

LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2013

COUNTY BUDGET

The LaPorte County Council held a public hearing for the 2013 County Budget and the Solid Waste District Budget on October 9, 2012 in the Assembly Room of the LaPorte County Government Complex, 809 State Street, LaPorte, IN 46350.

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Matthew Bernacchi

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

All members of the Council were present. Also present was Auditor, Craig Hinchman, Chief Deputy Auditor, Mary Ray and Council Attorney, Doug Biege.

Public comment was called for. No one from the public addressed the Council on either the Solid Waste district or the County Budget.

Council comments were as followed:

Mrs. Sosinski reported on a re-evaluation position in the Prosecutors office. The bad check coordinator's job had been reduced to a COMOT IV, after additional information was presented to the committee, the classification was returned to a COMOT V. Mr. Yagelski stated that he didn't think this was a full time job; it could be handled by a part time person since the volume of bad checks has greatly reduced. Prosecutor Szilagyi stated that this employee also has other duties that are considered a part time position also. Mr. Yagelski said to save money, both positions should have a part time employee not one full time.

Mr. Mrozinski spoke about the recent re-evaluation in the highway department. Said there was controversy on how it was handled and did not feel like the employee should be paid at a lower rate even though her position was re-evaluated lower. Mrs. Sosinski stated that this was all discussed and voted on last meeting now all has mysteriously changed. A motion was made to reverse this decision and if an employee was evaluated at a lower level, the pay would not

decrease until a new employee hired for that position. Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Ford and Mrs. Sosinski voted against. Mr. Bernacchi, Mr. Mrozinski, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Garner voted in favor. Motion approved no decrease in pay if a position is re-evaluated. Mrs. Sosinski stated that a bad precedent has been set, now it opened the door for numerous applications that are unwarranted.

Commissioner, Ken Layton spoke on the MS4 situation. Michigan City Sanitary District has pulled out of the program which causes a problem to the other entities since Michigan City Sanitary District pays 50% of the funding.

Commissioner Layton along with Mr. Garner is to meet with the Sanitary District's Director.

Commissioner Layton discussed the Swanson Center; the County's share that is regulated by the state has increased therefore the budget for this item has also increased. The Swanson Center was asking for back pay but that is still under negotiations.

GIS department was discussed. It was suggested that this department should come under either the Auditor's or Assessor's department. If in question, this position should be re-evaluated. Mrs. Sosinski stated that the department is behind but making progress.

Mr. Mrosinski spoke on the merit officer's retirement fund. He stated that only \$1.00 per year was paid into the fund by the officers, not the 3% of all other county employees are required to pay into their retirement fund. He said it is not fair. He made a motion to have the officers pay 3% also, after a discussion on the legality of this, he withdrew his motion until Council Attorney, Doug Biege could do the proper research. It is unclear as to who is paying the attorney fees in regards to the law suit filed by the merit board against Loren Arnold. A motion was made to allow President Matthew Bernacchi to authorize Attorney Biege to do the research at his regular rate. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Yagelski stated that due to the "almost riot" in the jail, he made a motion due to safety and security issues to allow the Sheriff to transfer \$30,000.00 from the County Corrections fund a/k/a Misdemeanant fund (1175) to the jail overtime

fund (1000-20025-000-0145) Mr. Mrozinski, Mr. Ford and Mr. Garner voted against, Mrs. Sosinski, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Bernacchi and Mr. Cunningham voted in favor. Motion approved authorization for the Sheriff to transfer the funds. Mr. Mrozinski condemns the jail overtime policies.

Mr. Cunningham stated that the county is approximately 30 million dollars in the red and there are funds available in the revenue generating accounts that can be used. He stated that the current Recorder, Johnny Stimley wanted to return \$182,000.00 to the general fund but the State Board of Accounts had issues with that so he made a motion to reduce the Recorder's 2013 budget to only \$100.00 Mrs. Sosinski voted against, all other members voted in favor. Motion approved. Mrs. Sosinski then asked Council Attorney Biege to do research on if this was allowable.

The Council requested Chief Deputy Auditor, Mary Ray to request Commissioner Willie Milsap to attend the October 22, 2012 County Council Meeting. They have several questions for him.

The budget finalization meeting was set for 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 22, 2012 prior to the regular Council meeting

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

