

STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
12-16-24

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council at 6:00 PM in the Annex Building #2 meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with all members present and the following proceedings were held to Wit:

IN RE: 2025 SALARY ORDINANCE

Sara Dingman, Deputy Auditor, presented the salary ordinance for final approval of the council. Tony Black moved to approve seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes. Ordinance is attached.

IN RE: E-911

Stacy Noonan, Head dispatcher for E-911 submitted quotes for E-911. She submitted them to the commissioners at their meeting this morning. Two of the quotes are for contract renewals in the amounts of \$26,016.00 and \$14,430.00. One of the quotes is for dispatch upgrade for items no longer supported in the amount of \$73,192.00 and one for a 10-year system refresh on 911 in the amount of \$194,047.37. It was questioned what an entire new system would cost. Cassandra Hine wanted to know why these quotes were received two months ago and they are just now seeing them. Bruce Bennett also questioned the fact that the quotes were two months old. There was much discussion about obsolete parts. J & K cannot cover the old equipment anymore on their contracts. Cassandra Hine moved to table and try to quickly get another estimate and go through proposals in an executive session that would be scheduled as soon as we get the additional information seconded by Kay Gudeman with 3 ayes and 4 nays (Tony Black, Bruce Bennett, Howard Bailey and Todd Leinbach.)

Tony Black moved to approve the \$194,047.37 out of Cum. Capital Development seconded by Howard Bailey with 5 ayes 2 nays (Cassandra Hine and Kay Gudeman).

IN RE: SHERIFF/JAIL TRANSFERS AND ADDITIONALS

April Wilhelm submitted transfers in the following amounts:

TRANSFERS

1000 (General Fund)

Transfer from:

1000.21200.00000.0005	Tires & Tubes	6000.00	
1000.20304.00000.0027	Inst/Medical	1000.00	
1000.20208.00000.0027	Laundry/Cleaning	4500.00	
1000.20600.00000.0005	Garage & Motor	2000.00	
1000.20100.00000.0005	Office Supplies	1000.00	
1000.20208.00000.0027	Laundry/Cleaning	2400.00	
			16900.00

Transfer to:

1000.10202.00000.0005	Chief Deputy	5548.00	
1000.10300.00000.0005	Extra Help	452.00	
1000.10550.00000.0027	Longevity	1.00	
1000.10100.00000.0005	Elected Official	3339.00	
1000.10300.00000.0005	Extra Help	5160.00	
1000.30404.00000.0005	Computer Contract	2400.00	
			16900.00

Todd Leinbach moved to approve the County General transfers in the amount of \$16,900.00 seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes.

4919 (Therapeutic Communities)

Transfer from:

4919.30150.00000.0000	Jail Supplies	20500.00	
			20500.00

Transfer to:

4919.20202.00000.0000	Repair & Maint.	16500.00	
4919.10502.00000.0000	Jailers	4000.00	
			20500.00

Todd Leinbach moved to approve the Therapeutic Communities transfers in the amount of \$20,500 seconded by Kay Gudeman with 7 ayes.

1114 (Jail Cedit)

Transfer from

1114.10502.00000.0027	Jailers	12,000.00	
1114.10300.00000.0027	Extra Help	19,000.00	
			31,000.00

Transfer to

1114.30405.00000.0027	Service Contract	12,000.00	
1114.21100.00000.0027	Gas, Oil, Lube	19,000.00	
			31,000.00

Todd Leinbach moved to approve the Jail Cedit transfers in the amount of \$31,000.00 seconded by Tony Black with 7 ayes.

April Wilhelm also requested the following additional appropriations:

Additional Appropriations

1000 County General

1000.10300.00000.0005	Extra Help	11163.000
1000.11400.00000.0005	Overtime	60600.00
		71,763.00

Todd Leinbach moved to approve the County General Additional in the amount of \$71,763.00 seconded by Kay Gudeman with 7 ayes.

4919 (Therapeutic Communities)

4919.10502.00000.0000	Jailers	51000.00
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Todd Leinbach moved to approve the Therapeutic Communities Additional in the amount of \$51,000.00 seconded by Howard Bailey with 3 ayes.

IN RE: GAS CARDS FOR PRISONER TRANSFERS-JAIL/SHERIFF

April Wilhelm also requested two gas cards for use when prisoner transfers are required as sometimes they have to refuel while in-route back. The commissioners approved this in their meeting. April assured everyone the cards would be locked up when not in use and there will be a sign out/in sheet. Todd Leinbach moved to approve with a \$500 limit on the cards seconded by Cassandra Hine with 7 ayes.

