



**LA PORTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202

La Porte, IN 46350-3400

Phone: (219) 326-6808 ext. 2229

**Dr. Vidya Kora,
President**

**Sheila Brillson Matias,
Vice President**

**Richard Mrozinski,
Member**

LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

Wednesday, March 20, 2019 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room #3 at 6:00 p.m.

President Vidya Kora called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. then led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for Senator Birch Bayh who passed away March 14th.

Auditor Joie Winski called the roll: Commissioner Sheila Brillson Matias – Present; Commissioner Vidya Kora – Present; Commissioner Rich Mrozinski – Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

Commissioner Mrozinski stated item “11 e” should say speed limit on 150 N not Lofgren Road. **Commissioner Sheila Brillson Matias** requested to remove item “11 f” from the agenda then motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. Auditor Joie Winski asked for item “11 g” to be removed from the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski then motioned to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motion carried.

Considered approval of March 6, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Brillson Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motioned carried.

Auditor Winski read the claims with Payroll ending 3/11/2019 \$1,225,641.28 and miscellaneous claims of \$1,055,807.88. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried.

Public Comments:

Robert Lemay – 2201 Oakenwald Dr. Long Beach - President of Long Beach Town Council, spoke against SB581 and urged support from the County Commissioners. Dr. Lemay stated both Long Beach and Michigan City have taken a stand opposing this bill in order to protect our shores. He also stated Lobbyist Marissa Lynch was working on behalf of “parties unknown” in support of the bill. President Kora assured Dr. Lemay that Marissa is not supporting this bill for the County. Commissioner Sheila Brillson Matias asked County Attorney Shaw Friedman if there was any reason why the County should not oppose the bill. Attorney Friedman replied there was not sufficient information provided to him for determination one way or another. Gunderson Case went to the Supreme Court. Dr. Lemay stressed “time is of the essence.” President Kora asked Dr. Lemay if there was anything in the Bill that would “benefit” the Town of Long Beach, the County or Michigan City. Dr. Lemay replied a section in the Bill releases property owners from liability of the public trespassing on their property to access the beach other than that no benefit. Commissioner Brillson Matias asked Dr. Lemay if the Town of Long Beach passed a Resolution opposing SB 581 allowing public access to the waterfront per the Supreme Court decision in the Gunderson Case. He said yes, it redefines what exactly the “public” beach is. It limits the amount of beach the citizens would be allowed to use. Commissioner Brillson Matias motioned to approve a Resolution opposing SB 581. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski stated he agrees with Attorney Friedman that he doesn’t know enough about the Bill yet. President Vidya Kora stepped down and seconded the motion. Motion carried 2 yes – 1 no.

Jim Kimmel – 1015 Westwood Dr. La Porte – As the Democratic County Chair, Jim stated there are issues in the Voter Registration office that he would like to see resolved. He filed a formal complaint with Human Resources in June of 2018. A meeting was held in July of 2018 to which he stated nothing has been done since that time. On June 8, 2018 the Republican appointee in Voter Registration attended the State Republican Convention in Evansville yet her time sheet reflected she was at work that day. When the Democratic appointee attended the State Democrat Convention he told the employee she had to take a vacation day which she did. Jim said he believes a vacation day should be given to the Democrat employee, Gail Cains, if the money was not paid back to the county by the employee who turned in the time sheet showing she was at work on the day she attended the convention.

ORIGINAL

Department Head Comments:

Jane Bernard – Animal Shelter Director – 2018 Annual Report given. 609 dogs were taken in; 535 strays with 74 being Pets. 292 dogs were reclaimed by owners; 187 adopted; 53 Euthanized either by owners' request; deemed "dangerous to others" or suffering/sick. 648 Cats came in; 575 Strays and 73 Pets. 14 Cats reclaimed by owners; 199 adopted out and 341 Euthanized. Jane reported in a 1996 comparison 1300 dogs came in and 798 cats. 838 Dogs were euthanized and 696 Cats. The numbers today compared to 1996 clearly show the county shelter as being a "no kill" shelter as long as the numbers are under 24% which they were for Dogs but not the Cats.

Facebook/Social Media has totally changed what is being done at the Animal Shelter. Adoption rates are high due to the use of a professional photographer, who volunteers her time, for posting pictures. Facebook can be a double-edged sword at times with positive and negative comments. Upcoming events include "Taking the shelter on the Road" by partnering with Pets Supplies Plus. Pets are taken one Saturday a month to the store. All pets taken have been adopted out so it has really worked well. A new entryway will be installed soon by Building Maintenance. Open house to be held May 18th, 11 am – 2 pm, celebrating 5 years in the Stevens Treatment Center. 11th Annual Animal Care Camp for Kids will be held June 18, 19 & 20 for ages 6-14 years. President Kora thanked Jane for all her efforts as Director, thanked the employees and Volunteers. Thanked the Veterinarians and the Stevens family for their contribution. Commissioner Mrozinski thanked Jane as well. Commissioner Brillson Matias commented on Jane and her staff working well together.

