The Steuben County Commissioners met at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, June 8, 2020, in the Commissioners’ Room of the Steuben County Community Center. Present this day were Commissioners James Crowl and Lynne Liechty. Also present were Donald Stuckey, County Attorney, Kim Meyers, Auditor, Kelli Johnson, Chief Deputy Auditor and Crystal Dadura, HR. Participating telephonically were Bill Schmidt, Karen DeForest and Erin Schiffli.

James Crowl said they would like to talk about reopening the Community Center. Alicia vanEe, Health Department, reported over the weekend they received word that Steuben County is currently at 95 cases, 2 deaths and 61 recovered cases. She said the cases this weekend have several contacts.

Ms. vanEe said currently there is only one (1) testing location in Steuben County. She was notified this morning that the OptumServ site is becoming a mobile site, so Steuben County will not have an OptumServ location for the month of June. She said they will be contacting Cameron Memorial Hospital to see if they can pick up the additional slack.

Alicia vanEe said they have received several emails and phone calls from people in the Community on how they are going to open safely, especially when it comes to daycares, outdoor establishments with patio seating and some of the sport arenas. As of right now, 50% of the positive cases are still coming back to the Health Department for follow up. She said they are being pulled in multiple directions but they are currently handling it.

Lynne Liechty said she believes Cameron will be surprised by the OptumServ situation so this will throw testing back to Cameron and the Health Department. Alicia vanEe said mobile means they are only testing people in long term care facility and they will not be testing anyone else that is not related to those facilities. She said they have also pulled the LaGrange site as well, so the only OptumServ site in the four-county area is Kendallville in Noble County.

James Crowl asked if the number of tests were dropping off which caused the testing site to be pulled. Alicia vanEe said that was not the case as the first data from OptumServ showed in the 3 weeks prior they did 471 tests, which is about average. She said there were a couple spikes because some organizations/businesses required testing of all employees.

Alicia vanEe said the State is talking about having Health Departments take on testing or doing a drive thru locations staffed by the local Health Department. She said she needs to speak to the Health Officer about that and she is not sure what any of that would look like. James Crowl said the Health Department doesn’t have the funds for extra help.

Lynne Liechty said the Health Department has already logged so many additional hours. Alicia vanEe said they only have one (1) public health nurse and if she were to be exposed for some reason, she would be out for a mandatory ten (10) days. Ms. vanEe said they also have their shot clinic that is up and running so there is only one (1) nurse available that oversee the whole county for all communicable diseases.

Commissioner Liechty said the different departments need to have their own protocol of exactly how they want to address things. She said some departments are going to want to do appointment only, but going forward, anyone entering this building has to be wearing a mask with social distancing in place. Commissioner Liechty also said any children in the building will have to be accompanied with an adult. James Crowl said there should only be one (1) child per adult. Alicia vanEe said they usually ask that families call ahead so they are aware of how many children they will be bringing in. Lynne Liechty said Commissioners’ meetings will be limited, the chairs will be spread out and the other departments will only be in the room as long as they are there to speak.

Lynne Liechty said that the building is open for business but lot of departments are by appointment only. James Crowl said if the door is unlocked, people are going to come in without an appointment. Lynne Liechty said the City has opened up their entire ground floor for the public and upstairs they are only by appointment.
Alicia vanEe said the Health Department is thinking about keeping their door closed and locked and people must knock to enter. If there is an appointment already waiting in the lobby, they will be greeted but be told there is someone in the waiting room and they need to wait in chairs that are six feet apart. Ms. vanEe said that is the only way they can control traffic in their location, but they also share a seating area with the Well Child Clinic so they are going to have to add a couple chairs across the hall.

James Crowl said they can continue as-is for another week and they can make a decision next Monday, but for now they want to keep the building locked down and by appointments only. Lynne Liechty said each Department needs to consider exactly how they are going to open. James Crowl said a memo should be sent to each Department Head informing them how they are going to be opening for the public when the doors are unlocked, but the doors will be locked until at least next Monday and a decision will be made next Monday. Commissioner Crowl said the health and safety of this community is very important.

