

# **LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

**August 27, 2012**

The LaPorte County Council Meeting was held on Monday, August 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 recited

A moment of silence was observed for former Sheriff Roger Nickels who passed away last week.

President Matthew Bernacchi announced that the state mandated additional six months to pay the 2008 pay 2009 and the 2009 pay 2010 reconciled bills will be passed by ordinance tonight. He also announced the mailing address of the Auditor's office that was omitted on the homestead form.

Auditor, Craig Hinchman called the Roll; all members were present along with Chief Deputy Auditor, Mary Ray and Council Attorney, Douglas Biege.

The agenda was approved by all members with the change of Save the Barns moved to first under appropriations or transfers.

The July 23, 2012 Council Minutes were approved by all members

Department Head Reports

Kevin Kieft of the Michigan City Economic Development Commission gave a review of the tax abetment. All Five Companies have complied with the requirements

A motion was made to approve the continuation of the tax abatement to 2013.

With only the Council president to sign.

All members voted in favor

Sheriff Mike Mollenhauer requested permission to pay from the Commissary fund the expenses occurred regarding the funeral of Sergeant Ed Hawk

All members voted in favor

LaPorte County Treasurer reported that there is now a link on the County Web Site to pay reconciliation bill on line by credit card. The fee is 2.6% of the tax amount. Soon, Horizon Bank will be able to accept credit card payments also. Mr. Cunningham asked is a 2% discount would reward the people that have not been paying their provisional bills, she replied yes.

Public Comments

Mr. Steve Holifield comments that the Save the Barns should be turned down since the Council turned down employee raises.

Mr. Tim Stabos read a letter about saving the barn and the positive impact on tourism written by Jack Arnett or the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Mr. Ford then asked him if the Convention and Visitors Bureau has offered any money, the answer was no

Mr. Bob Carpenter spoke hoping to convince the Council to at least put a new roof on the barn.

Mayor Blair Milo discussed the extension of the payment of the recent tax reconciliation bills that were sent out. It came as a real surprise to most people. The City recommends allowing six months to pay in full but a 2% discount if paid in full by the September 14<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Mr. Baker representing the Rumely/Allis Chalmers Museum spoke out in favor of saving the barn. He said they wanted to store their machinery there and for the county to put in an underpass from their museum to the barn.

Ms. Christy Jacobs received a reconciliation bill of over \$5,000.00 and they had paid all of their provisional bills. Why so high she asked

Mr. Gene Samuelsson has lived at his home for 53 years. He stated that before any extra spending; take care of the employees with a raise first.

Mr. Dick Lossman stated he is a member of the 4H program and Pioneer Land Committee, and it is very important to save the barns to educate the young people of LaPorte about the History of the county.

Sister Judy supports the save the barns project.

Mr. John Mills also wants to save the barns. He listed several reasons to do so.

### **Liaison Reports**

Mr. Garner reported attending the soil and water meeting on the MS4 problems. Reported that the DNR has eight test wells in LaPorte County and all are back to normal

Mr. Ford reported that the Drainage Board will be requesting additional money this evening and he fully supports it.

Mr. Cunningham reported meeting with the Community Corrections Department

Mr. Mrozinski reported attending several Veteran's meetings. Also, he is suggesting to Veterans to inquire about living at the LaPorte County Home.

Mr. Mrozinski met with the Highway Department regarding the Welnetz Road project.

Mrs. Sosinski met with the Human Resources Department, Voters Registration and Friends of the Barns.

Mr. Bernacchi met with the Friends of the Barns and had some recommendations. He attended the Assessor's conference recently for continuing education to remain a level two appraiser. The tax situation is moving at a good pace, we are on schedule.

## APPROPRIATIONS OR TRANSFERS

### **FRIENDS OF THE BARNs**

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

To repair and restore the Dairy Barn located at the LaPorte County Home

\$80,000.00

Tabled from the JULY 23, 2012 meeting

A motion was made to take off the table

Motion approved by all members

A very lengthily discussion followed with several recommendations and numerous people speaking to support the project.

