

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

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
2016 SALARY ORDINANCE
NOVEMBER 30, 2015 AT 5:30 P.M.**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Special Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on November 30, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. (local time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex located at 809 State Street, La Porte, Indiana, 46350.

CALL TO ORDER

La Porte County Council President Mark Yagelski called the Special Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Yagelski asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Yagelski asked that everyone, except emergency personnel, to please turn off their cell phones at this time.

ROLL CALL

Auditor Winski took the Roll Call. Council Members present were Councilmen Bernacchi, Garner, Kirkham, Novak and Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski. Councilman Santana was absent. A quorum was noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Hearing or seeing no Public Comment, President Yagelski closed Public Comment.

SPECIAL MEETING FOR THE 2016 SALARIES

President Yagelski called on Mr. Bernacchi to begin the 2016 salaries. Mr. Bernacchi stated that the Council has in front of them a revision of the proposed salaries. There is also a proposal for the appointed Department Heads, but not the Elected Officials, to be given some sort of reward/adjustment for having an Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's Degree. In addition, time served in the County is broken down into 8, 16 and 24 years, which could equate to holding one of those degrees. He then stated it is up to the Council to determine what direction they want to go.

Councilwoman Sosinski said she didn't know where to start, but said there was a disagreement on how the salary numbers were determined. She said she understands that a lot of work went into evaluating the

salaries, and she is a strong advocate of employees; but her hesitance as a Council Member is that there are inconsistencies in the proposed salaries of some of the Elected Officials/Department Heads; some are below the average and some are above and there have been significant changes made to the proposals in just the last two weeks.

Councilwoman Sosinski is not accusing anybody of playing politics or favoritism, but is concerned with the appearance of giving dissimilar raises instead of equal percentages of increases across the board. For example, one Department Head would be receiving 120% of the average, whereas another Department Head would receive 85% of the average. Also, the salaries for the Chief Deputies went different places. Looking at Sheriff and EMS, if the plan was followed, would be approximately \$1,000,000. She continued that she is an advocate for the employees and was the one that tried to push through the 3% raise for employees on July 1, 2015. She just has a problem when she doesn't have a concrete answer from where the amounts came. The non-elected officials, such as Maintenance, Highway, Animal Shelter or County Home, are governed by job descriptions and they also receive longevity, so they should not be given a raise in the same manner. All of the raises should be run through Waggoner, Irwin, and Scheele and Human Resources. Also, the Economic Development Director is on the list, and is not paid a salary, but receives compensation per a budget line item.

Councilwoman Sosinski contacted some of the Council Members and told them what she would be supporting tonight. She, again reiterated that she believes that Waggoner, Irwin, and Scheele should be used to determine the salaries. Also, Porter County has a higher wage base and should not be used as a comparison because they may have a higher income base than La Porte County. She said she is not against raises, but she has to answer to the constituents, employees, Department Heads and Elected Officials. She acknowledged the condensed sheets that Auditor Winski distributed, but said that the employees filling the Assistant positions in the Departments cannot be included because they have job descriptions.

Councilman Bernacchi asked the Council to look at the first page of the paper he disseminated. He said those are all Elected Officials, other than the Engineer at the bottom. All of those salaries do not have any type of adjustment, but just have a base pay. The recommendation and maximum salary are the same and cannot be adjusted. The Economic Development Director is included for informational purposes only. It doesn't have to be voted on, but Councilman Bernacchi thought it should be included. Economic Development Director, Engineer, Human Resource Director, Health Department, GIS, EMS, IT Director, Community Corrections, County Home Administrator, 911-Director, Highway Superintendent, Maintenance Director, Planner, Parks Superintendent, MS-4, Weights and Measures, Veterans' Service Officer, Emergency Management Director, Animal Shelter Director and Building Commissioner are all appointed positions. There is no type of Step Increase or Longevity. The Assistant Directors get an increase, but it is a job classification. The salaries with adjustments are there, but, again, are for information and don't necessarily have to be voted on.

Councilman Bernacchi continued that since Department Heads are appointed by Commissioners, there is no reward for either education or longevity. Instead of a Step Increase, it makes sense to do the same as with education. It was discussed, and *is only a recommendation*, but is broken down into 8, 16 and 24 years of service, which carries the same rewards as an Associates', Bachelor's and Master's degree respectively. The average keeps changing because more in-depth research was done. With more data, the numbers continued to change. In the last sheet provided, there are no large discrepancies between the average and the max pay; they are all within 2 to 3 percent. Councilman Bernacchi said he spent the weekend making sure the averages were correct. Whether it is decided if some, all or none get raises, the information is here to do with whatever the Council determines. The Animal Shelter was a concern, but once the data was

added, the salary is less than what a typical County would be paying for that position. Also, there is an Entry Level up to a 24-Years of Service Level, which is the maximum salary of that position.

