

Starke County Council

July 21, 2025

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council and meet in a regular session in the meeting room of the Starke County Annex#1, Knox, In, at 7:00 PM, member's present are Todd Leinbach, Kay Gudeman, Cassandra Hine, Howard Bailey, Bruce Bennett, and Dave Pearman. The following proceedings were held to wit:

IN RE: Auditor's Budget for 2026

Teresa Trout appeared for the Auditor. The Auditor is asking to return the original pay for the Auditor to what the pay was when she started and to promote Suzanne Simms to 1st Deputy with a monetary increase.

After a brief discussion the Council advised that there would need to be a new Job description for First Deputy, approved by the commissioners. They would also like to have the requested increase in pay presented to them as well.

Councilman Bruce Bennett made a motion to table this request until the council can meet in a joint session with the commissioners. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Cassandra Hine, motion passed with all ayes.

IN RE: Austin Fletcher & Nathan Caudill, Jail – Padded Cell at the jail

Austin Fletcher and Nathan Caudill are presenting two estimates for an additional padded cell at the jail.

1st estimate – Indy Wall Padding at \$33,170.00

2nd estimate – Marathon Engineering Corporation at \$27,251 to be paid from jail CEDIT.

Councilwoman Kay Gudeman made a motion to accept the estimate from Marathon Engineering Corporation for \$27,251.00. Motion seconded by Councilman Howard Bailey, motion passed with all ayes.

IN RE: Gwen Rentz, Surveyor – Surveyor budget

Gwen Rentz, Surveyor came before the council to request a pay raise for her deputy. Gwen presented an updated job description for her deputy to promote her to First Deputy with a pay increase that put her salary at \$40,681.00. Gwen had presented the new job description to the commissioners for their approval on 7/21/2025.

Councilman Bruce Bennett made a motion to approve the pay increase for Sara Dingman. Seconded by Councilwoman Cassandra Hine, motion passed with all ayes.

IN RE: Sheriff's Department – Additional Appropriations

The Sheriff Department has submitted a request for additional appropriations. No one was present from the Sheriff Department. The request is for additional appropriations for extra help, patrolmen, retirement, overtime, and allowance for K9 handler. The total request is for \$355,500. The Sheriff department is also requesting \$10,000.00 for building maintenance and \$10,000.00 for repair and maintenance.

I reached out to April Wilhelm to help answer some of the council's questions. April stated she was not prepared to answer the questions and had not planned to attend the meeting. Question would need to be addressed by the Sheriff Jack Rosa and Chief Deputy Wayne James.

Councilwoman Cassandra Hine made a motion to table this request until the council can meet with the commissioners in a joint session. Seconded by Councilwoman Kay Gudeman, motion passed with all ayes.

The Council asked that a Joint meeting with the commissioners be scheduled preferably Monday July 28th at 5:00 pm if agreeable with the Commissioners. Auditor and Sheriff department would also need to attend. The Auditor's office will set up a meeting that is agreeable with both council and commissioners.

Councilwoman Cassandra Hine made a motion to request a joint meeting with the commissioners. Kay Gudeman seconded the motion, motion passed with all ayes.

IN RE: Ordinance No. 14 – Rules and regulations within a Council meeting

This ordinance is regarding reasonable rules and regulations during the council meeting while also providing for the removal of disruptive meeting attendees.

Councilwoman Cassandra Hine made a motion to accept the Ordinance. Seconded by Councilman Howard Bailey, motion passed with all ayes.

However, the ordinance was not signed by the council due to incorrect names on the signature page. The ordinance will be corrected and the council will sign the document in their next meeting.

IN RE: Meeting Minutes from 6-16-2025

Councilwoman Kay Gudeman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 6-16-2025. Seconded by Councilwoman Cassandra Hine, motion passed with all ayes.

IN RE: Meeting Minutes from 7-8-2025

Councilwoman Kay Gudeman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 7-8.2025. Seconded by Councilman Bruce Bennett, motion passed with all ayes.

Other Business:

Shawn (solar) – Highway Superintendent Rachel Oesterreich has applied for a CCMG Grant for Surface Treatment, Chip Seal. Shawn let the council know that the Highway was awarded the grant in the amount of \$195,549.75.

Councilwoman Cassandra Hine made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Kay Gudeman, motion passed with all ayes.

Todd Leinbach, Council President

Bruce Bennett, Council Vice-President

Bill Crase, Member

Kay Gudeman, Member

Howard Bailey, Member

Dave Pearman, Member

Cassandra Hine, Member

Teresa Trout, Auditor Pro Tem

