

STARKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
October 7, 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 5:00 PM, with all members present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

IN RE: REPAIRS TO COUNTY STRUCTURES

Rick Green with Maintenance submitted quotes for the courthouse roof. Atlas submitted a quote of \$22,306-\$15,773 for exterior repairs and \$6,533 for inspection. Mougín Roofing submitted a quote of \$6,500 for the repairs and would also do an inspection. Charles Chesak moved to approve Mougín Roofing seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes to be paid out of the courthouse maintenance fund.

Rick also submitted quotes for the Annex 2 renovations. Larson Daniels of Laporte, Indiana, submitted a quote of \$65,585, Toppen, Inc. of DeMotte, Indiana, submitted a quote for \$52,750, and EAM Construction of Knox, Indiana, submitted a quote for \$56,157. Mark Gourley moved to approve EAM as they are local seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes. Half of this is to be paid out of CEDIT and half out of the Health Dept. budget. If all the ARPA Stellar funds have not been used, we are to subsidize with those funds.

Rick stated that the seal coat had already been approved but wanted to know where to pay it from and was told to pay it out of Cum. Cap.

Rick informed the commissioners about the Annex 1 curb by the trash, the Annex 2 parking lot curb at the southeast corner, ADA ramps at west side of the courthouse, memorial sidewalk & ADA ramps, and the need for a concrete pad for the Bison. He is looking at a 50/50 program with the city in April of 2025 for the Annex 2 sidewalk at the south end by Fingerhut Bakery. The commissioners told him to move forward to get bids.

Rick wanted to know where to place the Bison, and the commissioners tabled this until a later date.

IN RE: SHREDDING OF OLD DOCUMENTS

Mark Gourley moved to authorize up to \$6,000 for shredding of old documents seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes. The Auditor stated that an additional appropriation had already been advertised for \$3,000 per the Recorder's estimate.

IN RE: KOONTZ LAKE SEWER DISTRICT BOARD POSITION

Michael McKenna with the KL Sewer District recommended Paul Warnke be reappointed. Paul did submit a letter requesting the appointment. Mark Gourley moved to appoint Paul Warnke to a term ending December 31, 2028, seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: OLD SQUAD CARS

The decision on selling old squad cars for scrap was tabled for a future meeting.

IN RE: UTILITY SOLAR WORKSHOP

Lisa Dan informed the board of a joint workshop with Starke County, Pulaski County and Community Leaders regarding Utility Solar on Tuesday October 29, 2024, at 4-8 PM CST.

IN RE: COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Sara Dingman, Deputy Auditor and H.R. Coordinator, requested a change in the handbook, asking that flex time be used within a pay period instead of within a work week as sometimes it is impossible to do it within the work week itself. Mark Gourley moved to approve the amendment on flex time seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: 2025 COUNTY HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Charles Chesak moved to approve the holiday schedule below seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

New Year's Day	Wednesday	January 1, 2025
Martin Luther King Day	Monday	January 20, 2025
President's Day	Monday	February 17, 2025
Good Friday	Friday	April 18, 2025
Primary Election Day	N/A	
Memorial Day	Monday	May 26, 2025
Independence Day	Friday	July 4, 2025
Labor Day	Monday	September 1, 2025
Columbus Day	Monday	October 13, 2025
General Election Day	N/A	
Veterans Day	Tuesday	November 11, 2025
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday	November 27, 2025
Lincoln's Birthday	Friday	November 28, 2025
Washington's Birthday	Wednesday	December 24, 2025
Christmas Day	Thursday	December 25, 2025

COURTHOUSE & ANNEX BUILDING OFFICES WILL CLOSE AT NOON-1:00 PM ON:
ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS' DAY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025
BOSS' DAY THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025

IN RE: PROPERTY LINE DISPUTE AT KOONTZ LAKE

Jody Kliendinst appeared before the commissioners regarding the easement on her property stating that she was sent by the Planning Commission. She began building a deck on her property and failed to get a permit. In the midst of this it was found that not only was the deck on the county easement, but so was the corner of her home. The Planning Commission told her she had to stop building the deck and remove it. She stated that there were already items there that they removed in order to build the deck but the deck is larger than the items removed. There was litigation over this whole situation and all the paperwork is on file in the Auditor's Office.

After much discussion, the commissioners stated that they might be willing to vacate the portion of the easement that her home sits on as they don't expect her to tear down her home, but they want a legal description in metes and bounds drawn up of that portion of the easement by a surveyor before making a decision.

Mary Beever, Planning Commission, stated that the Kliendinst's contractor was not registered and needed to be.

IN RE: OPIOD FUNDS

Shawn Matraw requested for 2025, \$50,000 out of the restricted Opioid fund for Opioid treatment, etc.