Councilman Garner added that this was discussed at every Finance Committee Meeting and that a previous survey from Waggoner, Irwin, and Scheele was used to determine the salary increases. He doesn't know what could be gained from spending the money to do another study.

Councilwoman Sosinski said that the last time the Committee met 1½ weeks ago, the preliminary recommendation on a \$44,500 salary was \$46,860. It was then changed to \$48,864, but the average was still at \$44,500. Tonight, the average for the Animal Shelter went from \$44,456 to \$54,865. She loves the idea of the Education Certifications, but doesn't understand how the averages change. She questioned how would she know the last list received is where the averages should be?

Councilman Bernacchi asked if she received the recent email from the Animal Shelter. Councilwoman Sosinski said she did not because she is still not receiving emails from the County. Councilman Garner said he is still not either. Auditor Winski will again let IT know the problem is continuing.

Councilman Bernacchi explained 4 or 5 Counties were included and the Michiana Humane Society was used as the Private Sector. Therefore, the 150-mile radius amount is \$46,310. Allen County pays its Director \$77,700; Delaware pays \$47,000; Porter County pays \$60,000; and Berrien County pays \$68,000. Councilman Bernacchi asked the Departments for their input as to the surrounding Counties' salaries for the same positions. When that data is added, the averages change.

Councilwoman Sosinski said Porter County should not be used in the average because their income is higher. The numbers continue to come back different and higher. When numbers and averages change, there is concern and is why she feels a study should be done by Waggoner, Irwin, and Scheele.

President Yagelski said that a few years ago, the Council had to bring into line the salaries of the Department Heads because of politics being played. Auditor, Clerk, Assessor, Health Director, County Highway, Parks & Recreation, HR, IT and Treasurer. The tenth was Planner, but that got knocked back down because he didn't fulfill his job requirement. It got knocked down from HR/Planner to just Planner. If you take the average of those 9 positions, it is \$53,750 and it brought everybody in line. The averages have changed so much now and he would be more comfortable keeping those salaries in line. He feels it worked well giving them a set raise. He also asked why the Health Director's salary recommendation went from \$53,757 to \$51,920.

Councilman Bernacchi said it's an average and if he had the years of service, he would be in a higher range. President Yagelski then asked about Parks & Recreation. He said he has no issue giving raises; he would just be more comfortable giving equal raises to those 9 positions. Councilman Bernacchi stated again that the proposed raises are based on averages and are informational, but the Council does not have to use those amounts. For example, if IT is looked at, the Private Sector is paying \$65,000 and the Counties are paying approximately \$70,000 for that position, so the average is \$68,000.

Councilwoman Sosinski said, using the 2012 Waggoner, Irwin, and Scheele study, and applying the cost of living increase, the Health Department Director salary would be \$64,000, which is higher than the proposed average. This is precisely why she wants a study to be completed.

President Yagelski added that he talked to a lot of Department Heads and said they were comfortable putting a percentage in now and incrementing the raise in to see where the County stands financially next year.

Auditor Winski stated the cost of the proposed raises. With the 90% Chief Deputy, the 3% raise would be \$1,064,679; the 2% raise would be \$766,359; and the 1.8% raise would be \$676,359. With the 85% Chief Deputy, the 3% raise would be \$1,048,371.

President Yagelski stated that this would be a yearly, not a one-time cost.

Councilman Garner said that he has consistently asked Auditor Winski if the County would have the amount, regardless of the Rainy Day Fund and she responded yes.

Auditor Winski said, that as a Fiscal Officer of the County, she does not feel that the raises are exorbitant and are not out of reach for the County.

President Yagelski said that, as a more fiscal person, he disagrees with Auditor Winski. This is not a one-time deal and said some surrounding Counties are in the hole. He continued that Riverboat money is not to be used for raises/wages. It gets pulled back in because the excess funds are put back in after the \$10,000,000 and it is a game of trickery and a slippery slope to play. He said to ask Michigan City how that turned out.

Councilwoman Sosinski thanked Auditor Winski for completing the spreadsheet. She asked if Auditor Winski included FICA in the spreadsheet and she replied yes.

President Yagelski asked how the Council wanted to address the raises. Councilman Bernacchi said to go by Department Head and Elected Officials and decide on each one.

Councilwoman Sosinski said she thought the two large Emergency Management Departments would be done first, but is in agreement that they all need to be made right.

President Yagelski asked if the Council wanted to start with Animal Shelter and move down the list and Councilman Bernacchi said that would be fine.

Councilman Novak asked which sheet would be used. Councilman Bernacchi said the one that he handed out. He continued that longevity increases would be given at the 8, 16 and 24 years of service.

Auditor Winski asked that if the employee had a degree, must it be in the field in which they work.