Lynne Liechty said the Health Department has two (2) exempt employees whom have put in as much as 100 overtime hours and they are wanting to know if there is any type of reimbursement and/or vacation available to them. Commissioner Liechty said she has asked them to keep track of those hours and the Sheriff’s Department is doing that as well. Kim Meyers, Auditor, said if you are Exempt the County doesn’t pay out anything for those hours or comp them. James Crowl said this is a totally different area and it should be brought before the Council and let them decide. Lynne Liechty said this has to be something to be discussed with Kim Meyers and Crystal Dadura. Alicia vanEe said she is not asking for any money, vacation or sick days, she is just asking to use the flex time when she is capable of using it. Ms. vanEe said she is asking to use that as a full or half day increment and that is what they are asking for an exemption on. Ms. Meyers said they can look at it and that should be okay, that way. She said that is an administrative decision. Crystal Dadura, HR, said right now the exempt employees can flex their time and within the same period they are supposed to manipulate their time. Ms. Dadura said obviously the Health Department has not been able to do that for several weeks. Ms. Dadura said they can work together and do research to see who has had a lot of extra hours and come up with a game plan. She said she would hesitate to change the practices and leave policies. Ms. vanEe said they are only asking for an exception until December 31, 2020 so they can use as many hours as possible.

Bill Schmidt asked if he was correct that golf carts are not permitted on County Roads. James Crowl said that is absolutely right. Mr. Schmidt said someone needs to inform people they are not supposed to be driving their golf carts on the County Roads. James Crowl said it has been stated on many occasions that golf carts are not allowed on County Roads, he is not a policeman and he cannot go out and enforce it. Karen DeForest said she has seen a lot of people do the same thing and she tries to tell them, the Association also sends out a newsletter, but people still do it.

Alicia vanEe, Health Department, submitted two (2) routine grants they get from the State Department of Health for approval. She said currently they aren’t aware of what the budget is, but she is hoping it will stay the same. Lynne Liechty made a motion to approve the Health Department Grants. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with two (2) ayes.

Jack Daniel with Martin Riley updated the Commissioners on the Courthouse Renovation Project. Mr. Daniel said last time they met was in February and they were on schedule to meet again in March, but due to COVID-19, that didn’t work out. He said at that time they floor plans and some revisions for the meeting that didn’t happen. Mr. Daniel said the square footage is broken down by addition and renovation at 20,045 square feet and new construction at 38,880 square feet. He said he knew that the construction cost needed to move in a downward direction and can’t say that square footage produces a project at a $15 million price tag. Mr. Daniel said they need guidance from the committee, stakeholders, etc., to help prioritize.

Lynne Liechty said they need the specifications so they could send out the RFP’s. She said all they were looking for was a guideline of what kind of footage this was going to give them, that is all they care about. Commissioner Liechty they need to know what square footage they can get for $10-$15 Million and that needs to include security. She said Martin Riley has done all of the needs assessments and asked if this gives them enough information to move forward with the RFP’s. Jack Daniel said if he would total this out with current square footage and construction costs would be about $18.3 million so it is in excess of the target number.
Mr. Daniel said last time they met, they talked about securing a proposal for a survey because they know they need a land survey, the documents, topography, utilities and legal descriptions for the Courthouse properties. He said he has solicited two (2) proposals, one (1) from A&Z Engineering and one (1) from Foresight. Jack Daniel said the quote from Foresight is in the amount of $3,980.00. He said if the Commissioners want him to execute that contract, or they can transfer it to the Commissioners for execution to get them started, if that is appropriate. Mr. Daniel said he also has a draft Contract for Martin Riley to submit to the Commissioners and he understands it will take some time for the legal team to review that. He said he also has a letter stating Martin Riley can move forward and bill on time and material basis, which would be credited towards the full contract amount.

Jack Daniel said they do not yet have a proposal on soil borings and four (4) to five (5) soil borings will be needed to confirm the soil’s condition, materials, etc. Lynne Liechty said what Martin Riley has been doing is billable work. She said to definitely move forward with the utilities and the topography surveys. James Crowl agreed with that. Commissioner Crowl asked if Martin Riley should hire the firm or if the Commission Board should. Donald Stuckey, County Attorney, said the Commissioners should hire the firm. Lynne Liechty made a motion to move forward with the survey and to hire a firm of the Commissioners’ choice. James Crowl seconded that motion and the motion carried with two (2) ayes. Jack Daniel said he will leave the proposal with the Commissioners, ask them to change the address to the Commissioners and he will also send them the other proposal they received.

Jack Daniel submitted the first draft of Martin Riley’s Contract to Donald Stuckey for review. Mr. Daniel said the County needs to designate an authorized representative to be the point person for communications.

Mr. Daniel said the next step is to dial down costs, will consist of another series of meetings and he will await a direction on that.

Donald Stuckey said he will go over everything and they will discuss it next Monday. He said there is no reason to go through Martin Riley for soil borings and the Commissioners can contract a company for that. James Crowl said they have two (2) quotes and they need to get one more quote for the survey. Lynne Liechty recommended getting a quote from Lawson Fisher. Donald Stuckey said he will contact them.

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Ronald L. Smith, President, South District

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Attest: Kim Meyers, Steuben County Auditor