

Tuesday, September 4, 2012

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in regular session at 10:00AM in the Annex meeting room, Knox, Indiana, with Kathy Norem, Dan Bridegroom, and Jennifer Davis present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by President, Kathy Norem.

RE: EMS DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT

EMS Director, Paul Mathewson, and Clerk, MaryLynn Ritchie appeared before the Board. Clerk Ritchie presented the write off amount of \$2275.31 for approval. Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve the write off amount, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes. Clerk Ritchie submitted copies of the checks received from the County Clerk in regard to small claims court payments, totaling \$612.41, and also \$568.58 that was collected by Collections Attorney, Jonathan O'Hara. She advised, in reference to cleaning up the old totals of past due accounts receivable that they are still showing in their financial software, the SBOA recommended the Board of Commissioners establish a policy, and document it during the public meeting, for the removal of past due A/R. She submitted a copy of such a policy that would allow for the cleaning up of any A/R that is still uncollected prior to the last two years, through the write off process. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve that policy, with the stipulation that they also write off any balance uncollected that is less than \$10.00. Commissioner Bridegroom seconded the motion and it passed with all ayes. President Norem advised her to make the corrections to the policy, and then circulate it for the signatures. She advised the write off policy would be effective as of September 4, 2012.

Clerk Ritchie then presented to the Board, a listing of runs by call, (ALS, BLS, etc.). She also noted she has learned how to obtain a report that will show the aging of the accounts receivable. She advised in comparing revenue year to date, to 2011 year to date, there has been a 13% increase. Clerk Ritchie also noted that she has learned how to extract information from their current software, and there will not be a need to purchase any different software. Director Mathewson submitted the job description for the position of Senior Paramedic. President Norem requested he make the job description a separate description, and not just an addendum to the Paramedic position. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve this employee classification, seconded by Commissioner Bridegroom. The motion passed with all ayes. President Norem advised the Director to make the corrections to the job description, and then circulate it for signatures.

Director Mathewson advised of the First Responder meetings that are being held on Tuesday evenings from 6PM-10PM, and on Sunday mornings from 8AM-10AM, at the Knox Fire Station. He also noted EMT, Travis Clarey and he will be attending the state conference on September 14 & 15. President Norem noted, in general, she would like to see a standard form for conference/meeting attendance by department head, be created to be submitted to the Board prior to their attendance of these meetings/conferences.

RE: JAIL PROJECT CONTRACTS

In reference to the county's new jail project, Scott Cherry, of Skillman Co., presented to the Board a Construction Manager contract. County Attorney, Marty Lucas, advised he had reviewed the contract and it is a standard contract. Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve the signing of the contract, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes and the contract was signed.

Scott Carnegie, of the DLZ Co., presented to the Board the Architect contract. Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve the signing of the contract, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes, and the contract was signed.

RE: COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT REPORT

County Highway Department Superintendent, Steve Siddall, appeared before the Board. Superintendent Siddall and Commissioner Bridegroom presented to the Board, the newly purchased "no smoking on county property" signs that will be posted at the edge of the county's property at each county location. Siddall advised eight foot posts had been cut from twelve foot posts that the County had, as was requested by the Board, to be used to post the "no smoking" signs. He was advised to disburse the signs to the custodians at each County location.

The Superintendent advised the Bridge 51 project was moving right along, with the concrete to be poured in approximately one week. He advised the completion date is November 1st but noted it could be completed before that date, if the weather holds.

He also noted the signs that were posted at "the pocket" at Bass Lake were installed by the DNR and not the County Highway Department. Commissioner Bridegroom noted it is an attempt to stop the ATVs and golf carts from driving around on the sand in the lake.

The Superintendent advised the representative from Downey Insurance had been at their location for the walk through inspection, and five minor issues were noted that need improving, such as securing the drill press to the floor, and the gas can, that was not state fire code approved. He noted each item has been corrected and he will be submitting a letter to the company advising of the improvements.

