

LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
BUDGET HEARINGS
August 20, 2008

The LaPorte County Council met in budget hearing on August 20, 2008, at 8:00 a.m. in the Assembly Room, main floor, LaPorte County Government Complex, LaPorte, Indiana. Council President Mark Yagelski called the budget hearing to order. Those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Council Members present were Jerry Cooley, Rich Mrozinski, Earl Cunningham, Terry Garner, Mark Ludlow and John Jones and Mark Yagelski. Also present were Auditor Teresa Shuter and Chief Deputy Auditor, Rita Layton.

Prosecutor, Bad Check Division & IV-D (108/137/159)

Prosecutor Robert Beckman reported that grant approval was received last week for those positions funded by grants. It is possible that this grant may not be renewed after the July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009, period at which time the Council will need to determine what their statutory obligation is because his office is statutorily mandated to provide victim advocate services.

Mr. Beckman stated that all of the employees in the Child Support Division were put in the budget for 2009 as COMOT V's. He reported that he went in front of the Job Evaluation Committee and the Committee granted some increases to some of the employees, promoted an employee, which was not asked for, and they demoted one of the employees, which was not asked for. Mr. Beckman stated that his office has refused to accept any of the alterations as he will not sacrifice one employee through demotion in order to gain pay grade increases for the other employees in the department as he feels what was asked for was fair, reasonable, logical and more importantly, was going to be fully paid for by his office. Mr. Beckman would assume that the eleven (11) employees that are now COMOT IV's and were increased to COMOT V's in the 2009 budget will go back to COMOT IV's and two (2) of the employees will remain at PAT II's.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **108, 137 and 159 budgets** as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Yagelski asked how many vehicles this department has. Mr. Beckman answered that they have four (4) cars; one (1) for the Process Server in Child Support and three (3) are used by Adult Protective Services Caseworkers. Mr. Cunningham asked if all of the vehicles have County emblems on them as he feels the vehicles should be clearly identified. Mr. Beckman responded that he would have no problem with that at all but it could raise a red flag regarding the vehicle used by the Process Server. Mr. Cunningham commented that, the same as undercover police officers, there are some cars you wouldn't put an emblem on.

Mr. Beckman reported that the employees with cars are not allowed to drive the vehicles unless they are on County business. Gas cards are purchased from Family Express as they have gas stations in the six (6) counties and the mileage is monitored; a \$500.00 gas card is purchased and the department knows exactly how much gas is going in the car and where the vehicles have been. Mr. Beckman stated that they leased cars when he first started but it became more appropriate to purchase the vehicles because they can get six (6) to eight (8) years out of a car.

Extension Office (133)

Walt Sell, Director of the Cooperative Extension, introduced Bret Kessler the Extension Board President. He also introduce Kathy Ulman, Office Manager. Mr. Cooley asked if the County is responsible for the staff at the Extension Office since there might be big lay-offs due to HB 1001. Mr. Sell responded that what the State asks that the County provide on behalf of the Extension Offices is office space, secretarial staff and the contractual agreement. The number of secretaries in the Extension Offices across the State varies depending upon the size of the County.

Mr. Sell stated that his department tries to provide programs through sponsorship grants and user fees. There was further discussion regarding the fees charged.

Mr. Ludlow asked if the increases to Purdue are mandated increases and the County doesn't have any say in the matter. Mr. Sell responded that Purdue tells each County how much is needed for the contracts; he stated that if, at a certain point in time, contractual agreements are not met financially due to reduction, the Extension Board, as advisors, would make a recommendation on how to cut. There was further discussion regarding the Purdue Extension Educators and the contractual agreement.

