



**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 Matias,  
Vice President**

**Richard Mrozinski,  
Member**

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MINUTES**

**Wednesday, July 17, 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. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. There was a moment of silence for Joe Cooper who passed away July 1, 2019.

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

**Considered** the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to accept the agenda. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** approval of July 1, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.

**Auditor Joie Winski** read the claims with Payroll ending 7/5/2019 - \$1,246,052.60 and miscellaneous claims of \$765,732.81. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried. All 3 Commissioners reviewed the claims.

**Public Comments:**

**Allen Stevens – 5277 W. 1400 S. Hanna – Carolyn Probasco – 7101 S. 800 W. Westville – South County Coalition –** Requested from the County a Golf Cart Ordinance for unincorporated areas of Hanna and Union Mills. President Vidya Kora asked Sheriff John Boyd to report on the issue. Sheriff Boyd stated there was no “Blitz” conducted on the areas of Hanna, Union Mills and a handful from Saugany Lake in Hudson Lake but rather complaints made in mid-June stating near collisions, reckless driving and intoxicated drivers on golf carts therefore the Sheriff’s Department followed up on the calls. Sheriff Boyd said there were juveniles found driving the golf carts, they were escorted home and informed the parents. No carts were towed or arrests made however currently it is **illegal** to drive a golf cart on the roads in the County except in Wanatah where there is an Ordinance in place. Sheriff Boyd said golf carts can be dangerous when not on a golf course, very different when driven on roads. A Slow Moving Vehicle must have headlights, taillights and a rearview mirror. Allen spoke about the “recent enforcement” by the Sheriff’s department. A meeting was held at the Conservation Club in Union Mills and the group is hoping something can be put together in an ordinance for common sense golf cart driving. Allen turned in petitions with 157 signatures. President Kora asked if Allen and/or a few members of the South County Coalition would be willing to be on a committee to put an ordinance together. Carolyn the stated they are behind the Sheriff and support his department for public safety. There are hundreds of communities that have Golf Cart ordinances. During the festivals the golf carts are used. Jeff Thatcher – 221 E. Hopper Street Hanna – handed in petitions with 134 signatures supporting golf carts. Attorney Shaw Friedman asked for other county ordinances.

**Jeanette Raymond – 0632 W. Nowak Drive La Porte –** Attended the recent Drainage Board meeting. Flooding issues at her house in Meadowview Estates subdivision started in 2008, she came to the Commissioners in 2009. 15 residents were pumping water from their homes. About 10 homes lost their finished basements, had interior drainage systems installed. Currently 31 homes have hoses running out of their houses to pump water out into the streets. Highway department employee Andrew Simmermeyer went to the subdivision to verify proper drainage was in place for the residents. Water is being pumped to a swell behind Lots 42-46 then to a pond outside the subdivision which overflows and then comes back to the same affected areas. Jeanette’s home has 3 pumps constantly running and 1 home has 5 pumps. Nipsco bills increase due to pumps constant use. In 2009 a plan for a pumping station was discussed however the cost was a factor in not having it done. Algae is being produced due to the water in the streets. Driveways and two streets are starting to crumble. Jeanette stated the neighborhood simply needs help. She said homeowners were never told about

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the water problems when they either built the homes or purchased them. President Kora thanked Jeanette for informing the Commissioners of the situation in Meadowview Estates. A team will be formed and will seek input from the residents.

**President Kora asked** if anyone else was in attendance for the golf carts. Commissioner Mrozinski said a committee will be put together to draft an ordinance. A penalty clause will be added. Tammy, Union Mills, stated two festivals will be held in the upcoming weeks. Could there be an exception to the Hanna Fest and Mill Pond Fest for the golf carts to be on the roads? Shaw stated liability would be an issue. Commissioner Matias motioned to create a Task Force with Commissioner Mrozinski on it to draft an ordinance allowing use of golf carts in unincorporated areas in the county with members from Hanna, Union Mills and the Sheriff's department on it. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Matias said public safety is very important when using golf carts. She thanked all of those that attended the meeting.

