The Steuben County Commissioners met at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 19, 2019, in the Commissioners’ Room of the Steuben County Community Center. Present this day were Commissioners Ronald Smith, James Crowl and Lynne Liechty. Also present were Donald Stuckey, County Attorney, Ruth Beer, Steuben County Councilwoman, Ken Shelton, Steuben County Councilman, Jim Getz, Steuben County Councilman, Kim Anderson (Johnson), Assessor, Richard Shipe, Steuben County Councilman, Larry Gilbert, Surveyor, RJ Robinson, Sheriff and Kim Meyers, Steuben County Auditor.

Judge William Fee discussed enhanced security at the Courthouse. Judge Fee said that there is a blind spot in the back of the Courthouse and he would like to see enhanced exterior security that includes the corners, back of the building and the parking lots. Jason Hufnagle, Jail Commander, submitted a quote from TCSI in the amount of $13,838.00. Kim Meyers, Auditor, stated that she would like to explore funding options from either LIT Public Safety or Cumulative Capital Development. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the quote from TCSI in the amount of $13,838.00, with funding to be determined by the County Auditor. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

James Crowl stated that security in the Community Center also needs to be addressed.

Richard Shipe, County Council President, said that he is presenting a request from County Council and he is asking for additional funds for an employee. Mr. Shipe said that it came to his attention last week that the County was at risk of losing Dave Spence from the IT Department. He said that after sitting down with the IT Director, it became clear to him that it was in the County’s best interest to keep Mr. Spence because of what he does and because of the money he saves the County. Mr. Shipe said that he is requesting to elevate Mr. Spence’s wage to $50,000.00 which is $8,986.00 more than what he is currently making.

Richard Shipe said that if something goes wrong with the radio system and ERS is called, they charge $110.00 an hour plus travel time. He said that in 2017, Gary LeTourneau spent about $10,000.00 with ERS on radio repairs and in 2018, since Dave Spence has been employed, Mr. LeTourneau has only spent $4,500.00 with ERS. Mr. Shipe said that mapping for emergency services layers needs to be done and that will cost about $3,500.00 if it is outsourced; however, Mr. Spence can do that as well. Richard Shipe said that encryption also needs to be done which would cost $5,000.00 - $7,500.00 and Mr. Spence can also do that. Mr. Shipe said that Dave Spence can run network cables and fix cameras on site with a cost savings to the County as well. He said that having Dave Spence continue as a County Employee is a way to save money even though the expense up front is $10,000.00. Richard Shipe said that he is requesting that the funds be placed into Mr. Spence’s salary out of whichever fund the Commissioners may choose. Mr. Shipe said that Dave Spence has received training to become Spillman certified as well. It was also understood that Mr. Spence is being groomed to take over the IT Director position when the time comes.

Lynne Liechty said that in September, a raise was given to Mr. Spence and they tried to make it work between E911 and IT in order to elevate him to a certain level. She said that the Sheriff’s Department is underpaid and they are not at the wages where they belong either. Lynne Liechty said that this puts them in an awkward position going forward. Richard Shipe said that he is well aware of that. Mr. Shipe said that this is a unique situation as Mr. Spence far exceeds the job description that he was hired in under but he performs above that with a cost savings to the County. Lynne Liechty said she doesn’t disagree as Mr. Spence is well above the skill set that was in the job description and the County is lucky to have him. Richard Shipe said that he believes it is in the County’s best interest to keep Mr. Spence.

James Crowl said that $5,000.00 was a cap that the Commissioners put on raises last year during budget time. Commissioner Crowl said that Tami Sumney, IT Director, came before the board and asked for additional monies so she could keep Mr. Spence. At that time, the Commissioners went over the $5,000.00 and requested $7,000.00 to be added to Mr. Spence’s salary for 2019. The request was then sent to the County Council and County Council cut $3,500.00. James Crowl said that he does not think it is fair to any other employee in Steuben County that is very valuable, all of the County Employees are valuable and they are underpaid. Commissioner Crowl said that it is his opinion to stay with the budget request that was sent to County Council for 2019.
Lynne Liechty said that she is in favor of keeping valued employees but she doesn’t like feeling that if they don’t increase the wage, he will go somewhere else and she’s afraid this situation will come up again. Richard Shipe said that in talking with Mr. Spence, he agreed to a gentleman’s agreement that if this was done, he would commit to two (2) years with the County as he does want to stay here.

