March 4, 2019 Commissioners’ Meeting

STEUBEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
March 4, 2019

The Steuben County Commissioners met at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, March 4, 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, County Councilwoman, Richard Shipe, County Councilman, Kim Anderson, Assessor and Kim Meyers, Steuben County Auditor.

James Crowl made a motion to approve the claims submitted for payment this day totaling $400,287.30. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Kim Meyers, Auditor and Melissa Bixler, Treasurer, submitted the Monthly Comparison Report for review and approval. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the Monthly Comparison Report. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Rae Delaney, Payroll, submitted the March 1, 2019 payroll in the amount of $414,322.04 for approval. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the March 1, 2019 payroll. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

The Commissioners signed the minutes from the February 4, 2019, Commissioners’ Meeting for the Index Book, which were approved at the prior meeting.

Donald Stuckey stated that he redlined parts of the Kone Contract that was submitted at the last meeting. James Crowl made a motion to approve the Contract as amended by Donald Stuckey. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Julie Troyer submitted the 2018 Annual Certification Report for the Steuben County Sheriff’s Department for review and approval. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the Report. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Pat Kirkpatrick, EMS Director, submitted January Writeoffs in the amount of $106,345.58 and February Writeoffs in the amount of $36,982.43. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the January and February Writeoffs. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Mr. Kirkpatrick also submitted January and February Closeouts in the amount of $3,438.54 for approval. James Crowl made a motion to approve the January and February Closeouts. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

The Commissioners signed the Marbo Acres III Plat.

Clint Knauer, Plan Commission, submitted VPW-19-03 a Petition to Vacate filed by Theresa Johnston Trust. Mr. Knauer said that it was taken to the Plan Commission and comes to the Commissioners with a 7-0 with one (1) abstention positive recommendation.

Ronald Smith opened the public hearing for comment. No one requested to speak on this Vacation Petition and the public hearing was closed.

James Crowl made a motion to approve VPW-19-03 Ordinance 3149. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Second and Third Readings
Steuben County, Indiana
Ordinance No. 3149
March 4, 2019 Commissioners’ Meeting Continued

Thereupon, County Commissioner, Lynne Liechty moved that all rules of procedure of the County Commissioners which might prevent, unless suspended, the second and third readings of Ordinance No 3149 for final passage and adoption of said Ordinances at this meeting without reading the said Ordinances in full but reading the title only. This motion was seconded by James Crowl and was on the call of the roll adopted by the following vote:

Ayes 3  Nays 0

Under the suspension of the regular rules, County Commissioner, James Crowl, then moved that the Ordinances be read for the second and third readings by title only and thereby be ready for passage and final adoption in this meeting. This motion for the second and third readings for final passage and adoption of said Ordinances was seconded by Lynne Liechty and on the call of the roll was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes 3  Nays 0

The County Auditor then read aloud the title of said Ordinances for the second and third readings. Thereupon, County Commissioner, James Crowl, moved for final passage and adoption of the Ordinances in full applicable regulations to establish such Ordinances. This motion for final passage and adoption was seconded by Lynne Liechty and on the call of the roll adopted by the following vote:

Ayes 3  Nays 0

The President of the Steuben County Commissioners, Ronald L. Smith, declared publicly Ordinance No 3149 to have been duly passed and adopted. Thereupon, said Ordinance were signed by all members of the County Commissioners present and attested by the County Auditor. Ordinance No. 3149 is on file in the Auditor’s office. Ordinance No. 3149 reads as follows:

ORDINANCE NUMBER 3149

AN ORDINANCE OF THE STEUBEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGARDING THE VACATION OF A PLATTED ROADWAY, SECOND ADDITION TO FOREST PARK

WHEREAS, the Petitioner has filed a Petition for Vacation of a Platted Roadway pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-3-12/13;

WHEREAS, the Petitioner owns or has legal interest in certain real estate which is contiguous to the roadway or place which they propose to vacate;

WHEREAS, notice by publication to the population at large and notice by certified mail to abutting property owners has been properly made consistent with Indiana Law;

WHEREAS, the Petitioner has paid the expense of providing legal notice;

WHEREAS, the vacation of the roadway would not hinder the growth or orderly development of the unit or neighborhood in which it is located or to which it is contiguous;

WHEREAS, the vacation would not make access to the lands by means of platted way, difficult or inconvenient;
WHEREAS, the vacation would not hinder the public’s access to a church, school or other public building or place; and,

