

**LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET HEARING
September 5, 2007**

The La Porte County Council met on the 5th day of September, 2007, in the assembly room of the La Porte County Government Complex for the first public hearing on the 2008 budget. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by President Cooley.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL:

Those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken.

Mrs. Shuter:	Councilman Cooley:	Present
	Councilman Cunningham:	Present
	Councilman Yagelski:	Present
	Councilman Garner:	Present
	Councilman Jones:	Present
	Councilman Ludlow:	Present
	Councilman Mrozinski:	Present

Mrs. Shuter: "All members are present, sir."

Mr. Cooley commented that there are a few items to be cleaned up from the Budget Workshops.

COMMISSIONERS: The Board of Commissioners requested an addition of \$10,000.00 to their 2008 budget for Extra Hire/Part-time Help. Mrs. Huston stated that when Monique Gillard is transferred from the Commissioners to EMS, that will leave them short if their secretary, Linda Arnett, goes on vacation or needs extra help. Mr. Yagelski asked if \$10,000.00 is needed. Mrs. Huston responded that \$5,000.00 would be o.k.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve \$5,000.00 in the Commissioners 143 budget for Extra Hire/Part-time Help and Mr. Yagelski seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

PARTY CHIEFS: Mrs. Shuter stated that there were some issues during the budget process pertaining to Party Chiefs being Chief Deputies; paperwork from the Department of Labor was distributed to the Council and this position is actually Chief of the Surveying party and the Drainage party by code and they are not Chief Deputies. Mrs. Shuter commented that a second attachment shows that back in 1991 there was a recommendation that both Party Chief positions be classified as COMOT V's but for some reason Tim Harrold was not put into this process. Mrs. Shuter reminded the Council that their final vote was to un-classify Christy Kiel as the Drainage Party Chief and to pay her and Tim Harrold both at a COMOT V pay with longevity but to be readdressed every year. Diane Allen was Chief Deputy in the Surveyor's Office; Chief Deputies used to be paid 80% of the Elected Officials pay but if the Surveyor is not a licensed Surveyor that would have drastically affected her pay so she was classified back in 1981 and her position is Office Deputy.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to classify both Party Chief positions (106 & 136) at the COMOT V level with longevity pay and without annual review. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

COOLSPRING TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR: Mr. Jones stated that a report was given during budget hearings but adding a third Deputy as requested was not voted upon; the Personnel Committee vote was 2 – 2 with Mr. Hager absent.

Mr. Cunningham asked Mrs. McDaniel why there is a discrepancy regarding two (2) deputies on 10,000 parcels and six (6) deputies on 17,000 parcels. Mrs. McDaniel commented that she doesn't know. Mike Schultz, Center Township Assessor, commented that the townships signed a contract with the Assessor and if Ms. Kieft doesn't have the staff in Coolspring Township, she needs to get more involved in contract trending. Mr. Schultz stated that he has in-between 13,000 to 14,000 parcels and he has three (3) full-time deputies.

Mr. Yagelski made a motion to **deny** this request and Mr. Garner seconded. The motion carried 5 – 2 with Mr. Ludlow and Mr. Cunningham voting, "Nay."

AUDITOR/PART-TIME BENEFITS: Mrs. Shuter explained that there was discussion at the workshop about Karol Dettweiler, Draftsman, working part-time hours; if the Council is inclined to move part of the money from the Draftsman's line item, his salary with the 3% would be \$32,914.00 in 2008. Mrs. Shuter reported that what is needed is \$15,995.20 for twenty (20) hours per week; the intent is to increase the hourly pay for Donna Bell, who is training under Mr. Dettweiler, from \$9.50 to \$10.00 and \$10,400.00 would be needed for her. The total requested in that line item is \$26,396.00; therefore, \$6,518.00 could be cut from that line item.

Mr. Jones asked if Mr. Dettweiler receives benefits. Mrs. Shuter responded that he receives half of the benefits and the job is classified as a COMOT IV if a person were working full-time in that position. Mr. Jones asked if any other part-timers receive benefits. Mrs. Shuter stated that Jim Rodgers at the Museum gets the same benefits that Mr. Dettweiler receives. Mrs. Shuter reported that this practice began before she or Ken Layton served as Auditors; pay for Mr. Dettweiler's benefits was stopped when the Commissioners' directive was received but in an Executive Session, the Commissioners agreed to give it all back to him. Mr. Cooley commented that this is probably something else that should be cleaned up.

Mr. Jones made a motion that all part-time employees be unclassified with no benefits. Mr. Yagelski seconded. Mr. Ludlow asked if these positions are considered technical positions that can be paid a higher rate of pay to than the average employee. Mr. Jones suggested increasing their hours and making them full-time as he thinks it is wrong to have a large pool of part-time employees and pick a couple out and give them benefits. Mrs. Shuter commented that these people for all of these years have fallen into the Full-time/Part-time category; they work regular hours for the County every day of the week. Mr. Jones stated that he is fine with the rate of pay but he is concerned about the benefits. Mr. Ludlow agrees concerning the benefits but he is concerned about lowering the salary of Mr. Dettweiler and Mr. Rodgers. Mr. Yagelski stated that Mr. Dettweiler has a degree and is not a "hire off of the street" position. Mr. Garner mentioned that Donna Bell is a licensed surveyor. Mr.

Jones' motion to make all part-time employees unclassified without benefits carried 7 – 0 by voice vote. Mr. Cooley stated that the pay will be cleaned up on September 17th.

Mr. Jones made a motion to decrease the Draftsman line item in the Auditor's budget by \$6,518.00. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

HIGHWAY UTILITY INSPECTOR/PART-TIME HELP: There was discussion regarding the part-time hourly rate set for 2007. Mrs. Shuter stated that for 2008 the Council agreed to \$10.30, which is 3% on the \$10.00 maximum per hour for 2007, except for technical positions. Mrs. Shuter reported that there was not a separate distinction made this year for Full-time/Part-time. Mr. Ludlow commented that the Council didn't increase anyone's Part-time budget so they still have to make the \$10.30 work. Mrs. Shuter stated that the technical Part-time hire in at the initiation rate for the classification in regards to EMS, E-911 and the Highway Department.

Mr. Jones received a call from the Highway Department and the pay for Dick Dombrowski, the Utility Inspector, was not addressed; he is a contracted employee of the Highway Department. Mr. Jones made a motion to approve \$10.30 per hour to match what is being given to part-timers and to adjust the line item to include enough money to cover twenty-five (25) hours worked per week. Mrs. Shuter clarified that Mr. Dombrowski is paid through purchase order and he does not receive any benefits. Mr. Yagelski, as the Highway liaison, talked to Bob Young, Highway Superintendent, and he stated that Mr. Dombrowski more than makes the money back from fees. Mr. Jones stated that the Commissioners, as the contracting agent, can adjust the contract with Mr. Dombrowski. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

SHERIFF'S BUDGET: Mr. Jones made a motion to revisit the Sheriff's budget under Jailers. Mr. Yagelski seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Jones stated that the Council is waiting for the assessment from the Department of Corrections to see if they can get by with less than the original eight (8) recommended Jailers to open up the wing in the Jail that everyone is concerned about.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve four (4) new Jailers over and above the one approved, which would give them five (5), to be used for opening up more jail space. Mr. Mrozinski seconded. Sheriff Mollenhauer expressed his gratitude and the study at the end of the month should provide some answers plus they are also looking at ways of reassigning people and using them more efficiently. Sheriff Mollenhauer stated that he intends to use Commissary money where possible but to be frugal in its use. The motion carried 6 – 0 with Mr. Yagelski abstaining from the vote since his son works at the Jail.

PLANNER: Mr. Jones mentioned that there is a discrepancy in the minutes, after talking to Mrs. Huston, concerning the vote regarding the Planner. Mr. Jones commented that President Huston thought from talking to Mrs. Layton that Mrs. Layton thought that the Council decreased the salary. Mr. Ludlow clarified that the motion was to decrease the salary but it was defeated 5 – 2. Mrs. Layton responded that this was from her notes but when the minutes are completed she will make sure it is stated correctly.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Mr. Mrozinski has done more research regarding making the Emergency Management Director's position full-time and, therefore, made the motion to change this position from part-time to full-time. Mr. Jones seconded. Commissioner Hager stated that he was at a seminar and this will be forced upon us down the road anyway; he thinks this is a good choice to make this position full-time.

Mrs. Huston stated that the wording says full-time person in the entire County and we already have that. Mr. Hager commented that all of the grants have to go through the County. After referring with Mr. Jones he stated that it would require legislation passed to make this position into one and this has also been discussed with the Mayors; then there would be one for the whole County.

There was about when the secretary's position was brought up to full-time for grant writing.

Mr. Mrozinski's motion to approve a full-time position carried 4 – 3 with Mr. Garner, Mr. Ludlow and Mr. Cunningham voting, "Nay." Mr. Cooley stated that the salary for this position will be discussed at the September 17th meeting.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS: Mr. Yagelski talked to the Director about what is happening in this department and he is satisfied with the comments that were made. Mr. Yagelski then made a motion to approve the 590 Budget as presented in the 200, 300 and 400 accounts. Mr. Ludlow seconded. Eric Yandt, Director, explained that the 584 budget is the grant from the Department of Corrections and the 590 budget, the subject of the current motion, is Project Income being paid by inmates in the program; these budgets operate on the State fiscal year of July 1 to June 30th. Mr. Ludlow stated that the budget is audited not only by the State Board of Accounts but also by the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Cooley commented that two (2) Judges say they aren't using Work Release and the jail is getting full. Mr. Yandt responded that Judge Baldoni in Superior 3 hasn't had a felony caseload in the last three or four years; all of Judge Baldoni's "D" felony cases were transferred to Circuit Court. Mr. Yandt commented that the Work Release is full today and that Judge Baldoni doesn't use the facility due to the transfer and Judge Alevizos' issues are his issues.

Steve Eyrick, Superior Court 4 Probation, reported that the numbers have gone from six hundred (600) to nine hundred (900) in a year and half; there are a bunch of people not in jail by virtue of the program. Mr. Cooley believes that it is necessary to have the program and suggested that a workshop be held to address the issues. Mr. Cooley also stated that the Council deserves the respect of every Department Head and Elected Official to come before them for budgets; Mr. Yandt commented that his dilemma in not attending the budget hearing for his department was that this was the only way that he could help his daughter move into her home in South Carolina.

Mr. Eyrick, as the Vice Chair of the Corrections Advisory Board, invited the Council to bring any of the issues to the Advisory Board as it is their job to oversee the programs that are receiving funding from the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Cunningham asked about the comment by Judge Alevizos that electronic monitoring costs \$14.00 per day when you can get it for \$10.00. Mr. Cooley asked how close the County is to the department being 100% funded by those who use the service. Mr. Yandt responded that the honest answer to the question is that he doesn't know that it can be done; the County is contributing about 18% in terms of General Fund dollars and in addition to that they thankfully receive the use of the building and the utilities plus assistance from the Maintenance Department. Mr. Yandt commented in response to Mr. Cunningham's comment about fees, one Judge feels the fee is too high but more revenue can't be generated since the program is full and he can't take anymore people into the program; regarding the grant from the Department of Corrections, the Department of Corrections does expect the County to contribute to the operation of the program or they won't fund the grant.

Mr. Yagelski's motion to approve the 590 budget carried with a 7 – 0 voice vote.

VACATED POSITIONS: Mr. Yagelski commented that the Council had talked about areas that have positions vacated and coming before the Council before the position is filled. Mrs. Shuter stated that Attorney Baugher is looking into the legalities of this matter.

SMOKING POLICY: Mr. Yagelski stated that Mr. Hager at the Commissioners Meeting yesterday forwarded the smoking policy and he commented that he is sorry about the other Commissioners feelings on that issue. Mr. Yagelski was hoping that the smoking policy would be further along.

SALARY ORDINANCE FOR 2008: Mr. Ludlow made a motion to hear the Salary Ordinance and the Appropriations Ordinance on first reading only. Mrs. Shuter read, "LaPorte County, Indiana, LaPorte County Council, Ordinance No. 2007-09, LaPorte County Employee Salary Ordinance for Calendar Year 2008." First reading was held on the Ordinance for Appropriations and Tax Rates. Mr. Ludlow made a motion for the President to sign the Ordinance for Appropriations and Tax Rates. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Yagelski made a motion to adjourn at 6:10 p.m. and Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.