Ronald Smith said that everyone realizes the importance of having employees in the area of technology with expertise above and beyond what is needed rather than remediation after the need arises. Commissioner Smith said that so early in a new budget year, it is difficult for him to back up a few months to when they were doing this, he feels it should have come out then; however, he knows that a job offer has come since that time. Richard Shipe said that if the Council had done its due diligence and given the full $7,000.00 as requested, he may not be standing here today. Ronald Smith said that he is torn. Richard Shipe said that is very understandable and this is not an easy request for him to make.

Lynne Liechty said that she, like James Crowl, would like to go back to the original budget request for 2019. Richard Shipe said that is not his request.

Ronald Smith said that during budget time there were other individuals whom had requests that were above what was granted and it was pared back. He said the Commissioners had a strong expression that they did not want to go above $5,000.00 for any individual. James Crowl said that because of what they were made aware of, they stretched the budget to $7,000.00 and he can’t see going over that.

Ken Shelton, County Council, said that this is highly unusual but he believes that the Council, at the time that decision was made, was trying to be good stewards of the County’s money. Since that time, this employee has excelled. He said that the Commissioners asked for a $7,000.00 increase and the Council chose not to do it, but that doesn’t mean that they should wait a year to solve the problem. Mr. Shelton said that they have a situation and they have an opportunity to correct a problem. He said this was discussed at length, may potentially cause problems with other employees and the Council recognizes that. He said that they have to deal with problems as they come to them and he doesn’t think it would be a good decision to let this person walk when the County has already put a lot of money into him with training. Mr. Shelton said that ever since he’s been on the Council, he has said that the salaries of the employees needs to be addressed because we keep losing them.

RJ Robinson, Sheriff, said that he agrees with the County Council. He said that Dave Spence is valuable to him as far as repairs are concerned. Sheriff Robinson said that all of his employees are valuable but Mr. Spence has stepped forward and helped tremendously. He said that Mr. Spence touches radios daily to reprogram it or fix them.

Crystal Dadura, HR Director, said that this would completely take Mr. Spence out of the grid and he would be an SO. Richard Shipe said it’s either that or the Council would put it in their budget as special compensation which is done for other employees already. Donald Stuckey said that if the Commissioners approve this, the Council will amend the salary ordinance. Richard Shipe said that it has not yet been officially decided, but yes, the ordinance would be amended in order to do this.

Jim Getz, County Council, said that they realize this is an extenuating circumstance and it may be hard for some department heads and other employees to chew, but the Council has an obligation to listen to the employees and department heads because things change. Mr. Getz said that they are not doing their jobs if they do not listen to the department heads and try to change with them. He said that he would ask everyone in the room what kind of stress it would put on their department or their employees if they try to turn on the computer and it doesn’t work.

Ronald Smith said that they have a document that was put in the Commissioners’ mailboxes concerning Steuben County Communications and in this particular document there is an article that talks about the radio system in Steuben County, how it was implemented, the issues that were there and how they were remediated. Commissioner Smith said that if there is anyone in the County that deserves a pay raise, it would be the person that is in charge of that department. Ronald Smith said that he wishes there was something that would show that there was a clear break that would warrant the large increase. Commissioner Smith said that he sees so many different ways of looking at this whole thing and there has not been a change of credentials or training and there are others that are worthy because of the accomplishments that have been brought about. He said that he spoke to the head of
the IT Department and it is important that the County keeps Mr. Spence. Commissioner Smith said that he would support making this work and he doesn’t know how to justify it other than this person has had an offer, he is of value and we are willing to come up to that level to keep him. Ronald Smith said that this is hard to do as it goes against everything. He said that they should take warning that there is the fact that there are other people that want considerable increases in pay if that is a possibility.

James Crowl said that he is sticking to what they budgeted, $7,000.00 is a lot of money for a raise. County Council has the opportunity to bump that back up by $3,500.00, only two (2) months into the year.

Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the full $8,900.00 because in a position like this, with that kind of IT knowledge, the job will not be an easy one to fill in this marketplace. Ronald Smith said that the County employs many people with experience and expertise and some whom protect the lives of all of us are warranted to a pay increase as well. Richard Shipe said that County Council has addressed that the best as they can. James Crowl said that if Mr. Spence is valuable to other departments, do they have money to put toward the pay increase? Kim Meyers said that they can transfer within their budget for now and then Council will do an amendment to the salary ordinance and possibly an additional appropriation to cover that transfer.

Richard Shipe said that he will be consulting HR regarding verbiage being added to the Personnel Policy to help pay back training costs or require a length of service after training.

Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the full request being made by Richard Shipe. Ronald Smith seconded that motion and the motion carried with two (2) ayes and one (1) nay.

Richard Shipe thanked the Commissioners for their attention to the matter and it was not an easy request but he wouldn’t be here if he didn’t think it was worthwhile.

Frank Charlton, County Park Superintendent, submitted photos of limbs that have fallen throughout the County Park due to the recent weather.

Ronald Smith asked if there are any other varied uses that the County Park could be used for during the year. Frank Charlton said that they can brainstorm on that.

Kylene Harris, Event Center Coordinator, stated that the prices to rent the Lion’s Building were inadvertently not changed on the County’s Website and someone wanted to rent the Lion’s Building for what was posted on the website. The Commissioners gave a consensus that Ms. Harris should honor the pricing that was listed on the website. Ms. Harris said that she would call the woman back and let her know.

Clint Knauer, Plan Commission, he has been working with Larry Gilbert and Jen Sharkey regarding storm water. Mr. Knauer said that HPG Network was also brought into the conversations. He said that they discussed process mapping the County.

Ryan Chasey, HPG Network, stated that Clint Knauer, Jen Sharkey and Larry Gilbert had approached them to talk about the process related issues that have been experienced recently and asked for input and advice. Mr. Chasey said that HPG Network has worked with local governments in aligning processes and to make sure the efforts are streamlined. He said that the discussion was ranging from state codes to local ordinances to staffing to communication between departments. He said HPG recommends a process called Strategic Assessment and Alignment. Mr. Chasey said that this would look comprehensively at the development process within Steuben County and would be employee driven but facilitated by HPG. He said that this is an effective approach to take because there is a lot that happens with the individual departments at the employee level. Mr. Chasey said that there are three (3) steps in the First Phase.

Clint Knauer said that about a year ago the Plan Commission gave the recommendation for changing the ordinance and doing some amendments to it. He said that has been the most positive thing since he’s been back in the office. Mr. Knauer said that the number of variances is down and they are catching things because everything was made more logical and simplified.
Clint Knauer said that the price for Phase I is $10,000.00.

The Commissioners signed the Andersons Turkey Creek Road Subdivision Plat.

Jennifer Sharkey, Highway Engineer, submitted Miller Poultry Utility Permit #2746RC and NIPSCO Utility Permit #2829 for approval. James Crowl made a motion to approve those Utility Permits. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Ms. Sharkey stated that there is a Level I Design Exception for approval on the 200 N Phase II Project. She said that the exception reduces the shoulder width from six (6) feet paved to four (4) feet paved. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the Level I Design Exception. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Jennifer Sharkey informed the Commissioners that they have been awarded the Highway Safety Improvement Funds for the 200 W/100 N Roundabout. Ms. Sharkey said that an early coordination meeting with INDOT will be held on March 15. Ms. Sharkey said that this is a 90/10 program for fiscal year 2024.

Ms. Sharkey stated that she has an unofficial detour letter of understanding for the US 20 Project which is typically done at the beginning of a project but was not done. Ms. Sharkey said that in order for INDOT to reimburse the County, they have to have this on file. According to state statute, reimbursement can only be received on one (1) route, so the letter is for E 20 N to S 100 E and turning to US 20. Jennifer Sharkey said that the revised letter of request in the amount of $85,792.00 has been sent to the State. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the unofficial detour letter of understanding. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Ms. Sharkey requested to attend the Legislative Fly In. James Crowl made a motion to approve that request. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Ms. Sharkey said that salt has been slow on delivery. They have 150 tons on order that should be delivered any day and then today they ordered another 150 tons. Ms. Sharkey said that they are running at about ten (10) days to get the salt delivered.

Ms. Sharkey stated that when trees are on utility lines, the electric companies are pretty responsive; however, the telephone companies are not. She said that typically the Highway Department doesn’t take care of a tree when it is on a utility line, but there is a situation on 850 E where a tree is hanging down and is now impacting travel. Ms. Sharkey said that they are going to take care of the tree, but wondered if there was any avenue to take in case a facility gets damaged from the tree removal efforts. The Commissioners told her to document it and list the reasons for the action. James Crowl said that if it is a large job, they could try billing the utility company.

Jennifer Bowman, GAI, stated that she is doing the inspection on the 200 N Project. Ms. Bowman said that the road is open but the pavement markings are temporary. She said that they will probably start back up around April 1, depending on the weather. Ms. Bowman updated the Commissioners on items that still need to be finished. She also reported that she will have change orders to submit to the Commissioners for approval. Jennifer Bowman said that the final completion date is May 20, 2019 and they do not anticipate pushing that out unless weather is a factor.

