



LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Phone: (219) 326-6808 ext. 2229

Dr. Vidya Kora,
President

Sheila Matias,
Vice President

Richard Mrozinski,
Member

LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

Wednesday, May 1, 2019 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room #3 at 10:00 a.m.

President Vidya Kora called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He requested a moment of silence for the passing of Senator Richard Lugar after the Pledge of Allegiance.

Auditor Joie Winski called the roll: Commissioner Kora – Present; Commissioner Matias – Present; Commissioner Mrozinski - Absent. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

Considered the agenda. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered approval of April 17, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Auditor Joie Winski read the claims with Payroll ending 4/23/2019 - \$1,226,911.39 and miscellaneous claims of \$978,471.97. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comments:

Walter Bass – 5789 W. Joliet Road La Porte - Commented on the paving of Joliet Road. He is retired with 17 years of experience working for a company in Illinois on road construction. Walter stated “do not pay Rieth-Riley for the paving of Joliet Road from the Westville city line to State Road 39.” Walter gave his phone number which was given to Duane Werner from the highway department who will contact Mr. Bass on his comments.

Rodney McCormick – 617 Union Street Michigan City – Requested voting machines used for Absentee Voting at the satellite office at the Michigan City courthouse be removed. Rodney stated he had approximately 20 Absentee ballot applications with him out of which 9 had been mailed out. He said the applications have his address, 617 Union Street, as the designated “mailing address.” Rodney said a few weeks ago Assistant Chief of Police in Michigan City, Royce Williams, unsealed his criminal record and posted it online.

Department Head Comments:

Annemarie Polan – Building Commissioner – Department Head Report – Reported on activities for the 2018 year. 1,397 building permits were issued. 91 were for new homes, 36 of which went in a subdivision. 13 new commercial buildings and 8 commercial remodels. Board of Zoning Appeals saw 80 variances which 9 of them were for small businesses. These businesses included an auction house, camp ground, antique shop, banquet hall, an expansion of an existing food truck business to include an ice cream shop, sand mining business under new ownership in Hanna, expanded chiropractic business which added yoga, a mini storage facility and a green bio fuel facility in KIP. Plan Commission saw vacates of alley ways, 4 re-zonings from business to industrial, one from business to residential to accommodate a new subdivision which will have 27 lots. Annemarie stated her department has been working with the City of La Porte, DNR and Christopher Burke Engineering on revising the flood plain map around Pine, Stone, Clear and Lily lakes in La Porte. Certificate of Occupancy was issued to the new hospital in Michigan City November 2018. Building Inspectors spent about 3 hours a day at the new facility with the 200-300 workers. A dot of orange paint would go on a post once the room was inspected. 72 gallons of paint was used in this process. Commissioner Kora thanked Annemarie and her office for a phenomenal job done at the hospital. He asked her how 2018 compared to previous years. Annemarie replied 2017 was a record year. 2018 was down from what they did in 2017. Commissioner Matias asked Annemarie to put her report on a grid on the county website for the public to view.

ORIGINAL

John Lake – Prosecuting Attorney – Reported on a Mental Health Court. Judge Tom Alevizos and Mary Lake have been working on a program. Both Juvenile and Adult Mental Health Court are in the works. Child Fatality Review will have its first 5-member committee meeting next week. Drug Treatment will involve the Sheriff's Department, Judge Alevizos and Community Corrections, Rob Neary. Two providers, Choices and Frontline/North Shore are willing to provide treatment with Vivitrol being one of them. A Property Crimes Task Force is also being considered. John stated he will be asking for an Ordinance from the Commissioners in the future that will require Pawn Brokers in the county to put online everything that comes into their business for possible stolen property. An Animal Abuse Advisory Panel as well as a Sexual Assault Response Team are two more issues to be considered. John commented on a bit of news he heard on the radio pertaining to the Absentee Ballot Applications that have a "mailing address" of 617 Union Street, Michigan City, that were turned over to the Indiana State Police for review. He was asked about a report that had been sitting on his desk from the ISP which he said he has not seen one yet. He did meet with the ISP the day before however he had nothing to review. John stated he has access now to RMS, Enterprise Law Enforcement Reporting System, which is an advanced reporting system designed to meet the needs of any law enforcement agency.

Mark Yagelski – County Council Member – Stated approximately 18 years ago he was appointed to the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) Board. Mark said the NICTD Board was formed in 1981 with the idea that if there was a bankruptcy with the railroad that they split up the railroad and allow freight to go commercial with outside entities that would own it. Four counties would run it with 2 representatives, one Commissioner and one Council member, from each county. A ridership, a government appointee and a union appointee were added later to the Board. Now under the new Board it will be run by the Governor and he will make the appointments of 2 Democrats and 2 Republicans. Commissioner Kora thanked Mark for his service on the NICTD Board.