President Norem noted, since Howard Coffin has signed the scrap/towing agreement, we will need to have a reconciliation report that will show the recent scrap that was given to Howard's, that totaled over 7-1/2 tons of scrap, and also the \$50.00 invoice he had submitted to the County for payment, after towing one of the County's vehicles. Commissioner Davis stated she thought the County was handling those items separately, but was reminded of the scrap/towing agreement that was approved by the Board.

RE: REQUEST FOR CREATION OF THE LARAMORE DITCH WATERSHED

County Surveyor, Dennis Estok, appeared before the Board to advise there has been a request from a landowner to clean the Laramore ditch, and to establish an assessment fee on the ditch. He advised in order to do that a watershed needs to be put on the ditch. He advised LaPorte County is willing to do the work for free, if the GIS system files could be allowed to be accessible for their viewing. He advised having LaPorte handle that portion of the project, the creation of the watershed, would save the County between \$15,000.00 and \$20,000.00. He noted the project will

require the Commissioners' approval and also approval from WTH. Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve this request, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: REPORT FROM 1ST SOURCE INSURANCE

Bridget Markin, the local agent for 1st Source Insurance, and insurance representatives, Debbie Rykovich and Holly Horan, both of 1st Source Insurance, appeared before the Board. Ms. Markin advised, due to the departure of Miquel Salazar, Ms. Rykovich and Horan will now be working with the County's health insurance coverage. They advised they will be comparing the CIGNA health insurance pricing with Anthem and United Healthcare, and will have the information compiled in order for the October renewal. They noted that the Wellness Points program will continue, and they will be commencing the Luncheon meetings in order to allow the employees to accumulate their points. They also expressed their concern with the employees' lack of utilization of the BASIC program. President Norem advised, in the past, the previous health insurance company, would process that for the employees, and so the employees are still not that familiar with the whole process. They advised they would look into having BASIC explain that process to the county's employees.

Ms Markin noted the inspection report that was processed by the representative of Downey Insurance, in regard to the five safety issues at the highway department, and three issues at the county police department. She then established the date of the County's next Safety Committee meeting that will be held on Wednesday, September 12, at 9AM. President Norem inquired if it would be a possibility that employees of the highway department be given shots in an attempt to immune them to poison ivy, in order to reduce the amount of claims submitted due to their reaction to poison ivy. President Norem then inquired if there was any way to keep a handle on the claims that are being submitted by the public, on the county's liability insurance. Ms. Markin advised they didn't want the County having to make the decision as to which claims could be covered, and which ones to deny, leaving that up to the insurance company to decide. Attorney Lucas noted only the individuals that have filed a tort claim, should be allowed to file a claim with the insurance company. President Norem stated they would like to take this issue under advisement as to what the procedure should be.

RE: NORTH JUDSON LOTS

Wendy Hoppe, President of the North Judson Town Board, appeared before the Board. She advised back in 2010 the Town had been granted the opportunity to have two lots turned over to their ownership, from the Board of Commissioners. The lots at one time had been where the business, Freddie's, was located. The Commissioners had received the two lots through the tax sale process, and had offered then to the Town, if the Town would clear off those two lots. At the meeting in 2010, it was agreed the property would be turned over to the Town, with the understanding that any expense in getting the proper paperwork completed would be the expense of the Town, and the offer was only good for one year. Ms Hoppe advised, through a series of events, the issue had fallen through the cracks, and was never completed. She advised she is requesting the Board now reissue the same offer, and the NJ Town Board will have their attorney process a Quit Claim Deed. Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve this offer, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes.

RE: IT DEPARTMENT REPORT

IT Director, Joe Short, and EMA Director, Ted Bombagetti appeared before the Board to present a report of the status of the County's communications system. Director Short advised the voter system had crashed last week, due to the fact that the system had not been repaired but had been pieced together instead of having it properly maintained. He noted there are issues at Bass Lake that need to be addressed, the coaxial cable at Koontz Lake was being replaced on Friday, Sept. 7th, and also the antenna at Washington Township repaired. He advised all departments in the County have been advised to utilize the 800 mhz frequency and the VHS system.