Mr. Cooley made a motion to approve the 133 budget the same as 2008 for the 200 and 300 accounts. Mr. Sell commented that if the Council feels that there can be no increase in the Extension Budget at all, he would prefer that the Extra Hire account be reduced and put that amount towards the Purdue contract and then allow the Extension Office to come back and ask for the Extra Hire money at the first of next year as part of the 4-H request of \$45,000.00 from the Win Tax Fund. The Extra Hire money is used to hire two (2) college students who provide assistance in the 4-H program when it is needed in the summer plus it provides these students with work. Mrs. Shuter asked that a copy of the Purdue contract be provided since Mr. Sell stated that the five (5) Educators are not the only thing included in the amount requested. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to eliminate the Extra Hire account (10130) and that the 200 and 300 accounts be passed as presented and to address the 100 accounts when salaries are addressed. Mr. Garner seconded. Mr. Yagelski asked that a letter be sent to Purdue stating that the Council objects to the Educators getting a raise if the other employees don't. The motion carried 6 – 1 by voice vote with Mr. Cooley voting “Nay.”

Pioneer Cemetery (260)

Ken Baker, Dale Ellis and Pat Harris were in attendance representing the Pioneer Cemetery Commission. Mr. Baker reported that about the only increase is on tombstone repair since that is an ongoing problem with the age of the stones and vandalism. Mr. Baker stated that a new project in mind for next year is to identify the cemetery by its history.

Veterans' stone restoration was discussed. Mrs. Harris stated that Ron Stallings would be the best contact for a list of veterans since he coordinates placement of the flags in the cemeteries.

Mr. Baker commented that mostly local help is used to maintain the cemeteries to cut the grass, etc. Mr. Baker is working with community service to see if they can get some of these people to do the painting, which would be at no cost, rather than hire a contractor to get the job done.

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Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts at the 2008 level. Mr. Mrozinski seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Parks & Recreation (155)

Tim Morgan, Park Superintendent, reported that \$82,401.71 was received in grant money from CMAQ for equipment. This funding will be received over a two-year period.

Mr. Morgan reported that his department has seven (7) vehicles; he is the only one with a take home vehicle. Mr. Morgan stated that his vehicle has a County plate along with La Porte County Park Department sticker. The Park Department fills up at the Highway Department with gas but they pay for the gas from their own account.

Mr. Mrozinski made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Mr. Jones asked how many Board Members there are. Mr. Morgan responded that there are seven (7) members who are paid \$95.00 each per meeting. Regarding uniforms, Mr. Morgan stated that the amount in this budget isn't enough to provide a uniform for everyone so the non-reverting fund is used as well. Mr. Morgan commented that in today's climate with predators, etc. they want the employees out in the Parks to have a shirt as well as a hat. The motion to approve the budget as presented carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Council (144)

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Jones seconded. Mr. Ludlow withdrew his motion. Mrs. Shuter explained that \$2,500.00 for Extra Hire was for the five (5) members of the former Personnel Committee; now there are four (4) members on the Job Evaluation Committee that Joyce Leon, Human Resource Director, has formed. Mr. Jones, a member of this Committee, commented that he doesn't think the members have any expectation of being paid and they should lead by example.

Mr. Shuter explained that Waggoner, Irwin, Scheele is paid \$450.00 per month to maintain the database on all employees, longevity schedules and to prepare the salary ordinance.

Mr. Jones made a motion to zero out the Extra Hire account, 10130, to zero out the Mileage account, 30018, and to reduce the line item for Waggoner, Irwin, Scheele by \$2,000.00 and approve \$6,000.00 instead of \$8,000.00 as requested. Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

County Home (146)

Kay Felton, County Home Director, stated that they have cut corners and have changed the way they cook but she is \$5,000.00 down in the budget from last year at the present time. Hopefully she can transfer from other accounts to Food; with the way the economy is going everything is jumping up. There was discussion regarding buying from one vendor and checking with other food distributors.

Mr. Yagelski asked if it is better to cut the budget and have the department come back for an additional appropriation. Mr. Ludlow commented that when the budgets are cut the numbers aren't realistically reflecting the actual costs for operating the County.

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Ms. Felton stated that the County Home now has a water bill, since it is hooked up, in addition to the sewage bill which had been directed to Al Ott, Building Maintenance; Mr. Ott asked if the water and sewage bill could be paid from the County Home budget since she pays the NIPSCO bill. There was discussion regarding the boiler system at the County Home.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to accept the 200 and 300 accounts as presented and to add \$7,200.00 for Water & Sewage, line item 30060. Mr. Mrozinski seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Ms. Felton reported that there are two (2) vans used by the County Home but there are no take home vehicles. Mr. Yagelski asked that Ms. Felton get some County emblems from the Commissioners to put on the vehicles.

Treasurer (103)

Ken Layton, Treasurer, stated that the Treasurer's Budget is the same as presented when he came into office in 2005 with the exception of salaries and Dues which is a percentage of the Treasurer's salary and the Chief Deputy's salary.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. In answer to the question regarding County vehicles, Mr. Layton stated that the Treasurer's Office has none. The motion to approve carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Layton reported that miscellaneous revenue for interest and budgeting is always speculated low for the benefit of the Council, the County and the taxpayers. This year \$2,000,000.00 was forecasted but as of today, \$2.8 million has been earned and it is expected that the amount will go over \$4 million even as bad as the times are and with no tax monies being brought in.

Mr. Yagelski commented that he had talked to Mr. Layton regarding the budgetary process. Mr. Layton stated that his suggestion at that time, and to the entire Council, would be to not go below the maximum levy allowed by the DLGF or we could find ourselves in the same predicament the City of LaPorte is in because they were trying to be frugal and the levy was frozen; even though the legislators realized that they penalized the City for being frugal and indicated they would fix it, they never have. Mrs. Layton relayed her experience in Jasper County regarding not levying to the maximum and the same situation.

Mr. Ludlow asked if the levy growth factor is 4%, is the Council better off raising salaries or food costs for example so that if the DLGF comes back next year and says we have to cut \$500,000.00, the Council can realistically look at cutting some of those line items or where would we be better off. Mrs. Shuter stated that there is typically surplus cash and an operating balance is built in. Mr. Ludlow commented that he believes that the Council should get the budgets back to a more realistic level since there were people coming back in January for more money.

Mrs. Shuter stated that we are three (3) years behind and the problem is that we don't know what the 2006 pay 2007 values will come in at and we don't have a 2007 pay 2008 budget; it's a crap shoot right now.

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Mr. Layton agreed that the Council should be realistic on everybody's budget and the best place for the surplus would be in the operating balance on; if the DLGF says that cuts need to be made, it is simple to cut from the operating budget rather than trying to go to each department for cuts.

Emergency Medical Service (140)

Pat Pease, EMS Administrator, reported that the Collections Clerk retired and she would like to combine two (2) positions into that position; regarding the Transfer Coordinator's position that they were trying out only one transfer has been picked up per day and not four (4) so she believes that this position can be combined. The job description for this combined position is now with the Job Evaluation Committee. Mrs. Pease commented that the Coordinator of Services position (10207) would be dissolved and picked up as Collections Clerk/Transfer Coordinator. The Extra Hire (10130) could also go away according to Mrs. Pease which would be a potential cut of \$100,000.00 in the 100 accounts. Mr. Cooley asked what would happen if we looked into subleasing out billing and collections to a private firm as people retire.

For the record, Mr. Cunningham commended Mrs. Pease as a Department Head because when she had a retirement, she tried to consolidate two (2) positions which is something all Department Heads should be thinking about. Mr. Cunningham further stated that there is a pool of former County employees that would love to work one day a week, etc. Mr. Cunningham appreciates the fact that Mrs. Pease is moving in that direction.

Mr. Cooley asked how much EMS is bringing into the County. Mrs. Pease answered around \$2.1 to \$2.2 million. Mr. Cooley stated that EMS is getting real close to paying for themselves. Mrs. Pease commented that the only thing throwing them over is the Capital Outlay accounts (400's); she always asks for these accounts in the budget so that the Council knows what they need even though she has to come back to ask for the items from CCD.

There was discussion regarding the Cumulative Capital Development (CCD) Fund and expenditures. Mrs. Shuter explained that \$700,000.00 is budgeted in this fund but the departments come back to the Council for authorization to spend any part of that amount; once we go over that amount we have to apply to the State for additional appropriations.

Mrs. Pease stated that the increase of \$30,000.00 in the Gas, Fuel & Oil line items reflects what she had to come back for this year and that the increase of \$3,000.00 in Uniforms is to maintain the uniforms that outfit fifty-three (53) people; the Uniform account has been raised in years. Mrs. Pease asked that the Council remember what her employees do; the uniforms get soiled and they get ripped.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented and to eliminate all of the 400's. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote. (See amended motion on Page 6.)

Mr. Yagelski asked Mrs. Pease for a list of vehicles. She responded that besides the ambulances they have four (4) support vehicles, one (1) vehicle for the Administrator, a vehicle shared by two (2) people, the Assistant Administrator and the Education Coordinator and the other two (2) vehicles are shared by the Shift Supervisors. There are four (4) cars that go home; two are marked and two are not. Mrs. Pease has no objections with marking the other two (2) vehicles.

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The motion for the EMS Budget was revisited. Mr. Ludlow amended his motion to include elimination of line item 20042 in the amount of \$9,000.00 for Medical Institutional for new scopes and to come before the Council at the next meeting for this equipment instead from Riverboat or CCD. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Michigan Township Assessor (130)

Terry Beckinger, Michigan Township Assessor, stated that the 2009 budget is basically the same except he did raise the Mileage by \$200.00. The only other cost increase is in Repairs & Maintenance which is on a fax, printer, copier in the office per a contract with Kramer & Leonard.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented except to put line item 30018, Mileage, back to \$1,200.00. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Coolspring Township Assessor (129)

Pam Kieft, Coolspring Township Assessor, stated that she is still an Elected Official until 2010 according to the law. She reported that the PTABOA Board does want to keep her and Mike Schultz, Center Township Assessor, as Hearing Officers until the end of their terms.

Mr. Yagelski commented that according to what he has read the Council could appropriate \$1.00 for the Township Assessors if they wanted to. Mrs. Kieft responded that anyone can interpret the law any way they want but if the legislators wanted to get rid of the Township Assessors they should have made it effective as of July 1st of this year but they did not.

Mr. Beckinger stated that if the referendum to eliminate the Michigan Township Assessor's Office this fall is defeated, he will be in office until the end of his term; if the referendum is successful then he would fall into the same category as of December 31st as Mike and Pam. Mr. Beckinger commented that it is his understanding that the Council would still have to pay \$1,000.00 to the three (3) Township Assessors as Level II Assessor-Appraisers and then has the option to determine what salary they would be paid.

Mr. Cunningham personally thinks that there will be a legal battle as these individuals all spent money to run for office and committed funds for four (4) years; he believes that they should be working in Carol's (County Assessor) office because of their experience and he doesn't think either one of them are trying to get paid for not working. Mr. Yagelski commented that he is only asking for interpretation.

Mrs. Kieft commented that as Hearing Officers, they need to be on top of every new law that comes across in the State of Indiana. If the County Assessor's Office won't cooperate in providing money for training, they should have their own training budget. She stated that the Dues would be for the International Assessing Association which were formerly paid to the Township Assessor's Association. Mr. Garner commented that it should be up to the Council to deal with this matter. Mr. Beckinger stated that if training and education is involved, it is his opinion that it should come from the Reassessment Fund; if there is a seminar to go to and a letter is submitted to the Commissioners for approval; two of the three Commissioners have been very good about signing off on the training.

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Mr. Schultz stated that when they talked to the PTABOA Board yesterday, there was discussion about putting the Hearing Officers under some sort of contract to show the parameters as there has been some concern about accountability; he commented that he and Mrs. Kieft would be willing to accept a contract that would indicate that they are still treated as an Elected Official but the parameters are outlined.

Mrs. Shuter commented that it is the Attorney General's opinion that the Township Assessors are Elected Officials until their term is complete; as of July 1st their assessing duties are over. If the Council decides to utilize the Township Assessors as Hearing Officers, that should be done through a contract and it should be under the Reassessment budget because it falls under PTABOA.

Mrs. Shuter reported that there is a conflict regarding the Level II as the original Attorney General recommendation is that the Council pay for Level II certification throughout the terms but her question is if the assessing duties are over, is the County paying for the training to maintain the Level II certification and pay for the Level II as well. Mrs. Shuter stated that the latest letter from the DLGF indicates that the assessing duties are over and the County is not responsible for Level II; the agencies are contradicting each other plus there is a Class Action suit already filed.

Mr. Schultz stated that if they are under contract, they should be treated like all of the other Elected Officials and maintain their benefits with health insurance and PERF.

Mr. Ludlow asked if there will be enough money in the Reassessment Fund as the reassessment starts in a couple of years. Mr. Schultz stated that reassessment starts in 2009 for 2010. Mrs. Shuter commented that the Reassessment levy is set by the State and the Council has no authority over it; the levy for 2009 is \$375,000.00 and it was almost half a million a couple of years ago.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to include the 100 accounts only in the Coolspring Township Budget and to eliminate the 200 and 300 accounts. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Center Township Assessor (128)

Mr. Schultz stated that a definitive answer hasn't been received regarding use of a personal vehicle when going out measuring, and mileage is being charged, but he questioned the liability if he would get in an accident. Mr. Schultz believes that the County would be liable if he is working in his capacity as a County employee. Mrs. Huston will check with Swanson & Swanson regarding this matter.

Mr. Cooley made a motion to eliminate the 200 and 300 accounts the same as Coolspring. Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

ASSESSOR & REASSESSMENT (109/247)

Mr. Ludlow stated that at last year's budget hearings, the Council berated Officeholders and Department Heads for not being here. Therefore, Mr. Ludlow made a motion that the Council not hear these budgets until the Assessor can be here. Mr. Garner seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

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Judy Anderson, Chief Deputy, commented that the Assessor is out of town. There was discussion about a time to hear this budget. Mrs. Shuter commented that the Council has up until budget adoption to hear this budget.

Auditor (102)

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the Auditor's Budget as submitted. Mr. Cunningham seconded and the motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Plan Commission, Zoning Board & Contractor Registration (134/135/246)

Ray Hamilton, Building Commissioner, presented these budgets. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Hamilton about the Board Members. Mr. Hamilton stated that there are nine (9) Plan Commission members and five (5) BZA members, two (2) of those members come from the Plan Commission.

Mr. Hamilton commented that they need to get on a rotation basis for vehicles. Mrs. Shuter stated that the request for a vehicle last year was from the 30059 line item but it is in the 41002 account this year as it should be in the Contractor's Registration (246) budget. Mr. Hamilton reported that his department has four (4) vehicles; none of them are take home vehicles. Mr. Cunningham asked if the vehicles have County emblems. Mr. Hamilton responded that they just got them to put on. In reference to the purchase of gas, Mr. Hamilton stated that it comes out of the Sheriff's budget and is purchased from Rackham's.

Mr. Hamilton reported that he hasn't purchased the vehicle yet from the 2008 budget because he was waiting until the model changes to hopefully get a better buy on a 2008 vehicle. Mr. Hamilton stated that they have one 2002 vehicle and three 2005 vehicles.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200, 300 and 400 accounts in the **246 budget** as presented. Mr. Ludlow seconded. Mr. Cooley commented that because of HB 1001, the push is to use User Fees to pay for the department. Mr. Hamilton commented that at the end of July this year eight-seven (87) homes have been built and at the end of July last year, one hundred forty (140) were built; they will do what they can. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **134 and 135 budgets** as presented. Mr. Cooley seconded. Mr. Ludlow amended his motion to move \$1,500.00 from line item 30048 to line item 30148, Board Members Mileage, in the BZA (135) budget and to eliminate the duplicate 10142 in the Plan Commission (134) budget. Mr. Garner seconded.

The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Regarding fees, Mrs. Shuter explained that the registration fees are deposited directly in to the 246 Fund which almost offset the entire budget; BZA and Plan Commission fees are deposited into the County General Fund.

Superior Court No. 3 & LADS (151/242)

Judge Paul Baldoni presented the budgets for Superior Court No. 3 and LADS. As there were no changes except for salaries, Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the **LADS Budget, 242**, as presented and Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Mr. Ludlow then made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented in the **151 budget** and Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Voter Registration (132)

Georgianna Wolff, Co-Director, reported that Dues is the only line item that increased other than salaries. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented and Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

E-911 (177/598)

Brent Soller, Director, presented the County General Budget and the E-911 Surcharge Budget. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **177** County General Budget as presented. Mr. Garner seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Regarding the 598 budget, Mr. Soller reported that revenue is being lost as more people are using only cell phones which brings in less money per line than the landlines. Mr. Soller also stated that by the end of the year the dispatchers should be cross-trained which should cut down on overtime.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200, 300 and 400 accounts in the **598 budget** and to eliminate the 20200 Claims line item in the amount of \$5,000.00. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Animal Shelter (156)

Jane Bernard, Director, was present. Mr. Mrozinski made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Mr. Cunningham asked about the plans for the area just east of the Animal Shelter. Mrs. Bernard stated that there is a small exercise area outside the building on the east that is fenced and they would like to enlarge this area. The idea was presented to the Fair Board and they said “No.” Mrs. Bernard commented that Mr. Beckman had money to fund the project. Mr. Garner stated that a Commissioner recommended that it not be done. Mr. Cunningham suggested that plans be submitted to the Commissioners since it seems logical that forty-eight (48) weeks out of the year there is nothing there but grass; as long as they can get in through a gate as was discussed, he can’t see that there is a loss of parking to the Fair Board.

Mr. Yagelski asked about vehicles. Mrs. Bernard responded that they have two (2) vehicles and they rotate being on call; there is identification on the vehicles. In answer to Mr. Yagelski’s question regarding gasoline, Mrs. Bernard reported that their gas comes from the County Highway Department.

Board of Education (139)

Mr. Yagelski asked Norm Kleist, Superintendent, if the County is getting any closer to getting rid of this budget. Mr. Kleist responded, “No.” Mr. Kleist mentioned that he has mentioned to the Commissioners before that Wanatah and LaCrosse are interested in investigating consolidation or some type of reorganization; when this proposal was presented to the State it was turned down because they would have to waive the number of students in the school corporation.

Mr. Kleist commented that two (2) things could possibly be on the horizon. The Kernan report does address further consolidation of schools under 2,000 students which would require legislative action which would certainly affect the County schools. There has also been

discussion about eliminating the Trustee positions; the first step was taken when the assessing portion was taken away. Mr. Kleist stated that he can't begin to tell the Council what that would do to the schools; the other problem is that probably one-third (1/3) of the school corporations in the State of Indiana are under 2,000 students so the likelihood of legislation with those kinds of numbers is probably not very strong.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

Mr. Cooley asked about salaries. Mr. Kleist stated that salaries are determined by the Board of Education which is made up of the Trustees of the School; the salaries for the Attendance Officers are set by the individual school corporations that they are assigned to.

Sheriff, Garage, Jail, Security & Metro Ops (105/141/145/182/272)

Sheriff Mike Mollenhauer, Chief Deputy Jim Sosinski, Major Gary Brooling and Tracy Moody, Civil Process, were present. Chief Deputy Sosinski reported that the Overtime account was increased from \$40,000.00 to \$60,000.00 and the Computer Repair/Maintenance was increased from \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00.

Mr. Brooling commented that the Computer Repair/Maintenance account was depleted by February; it is used basically for supplies. Mr. Brooling stated that they are trying to be proactive and have cut down on the number of printers but cartridges are very expensive.

Chief Deputy Sosinski stated that overtime is being paid more than using comp time. He commented that they are coming to the Council for an additional appropriation at the regular meeting for overtime; paying overtime works out better for the department because if comp time is given the officer can't get time off since the department is short on staff anyway.

The Pension Benefits line item in the amount of \$800,000.00 was discussed. Mrs. Shuter commented that the pension was funded out of Emergency Reserve last year.

Board Members were discussed; it was reported that the Merit Board receives \$75.00 per meeting. Sheriff Mollenhauer stated that the Board Members get an additional amount if they put in extra time for hiring which usually amounts to \$40.00 or \$45.00.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the **105 budget** as presented with the elimination of the 30160 line item for Pension Benefits. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

As there were no changes in the **141 budget** except for salaries, Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

As there were no changes in the **145 budget** except for salaries, Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Ludlow seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

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Except for salaries, there were no changes in the **182 budget**. Therefore, Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried by voice vote 7 – 0.

There were no changes in the Riverboat 272 budget except for salary. Chief Deputy Sosinski stated that when the Prosecutor quit funding Metro Ops, the Sheriff took it over. Mrs. Shuter commented that when the grant money went away last year, the Council agreed to fund this budget through Riverboat and to review it annually. Regarding grant money, Chief Deputy Sosinski reported that they did receive grant money for some equipment.

Chief Deputy Sosinski stated that the Metro Ops office is in the basement at the City of LaPorte; there is the Program Supervisor, two (2) County officers and one (1) City officer. Mr. Ludlow asked the Sheriff and Chief Deputy if they are still in support of the program; they responded that there are no doubts about it. Chief Deputy Sosinski reported that they looking at bring Metro Ops more into the Sheriff's Office under the Detective Bureau.

Chief Deputy Sosinski commented that the City supplies the officer and their building but everything else needed to run the department is funded by the County. The Program Supervisor is the only position funded from Riverboat as the two (2) officers are in the Sheriff's 105 budget.

Mr. Cunningham asked about the proposal by LaPorte Schools for a Liaison Officer; we would be one officer short. Sheriff Mollenhauer stated that the school came to them; they didn't go to the school. There was further discussion about supplying a Liaison Officer to the LaPorte Schools.

Mr. Ludlow stated that the Sheriff endorses this program and if it is not funded, other than the Michigan City group there is little or no drug enforcement in this County; we need to do far more in drug enforcement and this is Riverboat money that should be well spent. Therefore, Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200, 300 and 400 accounts in the **272 budget** as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 5 – 2 with Mr. Garner and Mr. Yagelski voting "Nay."

Mr. Mrozinski asked about the overall experience with the cell phone since he hears a lot of complaints from a lot of other people and he would imagine that the Sheriff's Department needs them in some pretty scary situations. Mr. Mrozinski commented that Nextel only has four (4) towers and they don't share towers with other companies. Major Broling stated that they use three (3) different cell phone carriers.

Mr. Yagelski asked about vehicles. Chief Deputy Sosinski submitted a list; he stated that there are seventy-five (75) vehicles with sixty-five (65) of them take home. Sheriff Mollenhauer reported that they have taken steps to cut down on gasoline consumption.

There was discussion regarding the Security Officers and the Jailers. Sheriff Mollenhauer commented that there are two (2) things they are working on that could bring some money in and to save some money. One is the credibility to hold DOC (Department of Corrections) inmates which pays \$35.00 per day which goes into the General Fund which Scott Bell, Jail Commander, is working on. Sheriff Mollenhauer thanked the Council for the five (5) new

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Jailers allotted last year but he stated that it is really not enough and that is why Commander Bell has to utilize some overtime money.

Sheriff Mollenhauer informed the Council that they will be coming to the Council in the near future for digital recording equipment for the Jail which will be video and audio; not only will this save the County on a lawsuit but it will also allow Commander Bell to be able to utilize his manpower better by cutting down the manpower on midnights and being able to bolster on days and afternoons when they are really needed.

Mr. Yagelski commented that there have been tours of the Jail by some of the Council and Commissioners; he asked how we are doing regarding the troubled areas. Commander Bell responded that they still have the trouble areas and a couple of other things have popped up. He commented that the roof is fixed and that is why they were able to open the last cell block; the giant ice machine still has to be unplugged at times. Sheriff Mollenhauer reported that there are possible mold problems in the Detective Bureau and when he went down there this morning and opened the door, he couldn't believe the stench from the septic; the Maintenance Department has been informed. Mr. Yagelski stated that a workshop with the Commissioners and Building Maintenance should be set one (1) hour before the next Council Meeting regarding these issues.