Patrick Kirkpatrick, EMS Director, requested permission to purchase a Full Body CPR/Trauma Manikin with an Electronic Console Box in the amount of $1,422.30 from his training budget. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the purchase of the Manikin. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Mr. Kirkpatrick was asked if EMS would be offering county-wide CPR Training. Mr. Kirkpatrick said that he would be able to do so.

Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the claims submitted for payment this day totaling $451,471.37. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.
James Crowl made a motion to approve the minutes from the Commissioners’ Meeting on February 4, 2019. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

The Commissioners signed the minutes from the January 22, 2019, Commissioners’ Meeting for the Index Book, which were approved at the prior meeting.

Rae Delaney, Payroll, submitted the February 15, 2019 payroll in the amount of $385,889.44 for approval. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the February 15, 2019 payroll. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Crystal Dadura, HR Director, submitted the 2019 Stop Loss and Administrative Agreements for the Health Insurance Benefits. James Crowl made a motion to approve and sign the documents. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

James Crowl made a motion to appoint Ron Shipe to the Cemetery Board. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Breann Fink, Literacy Coalition, submitted a request to use the Auditorium for the Drama Camp again during the weeks of July 8, 2019 and July 15, 2019 from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve that request. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Ms. Fink also requested to use the parking lot on Saturday, April 6, 2019 from 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. for staff parking during an academic field trip. James Crowl made a motion to approve that request. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

James Crowl made a motion to appoint Lynne Liechty as the Board of Commissioners 2019 Region 3a Board of Directors Appointee. Ronald Smith seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve and sign the OCRA Workforce Development Grant Closeout paperwork. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

James Crowl made a motion to approve and sign the 2019 Capital 5311 Grant for Council on Aging. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Kone submitted an Annual Safety Inspection Test for Lift #47795 at the Community Center in the amount of $895.00. The Commissioners tabled the proposal until Donald Stuckey has time to review it.

Brett Hays, NICC, submitted an invoice in the amount of $1,258.66 from Larry’s Lock and Safe and a $640.66 invoice from Delta T Mechanical for work done at the Old Jail. Mr. Hays requested that the Commissioners pay for half of both invoices. James Crowl made a motion to approve Mr. Hays’ request and pay half of the invoices for a total of $949.66 to be paid from Building and Equipment Repairs 1000-068-3000.39. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Tangi Manahan, Clerk, submitted the 2019 Municipal Primary Election Polling Places for approval. James Crowl made a motion to approve the 2019 Municipal Primary Election Polling Places. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Crystal Dadura, HR Director, submitted an Amendment to the Sterling Talent Solutions Service Agreement for Approval. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the Amendment. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Alicia van Ee, Health Department, submitted a request to use the Steuben County Event Center as a Point of Dispensing Location in the event of a Public Health Emergency. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve that request. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.
Lynne Liechty stated that she met with ABS and Patrick Kirkpatrick and they submitted an outline for a Financial Management Policy that has been given to the EMS Department. Commissioner Liechty said that it outlines a billing policy and a collections policy so everything is consistent. She said that currently it is being done in such a way that it is up to the patient to go into the EMS Office to set up their own payment plans. This Policy would keep it more consistent and it would help with creating a plan for hardship cases. Donald Stuckey said that there is one thing he doesn’t like about the hardship income related policies and that you could have $4 Million in assets and $32,000.00 in income, you only have to pay 25% of the bill. Mr. Stuckey said he doesn’t like agreements like this. Lynne Liechty said that currently they don’t have anything in place and this is just a start.

Erin Schiffli, Commissioners’ Secretary, said that she was notified that the Sheriff’s Department Maintenance Truck is now out of commission. Ms. Schiffli said that she would like direction on what they would like to do with the truck. RJ Robinson, Sheriff, stated that he hadn’t decided on what to do with it because Bill’s may have had an old Chevy coming in for parts so that’s why he was waiting. Sheriff Robinson said that fell apart and the truck is locked up, the transfer case has issues and they are at a standstill with it. He said that he won’t be able to get anything for it to get it fixed and they would like to get rid of it.

Sheriff Robinson said that through the fleet changeover, he should have at least one pick up that could be used for Sheriff’s Department Maintenance, all Maintenance or some other department. He said if the Commissioners’ don’t mind, they have two (2) pickup trucks on order so he would like to keep one (1) of the old trucks in the reserve fleet and then the other one can be used for Maintenance, etc.

