

*LaPorte County Auditor
Joie Winski
555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 205
LaPorte, IN 46350-3490*

**MINUTES
LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 24, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Mark Yagelski.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Yagelski asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for Gary L. Cooper, a former long-time employee of the Sheriff's department and an interim Sheriff, who passed away. Mr. Yagelski asked Mrs. Winski to lead the pledge.

Sheriff Mollenauer spoke briefly about Captain Gary Cooper, who was the first detective on the department.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Auditor Winski. All members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 24, 2014 AGENDA

Councilman Rich Mrozinski asked that Item Two (2) – Laporte County Sheriff's Department, requesting an additional appropriation from the Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220) for Upgrade of Computers, Software, etc. and purchase of I-Pads, be removed and tabled until the April 28th meeting.

Agenda was approved as amended on a motion by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Jeff Santana. Approved by all members.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2014

The minutes were approved on a motion made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Matt Bernacchi. Approved by all.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mr. Greg Radinger, President of Dunes Lodge FOP 75, representing Michigan City Police Department, Long Beach Police Department, Trail Creek Police Department, and Laporte County Sheriff's Department. Mr. Radiger spoke to a post made by Mr. Bernacchi on Facebook and resulted in Mr. Radiger asking for Mr. Bernacchi's resignation.

Mr. Yagelski asked the public if there were any more comments related to this subject, if so, please come forward on this topic only. He then asked Mr. Bernacchi would like to respond.

Mr. Bernacchi answered the complaint.

- Dr. Vidya Kora commented on the transportation services now provided by the Council on Aging, Parents and Friends and asked that the Council to consider providing a one-time infusion of money for Michiana Resources to continue the services. The Commissioner's will be coming to the next council meeting to formally request that the Council appropriate the money to help continue these services.

Ms. Christine Harlow, director of Adult Protective Services, explained what APS does and also commented on the need to continue the transportation services. 1,251 residents used this service last year. She asked that the Council support this request.

Mr. Leigh Morris also spoke in support of this request. He urged the Council to pass this one time request.

Mr. Dennis Metheny asked where the Council on Aging received their funding and vehicles previously? He would like to see the vehicles given to Michiana Resources to continue this service. He is in support of the request and would like the Commissioner's to receive a five year contract to ensure this service continues.

Ms. Pat Pease of EMS also spoke in favor of the request.

Mr. Ron Miller also spoke in favor of the request. He is a member of the Task Force and also a member of the Michigan City Enrichment Corporation. He spoke to the grants that were given to the Council on Aging by the Enrichment Corp. The grants are being held pending the outcome of the Council's vote. He said this is a life or death situation for many people in the county.

Dr. Jim Callaghan of Franciscan Healthcare spoke in favor of the request. Approximately \$62,000 was provided for the services in 2013 by Franciscan for these services.

Mr. G. Thor Thordarson, president and CEO of Laporte IU Hospital, added the hospital's support of this request. Laporte Hospital grants \$50,000 annually to the program.

Mr. Cunningham questioned Dr. Kora on the remaining money left from the audit of Parents and Friends, Council on Aging. Dr. Kora and Ms. Harlow answered the questions saying that the new Task Force will be open and transparent for the Council and public.

Mr. Cunningham asked if Swanson Center contributed. Ms. Harlow said that they do not and that she was told their budget does not allow for that.

Mr. Cunningham said that because they can't fund this for another 30 days, he suggested that the Task Force look for immediate funding sources.

Dr. Kora asked that the Council consider a special meeting before April 15th to consider the request.

Mr. Cunningham suggested the Council give the Prosecutor the authority to give money out of his Deferral Fund to aid in the cost of this program. A discussion took place between Ms. Harlow and Mr. Cunningham.

Mrs. Sosinski made a motion to have a Special Meeting to discuss this. Mr. Santana seconded.

The discussion between Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Harlow with reference to the Prosecutor's office funding this continued.

Dr. Kora asked once again for support of this program.