Mark Gourley moved to approve the \$50,000 out of the restricted Opioid fund seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes. This also has to go before the County Council.

IN RE: SECTION CORNERS ORDINANCE

Tom Schouten, Surveyor, submitted a Section Corners' Ordinance to protect the monuments. This will be considered the first reading of the ordinance. Charles Chesak moved to move forward with the ordinance seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

IN RE: RV PARK FLOODING AT BASS LAKE

Tom Schouten also submitted a quote to run the water backwards to Johnson Ditch. It is a regulated drain, taking the tile from the back side of the campground to Mr. Swanson's property ditch that runs into the regulated ditch. It would be approximately 12 or 15" in diameter and approximately 1000 feet long. It's a five-foot drop from the campground to the unregulated drain. The tile would be approximately \$19,000 and the catch basin a little over \$4,000. Alsip submitted a proposal for \$38,000. Mr. Shannon stated it would be around \$30,000 but never submitted the actual quote. Kevin Falk backed off stating it wasn't worth his time. The commissioners want him to go before the Drainage Board with this plan.

IN RE: UNREGULATED DITCHES

Tom Schouten requested funding to pull beaver dams, trees and other blockages from unregulated ditches. The line item only has \$127. It is a county ditch but unregulated and it will impact CR 450. IC Code says \$1,500 a year should be put into this line item, but he is asking for \$5,000 right now. The commissioners want to know if it wouldn't be up to the property owner. The commissioners want Tom to research it more and come back to the next meeting.

IN RE: COMMISSIONERS'S FIRST DEPUTY

Don Binkley wishes to create a position for Commissioners' first deputy to end January 1, 2025. Mark Gourley moved to create a Commissioners' first deputy slot ending January 1, 2025, seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: KOONTZ LAKE PARKS, EASEMENTS AND PUBLIC ACCESSES

Tom Cormican came before the commissioners regarding encroachments and buildings on the Park site, easements and public accesses. He also stated that several of these encroachments have lot numbers now and wanted to know who issued quit claims to them in order to take over the park. This is about a block from Kramers' Beach which was originally donated to the county. There was a lawsuit regarding this, 75A04-0812-CV-703 Darflinger Knight Case. He said the encroachments have been happening for years. The commissioners will look into this.

IN RE: HIGHWAY

Justin Risner stated he was approached by the victim and given the info he had. He stated that no one leaked anything to him. He thinks the public deserves answers on the highway affair because it happened in a county vehicle on county time. Don Binkley stated that this was a personal matter and not going to be brought up at a public meeting. Justin feels it is a public matter but the commissioners are adamant that it is not and refused to discuss it further.

IN RE: UNREGULATED DITCH ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Donna Underwood who is a 29-year resident at Bass Lake has a ditch behind her house that empties into Bass Lake. Tom Schouten, Surveyor, stated that it is not a county ditch. In April, due to all the rain, the ditch became

full of water that became stagnant and smelly causing lots of mosquitoes. The ditch is totally on her property. She hired an excavator to clean the ditch and a neighbor came over screaming and ranting that they were on his property and to get off. She wants to know what she can do to solve this problem as she is just trying to maintain her property. She wants it manageable and not full of water. The commissioners informed her that this is a private civil matter that she would need to take up with private legal counsel.

IN RE: PAYROLL CLAIMS, VENDOR CLAIMS AND MINUTES

Charles Chesak moved to approve the September 16, 2024, minutes seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

Charles Chesak moved to approve the September 20, 2024 payroll seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

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

Mark Gourley moved to approve the vendor claims less \$1,911 for the Recorder's Attorney seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: EMS HELPING HURRICANE VICTIMS

Jim Garner, EMS Director, would like to send a crew south to North Carolina and maybe into Florida. FEMA will reimburse the county and he stated it wouldn't cause a staff shortage. He would be taking an ambulance and FEMA would reimburse all fuel and rent on the ambulance. It could be for up to two weeks and he has 4 volunteers willing to go. GMR will be reimbursing for their food, lodging, etc.

He checked with our insurance carrier, and they will still be covered. He stated that they will run on all county protocols. Charles Chesak moved to approve seconded by Mark Gourley with 3 ayes.

Anthony Black, County Councilman, stated that he thought this was a great idea.

IN RE: COUNTY TREASURER'S OUTSIDE DROP BOX

Lauri Venckus, County Treasurer, stated that the outside drop box was not secure and requested a new box like the bank has for night deposits. It is estimated at \$4-6,000. No one would be able to get into this box except the Treasurer and that would be from the inside. She thinks the box itself would be approximately \$1,300. The commissioners requested that she get 3 estimates.

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

Don Binkley, President

Charles Chesak, Vice President

Mark Gourley, Member

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