

**STARKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING****August 5, 2024**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Commissioners and meet in regular session in the meeting room of the Starke County Annex #1, Knox, IN, at 5 PM, with all members present. Also present were four councilmen-Cassandra Hine, Todd Leinbach, Kay Gudeman and Dave Pearman, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

IN RE: BZA

Mary Beever came before the board requesting a full-time position in the BZA department. It would be three days for BZA and two days for the Planning Commission, eliminating the part time person for BZA. She gave the reason being that the DNR has transferred all permitting for piers at Bass Lake to be done by the BZA and needing done every year. This is an extension of what she is currently doing now. Charles Chesak moved to approve the job description starting January 1st, 2025. Seconded by Mark Gourley with three eyes.

Planning software Iworq \$6,587 per year is paid through IT. \$2,431.67 has already been paid and that same amount is due again in September. Mark Gourley moved to approve this out of Cum. Capital Development seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: COURTHOUSE MAINTENANCE AND LEFTOVER AUCTION ITEMS

Randal Minix submitted estimates on repairs needed to the courthouse. Mark Gourley moved to approve the quote from Country Strong in the amount of \$8,570 seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

Randal Minix and Rick Green asked what to do about leftover auction items. Commissioners stated that this would need to go before the County Recorder as she is the retentions officer.

IN RE: WORKER'S COMPENSATION FOR EMS AND FIRE

Lupke Rice and Chris Childers wished to be considered when the Worker's Compensation came up for renewal for EMS and fire. The commissioners stated that fire was through the city and that they should talk to Jim Garner, EMS director.

IN RE: MOWER FOR JUSTICE CENTER

Sheriff Rosa brought in 3 bids for a new mower for the justice center as the other one will no longer work. He stated that it is 9 ½ years old. The Sheriff prefers the bid from Ronson Equipment in the amount of \$7,200. Don Binkley moved to approve Ronson Equipment and it being paid out of Cum. Capital Development seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

The sheriff submitted his report for July which totaled 59 calls.

IN RE: SOLAR CONSTRUCTION COMPLIANCE MONITORING SERVICES

Ginny Munroe submitted a booklet on the services they offer for monitoring the Solar construction and other energy companies. Also, to make sure BZA requirements are met. Mark Gourley had requested that she come to the meeting with information. They would be onsite to monitor.

Mark asked the attorney, Justin Schramm, if the cost for this could be shifted to the energy companies. Justin stated that that the ones already permitted may be trickier but could be done. Mark said he would prefer the cost not to be on the taxpayers. The monitoring company would still be under the scope of the commissioners. The commissioners tabled this until van discuss and research with Justin Schramm, County Attorney.

IN RE: JUSTICE CENTER ACCESS CONTROLS

Stanley Budd, IT Coordinator, stated that the main door is fixed and Securitas is still working on fixing the other doors.

IN RE: GOLF CART ORDINANCE AT BASS LAKE

There were concerns that were brought to the attention of Don Binkley by residents at Bass Lake, that State Police were ticketing golf carts on Highway 10 around the lake. The residents were under the impression that there was a special ordinance allowing this. County Attorney, Justin Schramm, stated he never heard of this, but he will check before the next meeting.

IN RE: UTILITY BILLS AT ANNEX #2

Shawn Matraw with Probation stated that currently the utility bills are being paid for at Annex #2 in the following manner:

Probation 40%
Community Corrections 40%
Purdue 20%

He stated that because the Health Department is also there, he would like to see it divided as follows:

Probation 30%
Community Corrections 30%
Health 20%
Purdue 20%

Mark Gourley moved to approve the new division of utilities seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: APPROVAL OF PAYROLL AND VENDOR CLAIMS

Charles Chesak moved to approve the payroll claims seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

Mark Gourley moved to approve the vendor claims seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charles Chesak moved to approve the July 15, 2024, commissioner minutes seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

Mark Gourley moved to approve the July 29, 2024, joint council and commissioner meeting seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: EMPLOYEE CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Auditor's Office usually plans the Christmas Party. December 6, 2024, is the date we are looking at. In the past, the commissioners approved closing from 1-4 PM for the party, with those employees not attending the party having to stay in their office and work the regular hours. County Attorney, Justin Schramm, will draft the resolution.

IN RE; INTERNAL CONTROLS

Cassandra Hine stated that an internal controls policy was adopted by the commissioners in 2020. She wants to know what's being done. She talked in length about following checks and balances. She also stated that monthly financial reports are to be submitted to the Auditor from anyone receiving funds. She stated that ordinance 2012-01 done on March 5, 2024, needs to be done monthly as subscribed. This is also mentioned in IC 5-11-1.5 ...

The commissioners are in charge of making sure the policy is followed.

Dave Pierman stated that solar funds will start coming in next month

Mandy Thomason, County Recorder, stated that she files a report monthly with the Auditor.

IN RE: SOLAR MONITORING

Deb Wappel questioned if the company that was here was the only one doing this monitoring. Mark Gourley stated that we already had an existing relationship with them through the Highway.

IN RE: GOLF CARTS

Matt Pellion (sp) wanted to know if the county had the ability to allow the usage of Highway 10. Justin Schramm is looking to verify if we have that ability.

IN RE: ATTENDING ZOOM MEETINGS WHILE DRIVING

Sandy Whiteneck asked Justin Schramm if it was appropriate to do zoom meetings while driving. He stated that it wasn't appropriate to drive distracted, but he would investigate it.