IN RE: TRANSFERS FOR PURDUE EXTENSION

Julia Miller with the Purdue Extension office requested a transfer in the amount of \$76.75 from repair and maintenance with \$3.81 going into travel expense and \$72.94 going into office supplies. Todd Leinbach moved to approve seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes.

IN RE: PARK BOARD TRANSFERS & REQUEST TO DO A FUNDRAISER

Amie Flora, Park Board Superintendent, requested transfers in the amount of \$4,897.85 with \$4,532.62 coming from service contracts with \$1,169.27 going into repair and maintenance and \$3,363.35 going into utilities and \$365.23 coming from mileage and going into stone-gravel aggregate. Todd Leinbach moved to approve seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes.

Amie also requested permission to do a fundraiser-selling t-shirts, sweatshirts, polos, totes-with the Park's logo on them. Bruce Bennett moved to approve seconded by Kay Gudeman with 7 ayes.

IN RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD APPOINTMENT

Janice Hernandez appeared before the board because she was told the council wanted to talk to her about her reappointment to the board. No action was taken.

IN RE: HIGHWAY

Rachel Oesterreich, Highway Superintendent, submitted a report on Bridge 137 (attached). This bridge is on CR 300E going into the Industrial Park. She needs \$569,942 to add to the \$400,000 she has put aside for this in order to meet the county's portion of \$969,942 to complete the work. Dave Pearman stated that this needs to be coordinated with the railroad repairs so that the road isn't closed longer than necessary. Brian with Butler, Fairman and Seyfert, is the consultant on this bridge. He stated that all bids were within 5% of each other. He further stated that the project is supposed to start in the spring with the finish date no later than September 30, 2025. He further stated that he will do everything he can to keep the costs down. Todd Leinbach moved to pay \$450,000 out of CEDIT for Bridge 137 seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes.

Rachel stated that the commissioners approved her to purchase 12-gauge culverts. (Quote attached). She has the money in her budget. Todd Leinbach

moved to pay for the culverts out of Cum. Bridge seconded by Tony Black with 7 ayes.

Rachel requested to purchase a sign vehicle. She stated that the commissioners had approved this at their meeting. She has the money in her budget. Tony moved to approve the 1997 7.3 diesel seconded by Howard Bailey with 7 ayes.

Rachel reported that she applied for a grant for repairs on Bridge 13 (CR 600E) over the Robbins Ditch. The state is requiring a letter from the commissioners for the amount needed for the county's share committing to financial obligation of \$636,500. Todd Leinbach moved to accept the financial commitment of \$636,500 seconded by Tony Black with 7 ayes.

Rachel requested transfers for the highway in the amount of \$6,133.71 with \$133.71 coming from postage and going into office supplies and \$6,000 coming out of part time worker and going into uniforms. Todd Leinbach moved to approve the transfers seconded by Kay Gudeman with 7 ayes.

IN RE: NORTH JUDSON/WAYNE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

Todd Jackson, Fire Chief, requested funding to purchase radios. (Information attached.) The commissioners approved the request at their meeting. Todd Leinbach moved to not spend any solar money until everything is done and all requirements are in place seconded by Bruce Bennett. Both rescinded their motion and second. Bruce Bennett moved to approve the money out of CEDIT, contingent on the commissioners' approval and agreeing that they will communicate with the communications committee, after the 1st of the year seconded by Todd Leinbach with 7 ayes.

IN RE: HOOSIER SOLAR EDAs

Nick Barbknecht and Martin Lucas with Hoosier Solar submitted their revised EDAs for the council's consideration. Todd Leinbach would still like some things added and much discussion ensued. Bruce Bennett moved to approve the revised EDA and the ERA seconded by Tony Black. Cassandra Hine stated that remonstrances were received. Nick asked if any of the remonstrators were

present and three people responded. Cassandra is also questioning the Tangible Personal Property. She doesn't believe that electricity qualifies as such. She further stated that she believes it is not new manufacturing equipment. There was much debate and discussion, but a vote was then taken. 4 ayes and 3 nays (Cassandra Hine, Kay Gudeman and Todd Leinbach).

