

**STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2024**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council at 1:00 PM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman, Kay Gudeman, Howard Bailey, Todd Leinbach, Norman (Bruce) Bennett, Anthony Black (via Zoom), and Cassandra Hine (via Zoom) present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Dave Pearman at 1:00 PM for the Starke County Council Regular Session.

**AIRPORT BUDGET APPROVAL**

Lee Smith from the Starke County Airport gave an update regarding revenue, personnel, and operation. Councilmembers commented that it was a great presentation and exactly what they were asking for. Councilman Leinbach noted that the board would like to be informed of the airport's operations and the monthly balance sheet that was provided to the board is exactly what they were looking to see. Councilman Bennett made a motion to approve the 2025 Starke County Airport budget. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**DOCUMENT SHREDDING – RECORDER THOMASON**

Recorder Mandy Thomason came before the Council to request an additional appropriation of \$3,000 to be used to shred documents that are currently stored in the county's warehouse. The documents have been approved as documents allowed to be shredded. Councilman Bailey made a motion to approve the additional appropriation of \$3,000 to be paid out of CUM CAP for document shredding. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded and the motion passed with all ayes.

**EMS VEHICLE REQUEST – DIRECTOR GARNER**

EMS Director Garner came before the County Council to get preapproval for a vehicle purchase as the County Council was meeting before the Board of Commissioners. Due to extensive costs, one ambulance is currently out of service. Director Garner stated he had looked at five used ambulances and none were fit for use. Director Garner also stated that currently a new ambulance would not be available for delivery until February of 2026. Temporarily, Director Garner would like to get a new Sprinter for \$107,500 that would take the place of the transfer truck and the transfer truck would move into service. Director Garner also requested funding for a new ambulance for \$238,000 that would be available in late 2025, early 2026. Garner did look into financing an ambulance but there would be interest on the purchase. Councilman Bennett made a motion to approve both vehicle purchases to be paid from CEDIT upon Commissioner approval. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

**PERF UNDERFUNDING**

Auditor Houston provided information to the board prior to the meeting that the PERF fund was short for 2024 by \$33,000. Councilman Leinbach made a motion to approve the additional PERF to be paid from CEDIT. Councilman Bennett seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

## **ERA/EDA AGREEMENTS**

Dunns Bridge came before the Board to present the ERA & EDA Agreements. Councilman Leinbach questioned why the Board needed to hear the presentation that related to battery storage as the Council does not approve the battery storage. Dunns Bridge presented their introduction to the ERA & EDA Agreements to the Council. Discussion was held regarding having an executive session to discuss the agreements and to hear from solar project representatives. Councilman Leinbach made a motion to set the Public Hearing for the Next Era ERA & EDA Agreements in December. Councilwoman Hine seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

## **ANGELA TEMPLE- STARKE COUNTY FAIR BOARD**

Angela Temple from the Starke County Fair Board came before the Board to request their 2025 funding. Temple also provided the board with a report of the 2024 Fair. Councilman Bailey noted that the feedback he received from the community was all positive and he thanked the Fair Board. Temple advised that the board would be meeting with the carnival company soon to know the exact amount the carnival had earned during the 2024 Fair. Councilman Bennett made a motion to approve the 2025 Fair Board funds in the amount of \$12,500. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded and the motion passed with all ayes.

## **LISA DAN- UTILITY SOLAR WORKSHOP**

Lisa Dan came before the Council to present information regarding a workshop being held at the Bass Lake Fire Station on October 29<sup>th</sup>. She believes the workshop would help answer a lot of their questions regarding solar. The workshop is especially for Pulaski and Starke County leaders.

## **SHAWN MATTRAW – OPIOD FUNDING REQUEST**

Mr. Mattraw came before the Council to request \$50,000 in order to continue utilizing Mr. Tim Gearhart for clinical services for the court services department. Councilman Leinbach made a motion to approve the \$50,000 to be paid from the Opiod Restricted Fund. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

## **BERNADETTE MANUEL – ELECTION PAY & VETERANS REQUEST**

Clerk Bernadette Manuel came before the Council to request that the Starke County Courthouse lights be changed to green in honor of Veteran's Day on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Manuel also presented before the Council, Act 1328 which gave counties the option to grant election officials a \$2,500 stipend for the extra work they do during election time. Councilman Bennett made a motion to approve the clerk's \$2,500 stipend. Councilman Bailey seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes. (Side note from Auditor-Per Act 1328 she is already getting this and is only to get it in even years. Needs removed from 2025 salary ordinance)

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilman Leinbach made a motion to relocate the November 19, 2024 Public Hearing from the Annex 1 Building to the Nancy Dembowski Community Center, pending arrangements and noticing. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

The County Council received notice from the Public Access Counsel that the Starke County Council had received a complaint. Councilman Pearman read the formal complaint that was filed against Councilwoman Hine. Councilmembers discussed how they would like the complaint to be answered to the Public Access Counsel. Attorney Schramm advised he would compose a response and send the response to board members before he submits to the Public Access Counsel. Councilwoman Hine made a motion to write the response as an advocate for the council and defending the council that the violation did not occur. Councilman Leinbach seconded the motion and the motion passed with all ayes.

Councilman Leinbach made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 16, 2024 meeting. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded and the motion passed with all ayes.

With no other business or public comment to come before the Starke County Council, Councilman Leinbach made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 PM. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**October 21, 2024  
STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Dave Pearman, President

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Todd Leinbach, Vice-President

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Kay Gudeman

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Norman (Bruce) Bennett

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Howard Bailey

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Anthony Black

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Cassandra Hine

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Sara Dingman, Deputy Auditor