Erin Schiffli also asked the Commissioners what the plan is for the Colorado and if they wish to sell it or keep it. The Commissioners said that it needs to be sold on auction as well. Ms. Schiffli stated that she would get the auction scheduled.

Ronald Smith said that they need to consider getting someone on board to start the process of replacing the wall at the Courthouse. James Crowl said that an engineer needs to be hired to draw the specs.

Gary Fair said that the City of Angola is going to be replacing sidewalks and it might be a good time to do the wall as well. Mr. Fair said that they looked at what could be done with the wall and large stackers were discussed. He said that there is no sidewalk along Gale Street on the north side of the Courthouse and it is unsafe for Courthouse employees to step out on Gale Street without protection and line of sight. Mr. Fair said that the control boxes for the mound would have to be considered as well and the City suggested moving the controls.

Gary Fair said that the City Engineer sent an email requesting dimensions, grades and elevations so they could proceed with their sidewalk and they wanted to make sure that the sidewalk on Gale Street would be ADA Compliant. Mr. Fair said that he has no way of doing an CAD, grading or elevations for this project. Mr. Fair believes it will be necessary to hire a qualified engineer as soon as possible to get this project rolling. He said that the Courthouse wall currently sits in the right of way of the City and it does need to be moved off of City property. Mr. Fair said that he is requesting that an engineering company be employed to take a look at this and to get the County information that can be forwarded to the City.

James Crowl said that Bob Shearer would be a good local choice as the County has worked with him several times in the past. Commissioner Crowl said that it is his recommendation to contact him as soon as possible and if he can tackle the job and do it quickly he can have the project. Erin Schiffli said that the funding would more than likely come from Cumulative Capital.

Gary Fair said that he took a look at the water line at the Courthouse as well. Mr. Fair said that there are two (2) water lines, he said the domestic line is a 2” line that is metered and he has requested an age of that pipe from the City to find out if it contains lead or not. Mr. Fair said that the second line is a 4” unmetered line that goes to fire suppression. He said that there is also the sanitary sewer from the lady’s restroom that would have to go across the street and hook into the existing main. He believes that would perhaps entail going across the existing planter that the City has already installed. Mr. Fair said that there is a backup plan where it could be run to the east if the floors were knocked out.
Ronald Smith said that he wants to get it done too, but doesn’t want to move too fast. Gary Fair suggested cutting the project back, but the exit on Gale Street from the Courthouse needs to be fixed.

Jennifer Sharkey said that she thinks the City is requesting this information because they found out the wall is within City right of way and that triggers all of their permitting requirements.

Ronald Smith stated that it would be best to let Jennifer Sharkey take a look at what can be done in partnering with the engineering firm that the City is working with. Commissioner Smith said that due to a number of things, he has a reluctance, and he cannot support hiring the project done. He said that he would allow one of the other Commissioners to make a motion and second it to move forward with the project. James Crowl made a motion to hire Bob Sheerer, if he has the time to draw up the specs in a timely fashion, that were suggested by Gary Fair. Lynne Liechty said that she has two (2) courthouse designs that are utilizing the back end of the Courthouse and until they move forward on what they are to do with the Courthouse, she doesn’t want to commit to anything unless it is just along South Wayne Street. The motion died for lack of a second.

Ronald Smith said that due to the rushed nature of what has been thrown out here, the Commissioners need to deliberate immediately in response to the availability of the Masonic Lodge. Once that is done, then they can consider this situation in either having an Interlocal Agreement with the City or hire another engineer.

Jennifer Sharkey asked if the Commissioners want her to do exploratory conversations on either the Interlocal Agreement or a proposal from Mr. Sheerer regarding costs. Gary Fair said that he has a guesstimate of $130,000.00 to complete the project.

The Commissioners received the following correspondence: IDHS re: Working together to protect Indiana Communities; Janel Meyer, SCSWCD re: Board Meeting Agenda; Robin Kemp, Williams County Commissioners re: Ohio EPA Public Notice; Carrie M. Schlade, Mayor re: Resolution Bryan, Ohio re: EPA Public Hearing; Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership re: Parking Map for RP Meetings; Janel Meyer, SCSWCD Board Meeting Minutes; Joy Hudson HPG Network re: Meeting Agenda-Advance Materials; Joy Hudson HPG Network re: AIM We need your help/HB1625.