

# **STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES**

## **6-16-25**

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 Cassandra Hine absent and Commissioner Don Binkley in attendance and the following proceedings were held to Wit:

### **IN RE: 911 SERVICE**

Anna Beam stated that her husband passed away on January 28. While she was doing CPR on him she called 911 numerous times and the line was constantly busy. She called the hospital and was transferred to dispatch.

Todd Leinbach informed her that they have no authority over this as they are the fiscal body. There is nothing they can do as a body other than support whatever the solution is.

Howard Bailey said that the commissioners are the executive body and Don Binkley, Commissioner, said he would look into it and he knows Don will.

### **IN RE: TRUE ROLL**

To renew our contract with True Roll to detect ineligible homestead deductions, we need an additional \$1,500. Bruce Bennett moved to table seconded by Dave Pearman with 6 ayes. The council would like them to come before them.

### **IN RE: ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCE #13 OF 2025**

Kay Gudeman moved to open the public hearing seconded by Bruce Bennett with 6 ayes.

\$10,000 was requested out of CEDIT for the Starke County Youth Club  
\$5,000 was requested out of Cum. Cap. for Text My Gov  
\$57,799 was requested out of Jail CEDIT for Dispatch Software  
\$146,924 was requested out of L,R&S for Tractors

There were no comments from the public and Bill Crase moved to close the public hearing seconded by Kay Gudeman with 6 ayes.

Bruce Bennett moved to approve the 4 additional appropriations seconded by Bill Crase with 6 ayes.

#### **IN RE: 4-21-25 AND 5-19-25 MINUTES**

Kay Gudeman moved to approve the 4-21 and 5-19-25 minutes seconded by Bill Crase with 6 ayes.

#### **IN RE: 2026 BUDGETS**

The council set the Budget workshop for July 8, 2025, beginning at 9 am. The public hearing on budgets will be August 14, 2025, at 6 PM, and adoption will be September 15, 2025, at 6 PM. Kay Gudeman moved to approve seconded by Bruce Bennett with 6 ayes.

#### **IN RE: ORDINANCE #14 OF 2025 REMOVAL OF DISRUPTIVE ATTENDEES AND ADOPTING REASONABLE RULES AND POLICIES**

Justin Schramm, County Attorney, stated that this ordinance would need to be published as there is a penalty. Kay Gudeman moved to table until the next meeting so the council can better look it over seconded by Howard Bailey with 6 ayes.

#### **IN RE: JOHN DEERE TRACTOR AT HIGHWAY**

The commissioners asked Dave Pearman to bring it to the council that the John Deere tractor mower at the highway is having transmission problems. If John Deere splits it open we will be committed to them repairing it. To split it open is between \$20 and \$25,000. The highway has already put work into it and they feel since it is a 2013 it is not worth putting that much money into.

## **IN RE: NEXTERA PROJECT**

Dave Pearman sent paperwork to support EDA with Next Era due to all the state cuts.

The council has two studies saying that the EDA is a good thing for the county. Todd Leinbach feels they need a more detailed study.

There was much discussion regarding this.

Bruce Bennett and Howard Bailey want it in black and white as to how it will benefit the taxpayers.

Dave Pearman suggested doing an impact study. Justin Schramm, County Attorney, suggested Baker-Tilly as they have been doing this for other counties. There is also an economist in Argos with a business called Small Town Indiana that was suggested by Mr. Lee.

Dave stated that two different studies we already had done showed it was the best idea to approve the EDA.

Todd Leinbach asked if NextEra was coming before the council.

Dave is concerned we are running out of time. As soon as the pilings are in the ground it is too late. He stated he was elected by his constituents and that is who he is supporting.

Todd stated that he is not for or against.

Dave stated that he will recirculate the study.

Dave Pearman said that Baker-Tilly is doing studies for other counties regarding the new legislation and how they are impacting the county.

Bruce Bennett wants to be sure we'll have this income and how it will help the taxpayers.

Bill Crase stated that all the statutes were changed and he has spent several hours on the phone with the DLGF and it is going to take someone to do a study on the impact.

Todd suggested taking the old studies and send them to Baker-Tilly and ask what the cost would be to do the study.

Howard Bailey doesn't think it will be that hard to figure out and wants to know what the benefit would be to the taxpayers. Bruce and Howard would like to see in black and white what the taxpayers will save.

Howard Bailey moved to hire Baker-Tilly to do a comparative study and to pay for it out of solar money not to exceed \$15,000 seconded by Bruce Bennett with 6 ayes. Todd said he would contact them and get the quote for an impact study.

#### **IN RE: RECORDER'S PERPETUATION FUND**

Mandy Thomas, Recorder, submitted her yearly ordinance for her perpetuation fund. It only needs council approval. Bruce Bennett moved to approve ordinance #15 of 2025 seconded by Kay Gudeman with 6 ayes.

#### **IN RE: PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bob Bush asked about the state cuts. Dave Pearman stated that he feels the state is trying to force counties to increase LIT taxes.

Bob also asked if it will actually cut the taxes and if the county actually makes cuts.

Deb Wappel stated that she had facts on what it would save.

There being no further business to come before the board, Bill Crase moved to adjourn seconded by Kay Gudeman with 6 ayes.

#### **STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES 6-16-25**

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Todd Leinbach, President

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Bruce Bennett, Vice-President

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Kay Gudeman

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Dave Pearman

## STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES 6-16-25

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Howard Bailey

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ABSENT

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Cassandra Hine

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Bill Crase

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