Director Short expressed his concern with the expense for all these repairs, and noted his budget line item has been expended for the year. President Norem advised the additional repairs could be paid out of the Cumulative Capital Development Fund. In regard to the replacement of the storm damaged tower, there was a discussion in regard to the need to have the project advertised for bids, and as to what the exact cost of a project is when it is required to follow that procedure. Attorney Lucas advised he will review the requirements. President Norem inquired if the tower project could be included in the new jail project, and Attorney Lucas advised he didn't see why it couldn't. Director Short advised the existing tower had been a 150 foot tower, and now a new one will be taller. Director Bombagetti advised they will research it further, as to the design of the tower in order to meet the future needs of the County. If there will be a need for sealed bids, they will supply the necessary specs for the project. Director Short noted they are looking at using any existing tower in the area, but would need to establish remote links back to the jail, but they have nothing definite to present to the Board, at this time.

Director Short presented to the Board, a Partial Sworn Statement & Proof of Loss form, for the insurance company, which required their signature. Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the signing of the form, seconded by Commissioner Bridegroom. The motion passed with all ayes, and was notarized by Attorney Lucas.

Director Short reviewed the process for the narrow banding compliance. He advised the following equipment would need to be in compliance: the highway department dispatch radio, the Sheriff Department's thirteen handheld radios, and thirteen mobile radios, the EMS Department's two pagers stations, ten handheld radios, and seven mobile radios, and also the panic button system. The Director stated he doesn't recommend doing the narrow banding work, until the tower problem is corrected.

Director Bombagetti advised there had been a tornado test held on Thursday, August 30th. He stated any of the fire departments' sirens, that are not working properly, is the responsibility of the fire department to have them repaired, and not the County's.

President Norem then summarized: to have them get the tower design completed, and make it tall enough for the line of site, check with Attorney Lucas about the bid process, and also have someone dispatched out to Bass Lake to address their issue.

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

Jim Shilling, of the Starke County Historical Society, appeared before the Board to advise the project had been completed at the County's warehouse, and he is submitting the invoice from Tim Benson Construction, in the amount of \$2,000.00. President Norem advised the invoice can be paid out of the Cum. Cap. Dev. Fund, and will be

submitted for payment in the regular claims process. Mr. Shilling advised that only 76 people participated in the Courthouse tours during the Harvest Day Festival, and he requested their signatures on the thank you letters he prepared for the six students that led the tours. (The letters were signed by the Board, and mailed out by the Auditor's Office.)

County Assessor, Rhonda Milner, appeared before the Board. She stated she wanted to bring to their attention a situation involving railroad property being sold at a tax sale. The specific incident she was referring to involved railroad property adjoining Jack Bell's property. She asked Attorney Lucas to explain the situation. Attorney Lucas advised there is a difference when dealing with abandoned railroad property, and it depends if the abandoned land is actually an easement, or right away, versus an actual parcel of land. He noted the County can't put a tax lien on an easement. He advised it will need to be determined if the land is a parcel or not, but in some case the railroad only had a 'right away'. If it is not a parcel, then it needs to be taken off the tax books, and would belong to the neighboring property owner, and placed on their tax bill. A notice should be sent to the property owner, for them to decide if they want the property. If they refuse their interest in the property, it could be quit claimed back to the County. He suggested the County begins going through all the railroad property, beginning with the CSX Railroad property, by township, beginning with the smaller townships, and any property that would be qualifying for the next tax sale. Assessor Milner requested Attorney Lucas' attorney fees be paid out of the Commissioners' budget, as she does not have the appropriations in her budget for those fees.