Andrew McGuire – EMS Director – Thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to speak about his department. Andrew stated EMS was established in 1974 in our county. Initially was part of the Health Department. Started with only 2 ambulances in Michigan City and 1 in La Porte. Funeral homes were used to help with coverage. In 1977 Wanatah base was added then in 1979 EMS became its own entity. Today La Porte County EMS has 6 ambulances run out of 3 stations along with one transfer ambulance. The donated ambulance will be number 7. EMS has 53 field employees and 8 part-time employees. Department does its own billing and coding with 5 full-time and 2 part-time employees. A total of 68 employees are in this department. Last year this department ran on 15,725 calls. La Porte County EMS is a 5 time winner of the Indiana ALS award. Andrew stated EMS is heavily involved in the community, they provide medical coverage for events such as the week of the fair, boat races, high school sporting events and graduations.

Requests:

Considered permission for EMS to attend EMS World Expo in New Orleans October 14-18 – Andrew McGuire. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered permission for EMA to approach the Council to purchase a vehicle – Larry Butcher. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered request USS Indianapolis commissioning donation. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered permission for GIS to attend ESRI User Conference in San Diego July 8-12. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered permission for APS Investigators to attend NAMI Conference in Seattle June 19-22. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Considered revision to the County's Drug Testing policy – Barb Mossman. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Ordinance 2019-2 Coroner's non-reverting fund. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve changing the word *shall* to *may* of Section One (C). Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

New Business:

Considered Proclaiming EMS week May 19-25 – Andrew McGuire. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered Approval of 2019 Fair Contract for EMS. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered Third Party Administrator contract renewal – John Jones and Garrett Keznor. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

ORIGINAL

Considered opening bids for Bridge #34 – Jay Sullivan. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered appointment of Michele Barber as Assistant Director of the Historical Society Museum. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered agreement to transfer ownership of retired K-9 Hokie to Deputy Andrew Hahn – J. Boyd. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered Proclaiming Correctional Officer awareness week May 5-11 – John Boyd. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration of Ease contract to assist employee enrollments in health benefits program recommended by Health benefits agent-of-record Craig Menne. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered approving Local Trax Overpass Project – County Planner. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Consideration of Cender & Company service agreement for 2019 La Porte County as Financial Advisor and special engagement to assist Clerk’s office with reconciliation of Child Support accounts. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered Resolution seeking line item authority from County Council for county website improvements/equipment upgrades from Comcast fees. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried. No public comment was heard. ***Resolution 2019-11

Considered Resolution Endorsing Local Control/Professional Administration of the South Shore Railroad and engaging Cohen & Malad LLP to consider rights and remedies to preserve local governance of NICTD Board. Ryan Dvorak, House of Representatives District 8 which includes 3 townships in La Porte County, updated the Commissioners on the disbanding of the NICTD Board. Since 1981 Lake, Porter, La Porte and St. Joseph Counties all owned and operated the South Shore Line. They appointed Representatives to sit on this Board. Two years ago a billion dollar deal was negotiated for “Double Tracking”, a faster line from South Bend to Chicago, as well as begin the West Lake Corridor Project. Over the past year, working in a bi-partisan way with everyone from the delegation, the Governor, Democrats, Republicans, the House and the Senate all working together to figure out how federal matching funds, state matching funds and local matching funds could be used. Everything went well, the Governor came to Michigan City to cut the ribbon for the new project. Then last week the budget came out with new language that no one had discussed publicly before about the operation of the NICTD organization. Ryan stated Governor Holcomb proposed an additional appropriation of about 205 million dollars but was also taking over the NICTD Board. Now the Governor will appoint a person from each county and the President of the Board would be the Director from INDOT. Governor Holcomb would now control the NICTD Board. Commissioner Kora thanked Representative Dvorak for explaining what happened at the statehouse. Commissioner Kora stated this Resolution was created as our county’s response to this disbanding of the current NICTD Board. Commissioner Matias read into the record her letter to Governor Eric Holcomb (attached to these minutes.) Commissioner Matias motioned to approve this resolution. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried. No Public Comment was heard. ***Resolution 2019-12

Considered revision for On the Job Political Activity – Barb Mossman. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Matias announced anyone living in our county please fill out the Rural Broadband assessment survey. There is a speed test that will be helpful for the survey.

Commissioner Kora stated he recently attended a meeting with the HealthCare Foundation on low birth rate babies and infant mortality.

Commissioner Kora adjourn at 11:56 a.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 5-15-2019

[Handwritten signature: Sheila Matias]

ATTEST: _____

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA Auditor ORIGINAL