IN RE: MAMMOTH SOLAR

Chris Shelmon, attorney, and Chris Neff presented Mammoth Solar's amended EDA for council review. Todd Leinbach moved to table so the council has time to review and discuss changes between the original and revised seconded by Cassandra Hine. Dave Pearman stated that he believes Mammoth is just trying to be good neighbors by giving us advanced payments. Motion passed 6 ayes 1 abstaining (Dave Pearman).

IN RE: STARKE HOSPITAL

Kathy Norem, President of the Hospital Board, informed the council that the lease had been sold to Community Health Systems and they are nearing the end of the 1st lease agreement. She needs approval by January of 2026 and would like some changes. She would like a community survey and would like to create a committee consisting of one commissioner, 3 council and 3 hospital board members.

Kathy also requested an appropriation of \$50,000 for a consultant/attorney and for community needs. It was noted that Mark Gourley, Commissioner, suggested using the Public Health Fund. Bruce, Cassandra, Todd and Howard all stated that they would like to be on the board. Since four would constitute a council meeting, there can only be three. Tony Black moved to put Bruce Bennett, Howard Bailey and Todd Leinbach on the committee seconded by Dave Pearman. Howard Bailey stated that he would like to yield this position to Cassandra, and stated that he would like to keep the hospital as a full functioning hospital and not a band-aid station. No vote was taken on this motion. Tony Black moved to appoint Bruce Bennett, Cassandra Hine and Todd Leinbach to the committee seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes. Todd Leinbach moved to approve the financial request not to exceed \$50,000 seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes.

IN RE: CIRCUIT COURT ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

Judge Hall sent a letter explaining his request for additional appropriations in the amount of \$11,071.50. He stated that the council cut his budget for 2024.

Cassandra Hine stated that her recollection of the September 2023 budget hearings was that they took his request for furniture out of the budget and put that amount into pauper counsel. They didn't take anything away just moved it around. Howard Bailey moved to approve the \$10,000 for pauper counsel and the \$1,071.50 for CASA/GAL to be appropriated from CEDIT seconded by Cassandra Hine.

IN RE: MINUTES

Bruce Bennett moved to approve the November 18 minutes seconded by Kay Gudeman with 7 ayes.

Cassandra Hine moved to approve the November 19 minutes seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes.

IN RE: EMA TRANSFERS

Todd Leinbach moved to approve the transfers for EMA in the amount of \$1,166.10 coming out of Education and Seminars and going into garage and motor and \$100 coming out of cellular phones and going into garage and motor seconded by Tony Black with 7 ayes.

IN RE: SHERIFF'S GAS CARDS

The council would like mileage and vehicle used added to the sign out/in sheet.

IN RE: PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Risner feels that the EDAs and ERAs are costing the taxpayers three times.

Mark Barlog stated that he hoped that someone looks down the road on expenses and makes sure shortfalls don't fall back on the taxpayers. Dave Pearman stated that through the lifetime of the EDA the abatement will decrease every year causing Hoosier Solar to pay more taxes.

IN RE: FUTURE SOLAR COMPANIES

Todd Leinbach moved that any negotiations with future solar companies be in a meeting with three council people and not one seconded by Cassandra Hine with 7 ayes.

Howard Bailey stated that he feels Dave Pearman has represented the council well.

IN RE: COUNCIL TEXTING DURING MEETINGS

Cassandra Hine moved to not allow the Council members to be texting during a meeting seconded by Kay Gudeman with 5 ayes 2 nays (Bruce Bennett and Dave Pearman).

IN RE: SURVEYOR

Tom Schouten, Surveyor, stated that a comment was made at the November 19, 2024, public hearing of the council. The comment stated that the fencing at a Mammoth Project was not proper and was holding back water and that contractors couldn't get back to the ditch. Tom stated that he had gone back and measured and the fencing is proper and is not holding back water. He further stated that there is room for them to go around the fencing to get to the ditch, and if they don't want to bother with that, the job can go to another contractor. Tom also stated that all the paperwork on this is in place.

There being no further business to come before the board, Todd Leinbach moved to adjourn seconded by Bruce Bennett with 7 ayes.

STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES 12-16-24

David Pearman, President

Todd Leinbach, Vice-President

Kay Gudeman

Norman (Bruce) Bennett

Howard Bailey

Anthony Black

Cassandra Hine

Michaelene J. Houston, Starke
County Auditor and Secretary to the
County Council