President Norem noted the attorney fees line item of their budget is almost expended for the year. She suggested that any further attorney fees should be paid from the balance of the legal fees line item, and then from the Commissioners' CREDIT fund. She also advised they will need to transfer appropriations from health insurance into the PERF line item. She noted that it appears the amount of health insurance expenses were over estimated, and the PERF expense, underestimated. She also noted that there is still \$1,000.00 balance payable to the 4-H Clubs that needs to be expended.

President Norem requested Commissioner Bridegroom submit to her the same information he had submitted to the Sheriff in regard to any county employees, who are involved in an accident, to be drug tested following the accident, and also submit an accident report to the Auditor's Office. She also advised she had received an email in regard to the Sheriff's hiring practices. She advised they need to look at placing stricter controls on hiring. There was a discussion in regard to the role of the Merit Board in the Sheriff's hiring of new county officers. Commissioner Bridegroom advised the Sheriff can notify the Merit Board of the posting of the position, and as a courtesy only, advise them of the candidates for the position. But, he noted, the Merit Board, does not have any say so during the first year of employment of that new officer. A discussion followed in regard to having a established policy for the time limit on job postings, and how the Sheriff was able to hire a new employee, a jailer/cook when he never asked the Board to create such a position. They noted the recommendation from Paul Downing, of DLZ, in regard to his assessment of the jail needs, was that there was a current need for such a position, but was never discussed with the Sheriff to create such a position.

Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve the vendor claims after removing the Howard Towing invoice in the amount of \$50.00, leaving a net total of \$219,583.81. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes. Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve the payroll for the pay period ending August 20, 2012 in the amount of \$168,099.49. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to renew the agreement with Government Fixed Asset Services to complete the GASB reporting of capital assets for the fiscal year ending 12/31/2012, in the amount of \$1,950.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis, and passed with all ayes.

Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 20th meeting. Commissioner Davis noted a correction was needed on the spelling of the word "stump", and she seconded the motion. The motion passed with all ayes.

President Norem advised, while the Auditor was researching the 2010 minutes involving the request by the North Judson Town Board and the two lots, it was discovered that the minutes between the time period of May 20, 2010 and June 8, 2010 were never finalized, printed, and entered into the Commissioners' Minute Book. Commissioner Bridegroom made a motion to approve those minutes, seconded by Commissioner Davis. The motion passed with all ayes. Auditor Chaffins had prepared the finalized version of those minutes, and the final copy was then signed. (The Auditor has placed those minutes in the proper chronological order in the official minute book.)

Auditor Chaffins advised all taxing entities in the County are now 100% in compliance in regard to the Anti-Nepotism Resolutions. She noted the Washington Twp. Trustee has submitted copies of both of their resolutions at the end of August.

President Norem requested each Commissioner email their available hours they will be able to man the Commissioners' Office during the month of September, so that the Auditor could post the month's Office hours.

President Norem noted they still have not received any information in regard to the change in the County's workers compensation insurance physician, and requested it be tabled until the next meeting.

President Norem asked that it be recorded in the minutes that they had received a report from Weaver Boos in regard to the July testing of the County landfill. She advised Weaver Boos were not aware that they also had to report the testing to IDEM, since there was a question as to whether it was considered an "active" landfill.

President Norem then advised there was an issue with the Health Department and their submission of the daily receipts. The Auditor explained that she had received the report from the Health Department Clerk, which stated she had zero funds to deposit on August 28th. But, the next day on August 29th, the Clerk brought in a deposit, and supplied copies of the corresponding receipts which showed the money had been received by the Health Department on August 27th and 28th. There was a discussion in regard to the Health Department's receipting procedure being addressed by the SBOA and the fact that they do not take the whole issue very seriously. President Norem noted their lack of concern, in regard to the handling of money in their department, needs to be addressed. Commissioner Davis advised she will talk to them at the Health Department, again about this issue, and possibly also with Dr. Theresa Alexander.

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Bridegroom. The motion passed with all ayes, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:45PM.

September 4, 2012

Kathy Norem, President

Dan Bridegroom, Vice President

Jennifer Davis

Katherine Chaffins, Auditor &
Secretary to the Commissioners