

**STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**  
**2-18-25**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet at 6:00 PM in the Annex Building #1 meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman and Cassandra Hine absent and Commissioner Mike VanDeMark in attendance and the following proceedings were held to Wit:

**IN RE: SHERIFF VEHICLES**

Wayne James, Starke County Deputy Sheriff, appeared before the board regarding the cost of the two new vehicles and light bars the commissioners approved. He stated that the light bars & sirens were submitted to the commissioners at \$15,000 and came in at \$27,000. The commissioners approved the cars, light bars & sirens to come out of EDIT. The council would prefer that it come out of Cum. Cap. Dev. They need to go back before the commissioners in order to inform them of the increase in cost on the light bars & sirens and paying out of Cum. Cap. Dev. instead of EDIT.

Howard Bailey asked if it wouldn't be better to get 2 new vehicles every year to relieve the problem. Howard would like 2 vehicles added to the Sheriff's budget every year. Commissioner Mike VanDeMark suggested 3 vehicles.

Wayne stated that they get 4 or 5 years out of a vehicle and that there are about 18 cars in the fleet.

Bruce Bennett moved to approve the 2 squad cars at \$83,292 with the light bars & sirens at \$27,000 out of Cum. Cap. Dev. after advertised, seconded by Kay Gudeman with 5 ayes.

**IN RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION AND STARKE TANK 2025  
SPONSORSHIP**

Mikie Stogsdill, Economic Development Foundation Director, informed the council that the commissioners approved a platinum sponsorship (\$1,000) for the Starke Tank 2025.

She further stated that the commissioners approved a 1-year contract in the amount of \$89,800.

She would like to work with the council moving forward and would like their direction as to where they want to see things go.

Todd Leinbach's concern is that there was no director for half the year and the cost was the same. He also stated that the consultant changed the makeup of the board by only moving the Vice President to President, so basically the same. He is for the 1-year contract at the \$89,800, but stated that she can bring additional projects for funding to the council for approval.

Bruce Bennett stated that projects are in the works along with continuing education. He further stated that something may be coming into North Judson, but can't say as it is only in the works right now. He also informed all the members that Mikie needs direction and that he sees other projects coming up. He also stated that he has seen forward progress ever since he's been on the board.

Kay Gudeman agrees on the forward progress and they have set a bigger goal. She also stated that in-kind gifts are coming in. She is on the committee, so she is abstaining from voting.

Howard Bailey stated that we should be proud of the Economic Development Foundation and that he is in favor of the 1-year contract.

Bill Crase stated that he is also in favor of the 1-year contract, but want them to come back with any needs.

Howard Bailey moved to approve the 1-year contract at \$89,800 with the option to come back with any needs and to have them come back on a yearly basis, seconded by Bill Crase with 5 ayes.

Bill Crase moved to approve the Starke Tank 2025 Platinum Sponsorship of \$1,000 seconded by Howard Bailey with 5 ayes.

Bruce Bennett thanked Mikie Stogsdill for what she has been doing for the foundation.

## **IN RE: HIGHWAY**

Rachel Oesterreich, Highway Superintendent, submitted her 2025 paving operations schedule. She talked to her vendor about putting a public map on paser readings on our web site.

She submitted quotes for parts only for the Cat Roller in the amount of \$9,425.09. She just got this quote a couple of hours ago, so the commissioners have not seen it yet. Mike VanDeMark asked Todd Leinbach to look at this as the cheaper parts that were put on it did not work. Todd said it needs to be fixed with the right equipment.

Bruce Bennett asked if Rachel would be doing any chip sealing. Rachel said they are, but she hasn't had time to prepare the plan yet.

The equipment should be upgraded with proper augers. The commissioners suggested adding the vibrators that Todd Leinbach brought up at their meeting.

Roberta Lee asked what a "wedge" was on the paving schedule. It was explained this is when they pave small areas.

## **IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS**

Bill Crase moved to open the public hearing seconded by Kay Gudeman with 5 ayes.

Todd Leinbach stated all additional appropriations and their amounts.

Cum. Bridge	\$ 150,000
CEDIT	\$ 19,030
Highway	\$1,948,033
Cum. Cap. Dev.	\$ 432,048
Save the Hospital	\$ 50,000

Bruce Bennett moved to approve the additional appropriations seconded by Bill Crase with 5 ayes.

Bill Crase moved to close the public hearing seconded by Kay Gudeman with 5 ayes.

### **IN RE: HOT ROD POWER TOUR 2025**

Todd Leinbach informed the council and the public of a Hot Rod Power Tour 2025 of which the town of Hamlet will be a point of interest. He stated it will be one of the biggest things to hit Starke County. Cars involved will be between 2,000 and 8,000. He further stated that he has the fair ground and vendors secured for the event which will be June 13, 2025.

Roberta Lee asked about having booths. Todd stated that they are discouraging it.

### **IN RE: OFFICE HOLDER MEETINGS**

The council is wanting the office holder meetings to move forward. The Auditor is to reach out to all office holders.

### **IN RE: AMENDMENT TO MAMMOTH SOLAR**

The amendment to Mammoth Solar was approved by the commissioners. Justin Schramm, County Attorney, explained the differences to the Council. Bill Crase moved to approve the amendment seconded by Bruce Bennett with 5 ayes.

### **IN RE: PARK BOARD FUNDRAISER**

Todd Leinbach brought up the fundraiser for the Park Board. Order forms for T-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, totes, etc. will be in the Auditor's Office. The deadline to order is March 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **IN RE: ANNEX 2 RENOVATIONS**

Rick Green informed the council that two sealed bids were received for the Annex 2 renovations.

1. Tonn & Blank Construction, Michigan City, Indiana for \$329,000.00
2. EAM Construction, Knox, Indiana for \$240,624.00

Rick stated that the engineer is looking over the bids and will be at the next commissioners' meeting.

Rick explained the renovations to the council and asked if the space was really needed. Rick stated that Shawn Matraw with Community Corrections lost space during the Health Dept. renovations and he really needs it back. Rick is asking where the council would like the money to come from.

Todd Leinbach feels they really need to look at this because he feels the county is getting too big for its britches and might need some changes.

Bruce Bennett moved to table this for now until they know more about what's going on, but he is not against it, seconded by Kay Gudeman with 5 ayes.

#### **IN RE: 1-21-25 AND 2-3-25 MINUTES**

Kay Gudeman moved to approve the 1-21-25 minutes seconded by Bill Crase with 5 ayes.

Bill Crase moved to approve the 2-3-25 minutes seconded by Kay Gudeman with 5 ayes.

There being no further business to come before the board, Kay Gudeman moved to adjourn seconded by Bill Crase with 5 ayes.

#### **STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES 2-18-25**

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Todd Leinbach, President

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Kay Gudeman

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Howard Bailey

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ABSENT  
Cassandra Hine

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Bruce Bennett, Vice-President

\_\_\_\_\_  
ABSENT  
Dave Pearman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Crase

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