Mr. Yagelski asked Counsel, Mr. Biege, to clarify the time needed for advertising a Special Meeting. Mr. Biege responded with 10 calendar days. Mr. Yagelski asked Mrs. Sosinski to specify which fund the donation should come from. Mrs. Sosinski responded CCD or Riverboat. Auditor Winski said that the CCD Fund would not qualify. Mrs. Sosinski amended her request for the Win Tax or Riverboat.

Mr. Yagelski stated that the meeting would be held April 7th. The vote was taken and passed 7 – 0.

Mr. Mrozinski asked why Swanson Center could not contribute to this. Mr. Matt Burden, director of Swanson Center, explained why Swanson Center cannot contribute. A discussion on Swanson Center's funding from the County took place.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

- Auditor Winski reported to the Council that the County received their first on time budget in over 6 years. The Settlement process has begun. The 2013 pay 2014 Tax bill process will begin in early April. Mrs. Winski asked President Yagelski to appoint a Finance Committee to work with her office when the billing process is completed.

- Mr. Yagelski asked if Councilmembers could be available at 6:00 p.m. before the next meeting for a workshop with the Sheriff's Department.

- Sheriff Mike Mollenauer and Chief Jim Sosinski were presented a donation from Precision Pipeline for \$20,000. The money will be used to buy a car for the new School Liaison Officer. The cost of the car is \$26,250. The remaining \$6,250 will come from the Sheriff's Commissary Account.

The Department went through their mandatory training. Kudo's to Executive Captain Heath Haferkamp who put the training together. There is a mandatory 24 hours each year and by the end of the year the entire department will be trained.

Chief Sosinski talked about the preliminary Crime Report. Overall it looks like the county saw a 10% reduction in crime. One homicide, which was a justified homicide. Robberies were down, thefts down so roughly a 10% decrease over last year.

Sheriff Mollenauer reported that the State Department of Correction did the Jail Inspection last week and remarked how clean the jail is kept. He thanked the Council for the 2 liaison officers that the department was granted last month. The Sheriff and 4 others attended the graduation ceremony at the Law Enforcement Academy where new officer, Deputy Aaron Stobaugh was honored for being 2nd in his class. He started FTO training on the following Monday.

Automated Information Services has been hired to provide telephone information services to the public such as court dates and times, release dates, etc as well as voice mail to the inmates. The information is updated every 15 minutes. This will free up officers for a cost of \$800 per month which will be funded through the Commissary account.

The second additional service they are putting in is for the Courts. It is an automatic Jail Tracker system that notifies the courts when an inmate posts bond or is released, it lets the courts know. This is at a one time cost of \$6,300 which will also come from the Commissary account.

The last thing the Sheriff reported on was the "Notice to Quits". This was created shortly after the Sheriff took office and provides funding for officer's continuing education through the fees generated by this program. The cost to file is \$35 to the public. Last year the fund generated \$18,590 which is used in its entirety to fund the continuing education of officers.

LIAISON REPORTS

●Mr. Mrozinski reported on the following:

He is on the Advisory Committee of the County Home and reported that there are 50 rooms at the home. We currently have 17 residents. There have been secretive meetings on the future of the home and Mr. Mrozinski asked that the Advisory Committee be invited to those meetings.

Small Animal Shelter – the ribbon cutting for the new shelter addition is April 26th.

He attended the 3rd house at PNC.

Veterans Court is set to open April 1st and needs mentors.

●Mr. Garner reported that Purdue Extension will be having their annual meeting.

He also reported that he was in the Auditor's office when the Auditor, the Treasurer, the Assessor and Darlene Hale from IT put in quite a bit of hours in the tax bill. They all work together to bring in the taxes on time.

●Mr. Santana thanked the public for attending tonight's meeting.

Mr. Cooley will receive bids on the roof next week. The water leak in the building has been fixed. He congratulated Pat Pease on her retirement from EMS.

Talked with surveyor and INDOT is moving forward with the drainage improvements on Highway 20. Mr. Hendricks surveyed the new EMS site for the county at no charge.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Yagelski asked the Council for 3 volunteers for the Finance Committee to work with Mrs. Winski on finances. Mr. Bernacchi, Mr. Garner and Mr. Mrozinski have been appointed.