WHEREAS, the vacation would not hinder the use of a public way by the neighborhood in which it is located or to which it is contiguous,

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE STEUBEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THAT THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED ROADWAY IN STEUBEN COUNTY, INDIANA IS HEREBY VACATED:

A part of the Second Addition to Forest Park, as recorded in Plat Book 2, Page 81 in the office of the Recorder of Steuben County, Indiana, described as follows:

Commencing at the Northwest corner of “No Lot” as platted in the Second Addition to Forest Park, thence North 75 degrees 28 minutes 45 seconds East (bearings based on the Indiana State Plane Coordinate System NAD 83, Indiana Zone East) along the South line of Lane 201BB Lake George, a distance of 78.37 feet to the Northeast corner of Lot 17 in said addition, said corner being the true point of beginning of this description; thence continuing North 75 degrees 28 minutes 45 seconds East a distance of 10.04 feet to the centerline of a 20 feet platted roadway; Thence South 19 degrees 39 minutes 15 seconds East along said centerline, a distance of 50.39 feet; thence departing said centerline, South 79 degrees 40 minutes 35 seconds West a distance of 10.13 feet to the Southeast corner of said Lot 17; thence North 19 degrees 39 minutes 15 seconds West along the East line of said Lot 17, a distance of 49.65 feet back to the true point of beginning of this description, containing 0.01 acres, more or less, subject to all legal highways, rights of way, and easements of record.

STEUBEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

3/4/2019 Lynne A. Liechty, Northern District
First Reading Ronald Smith, Chairman, Southern District

3/4/2019 James Crowl, Central District
Second Reading

3/4/19 Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the MOU with Kelly Bailey, SUP 101 Lakes, for the use of the County Park Beach House. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

ATTEST: Kim Meyers, Steuben County Auditor

I affirm, under the penalties for perjury, that I have taken reasonable care to redact each Social Security Number in this document, unless required by law. Vina L. Conti

3/4/19 Brett Hays, NICC, submitted a TANF Request for Reimbursement for approval. James Crowl made a motion to approve the January TANF Report. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Frank Charlton said that a quote was received from Larry’s Lock and Safe for beach cameras and more investigation is needed.

Brett Hays, NICC, submitted a TANF Request for Reimbursement for approval. James Crowl made a motion to approve the January TANF Report. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Gary Fair, Community Center Building Manager, informed the Commissioners that the water heater in the Community Center is being repaired.

Mr. Fair submitted the new truck sign for approval. He said that the new signs will cost $100.00 and he plans on paying for that and the rust proofing in the amount of $275.00 from the vehicle maintenance line item 1000-161-
2000.13. James Crowl made a motion to approve the new truck signage. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Gary Fair said that at the last meeting, the Courthouse wall was tabled. He said that they cannot move forward with out an engineering firm on board.

Lynne Liechty said that they need to start bringing one (1) or two (2) engineering companies in to give ideas so they have a better solution going forward. She said if they decide to go east, south or some other option, they need to get moving on bringing in the companies to give a presentation of what they think is best.

Commissioner Liechty said that the west side has to be addressed and that won’t cause any problems going forward. Gary Fair said that it is his suggestion to do the west wall, do the flat work and continue around to the corner of the Courthouse. He said that doesn’t get the sidewalk done, but they will have to do the handicapped ramp. Mr. Fair said that it cost roughly $5,000.00 to employ an engineer to do the drawings but they probably won’t have the prints until the second week of June.

James Crowl stated that he made a motion at the last meeting to employ local engineer Bob Shearer and that motion stands. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Lynne Liechty said that she could bring in two (2) engineering firms at a time. James Crowl said that it would be better if they were done one (1) at a time. Commissioner Liechty said that they have requested to present the same day, but they don’t want to be in the room at the same time. James Crowl said that he is fine with that. Ronald Smith said that having the engineering firms come in is approved and Erin Schiffli may set up a time for that to happen.

James Crowl said that at one point they had spoken about getting an appraisal on the Masonic Lodge and he asked if that was out of the door. He said that he thinks it is the wise thing to do. Lynne Liechty said that it would give them an idea and if it is doable.

Commissioner Crowl recommended getting just one appraisal, instead of two (2), so they have an idea of the cost. Donald Stuckey said that a second appraisal would have to be done if an offer is to be made. Ruth Beer asked the Commissioners to keep local contractors in mind.