IN RE: UNFOUNDED ARRESTS

Craig Henry stated that the sheriff's department Kidnapped a man, put him in a cage and drew his blood without his permission. He sued the county and obtained a settlement.

He further stated that Jeremy Risner was arrested and taken into custody due to a restraining order against him by his wife and that his wife received notice of disorderly conduct, trying to defend her husband as there was no restraining order.

These were both back in June of 2022 and the arresting officer, Sergeant Leonhardt, received a promotion to Detective.

He was told both parties needed to talk to the Sheriff about this.

IN RE: PIER PERMITS

Larry Wickert asked about the BZA issuing pier permits stating that they used to be handled by the DNR. Mary Beever stated that each county is required by the state to have the BZA handle the permitting and the rules that go with them, such as length, depth of water, etc.

Gary Later asked if you pay for the pier permit, will boats have to be as well? Mary's answer was, "Not yet."

Bass Lake is exempt on pier length.

Mary Tippelion (sp) asked if the county can permit the piers without cost.

The commissioners stated that this is another unfunded mandate from the state.

Matt Pellion (sp) asked if the piers would have to be removed in the winter. Mary Beever stated that permanent piers can stay but she didn't know about the temporary ones.

IN RE: INTERSECTION OF 650S AND 600E

Mike Saymak (sp) stated that the intersection of east 650S and 600E is very hard to see. The commissioners will let the highway department know

IN RE: SBOA AUDIT REPORT

Tammy Holdread wondered about the highway debacle and the jail and the prior Auditor with things not balancing since 2021. Commissioner Gourley and Councilman Leinbach both stated that these were not the prior Auditor's fault. Tammy stated that she was a part of the misappropriations in the jail and highway.

IN RE: AN I.T. CONTRACT AND AN OIL SPILL AT THE HIGHWAY GARAGE

Roberta Lee was concerned about a \$16,000 a year contract with an IT company that was supposed to cost \$16,000 a year and ended up being \$16,000 a month. She wanted to know if these things were being taken care of.

She also questioned what was being done about the oil spill at the highway garage in July of 2023. She wanted to know if the cleanup had been followed up on and what was the cost. She would like to see the IDEM report on the spill, and how the IT thing was missed.

The commissioners and the council are working on both.

IN RE: ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Mark Barlog wants to know where they can tune in for the answers to all these concerns. The commissioners stated to continue to listen to the radio, and to wherever they are hearing all the concerns.

Cassandra Hine said she would do her best to post on her council Facebook page and would like to have a joint meeting with the council and commissioners to go over the internal controls.

Charles Chesak and Cassandra Hine will work together on this.

County Attorney, Justin Schramm, stated that the IT contract did not go through him, and that all contracts should be checked by the attorney.

IN RE: HIGHWAY AND OTHER SBOA REPORT COMPLAINTS

Todd Leinbach stated that the former Highway Superintendent never turned the bills in. The council set a limit on what they could spend, and he ignored it and didn't turn the claims in to be paid.

Dave Pearman stated that it will take teamwork between the council and commissioners to clear this up. The commissioners and council found that they do have control and are taking action to correct. There has been a lot of heated discussion regarding this, and the previous Auditor was not implicated.

The council is going to discuss this further at their meeting.

Tammy Holdread complained that the previous Auditor was responsible in a sense and then she was promoted to the highway.

Justin Risner reported that Pam McDonald, who handled the commissary funds at the jail, was still under investigation. Pam said she was going to pay back the commissary for the personal items she purchased from there. He further complained about the invoices being cut out and of other invoices and that the previous Auditor should be put on probation without pay. Because if it's true that Pam told Rachel she made a mistake about buying personal items, then Rachel should also be held accountable.

Dave Pearman again stated that Rachel was not implicated in this matter, only Pam was implicated.

Tammy Holdread stated that somebody doesn't accidentally purchase personal items out of county money.

IN RE: MISSING EMAILS FROM RECORDER'S OFFICE

Justin Risner complained about the emails he requested not being given to him.

Stanley Budd, IT coordinator, searched for these emails for Justin Risner. He attempted to find the ones he wanted from the Recorder's office as well.

Roberta Lee wanted to know if Stanley knew about the deleted emails before Justin Risner requested them.

Stanley stated that there was a bug in the software caused by the Microsoft update. This may have caused the email problem.

Mandy Thomason, Starke County Recorder, informed us that she sent emails to the commissioners, the Auditor, Stanley Budd and the County Attorney regarding her mission emails in early July.

IN RE: ANNUAL COMMISSARY REPORTS FROM 2021

Marcia Bedrock stated that her late husband, Martin Bedrock, asked for the commissary reports for 2021 from Rachel where it states that the commissioners were to approve the items in category 9. The council has the ability to create an ordinance about commissary spending out of category 9.

Cassandra Hine wants copies of this report if found.

IN RE: FUNDS AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

Tammy Holdread wants to know what has been put into place to solve these funds. The commissioners are delegating council members to help with the internal controls.

The commissioners and the council have an internal controls committee.

Tammy further stated that she wouldn't want someone on the committee that made over a \$100,000 error on an IT contract.

Roberta Lee stated that she is still waiting for information that she requested from Sara Dingman.

There being no further business to come before the board, Charles Chesak moved to adjourn seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.




Don Binkley, President



Charles Chesak, Vice President



Mark Gourley, Member



Michaelene J. Houston, Auditor and
Secretary to the County Commissioners

Highlighted in yellow are last names that the spelling is probably incorrect for which I apologize. Is it possible to have a sign-in sheet for those who wish to speak at the meeting? Thank you.