a balance of \$1.5 million. I would like to transition some of our CCMG matching grant money to come from MVH Restricted. This year we have applied for the 1st call of the CCMG grants and this consists of an HMA overlay on 600 N between 600 E and SR 23, 400 N between US 35 and Range Rd, and an HMA overlay in Johnsons Subdivision which is the subdivision we had to put almost \$200,000 into last year unexpectedly from a plat that was approved in 2010. The matching amount to this project is estimated at \$500,000. Normally, we would use CREDIT for grant matches but I would like to use \$500,000 of the cash balance in MVH Restricted to create a CCMG appropriation. These particular funds are not meant to sit an accumulate. These funds are collected from gas taxes and they need to be put back in the roadways.

Along this same discussion (LRS) Local Road and Street 1169 is a fund that prior to 2019 was use mainly for aggregates. When they changed the MVH funds they tweaked LRS in that its use was going to be for purchasing Trucks and Other Road Equipment. The carry over balances for the last few years in LRS have been the following:

2016 = \$16,402

2017 = 16,431

2018= 85,061

This fund now has a carryover balance of \$532,500. I believe the highway funds have not been utilized correctly for the past few years. I would like to spend \$200,000 of that carry over balance toward a new single axle international dump truck and also a \$48,500 pick-up. The department has not had a new truck purchased in several years. When I was at the department years ago I remember we used to budget for 1 new tandem, 1 new singe axle, and at least one new pick-up every year. These funds are meant to be spent on equipment to help the department to maintain roadways. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the pick-up truck and single axle truck as presented. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes for February 5, 2024. Commissioner Chesak 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 \$311,501.71 including deductions in the amount of \$81,836.67 for pay period ending 02/03/2024 and payroll date of 02/09/2024. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Chesak made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$245,085.15. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Auditor Oesterreich explained that she would like to offer PERF to the Council pending their acceptance as well at the meeting tonight. After further discussion Commissioner Gourley made a motion to include the Council in the PERF ordinance contingent upon the Council's approval as well. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Binkley advised he was looking for a vehicle for the Park's Department and would like to approve an "up to" amount. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve up to \$25,000 for the purchase of a vehicle for the Park's Department to be paid from the ARPA fund. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Commissioner Chesak spoke about going to a few meetings in San Pierre to discuss a new fire house. He advised that they are actively looking for grant funds, donations, ad other avenues for funding for this project. He asked for a pledge from the county for \$250,000 to put towards the contract. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve a pledge to San Pierre toward the project of

constructing a new fire house. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Bill Crase, Kankakee Valley River Basin Member, came before the Board of Commissioners with Dan Gumz for a complete update regarding the work being done on the Kankakee Valley River Basin Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Gourley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Chesak seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 PM.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2024

Don Binkley, President

Charles Chesak, Vice-President

Mark Gourley, Member

Sara Dingman, Deputy Auditor