Ronald Smith stated that the Commissioners will be out of money before the end of the year. He said that if they act, they may need to go to Council for funds. Commissioner Smith said that if the Commission Board wants to go ahead and get the appraisals done, they can do so at risk, but they have to slow down on the Cumulative Capital Fund.

James Crowl made a motion to get one (1) appraisal on each building so the Commission Board has an idea of the cost. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Donald Stuckey will contract a commercial appraiser to do one (1) appraisal on the Masonic Building and one (1) appraisal on the KPC Building.

Jennifer Sharkey, Highway Engineer, submitted Mediacom Utility Permit #2830, Frontier Utility Permit #2831, Centurylink Utility Permits #2832, #2833, #2834, #2835 and NIPSCO Utility Permit #2836 for approval. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the Utility Permits. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Ms. Sharkey submitted a reimbursement voucher for inspection services on the 200 N/827 Project for approval. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the reimbursement voucher. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Ms. Sharkey also submitted a reimbursement voucher for preliminary engineering on the 200 N Phase II Project. James Crowl made a motion to approve that reimbursement voucher. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.
Jennifer Sharkey reported that the Buggy Plates have been ordered.

Ms. Sharkey requested to use a county vehicle to travel to the airport for 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.

Emmett Heller, Highway Superintendent, thanked Jennifer Sharkey and the Foremen for taking over when he was off for ten (10) days. Mr. Heller said that they are still cleaning up from the ice storm and wind from the previous week. He also stated that they are looking ahead at culverts and roadwork for this year.

Donald Stuckey requested Emmett Heller’s signature on an application for a duplicate title of a truck that was sold at auction.

Kim Anderson, Assessor, stated that she sent out the personal property returns to three hundred (300) farmers and they will be sent to businesses tomorrow. Ms. Anderson said that the Ratio Study did make the March 1 deadline.

Patrick Kirkpatrick, EMS Director, submitted a Contract with Anthem. Mr. Kirkpatrick explained that entering into this Contract would allow Anthem to pay Steuben County EMS instead of the patient directly. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the Contract with Anthem. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Mr. Kirkpatrick also submitted a Contract with New World Collections for approval. Donald Stuckey said that the Contract is acceptable. Mr. Kirkpatrick said that this is the collection agency that Ambulance Billing Services recommends. James Crowl made a motion to approve the Contract with New World Collections. Lynne Liechty seconded that motion and the motion carried with three (3) ayes.

Jennifer Arnold-Hake approached the Commissioners regarding the demolition of the Old County Home. Ms. Arnold-Hake said that she has letters people have sent her and she said that on the Memories of Steuben County’s Facebook Page, there have been over 500 posts so the issue has raised a lot of attention.

Lynne Liechty asked if Ms. Arnold-Hake was aware of all of the facts and that this has been going on for over a year. Jennifer Arnold-Hake said that she just realized it in the last few months. Commissioner Liechty said that they already have contracts in place. Ms. Arnold-Hake asked if there was any way to stop the demolition. Lynne Liechty said that she could show Ms. Arnold-Hake all of the newspaper articles, etc. Jennifer Arnold-Hake asked if there was anything posted in the yard at the County Home. She said that back in 2016 Night Owl Productions was interested. Ronald Smith said that the Commissioners decided that was not in the best interest of the County to have that sort of thing happen in the area.

Ronald Smith said that at one time the Old County Home housed the Work Release Program. Jennifer Arnold-Hake said that her grandparents, Frank and Dorothy McCormick, ran it before then and she grew up there. Commissioner Smith said that they have to consider utility when they consider a use of or refurbishing of an old building. He said that the County tried to redo the building, turned it into Work Release Center and it ended up having more officers than Work Release participants, so it just didn’t work. He said since that time, the building has not been maintained for any particular reason and any old building that is not tended to goes down and becomes very dilapidated in a very short time. Ronald Smith said that there has always been roofing, window and foundation issues with that building.

Commissioner Smith said that in today’s meeting they were just trying to find money to keep the regular processes of the County going and a year ago they didn’t know about having to redo the wall along the Courthouse in downtown Angola and that happens quite often. Commissioner Smith said that County Council has given permission to spend money up to a certain amount of money to refurbish the Courthouse and they are currently looking into doing it with the old buildings that are located downtown so the Commissioners are not anti-old buildings, it is the utility factor.
Ronald Smith said that when Ms. Arnold-Hake and other people voice their concerns, the Commissioners want to be sensitive to that. Commissioner Smith said that he grew up on the Duncan Homestead which was a large old home, it couldn’t be heated adequately and was not maintainable. It wasn’t long before that home was torn down. He said that a big thing in Indiana is barns and maintaining them; however, the cost of redoing those barns is almost as much or more than building a new building.

