

**STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2025**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet in Regular Session at 6:00 PM, in person at the Starke County Annex Building #1 meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with all members except Bill Crase present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Council was called to order by Council President Todd Leinbach directly at 6:00 PM.

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Amie Flora, Park Superintendent, came before the Council to give an update regarding the beach house renovation and needing a change order to the existing fund request due to some items not included in the original scope of work. Bruce Bennett made a motion to approve the amount up to \$76,000 to go into Repair & Maintenance to take care of roof, gutters, insulation & gas line (once specifications are changed) seconded by Dave Pearman. Motion passed with all ayes.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Mary Beever came before the Council to discuss the shortfall amount of \$1,113 for the BZA Secretary salary as a result of miscommunication. Discussion was held regarding other full time salaries and the scope of duties & whether to keep the position full time. The Council decided to have the issue revisited later in the year to see if the same amount of funds would be needed.

Quotes were provided for tablets to be used at Planning Commission/BZA meetings. Cassandra Hine made a motion to approve the purchase of tablets up to \$3,000 seconded by Kay Gudeman & approved with all ayes. Discussion regarding Keramida presentation. She stated the Commissioners advised her to come before the Council to see if they are open to funding the fee for their service before they proceed with a presentation. After discussion held regarding benefits and the need for the service it was determined that due to the fact that no funding was being requested at this time there was no decision to be made. A motion was made by Bruce Bennett to table the issue until a recommendation to proceed is made by the Commissioners, seconded by Cassandra Hine & approved with all ayes.

STARKE COUNTY CVC BOARD

Kathy Norem came before the Council to provide a report on the activities and financial disbursements of the CVC board and the Innkeepers Tax Fund, along with an update on current and past projects. She discussed the overspending of the 2024 budget and was advised to wait until later in the year for a better idea of just how much they would need to correct the shortfall.

KELLY SHEPHERD / SCILL CENTER

Kelly Shepherd, Superintendent of NJ-SP schools and Jim Hernandez from the SCILL center came before the Council to discuss finding a possible space for a continuing education program for adults and students in Starke County. Discussion was held regarding the benefits for the three county school system and adults in the county. Discussion was held regarding purchasing the building currently owned by Thermo Products and currently up for sale and the financial aspects of the county purchasing the building. Todd Leinbach would like to move forward with the project and suggested that up to three members of the Council be involved in any committee or future discussions.

STARKE COUNTY TREASURER

Kelly Graham, Starke County Treasurer, came before the Council to request approval for payment to Crowe for the reconciliation of the Treasurer's bank account and financial statements. Cassie Hine made a motion to proceed with funding up to \$12,475 out of Cum Cap, seconded by Kay Gudeman and approved with all ayes. She updated the Council that 40 percent of all delinquent taxes have been collected and that she reinvested the Save The Hospital funds into a CD paying a 4.3% interest rate. She discussed the proposed PO system and that LOW advised it is possible with our current financial software. She advised they will be coming to discuss it with us in person & she will advise after that meeting.

EMA DIRECTOR

Tori Chessor, EMA Director, came before the Council to discuss textmygov and their emergency notification service. Discussion was held regarding benefits. Jacob Passey from textmygov was available on Zoom to answer any questions. It was requested that a Zoom meeting be set up for a future presentation. Justin Schramm advised it would need to be set up as a public meeting with 48 hours notice.

Tori advised that she would set up that meeting once she receives possible dates from the Council & Commissioners that work for the majority.

STARKE COUNTY MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR

Rick Green came before the Council requesting the renovation of Annex be funded out of Cum Cap in the amount of \$240,624. Dave Pearmen questioned paying it out of CEDIT as there are more funds available in that fund. Discussion was held regarding the need for additional meeting rooms in that building. Cassandra Hine questioned being able to use CEDIT funds without a Capital Improvement Plan in place. Discussion was then held regarding the gutters needing replaced and the approved bid for those. Discussion was held regarding concrete work for courthouse lawn, ADA ramps and curbs for Annex 1. Bruce Bennett made a motion to approve \$5400 be paid out of Cum Cap for the gutters & leaf guards but felt there was not enough information to proceed with approval of the renovation & concrete work seconded by Cassandra Hine & approved with all ayes. Cassandra Hine made a motion to table the jail renovation & concrete work approval seconded by Kay Gudeman & approved with all ayes.

PUBLIC HEARING

A motion to open the hearing to the public in regards to Additional Appropriations was made by Kay Gudeman. Dave Pearman made a motion to approve the Additional Appropriations as Resolution #04-2025 for the following funds & amounts: County General \$258,885; CEDIT \$451,000 and Cum Cap \$143,692 seconded by Bruce Bennett and approved with all ayes. With no public comment made Dave Pearman made a motion to close the hearing seconded by Howard Bailey & approved with all ayes.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Bruce Bennett made a motion to approve meeting minutes seconded by Kay Gudeman & approved with all ayes. A request was made that the Auditor provide a listing of all fund balances for all future meetings.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dave Pearman advised that NextEra received a permit for their additional project and requests that the county look at their EDA offer or any money involved would revert back to the state. Discussion was held regarding how they were able to receive a permit with a current moratorium in place. Bruce Bennett discussed someone not being on the agenda and Cassandra Hine would like any emails sent regarding meetings and agendas to have a bold headline, both from the Auditor and the other Council members.

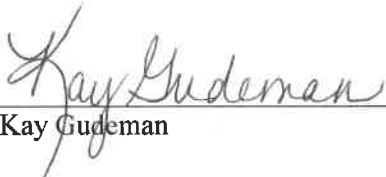
PUBLIC COMMENT

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Councilwoman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cassandra Hine seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM

MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2025


Todd Leinbach, President


Bruce Bennett, Vice-President



Kay Gudeman


David Pearman


Howard Bailey

ABSENT
Bill Crase

Cassandra Hine


Suzanne Sims, Deputy Auditor