

STARKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

1-6-25

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.

IN RE: REORGANIZATION

Don Binkley moved to appoint Charles Chesak President of the board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Charles Chesak moved to appoint Mike VanDeMark Vice-President seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 2 ayes 1 nay (Don Binkley).

Don Binkley moved to appoint Charles Chesak to the Starke County Drainage Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to reappoint Ed Jernas to the Starke County Drainage Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to appoint Don Binkley as commissioner to contact for the Jail and the EMS, and to appoint Mike VanDeMark as the commissioner to contact for the Highway and Charles Chesak as the commissioner to contact for the Courthouse, Annex and Landfill seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Charles Chesak moved to appoint Don Binkley to the Economic Development Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Charles Chesak moved to appoint Don Binkley to the K.I.R.P.C. Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Charles Chesak moved to appoint Don Binkley to the Arrowhead board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to reappoint Charles Chesak to the Workforce Development Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to appoint Mike VanDeMark to the Planning Commission seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to appoint Eugene Pugh to the BZA seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Mike VanDeMark moved to appoint Roberta Lee to the BZA seconded by Charles Chesak with 2 ayes 1 nay (Don Binkley).

Mike VanDeMark moved to reappoint Angela Banks to the Health Board seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to reappoint Jim Long to the Airport Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to reappoint Marty Lucas and to appoint Erland Henry to the Hospital Community Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to appoint Joseph Pucel to the Alcoholic Beverage Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to reappoint Victoria Chessor to the P.T.A.B.O.A. Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to appoint himself to the LEPC Board with Charles Chesak as his proxy seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to appoint himself to the Emergency Management Board with Charles Chesak as his proxy seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to appoint Mike VanDeMark to the FEMA Board with Charles Chesak as his proxy seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to reappoint JoAnne Bailey to the Starke County Convention and Visitors' Commission seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Mike VanDeMark moved to table the reappointment of Erland Henry to the Starke County Convention and Visitors' Commission until they find out if serving on the Hospital Board disqualifies him for this board seconded by Don Binkley with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to reappoint Tom Busch to the Park Board seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

IN RE: STARKE COUNTY BUILDING CORP.

Don Binkley moved to approve Justin Schramm filing the business report for the Starke County Building Corp. seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

IN RE: MAMMOTH SOLAR

Chris Kline with Mammoth Solar discussed the revised 2022 EDA. Justin has the revised draft. The revision is in order to allow front loading of payments. Don Binkley moved to approve language about any new projects being stricken from 2022 only. Motion died for lack of a second. Mike VanDeMark moved to table the decision until the next meeting so they have a chance to look over the revisions seconded by Charles Chesak with 2 ayes 1 nay (Don Binkley).

IN RE: FMLA EXTENSION

Don Binkley moved to approve Pam Bailey's FMLA extension seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

IN RE: RADIOS FOR NORTH JUDSON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Todd Jackson, NJFD, requested the funds for the radios that the council approved at their Dec. 16th meeting. Don Binkley moved to pay the \$19,029.76 out of CEDIT.

IN RE: COUNTY PERMITTING

Spencer England appeared before the commissioners requesting that the commissioners set a step by step policy procedure for permitting and make everyone follow the same rules. There was much discussion regarding this. Don Binkley stated that permitting is through the Planning Commission. Todd Jackson, Planning Commission Board Member & Mary Beever, Planning Administrator were both involved in the discussion and stated that there are changes coming and that new ordinances will take care of some of his concerns.

Cassandra Hine, Council Person, requested that the commissioners appoint a third person to the Internal Controls Committee as she thinks this committee should be handling some of this.

Mary Beever stated that a lot of what Spencer England said was inaccurate. She also stated that the process does not begin with a phone call, they have to submit their files.

There was much more discussion on this.

Justin Schramm, County Attorney, stated that a reliance argument needs shored up. They can make a detrimental reliance argument. He further stated that permitting is easy, but the reliance argument needs to be taken care of.

Mike VanDeMark wanted to know if they should change the moratorium excluding the 3 solar companies. Justin Schramm stated that this would probably be more problematic.

Mike VanDeMark moved to update the moratorium to take out the exclusions except those already permitted seconded by Charles Chesak with 2 ayes 1 nay (Don Binkley).

Mike VanDeMark moved to put a moratorium on battery storage with no exclusions and except for those already permitted seconded by Charles Chesak with 2 ayes 1 nay (Don Binkley).

Mike VanDeMark asked if committees had been formed for public input and an advisory board to get input from both sides. Justin Schramm stated that if they want a committee to carry forward they would need a resolution or if it is just a loose committee they would just need a motion.

IN RE: AUDITOR STIPEND

The Auditor requested to have the Night Meeting pay reinstated and requested a \$2,500 stipend that other County Auditors are receiving. Don Binkley moved to approve. Motion died for lack of a second. Mike VanDeMark moved to table until the next meeting seconded by Don Binkley with 3 ayes.

IN RE: 12-16-24 COMMISSIONER MINUTES

Don Binkley moved to approve the minutes from the 12-16-24 meeting seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: VENDOR AND PAYROLL CLAIMS

Don Binkley moved to approve the vendor claims seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

Don Binkley moved to approve the payroll claims seconded by Charles Chesak with 3 ayes.

IN RE: EASEMENTS AT BASS LAKE AND KOONTZ LAKE

Don Binkley reported that VS engineering is working on a quote for the easements at the lakes.

IN RE: OTHER BUSINESS

Don Binkley stated that two squad cars are needed and that work was needed on the septic at the jail. He also stated that the ambulance garages need some work.

Don also discussed a well at Bass Lake and who should be receiving the lease money for it. He feels the Park Board should get it. The well will be discussed further at the next meeting.

IN RE: SURVEYOR'S OFFICE

There was discussion about the past Surveyor's salary. Gwen Rentz stated she doesn't want the unpaid 8 days paid to the previous surveyor. Mandy Tomason, Recorder, stated that since the previous surveyor was related to the auditor that a separate audit should be done on the salary shortage.

Gwen also wanted it known that the Surveyor's truck was damaged before she took office and that she has two quotes for repairs. The commissioners want to know if the damage was reported at the time to the insurance company and want to know if the insurance will pay for it. Gwen is to check on this before the next meeting.

IN RE: KRBC

Mike VanDeMark moved to reappoint Dan Gumz and Bill Crase to the KRBC Board seconded by Don Binkley with 3 ayes.

IN RE: RETIRED POLICE CARS

Mike VanDeMark asked about retired police cars. He would like more information on this by the next meeting. Don Binkley stated that they are not worth anything and should be gotten rid of as scrap. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

IN RE: PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Risner stated that he would like things gone through and read better before votes are taken.

Tom Busch stated that there should be more decorum at public meetings.

IN RE: TREASURER'S OFFICE

Kelly Graham, Treasurer, stated that she needs someone to come in and help her fix the problems in the treasurer's office. She said Low can come in February, but she needs help reconciling the banks from back to May of 2023. She stated she would use part time help to pay for this. She further stated that 3 lease payments for the hospital had been posted to tax payments and were distributed in the fall settlement. The commissioners requested that she present some options at the next meeting.

There being no other business to come before the board, Don Binkley moved to adjourn seconded by Mike VanDeMark with 3 ayes.

Charles Chesak, President

Mike VanDeMark, Vice President

Don Binkley, Member

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