Larry Levendowski – Director of Facilities – Reported on damage from a hail storm a few weeks ago to a cooling tower and 7 units on top of the roof. Larry stated estimate is being done and insurance has been notified.

Requests:

Considered authorizing Coolspring Township Volunteer Fire Department Fit to Fight Fire 5k run/walk. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried.

Considered authorizing proposed contract with Quality Corrections Care for medical services at County Jail – Chief Deputy Ron Heeg, Attorney Guy DiMartino and Ms. Scroggins appeared. Commissioner Brillson Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motioned carried.

Considered authorizing Polling Locations for the May 7th Primary Election – Kathy Chroback – Clerk. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried.

Clerk Kathy Chroback stated her concerns with the Voter Registration office not having supervision on site or not being held responsible for their actions that result in the Clerk being held liable for the Elections. Kathy gave a list of issues that were the outcome of the previous elections in 2018. She said she has been asking for over a year for assistance with the matter or issues. Attorney Friedman recommended she take it up with the County Election Board. The Commissioners heard the complaint.

Old Business:

Considered 2nd Reading for Updated Responsible Bidder Ordinance to comply with current state law. Request for Public Comment – None. Commissioner Brillson Matias motioned to approve 2nd/Final reading. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motioned carried. *****Ordinance 2019-3**

Considered Ordinance for a 4-way stop at 650 N and Wilhelm Road – Jay Sullivan. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to suspend the rules and approve for 1st then Final reading. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. *****Ordinance 2019-4**

Considered Recommendation of Ambulance Bids – Andrew McGuire – EMS. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve the one bid that was submitted by North Central Emergency Vehicles for two ambulances in the amount of \$396,114. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. Permission to take bid to the Council for funding approved.

Considered Ordinance for rezoning for Leslie P. Craft – David Ambers. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve 2nd and Final reading. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. *****Ordinance 2019-5**

Considered approval of vacating unimproved public way in Rolling Prairie - CJ Investment Property. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve 2nd/Final reading. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. *****Ordinance 2019-6**

Considered approval of vacating unimproved public way in Rolling Prairie - Grimm Development. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve 2nd/Final reading. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. *****Ordinance 2019-7**

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Considered authorizing structural move of EMS base to new site rather than demolition and re-build/ Considered needed maintenance upgrades to MC EMS base on Wabash & Coolspring/Consider proposals for new Rolling Prairie EMS base and consider authorizing RQAW to proceed with Professional design work. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried.
Considered update on County's intervention in NIPSCO rate case. Attorney Shaw Friedman reported permission for intervention was granted by the IURC. Hearings on the case begin in April. A concerned key issue is the premature closing of the Michigan City coal fire gen station which will result in a loss of a couple hundred good paying jobs and the millions of tax dollars that are collected from that plant. Plant was originally scheduled to close in 2035 but under the new plan it will close in 2028 with no current replacement scheduled.

New Business:

Considered amending Animal Control Ordinance – Amber Poff and Jane Bernard. Combines last 3 previous ordinances. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to suspend the rules and approve on 1st/Final reading. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. *****Ordinance 2019-8**

Considered La Porte County Fairgrounds Electric Facilities upgrade agreement with Kankakee Valley REMC. Fairgrounds Management & Events Corporation Attorney Doug Biege stated this is the 1st of two installments (\$31,824.61 each) of an agreement to install electric to the fairgrounds. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. Agreement signed by President Vidya Kora.

Considered lease for farm land associated with County Home to farmer John W. Glasgow at the rate of \$240.00 per acre x 75 acres (prime acreage) and \$175.00 per acre for remaining acreage described as marginal. Commissioner Brillson Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motioned carried. Money will go to the Fairgrounds Management & Events Corporation. Let the record show Assessor Mike Schultz corrected the number of acres to **78 tillable acres which is stated in the Lease.**

Considered Ordinance to amend zoning map, Petitioner Pritz Family. James A. Masters appeared on behalf of the Pritz family, LLC, Petitioner. Requested permission to rezone approximately 16.4 acres of land, north of Pahs Road near intersection of Prairie Blvd, from Business (B2) to Townhome Residential R2A. Currently the land is zoned for Big Box retail stores. Approximately 66 units will be built. Commissioner Brillson Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motioned carried. President Kora abstained from voting so motion carried with 2 yes votes. **(***Ordinance 2019-9 1st Reading only)**

Considered Ordinance for speed limit 150 North – Jay Sullivan – Engineer. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to suspend the rules and approve on 1st/Final reading. Commissioner Brillson Matias seconded. Motioned carried. *****Ordinance 2019-10**

Considered Revision of Drug Policy – Barb Mossman – HR. *Removed**
Considered replacing postage machines – Joie Winski – Auditor. *Removed**

President Kora motioned to adjourn at 7:46 p.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE: 4-13-2019

ATTEST: _____
Auditor
LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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