OLD BUSINESS

A Public Hearing and Confirmatory Resolution on Kingsbury Industrial Park Elevator Logistics was held. (Resolution 2014-3 A & B). Mr. Matt Reardon spoke in support of the project.

A motion to approve the Tax Abatement for both Real Property and Personal Property was made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Bernacchi. The Resolution by title only was read by Auditor Winski. Both measures passed with a 7 – 0 vote.

A discussion took place on the Tax Abatement report between Mr. Mrozinski and Mr. Reardon.

Mr. Yagelski asked that the Lindborg Family stand up and be acknowledged. Mr. Lindborg thanked the Council for their support.

Mr. Garner asked Mr. Reardon to give a report on his meeting with CSX. Mr. Reardon told the Council that everything that could be accomplished has been.

Mr. Yagelski asked that Assessor Schultz give a date that the tax bills will be going out and when they will be due. The bills are on track to go out by April 25th and will be due by May 12th.

Mr. Beige clarified the motion made by Mr. Cunningham to give PNC a donation of \$25,000 over the next five years. The money needs to be allocated this year put into a fund by the Auditor and then can be distributed over the next five years.

A motion was made by Mr. Cunningham to allocate the donation this year and to be given out over three years. The motion was seconded by Mr. Santana and passed 7-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

LaPorte County EMS

Requesting an Additional Appropriation; Riverboat (1191) or CCD (1138); for purchase of Two (2) New Ambulances. \$286,804

Mrs. Pease, EMS director gave the council packets with the Ambulance rotation schedule as requested by the Council. A discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Santana and seconded by Ms. Sosinski to purchase two ambulances from the CCD fund. Motion passed 7-0.

LaPorte County Prosecutor

Requesting Receipt of Funds; Pretrial Diversion (2501) and Victim's Advocate for Pre-trial Diversion Program Services \$171,820.50

Prosecutor Szilagyi explained the need for the receipting of the funds.

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Bernacchi. Motion was approved 7-0.

Mr. Szilagyi also told the council that all the money was not given to Parents and Friends. He is willing to give another donation to CASA or Harmony House. He will work with the council on the donation.

A motion was made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mrozinski to allow the Prosecutor up to \$40,000 in support of the Council on Aging from the Deferral Fees. Motion passed 7-0.

LaPorte County Sheriff's Department

Requesting Permission to spend \$132,263.86 from the CCD (1138) funds for the purchase of 7 vehicles.

Sheriff Mollenauer explained that the department is back on their rotation to replace cars. 4 would be given to deputies and 3 would go to the process servers. A discussion took place.

A motion to buy 4 Police A Wheel Drive Interceptors from the CCD fund with a trade-in of 3 cars was made by Mr. Bernacchi and seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Motion passed 6-1 with the dissenting vote by Mrs. Sosinski.

Council Comments

None

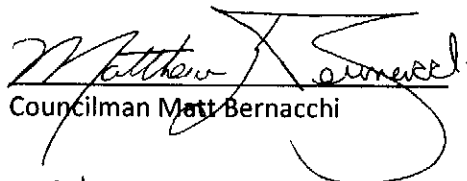
Attorney Comments

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Jeff Santana and seconded by Mr. Mrozinski. The motion passed 7 – 0.


EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL, dated this 28th day of April, 2014.

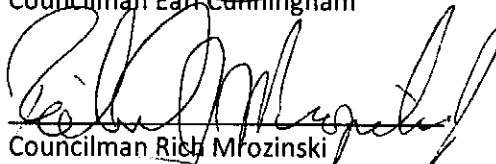

Councilman Matt Bernacchi

absent
Councilman Terry Garner


Councilman Jeff Santana


Councilman Mark Yagelski


Councilman Earl Cunningham


Councilman Rich Mrozinski


Councilwoman Lois Sosinski

Attest: Joie Winski
Joie Winski, Laporte County Auditor