A motion was made to use \$15,000.00 from a special fund and the balance from the Riverboat fund and to form a board to control the project with at least one council member and one commissioner to sit on the board.

Mrs. Sosinski, Mr. Garner, Mr. Mrozinski voted in favor

Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Ford. Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Bernacchi all voted against

Motion failed

Critical comments followed by the committee of Save the Barns

### **LaPorte County Drainage Board**

Requested an additional appropriation for travel and Board

Member's compensation. For 2012

Travel 1000-30003-000-0136

\$800.00

Members compensation

\$5,000.00

1000-10136-000-0136

A motion was made to approve the travel (#1000-30003-000-0136) for \$800.00

And to approve the members compensation (1000-10136-000-0136 for \$2,500.00

All members approved

Request approved

**LaPorte County Highway**

Requested balance of a past due bill from Indiana Department  
Of Transportation for Bridge #34. \$8,102.01

From either Riverboat (1191), Win Tax (4220) or Major Moves (1172)

This project was thought to be paid in full in 2009 but after the  
Final review, this bill didn't get paid.

Motion to approve the request from the Cumulative Bridge Account

All members voted in favor

Request approved

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Requested funds to upgrade the security systems for the  
8<sup>th</sup> street building in Michigan City

From either Riverboat (1191) Win Tax (4220) or CCD (1138) \$20,000.00

A motion was made to approve the actual amount from

The Riverboat Fund (1191) \$5,710.00

Requesting funds for the new Community Corrections Building

From Riverboat Fund (1191) \$4,780,174.34

A motion was made to approve the request

All members voted in favor

Request approved

**OLD BUSINESS**

Adjustment of the ethics appointment for Mr. Wolf from a four year term  
To a two year term per HR Director, Joyce Leon.  
All members voted in favor

#### **LAPORTE COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT**

Requested FINAL approval of the Rolling Prairie Sewer Project.  
A motion was made to approve the total funding with a rate and payback to the County  
Residential \$70.00 per month  
\$10.00 will come back to the County  
Commercial \$100.00 per month  
\$40.00 will come back to the County  
Hi volume users will pay more  
Mr. Ford, Mrs. Sosinski voted no  
Mr. Garner, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Mrozinski and Mr. Cunningham voted in favor  
Mr. Bernacchi abstained  
Request approved  
Attorney Biege to draw up agreements.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Due to the change in the way "STEPS" are determined and paid  
Any department that is in need of an additional appropriation is  
Requesting to be approved  
Motion was made to accept the change in steps and allow additional appropriations  
All members voted in favor  
Request approved

Ordinance to establish a payment plan regarding the reconciliation taxes for 2008 pay 2009 and 2009  
pay 2010. Ordinance 2012-03  
A motion was made to approve the ordinance  
Mr. Garner voted against  
All other members voted in favor  
Ordinance passed on first reading

A motion was made to waive the second reading  
All members voted in favor  
Motion passed

A motion was made to approve the ordinance read by title only  
Mr. Garner voted against  
All other members voted in favor  
Ordinance approved  
The tax payers will now have six months from August 14, 2012 to pay their 2008 pay 2009 and 2009 pay  
2010 without a penalty.

A motion was made to recommend to the Commissioners that the new County Ethics ordinance be repealed since the State has now passed a State Ethics Ordinance that all Counties must follow.

Mr. Cunningham voted against

All other members voted in favor

Motion approved

Mr. Bernacchi is to address the Commissioners at their next meeting

#### **COMMENTS BY THE COUNCIL**

Mr. Garner, Mrs. Sosinski, Mr. Ford and Mr. Cunningham had no further comments

Mr. Yagelski stated he was sorry to disappoint the Save the Barns Committee but it is not a defeat. He believes that ICON is a good idea; it can be a cost savings.

Mr. Bernacchi wants the barn saved but cannot support it now because of not being able to give employees a raise or bonus.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.