**Valerie McCline – 5255 W. 800 N. Michigan City** – Attended the recent Drainage Board meeting. Stated she needs her ditches cleaned out. Flooding on her property since 2001. She has been maintaining the ditch herself since 2007 until she found out she could get assistance. She has called highway department every March since 2007 asking when is she going to get her ditches cleaned. She called Howard Conley, Springfield Township Trustee, in 2007, he told her there was nothing he could do. Valerie then contacted Governor Mitch Daniels in 2010. Representatives went to her property, they told her they would contact INDOT. INDOT came out in 2010 and cleaned up along I-94 adjacent to her property but stated the county needs to clean the ditches. Valerie now has trees growing in the ditches. She has lost her basement. Her driveway is in bad shape due to the flooding. She said repairs are done to the driveway but then Howard Conley comes out and her taxes go up. Valerie contacted the Highway Department in 2018, they came out and cleaned 4 miles of ditches along I-94 on her property. She has talked to all 3 Commissioners, County Attorney Shaw Friedman, Surveyor Tony Hendricks yet nothing has been done. Valerie said Charrise Searer, Gallagher Bassett, 3<sup>rd</sup> party claims adjuster, came out on a Saturday to assess the situation. Valerie said due to her property being so saturated with water that a tree leaned over and took down her gutters. President Kora told her he will reach out to Bob Young and call Valerie back. Valerie replied that Charrise told her she has a claim now with the county but the Drainage Board said she did not. Valerie called Bob Young asking when was he going to come out and clean the ditches but Bob said he wasn't allowed to talk to Valerie anymore due to her claim against the County. Valerie then called Charrise who confirmed she does have a claim against the County and provided her with the claim number. Valerie stated President Kora called Charrise which prompted the claim. Valerie said she was gone one day and her alarm went off notifying her that someone was on her property. She looked at her phone and saw Rieth-Riley and Jon's Tree Service on her land. She said they damaged her gate to enter the property. Water is flowing into her septic tank more than in her house but still in the house as well. President Kora asked County Attorney Shaw Friedman if there was anything the Commissioners could do even with the claim filed – Shaw stated steps have been taken to help Ms. McCline. Gallagher Bassett, 3<sup>rd</sup> party claims adjuster, sent Charrise Searer to the property. It is a combination issue of both the state and county. Shaw said Valerie has retained counsel which at first she said she was **told** to retain counsel but she just wants the ditches cleaned out. Shaw stated due to both entities being involved a tort claim needs to be filed. He directed Valerie to contact her attorney.

**Department Head Comments:**

None

**Requests:**

None

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

**Considered proposed environmentally restrictive covenant requested by IDEM in connection with Rolling Prairie – County Highway LUST site – Jay Sullivan, County Engineer. (\*\*Removed July 1, 2019)** Jay said there were no restrictions as per IDEM yet Mark Yagelski, County Council member and representative for the County Highway Department for the past 17 years, held a 114 page report saying otherwise which would be a recorded document. Mark said it was unacceptable. There was a simple diesel spill but that has been cleaned up. Tests have been done showing area is clean. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

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**Considered permission to approach the Council to replace a vehicle and Considered paving proposal for Luhr Park – Jeremy Sobeki, Parks Dept.** Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve permission to approach the Council to replace a vehicle. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Mrozinski then motioned to approve lowest bid from Rieth-Riley Construction for the paving project. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motioned carried.

**Considered referring Sheriff Department’s request for an ordinance to regulate pawn shops and junk yards to joint work session with the County Council – Detective Pat Cicero, Sheriff’s Department.** Sheriff John Boyd said junk yards, scrap yards, dealers in precious metals and pawn shops are difficult at times to work with when attempting to retrieve potentially stolen items. Sheriff Boyd stated they would like something in writing that would help these businesses be more compliant with law enforcement. Attorney Shaw Friedman stated when the businesses report to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, example Leads OnLine, it would be beneficial especially to the victims. There could be a penalty provision so that would involve the Council. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered Sera Solutions contract – Tony Rodriguez, OCED** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve Sera Solutions for work on the county website. Commissioner Matias seconded but added the dollar amount of \$28,985.00 for the contract. Motion carried.

**Considered OCED Coordinator contract – Tony Rodriguez, OCED** - Commissioner Matias motioned to approve Bailey McGrath as the OCED Coordinator. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered retroactive approval of Commission and Council Presidents’ Declaration of Emergency repairs/authorization of \$50,000 in emergency funding for repairs/restoration of County’s computer system** – Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.

**Status update from Darlene Hale on data restoration efforts/steps taken to reduce likelihood or risk of similar ransomware attack in the future.**

**Commissioner Comments:**

**Commissioner Matias** reported the County Fair was remarkable. There was a Midwest Trade Center Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with NorthPoint and Dollar General Stores which will be adding 80 jobs at 6500 S. Highway 421 in Westville. A 24 million dollar investment for the county. Thanked both Tony Rodriguez and Matt Reardon for their work.

**Commissioner Mrozinski** attended the County Fair daily. Only rained on the last night. Next year will be 175 years of the County Fair.

**Commissioner Kora** was very gratified during the past weeks as everyone worked together during the crisis. Great example of coordination and collaboration of everyone coming together to complete the NorthPoint/Dollar General/County government ribbon cutting ceremony. Commissioner Kora stated he attended a health insurance meeting and the good news is half a million dollars less was spent at this time then last year. Commissioner Kora thanked Clerk Kathy Chroback for submitting information of cyber security from the Secretary of State’s office – Fireeye. Specifically to secure the elections for the 2020 year.

**President Kora adjourn at 7:16 p.m.**

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA  
DATE 8-7-2018

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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