Ronald Smith said that if any practical use for utility could be assigned to the Old County Home, they would have given some serious consideration to it, but if you were to go in there now, it is not a healthy place to go. He said that recently there have been several people going through there and they have been convinced that this is not something that can be accomplished.

Ronald Smith said that he loves that building as well and they all have feelings for it. Commissioner Smith said that he loves to go to Marshall, Michigan and look at the old buildings and houses, but the cost to the people who own those properties is just horrendous. He said that they got to the place where there was no utility for the Old County Home, it couldn’t be refurbished by the County to make it presentable to sell and then there had been speculations as to how it would be used even if it was sold. He said that the rooms were very small and it also lacks ADA Compliance. Ronald Smith said that for those reasons, this Commission Board decided it was time to do what was best and put it at rest, so they have let Contracts and it is time for that building to go.

Jennifer Arnold-Hake thought if there was a sign maybe there would have been someone that would be willing to invest in it.

Ruth Beer, County Council, said that if she remembers right, a couple years ago when this came up, there was a local contractor that tried to find a use for it and the County would possibly give it to him if he could find a use. After that contractor went through the building and put the numbers together, he walked away.

Bill Schmidt stated that the Indiana Historic Building Preservation Group did have this building listed in their publication so it hasn’t been kept a secret. Mr. Schmidt said that there has been notification and there has been effort made.

Ronald Smith said that they wanted to allow Ms. Arnold-Hake to speak; however, unfortunately it is a done deal. He said that the Commission Board did what they thought was in the best interest of the County.

Ms. Arnold-Hake said that everyone thought that if there was a sign out front or if it was more publicly advertised, perhaps they could have gotten help. Ronald Smith said the fact that the building is vacant could have been as good as a sign to anybody whom was interested in that property that it was available. Commissioner Smith said that hoteliers have even taken a look and he doesn’t know that anyone has even expressed interest in that possibility.

Donald Stuckey said it would cost at least seven figures to get started. Ronald Smith said the Old County Home is on a private water and sewer system which is shared with the old Animal Shelter. He said that there were too many strikes against the building but age and deterioration were the biggest things.

Ronald Smith said that Ms. Arnold-Hake can tell her friends that she gave it a try and the Commissioners listened to her, but it was a done deal as far as timeline is concerned so the building will go down. The Commissioners thanked Ms. Arnold-Hake for coming in. Ronald Smith gave Ms. Arnold-Hake a list of meeting dates and newspaper articles in which the matter was discussed.

Ronald Smith said that he was asked to go to the Community Foundation last week to speak with Jennifer Danic, Director. He said that the Community Foundation is doing a feasibility study on making iMAN an independent functioning operation due to the fact that they have over 140 subscribers and it is becoming a giant. Ronald Smith said when the County invested a couple million dollars in the project, we wanted to know what direction it would take. It is not that we are making a severance, it is not being handed over to anyone else, it just has outgrown them and they cannot continue to keep it under the Foundation. At this point in time it is only a Feasibility Study and it is being funded by a grant.
March 4, 2019 Commissioners’ Meeting Continued

Richard Shipe, County Council, asked if there is anything in making this entity private with the Governor’s initiative on rural broadband. He said that due to the commitment that Steuben County has made to iMAN, he doesn’t think they will allow them to privatize it. James Crowl said that Steuben County is the bigger player in this financially. Ronald Smith said that thankfully, it has continued to grow. James Crowl said that the only way it would be able to be privatized is if the County would get back their money, plus interest and then sell it. Ronald Smith said they are asking people not to panic because of a rumor going around that they are going to try to privatize, but rather they are trying to do a restructuring in management process.

Richard Shipe said that an average bill for iMAN’s service is a minimum $300.00 a month and that is based on speed. He said that right now they guarantee 50 Mbps and they are running almost 100 Mbps because they have more volume than usage.

The Commissioners received the following correspondence: Kathy Armstrong, JDAI re: Steering Committee Meeting; BoAC re: February Memorandum; Matt Meersman, St. Joe River Bason re: Meeting Reminder; Kirk Hinz re: Weather Services Inquiry.

STEUBEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

______________________________  
Ronald L. Smith, President, South District

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James A. Crowl, Vice President, Middle District

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Lynne Liechty, North District

Attest:  
Kim Meyers, Steuben County Auditor

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