

**LAPORTE**  
**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**

**February 27, 2012**

(PLEASE TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES)

The LaPorte County Council Meeting was held on Monday, February 27, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the LaPorte County Government Complex, 809 State Street, LaPorte, Indiana 46350.

Meeting was called to order by Council President, Matthew Bernacchi.

Pledge of Allegiance was lead by students attending the meeting.

Roll Call

The agenda was approved with two corrections by all members

The January 30, 2012 Council Minutes were approved by all members.

Appointment to Regional Sewer Board

Clay Howard –re-appointment –tabled until more information is obtained.

Department Head Reports

Rodney Washington, Michigan Township Trustee, regarding a loan from the County for poor Relief. This was not discussed due to no one from the Michigan Township Trustees being in attendance.

Chief Sheriff Deputy, Jim Sosinski, gave the 2011 crime report. Some crimes increased but an overall decrease for 2011 was 11%. Arrests were up by 26% a full report is available from the Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff Mike Mollenhauer reported that the jail inmate count was now at 429, that's 61 inmates over the capacity.

Jail Commander, Scott Bell reported that the kiosks recently installed in the jail cell blocks have worked out well. Commissary orders are placed through this and all jail forms for the inmates are available. He is hoping to get the law library installed on them and possible video visits also.

Mr. Burt Cook from the Economic Alliance reported that Brian McKee was hired as the retention director.

Mr. Ken Purze from the drainage board reported that a possible special assessment will be put on the tax bill for maintenance and repairs to the Kankakee water shed. There will be public meetings regarding this issue. He reported that there have been millions of state funds during the prior years.

### Liaison Reports

Mr. Garner reported attending the Soil & Water Row Crop meeting, and met with the Sheriff regarding medical bills and the purchase of vehicles.

Mr. Ford reported that County Surveyor, Tony Hendricks will have information on the Beacon site within two months. He attended the Emergency Management meeting and was impressed with the response of Hazmat to the train derailment in Porter County. He is recommending the Emergency request for funding of the new sirens and the narrow banding on the agenda.

Mr. Cunningham reported meeting with the Judges regarding overcrowding of the jail and community correction center.

Mrs. Sosinski had no report

Mr. Yagelski reported meeting with INDOT in Indianapolis regarding the Franklin Street Bridge. Basically the County is stuck with it and must maintain it. He stated that due to the tax situation, the County should not be paying interest to the entities as proposed by State Legislators.

Mr. Mrozinski attended the following meetings:

Association of Counties in Indianapolis, Library Board, Veterans Committee regarding the hiring of a new Veteran's officer, PNC Traveling Wall, testing of the new sirens at the Fairgrounds, Animal Shelter endowment, Civil Air Patrol now having a plane stationed at LaPorte Airport, and finally, bids are ready to be sent out regarding the Rolling Prairie sewer project.

Mr. Bernacchi commented on the tax bill situation. All offices are working together to come up with a plan to move forward but there is still problems with the software company, not the County's fault. He attended the AIC conference in Indianapolis. He asked for the Assessors request on the agenda be approved.

### Public Comments

Fonda Owens, spoke regarding the financial problems facing the Library. She is not blaming the tax situation on anyone but just needs funding for the library. She furnished copies of a study done by Umbough and associates.

Sonshine Troche, President of Worthy Recovery Inc. asked to speak uninterrupted. She is not angry, just disturbed about the treatment she has received from the County Council. She stated that she telephoned each council member and only Mrs. Sosinski and Mr. Cunningham returned her call. She reported that in speaking with Mr. Cunningham he stated that he had the votes to approve her funding request from the January Council Meeting but proceeded to bring her into a problem that is not hers. He stated that the Sheriff has miss-appropriated commissary funds for years. Mr. Cunningham responded that everything she said was true but he has no authority over the commissary fund but only had the votes to approve the Sheriff to use the commissary fund to pay her request. But then he stated if he had known the money asked for was for salaries he would not have agreed. She then replied that she didn't like being put in the middle of his problem with the Sheriff.

## **APPROPRIATIONS OR TRANSFERS**

### **LAPORTE COUNTY ASSESSOR**

Requested permission to spend from my non-reverting Sales Disclosure Fund (1131-41006-109-0340) to purchase a Desk and computer work station with dual monitors \$2,400.00  
A motion was made to approve the request  
All members voted in favor  
Motion approved

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Requested funds from either the Riverboat Fund (#1191) Or Win Tax Fund (#4220) for moving and instillation of new sirens \$60,446.00  
After a brief discussion,  
A motion was made to approve the request from the Riverboat Fund (#1191)  
Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Cunningham voted against  
All remaining members voted in favor  
Motion approved

Requested funds for Narrow Banding required by the FCC to Be completed by 12/31/2012 \$14,000.00  
(For several departments)  
A motion was made to approve the request from the Riverboat Fund (1191)  
Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Cunningham voted against  
All remaining members voted in favor  
Motion approved

**LAPORTE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

Requested funds from either Riverboat (#1191) or Win Tax Fund (4220) to be added to the following accounts

Due to the change in longevity rules:

#1176-10196-000-0202 \$1,972.86  
#1176-10192-000-0202 \$ 683.79

ITEM REMOVED FROM AGENDA

Also requested the purchase of radios due to the update change in Narrow Banding. Recommended bid by ERS.

Funds requested from either Riverboat (#1191) or Win Tax (#4220) \$41,313.69

A motion was made to approve the request from the Winn Tax fund (#4220)

All members voted in favor  
Motion approved

**LAPORTE COUNTY SHERIFF**

Requested funds from either Cty. Cumulative Capital Develop Fund (#1138) or Riverboat Fund (#1191) or Win Tax (#4220)

To purchase vehicles \$254,742.94

A discussion followed regarding lack of information prior to the Meeting, it was suggested that this be tabled but Chief Jim Sosinski stated they Would loose the bid.

A motion was made to table the request  
All members voted in favor  
Motion was approved, request is tabled.

Requested funds from either Riverboat Fund (1191) or Win Tax (#4220)

To cover medical for jail inmates \$225,000.00

Council questions were addressed by Sheriff Mollenhauer and Jail Commander, Scott Bell regarding estimated expenses for this year. It is impossible to predict expenses.

A motion was made to approve the request from the Riverboat Fund (1191)  
All members voted in favor  
Motion approved

**NEW BUSINESS**

President Bernacchi wants a joint workshop with the Council and Commissioners to discuss the 400 & 950 road project.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **COMMENTS BY THE COUNCIL**

Mr. Garner would like to see the tax bill situation fixed but it is not the current administrations fault, we should be allowed to fix it without the interference from the State.

Mr. Ford had no comment

Mr. Cunningham had no comment

Mrs. Sosinski wants Melissa Mischke to get the proper paper work to the Auditor for her part time employee funding. Mr. Yagelski said he would take care of contacting her. She thanked Attorney Biege for his assistance regarding outside contractors receiving County health insurance. She also thanked Mr. Mrozinski for speaking for her. She also stated that Sonshine should not have been verbally attacked by any council member for stating her opinion at the last Council meeting.

Mr. Yagelski commented on the car situation, before a car is to be replaced he wants a detailed maintenance report.

Mr. Mrozinski had no contact.

Mr. Bernacchi questioned if the past Council attorneys had health insurance. Mrs. Sosinski replied that she is working with Human Resources and the Payroll department regarding insurance and private contractors.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment was at approximately 7:55 p.m.