Councilman Bernacchi said that a person appointed by the Commissioners would have a background in the designated position and would most likely hold a degree in that field.

Auditor Winski said she would have to have justification of the degree in her office for the State Board of Accounts.

Councilwoman Sosinski there has been dialogue regarding the distaste for longevity and that it would be added next year. She questioned if it was being addressed now.

Councilman Bernacchi said Department Heads do not get longevity and there was concern that there is no reward for being in a position for many years.

Councilwoman Sosinski said she did not want something to be given and then taken away next year.

President Yagelski began with the 2016 salaries.

Animal Shelter: \$43,148 to \$48,864. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Councilwoman Sosinski said because she is not confident with the proposed numbers provided, she will be voting Nay on the majority of the raises, but that there is nothing personal involved and hopes all employees get their raises.

Auditor: \$54,818 to \$62,200. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Commissioner: \$31,902 to \$32,830. Councilman Bernacchi said the recommended amount being given to the Commissioners is to be the same as the County employees, so there was no vote at this time.

Planner: \$47,391 to \$51,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Veteran's Officer: \$32,069 to \$36,720. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Novak. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Clerk: \$54,818 to \$62,200. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Coroner: \$25,886 to \$28,000. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

E-911 Director: \$49,513 to \$51,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Community Corrections: \$51,937 to \$53,954. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Novak. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

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Assessor: \$52,696 to \$60,470. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Health Director: \$53,757 to \$51,920. Councilman Bernacchi said the number should not be reduced. The Health Director should be \$54,630. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

County Highway: \$54,159 to \$56,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Novak. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Engineer: \$76,920 to \$77,250. Councilman Bernacchi said this salary should stay at \$76,920 and will part of the raises. There was no vote at this time.

County Home: Councilman Bernacchi said this will also be with the raises, so there was no vote at this time.

Parks & Recreation: Councilman Bernacchi said this will also be with the raises, so there was no vote at this time.

GIS: \$38,398 to \$46,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

President Yagelski said it was a mistake to not make that person a Department Head.

EMS: \$53,757 to \$63,322. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Human Resources: \$53,560 to \$56,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

IT: \$51,105 to \$60,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Novak. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Weights & Measures: \$32,008 to \$36,720. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Building Maintenance: \$49,513 to \$51,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

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Michigan Township Assessor: \$40,283 to \$41,940. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Planning Commission: \$49,513 to \$51,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Novak. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Recorder: \$49,513 to \$51,920. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Novak. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Surveyor: \$31,219 to \$32,000. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Treasurer: \$52,696 to \$58,026. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 4-2, with President Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Councilwoman Sosinski asked if there was a stipulation of having a degree in the field in which you work. Councilman Bernacchi said yes.

Attorney Biege said this Meeting was not to adopt that Policy and it would have to be addressed at a different Meeting.

Councilman Bernacchi said that the Sheriff is elected and his salary is set by the State so there would not be a vote on it. However, there would be the Chief Deputy, Major, Captain, Sergeant, Patrolman, Detective and Warrants are in the same classification. The Jail Sergeant, Jail Corporal, Courthouse Corporal, Jail Deputy and Courthouse Deputy are in the same classification.

President Yagelski asked if Auditor Winski verified the Sheriff's numbers. Auditor Winski replied yes. President Yagelski asked for a Motion to accept all Sheriff's raises as stated.

A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Garner.

Councilwoman Sosinski asked Attorney Biege if she had a conflict because her husband works in the Sheriff's Department. Attorney Biege replied no because he was not singled out and it was an approval of raises for the entire Department. Motion carried 6-0.

Councilman Bernacchi said EMS includes the Director, Assistant Director, Captain, Lieutenant, Paramedic and EMT.

A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak. Attorney Biege stated that the Director was not included because it was already voted upon. Councilman Bernacchi agreed. Motion carried 6-0.

President Yagelski asked Auditor Winski for the amounts for the employee raises. She replied that for 3%, the approximate cost would be \$908,320; for 2% the approximate cost would be \$610,000; and for 1.8%, the approximate cost would be \$520,000. The cost for the 90% Chief Deputies would be \$58,689 and for 85%, it would be \$42,381.

Councilwoman Sosinski said she appreciates the Chief Deputies, and that the Elected Officials spoke very highly of their Chief Deputies. However, until there is clarification, she is going with the Waggoner, Irwin, and Scheele study on the average of Chief Deputy pay. Therefore, her vote will have nothing to do with any derogatory thoughts she has about any of the Chief Deputies. It has to do with a study to give the actual average and feels that they are being made semi-whole with the raises that went through tonight.

A Motion to approve 85% was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 6-0.