Mr. Garner asked if there was any way the Sheriff's Department could help out the County Home with food expenses. Mr. Ludlow stated that cooperative buying has been discussed previously but everyone seems to have their own buyers.

Sheriff Mollenhauer stated that he is willing to be under contract for his salary; Howard Williams is putting one together. Sheriff Mollenhauer commented that he made a mistake last year by not asking more questions and his wages stayed the same as the year prior which is \$99,400.00. Under state statute, Sheriff Mollenhauer commented that his wage should have been 90% of what the Prosecutor was making which would have been \$109,468.99 which is a difference of \$10,068.00. Sheriff Mollenhauer stated that Howard Williams thinks the best thing for everybody concerned is to mirror what it will be in 2011 for Sheriff's which is 100% of the Prosecutor's salary with the Sheriff forfeiting tax warrant money; the tax warrant money would go into the Pension Fund. Mr. Ludlow commented that as he read the law, the tax warrant money could be used to supplement the Sheriff's salary and any excess over and above would go to the Pension.

Mr. Yagelski asked if all of the department's vehicles, except for the Detectives, are marked. Chief Deputy Sosinski responded that not all of them are. Mr. Yagelski stated that it is the policy for every employee to have a marked vehicle except in special circumstances. There was discussion regarding which cars should be marked and which should not due to the line of work.

Clerk & Election Board (101/131)

Bette Conroy, Clerk of the Circuit Court, reported that there are budget increases due to changes in the law and the former Clerk didn't understand the concept of the office and budget accordingly. Ms. Conroy discussed the reasons for the increases requested. A grant from the State has been received and Ms. Conroy is trying to eliminate the money being paid out to GUTS. Mr. Yagelski commented that a lot of departments would need to be cut in order to

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accommodate the requested 11.6% increase. Mr. Ludlow stated that when Mr. Behler, the former Clerk, was cutting budgets the Council realized that more money would be needed.

Mr. Jones made a motion to keep the **101 budget** the same as last year except for the 100 accounts. Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 6 – 1 with Mr. Ludlow voting, “Nay.” Ms. Conroy stated that she will be in the office next year and will come back to the Council for things that she needs to have since they are mandated by the State.

The Election Board budget was discussed; there is not an election every year and Mr. Garner stated that in the past the budget had been cut back. Mr. Ludlow commented that realistically the Council should keep an Election Board budget so that there isn’t such a fluctuation from year to year. Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the **131 budget** at the 2008 level and Mr. Cunningham seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Superior Court No. 1 (149)

Mr. Yagelski asked Judge Kathleen Lang about using people in the Vocational Training Program for painting at the cemeteries. Mr. Cunningham suggested that a letter be sent to the Pioneer Cemetery Board informing them that they should contact Judge Lang.

Regarding Law Books, Judge Lang stated that there are some reference books that are used constantly in the Courts and in the office. Judge Lang commented that the Courts are victims of circumstances regarding Psychological Services since the statute stipulates that these services are mandatory; Judge Lang reported that she is coming before the Council for more money for these services.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the 149 budget with the exception of a reduction in line item 20002, Law Books, to \$5,000.00 from \$11,000.00. Mrs. Shuter noted that when the data was pulled from the financial system, the amount was originally entered in the 20002 account which was zeroed out and it was put into the 30038 account where it should be; there never were two (2) Law Book accounts. Mr. Jones withdrew his motion.

Mr. Ludlow made a motion to approve the 200 and 300 accounts in the 149 budget as presented with the Law Books at \$11,000.00 except for Professional Services, line item 30135, to be approved at \$14,000.00. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried 7 – 0 by voice vote.

Judge Lang stated that video conferencing is a cost-saving measure; she referred to the recent drug bust.

Recess: The Council recessed until 8:00 a.m., August 21, 2008.