A Motion to approve 1.8% increase for full-time employee raises was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 4-2, with Councilman Novak and Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

Councilman Bernacchi asked if the minimum wage changed for Part-Time. Auditor Winski said each Department is given leeway, but \$10.80 and 28 hours per week are the maximums for part-time employees.

Councilman Bernacchi explained that finding and hiring a Part-Time Nurse for the Sheriff's Department is extremely difficult to do based on \$10.80 per hour. He asked if the wage for a registered nurse or emergency personnel could be increased. Auditor Winski said it could be done on a case-by-case basis. She added that as of January 1st, any medical or legal personnel will no longer be given a 1099; they will be considered employees of the County and will be given a W-2.

President Yagelski clarified that there is a difference between a 1099 and a Subcontractor.

Councilwoman Sosinski asked for more information on the wages for the registered nurse/emergency personnel.

Councilman Bernacchi said he just wanted to help the Sheriff's department and said the wage wouldn't have to be \$30.00 per hour, but possibly \$15.00 to strike more interest. Hopefully it can be tidied up next year.

President Yagelski asked that the part-time/full-time positions be kept as they've been for the last 3 years and that they receive the 1.8% raise. A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Novak. Councilwoman Sosinski clarified that she voted Nay for the employee raises because she would have approved a higher raise, but will approve the 1.8% for the part-time/full-time employees. Councilman Novak said he also voted Nay because he would have approved a higher raise for the full-time employees. Motion carried 6-0.

Councilman Bernacchi said the 1.8% covered all other full-time and elected officials who were not previously addressed.

Councilman Garner said that the County is absorbing the additional insurance costs, so the raise is actually more than 1.8%.

President Yagelski commented on Holidays and Vacations. He said Michigan City and La Porte go to work on Election Day, but County employees are off when there isn't even a County Election. The Commissioners are giving another 2-day bonus away for Christmas and New Year. If the other Counties are compared, the same raises are not given. He continued that 15 holidays are given and Councilman

Garner added that this issue keeps being discussed but the Commissioners are not listening. He asked Attorney Biege how to get the attention of the Commissioners. President Yagelski said the Commissioners' budget could be cut and then they would play ball. He said students went to school on days when employees had a snow day. Councilman Novak said it is not the employees' fault. President Yagelski said the Finance Committee was asked to look at this issue.

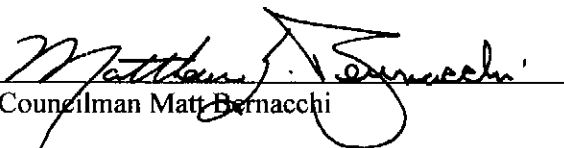
Councilman Bernacchi said he would try to schedule a Meeting with President Decker and possibly Councilmen Novak and Garner.

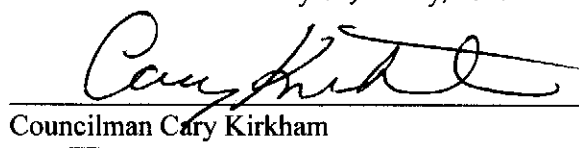
Councilman Novak reiterated that he voted Nay on the employee raises because he would have liked it to be more. He said some Departments collect in excess of \$120,000,000 and have gotten \$1,000,000 grants, and that our biggest County assets are its employees. He wished the individual raises could have been more than 1.8%.

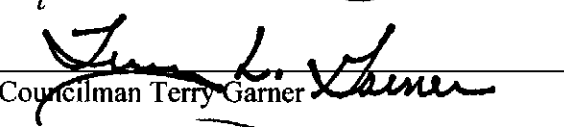
ADJOURNMENT

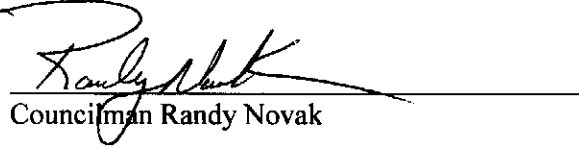
A Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski. Motion carried 6-0.

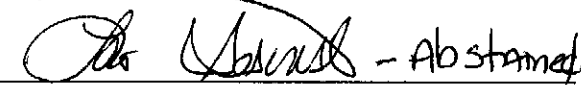
EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 25th day of January, 2016.


Councilman Matt Bernacchi


Councilman Cary Kirkham

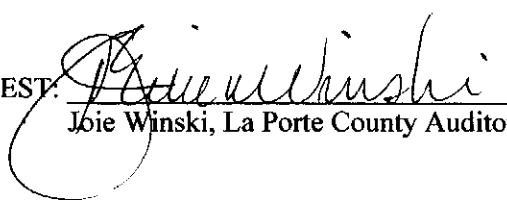

Councilman Terry Garner


Councilman Randy Novak

 - Abstained
Councilwoman Lois Sosinski

Absent
Councilman Jeff Santana


Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 
Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor