



*LaPorte County Auditor
Joie Winski
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LaPorte, IN 46350-3490*

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
JANUARY 25, 2016 AT 6:30 P.M.**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on January 25, 2016 at 6:30 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 Terry Garner called the Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Garner asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. President Garner 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, Santana and Yagelski and Councilwoman Sosinski. A quorum was noted.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 25, 2016 AGENDA

President Garner announced that the two Building Maintenance requests will be removed from the Agenda.

A Motion was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Santana to approve the January 25, 2016 Agenda as amended. Motion carried 7-0.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 23, 2015 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Councilwoman Sosinski said she had been experiencing problems with her email and just received the Meeting Minutes so was unable to read them yet.

A Motion was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve. Motion carried 5-2, with Councilwoman Sosinski and Councilman Santana abstaining.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2015 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

A Motion was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi to approve. Motion carried 5-2, with Councilwoman Sosinski and Councilman Santana abstaining.

Councilwoman Sosinski asked Attorney Biege if she should be abstaining or voting Nay, as she had not had time to read all of the minutes since she just received them on Friday. Attorney Biege said she should abstain.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 4, 2016 REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES

A Motion was made by Councilman Santana and seconded by Councilman Kirkham to approve. Motion carried 6-1, with Councilwoman Sosinski abstaining.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dennis Metheny, 6757 W 450 North, Michigan City, IN 46360

Mr. Metheny read from a federal trial transcript of an individual who testified under oath. He said it addressed the different funds. He read “was money ever taken out by people and for like an IOU and then money put back later as to those accounts? And the answer is “no”. And then the next question was, “was there also a kitty fund that was also part of the Treasurer’s Office?” Answer, “we have a change fund, yes.” Then the next question was, “and has that matter ever been used for personal use by anyone in the Treasurer’s Office?” “Yes, personal use.” “Who used that for personal use?” The answer was “I did.” And this testimony is from Nancy Hawkins, the La Porte County Treasurer.

Mr. Metheny continued that he is very upset when people steal money. He is not accusing, but Nancy Hawkins admitted under oath that she used money for personal use. He also showed that he had the audit reports from 2009 to 2012 that he acquired from the Internet. He commented that the 2012 audit report says 6 transactions were not recorded or mis-recorded for the amounts in excess of \$1.4 million dollars each. Also, from 2009 through 2012, \$34,327,611 was found. He said he has previously complained about the mishandling of money and taxes. He said he was able to get the court transcript for \$5 per sheet for 56 sheets and said he has no problem to spend his money, not taxpayer money. He wants the County to do a Federal Audit of the County. He is going to turn over his information to the Sheriff to see if anything can be done.

Rich Mrozinski, 2303 E 150 North, La Porte, IN 46350

Mr. Mrozinski said he doesn’t believe there is a Liaison to Economic Development, but that it doesn’t really matter because nothing is coming out of that office. He said he believes there is a liaison to the Commissioners, who dissolved the Economic Development Alliance that there was because they decided to do it on their own. He questioned if the Council has received any Annual Reports since then, as the reports informed what the Alliance was accomplishing. He especially wanted to know what was happening with the Kingsbury project. He reminded the Council that \$6.8 million was approved for that project, of which \$5.7 million was supposed to go for rail and infrastructure and \$300,000.00 for engineering and attorney fees. Also, the Council approved \$800,000.00 to pave Hupp Road. Verbal agreement was given by each of the landowners for their part of the easement in return for tax credit. However, the County still does not own Hupp Road. Also, out of the \$800,000.00, \$740,000.00 went for paving, but the remaining \$60,000.00 went into the fund for engineering and attorney fees. The Decker-Friedman administration then took another \$100,000.00 out of the \$5.7 million for engineering and attorney fees, which now totals \$460,000.00 taxpayer dollars. He urged the Council to find out what is happening with that money.

Hearing or seeing no additional Public Comment, President Garner closed Public Comment.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Auditor Winski said that the information she disseminated this evening included a copy of the Abatements published in December, the list of Liaisons and Board and Commission appointments. Also, at the request

of several Council Members, included was the financial overview of La Porte County presented by Carl Cender & Co. at the January 20th Commissioners' Meeting.

Commissioner Kora said he was attending the Meeting to address this item. He stated that, in January 2013, the first act of the Meeting was to retain Carl Cender & Co. due to the financial status of the County at that time. Thanks to the efforts of the Commission, the Council, and the Auditor's, Treasurer's and Assessor's Offices, there has been a phenomenal turnaround. There was a \$28.4 million deficit in 2013 but a balance of \$2.5 million in the General Fund in 2014. At the end of 2015, there is a balance of \$10 million. The majority of the funds are currently in a positive status. The property tax collection also increased from 75% in 2013 to over 100% in 2015. He thanked all for their efforts in bringing about the turnaround.

President Garner said belts have been tightened, but the results are being proven. Commissioner Kora said he appreciated the work of Carl Cender & Co. Auditor Winski corrected Dr. Kora stating the bank balancing was in the Treasurer's Office and *not* the Auditor's Office.

Councilman Kirkham asked Auditor Winski about the Spring Settlement. Auditor Winski said that the Spring Settlement is easier than the Fall, so she anticipates that another distribution will come at the end of May/beginning of June. At this time, the balance in the General Fund is \$8.5 million. Councilman Kirkham asked if there will be draws from that fund, and Auditor Winski replied yes because it is operating capital and from where the budget comes.

Councilman Novak commended the Auditor's Office for the work they have done, as well as the other departments, and for helping Carl Cender & Co. for preparing the slides for tonight's Meeting.

Councilman Santana asked if Auditor Winski knew the amount of the draw in May/June. Auditor Winski replied that in order to estimate, tax rates are necessary. The Auditor's Office is completing an abstract, which is a picture of the anticipated income during the year. It is hopeful that the budgets and tax rates will come out next week. A better estimate will be available at the end of February/the beginning of March.

President Garner asked if the Auditor's and Assessor's Offices are meeting their State deadlines. Auditor Winski said the County was one of the first to have the assessed values in and one of the first 26 counties in the state to have turned in their budgets.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Bernacchi said on February 4th will be the first PTABOA Meeting. He said most of the appeals have been settled in the Assessor's Office.

Councilman Novak said he met with the Prosecutor, who is on the Agenda for the night. He also said that he toured the Courthouse on the 2nd floor and said it looks fantastic.

Councilman Santana met with the Surveyor and with at a resident at 400 North due to a water issue. Permits will be filed for the issue to be resolved but not until August/September when the ground is firm. He also met with Andrew McGuire from EMS regarding bids for two new ambulances. He informed the Council that Mr. McGuire will be coming before them in March. Also, the EMS base in Michigan City at Coolspring and Wabash is in dire straits for many repairs. It is something that will have to be addressed at a later date. Regarding the EMA 800 MHz radios, the consensus is that going directly to Motorola is the way to go. They will be going before the Commissioners on February 10th and said Councilman Novak also has knowledge of the process. Councilman Novak said that EMA could go directly to Motorola because it has already been state bid. Councilman Santana said it also falls under an IC code and it will be under compliance.

Councilman Kirkham said the last NIRPC Meeting was cancelled due to a lack of quorum. Also, the Parks & Recreation Department has had a problem with aggressive dogs at Creek Ridge. In addition, children were dropped off at the park, as if it was a babysitting service. The Park Department is working to resolve this issue.

Councilman Yagelski said he will be representing Bob Young tonight regarding a broken down vehicle.

President Garner met with Sheriff Boyd regarding the Resource Officer at New Prairie Schools. Also, another county used one of the current canine dogs to sniff out a possible bomb. Also discussed were new cars for Sheriff use. The current garage staff is not just for the Sheriff's Department, but the services are charged to the Sheriff's Department. Also, portable scales should be purchased to weigh the vehicles that abuse the roads. There would be fines, but more importantly, saving County tax dollars instead of repairing roads would be more significant. He also met with Recorder Dean about her budget and said she would be working with Auditor Winski to get her budget out of the red. He said she is unhappy that she cannot spend money the way she wishes, but the Council has decided to adhere to the rules of the State Board of Accounts as to how the money can be spent. He also spoke to Hugh Tonagel from Purdue Extension and he would like to set up a meeting in May for the Council to see the services performed. Rick Brown, the MS4 Director, sent out information to the Council. Lastly, Bob Young will be coming before the Council this evening regarding the Bridge Tenders.

NEW BUSINESS

Sheriff John Boyd – School Resource Officer New Prairie Schools

Sheriff Boyd discussed the importance of the School Resource Officer at New Prairie Schools. He explained that there have been discussions with the new Administration, especially the new Superintendent, regarding obtaining a grant through the DOE and securing a School Resource Officer. The Sheriff's Office was asked by the Superintendent to do a study that challenged the department. From June 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, there were 229 calls for service at New Prairie Schools, which includes the high and middle schools, and Prairie View, Rolling Prairie and Olive Elementary schools. 174 calls were for the high and middle schools, which equates to roughly one call per day. Therefore, the School Board decided to spend a day in the life of a School Resource Officer, starting at La Porte Community Schools and concluding at South Central, speaking to students, Staff and Administration. They also observed the interactions of the School Resource Officers. After this exercise, at least one Board Member, who was skeptical about the hiring of the School Resource Officer, didn't want to know if, but when it would happen. In addition, several Council members had asked Sheriff Boyd if any of the other municipalities could assist in this endeavor. He replied that, due to the geographic location of the New Prairie School Corporation, it is a very rural area and is serviced by the Sheriff's Department.

There are similar contracts with other nearby school corporations and New Prairie would mirror those contracts. Since they have already been approved for the grant from the DOE, they would pay 70% of the salary and benefits of the School Resource Officer and the Sheriff's Department would pay 30% and retain control over that Officer. For example, using the Senior Deputy in the schools, Marvin McCoy, the Sheriff's Department pays approximately \$25,800 of his salary and benefits and La Porte Community Schools picks up the remaining 70%. Having such success with this program prompted the Administration of the La Porte Community Schools to encourage New Prairie to initiate it at their schools. Therefore, Sheriff Boyd is asking for the support of the Council. He said he would like to advertise within the Sheriff's Office for the School Resource Officer, who would then be approved by the Administrations of the Sheriff's Office and New Prairie School Corporation. In addition, the person hired would have to be replaced in the Sheriff's Department, which means that the Sheriff's Department would not only have to pay the 30%, but also the starting salary of the replacement, which would be \$44,790. It is important to note that the Sheriff's

office would have a presence at the school and when there is a day off at the school, or during the summer months, the Resource Officer would be assigned to other tasks for the Sheriff's Office.

A Motion was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi to approve the Resource Officer. Motion carried 7-0.

Director Bob Young – Permission to Hire Two (2) Bridge Tenders

Councilman Yagelski spoke for Mr. Young. He explained that during the summer/fall months, 3 Bridge Tenders are kept available, who begin on March 1st and end on November 30th. One employee moved on to another job and the other retired, so 2 new Bridge Tenders are needed. Although there have been discussions to reduce the number from 3 to 2 Bridge Tenders, it has not yet been approved.

A Motion was made by Councilman Santana and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi to approve. Motion carried 7-0.

Prosecutor Espar – Salary Tier Adjustments Request

Prosecutor Espar said he is not coming before the Council to ask for any additional appropriations or money, but for approval to be able to make adjustments within the salaries of the deputies in his office. As the year progressed, personnel changes occurred and he would like to keep the salaries equitable and fair.

A Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to approve. Motion carried 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

2016 Board, Commission and Liaison Appointments

President Garner said that, at this time, due to the illness of his wife, he said that the appointments would stay as they were from the previous year. He said there was a question as to the HR Committee, but Auditor Winski said that committee is now the Job Evaluation Committee. Councilwoman Sosinski added that she is liaison to the HR Department, but also sits on the Job Evaluation Committee. Councilman Yagelski clarified that, technically, there is an HR Committee than includes the Presidents of the Commissioners and Council and the Attorneys for each.

Councilwoman Sosinski questioned the La Porte County Planning Commission on Page 2. Councilman Bernacchi clarified that is the Redevelopment Commission and added it was not listed. Auditor Winski said she received the appointments from Robin Surber and Redevelopment was not included. It was noted that Councilman Bernacchi, Councilman Novak and Councilwoman Sosinski are on that Committee.

Councilman Kirkham brought up La Porte County Economic Development and President Garner indicated he would like Councilman Kirkham to continue that appointment. Councilman Novak noted that is listed as EDC Alliance on their sheets.

Councilman Santana said Assessor Mike Shultz was listed for that, but Auditor Winski clarified that is GLEDC and not La Porte Economic Development.

Assessor Schultz addressed the Council and said that GLEDC appoints their own Board members and they asked him to serve on the Board.

Auditor Winski said she received two letters from Gregg Fuhlenbrock and Roger Wolff for the La Porte County Library and the Alcoholic Beverage Boards respectively. President Garner said Mr. Fuhlenbrock has been very helpful to the residents of Hanna.

Councilman Kirkham said these appointments were tabled at the last meeting and asked if they needed to be untabled. President Garner replied yes. A Motion was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Santana to remove from the table. Motion carried 7-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve the reappointment of Gregg Fuhlenbrock to the La Porte County Library Board of Trustees. Motion carried 7-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve the reappointment of Roger Wolff to the La Porte County ABC Commission. Motion carried 7-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi to approve the reappointment of Rich Mrozinski to the Animal Control Advisory Committee. Motion carried 7-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve the reappointment of Rich Mrozinski to the Veterans' Office. Motion carried 7-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve the reappointment of Attorney Biege as the Council Attorney for 2016. Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Bernacchi said he would like to give LADS to Councilman Novak. Councilman Novak agreed.

Councilman Novak asked what the La Porte County Emergency Medical Service Council is. Auditor Winski read the explanation, which stated that a member from the County Council would be required to serve on that Council. Commissioner Kora told the Council that, according to Andrew McGuire, that entity is now defunct so no appointment is necessary.

President Garner said Jerry Cooley from Maintenance has asked that part-time hire wages be reviewed. The wage is currently \$10.80. It was decided to refer it to the Finance Committee and discuss it at next month's Meeting.

A Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to continue the hiring freeze for 2016. Motion carried 7-0.

Finance Committee – Haz-Mat Increase

Councilman Novak asked if it was necessary to vote on the Haz-Mat raise because he understood that any entity, that wasn't specifically addressed at the Meeting on December 1st, automatically received the 1.8% raise. Auditor Winski said she would verify that is indeed correct.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None.

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

La Porte County Superior Court No. 1

Requesting Permission to Transfer
from 1000-10130-000-0149 to 1000-30135-000-0149
for Vocational Director

\$30,000.00

Auditor Winski said this is a direct result of an IRS request that this employee not be paid out of Part-Time, but Professional Services on a 1099. She said the money is in the budget and it would strictly be a transfer.

President Garner said that Superior Court No. 1 was given a grant for the position of Vocational Director that ended in 2010 and the County has been paying for this since then on a 1099. This position should have ended, or the Council should have been informed that the grant ended.

A Motion was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve the transfer.

Councilman Santana asked when this would be rectified and Auditor Winski said it would have to be addressed at this year's Budget Hearings.

A roll call was requested. Motion carried 5-2, with Councilman Yagelski and President Garner voting Nay. Councilwoman Sosinski added she would only approve until Budget Hearings.

La Porte County Circuit Court

Requesting Permission to Transfer
from 1000-30074000-0148 to 1000-10211-000-0148
for Juvenile Facilitation

\$5,000.00

Judge Alevizos approached and said this is similar to the previous request. However, in this situation, the IRS has requested that this not be a 1099 and it become a salary position. Judge Alevizos added that due to this salary coming out of the General Fund, the grant fund would need to be debited. Auditor Winski said that would be addressed.

A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi to approve. Motion carried 7-0.

La Porte County Clerk of Circuit Court

Requesting Permission to Spend
from CLERK'S RECORD PERPETUATION (1119)
for Transfer Digital Images, 35mm Film, Shredding, Preservation
and Bolt Scanning Contract

\$40,000.00

A Motion to approve was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Santana to approve. Motion carried 7-0.

La Porte County Adult Probation

Requesting Permission to Spend
from ADULT PROBATION USER FEES (2102)
for Speakers, Warning Light Microphone, TV Mount, Chairs and other Furniture
for Two (2) Drawer File Cabinet
for New Computer

\$4,810.25

\$431.99

\$1,229.00

Mr. Steve Eyrick explained that each of these items is being used for the courts. He continued that the computer is for replacement of one that is now broken in Superior Court 2. Judge Alevizos added that these items refer to Probation Services. He said the Court budgets don't ever change and run a surplus from money collected from probationers. He continued the Council doesn't actually have to approve it because the statute says it *shall* be appropriated and it is the law.

Councilman Yagelski asked about a furniture outlet for businesses. Councilman Santana said it is general surplus sales to local units of government out of Indianapolis. He said the items are offered at very substantial, reduced prices.

Judge Alevizos said that Kemps had quoted him a significant discount on the quantity of chairs requested. However, as it is not a high priority, he said he would remove that part of the request if the Council asked.

A Motion was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to approve all three items. Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Novak asked if this fund could be used for the items being requested below for Superior Court 3. Auditor Winski added that the State Board of Accounts has encouraged that fund be used. Judge Alevizos said the Judge for that Court would have to decide if the same fund could be used for those items. However, he said that is a large amount of money. It was decided to address it when that item is arrived upon in the Agenda.

La Porte County Planner

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
from RIVERBOAT (1191) OR WIN TAX (4220)
for Grant Money Match Marquette Greenway Trail \$35,000.00

A Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve out of RIVERBOAT (1191). Motion carried 7-0.

La Porte County Superior Court 3

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
from RIVERBOAT (1190) OR WIN TAX (4220)
for Furniture for Courtroom, Chambers, Staff, Conference and Jury Rooms \$45,000.00

Auditor Winski said, as a point of order, there is \$514,428 in ADULT PROBATION USER FEES (2102).

Commissioner Kora said he is accompanying Judge Thorne because they have exchanged emails regarding this issue. He said, originally, there was \$75,000.00 allocated for this furniture. However, due to some unplanned expenses related to IT and electrical work, that money was used. Judge Thorne has been diligent in reducing the costs as much as possible, and Commissioner Kora is requesting to find the money for this furniture.

Councilman Yagelski said, respectfully, the unplanned expenses were due to the incompetence of the people who planned the job before the Judge was even a part of it. Unfortunately, this cost falls on the County again. The engineer messed up the project.

Judge Thorne said he came aboard as Judge of Superior Court 3 on January 1, 2015. At that time, the bids had already gone out for the Courthouse project and he only made minor adjustments. He was also made aware by President Decker that there wasn't enough money because the bids did not include enough to complete the project. Therefore, President Decker said the money in the Furniture and Overage funds had

to be used. At that time, Judge Thorne was not aware that there were such funds. And realizing that it is necessary to move into the new facilities, due in part to the lack of security, it is also necessary to furnish those areas. He continued that there are two suppliers being used, one being Kemps and another for Jury chairs. The bids came in at approximately \$37,000, but he also anticipates that there will be additional expenses for window treatments and benches for the foyer. Also, he showed the Council a piece of metal that came out of his chair. Judge Thorne added that he hopes he will not have to use all of the money being requested.

A Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve \$45,000.00, with \$15,000 coming out of ADULT PROBATION USER FEES (2102). Judge Alevizos said that due to the statute, the Council was unable to do that. It could be requested, so the Motion was amended to approve \$30,000.00 out of RIVERBOAT (1191). A roll call was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

It was discussed that the additional \$15,000.00 will be paid from ADULT PROBATION USER FEES (2102).

Councilman Novak said that, when the next phase is studied, there needs to be additional input and collaboration to get more accurate numbers. Councilman Santana added that these projects need to be overseen and the Council needs to be notified when money is being used from other funds. President Garner said he recalled that Judge Thorne was in charge of this project and he wished the Council had been informed of this shortfall. Councilman Yagelski said someone was hired for this and did not include all necessary items in the bids and, therefore, there were many mistakes.

Motion carried 7-0.

La Porte County Engineer

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
from RIVERBOAT (1191) OR WIN TAX (4220)
for Local Match Pavement Management

\$50,000.00

Mr. Michael Yacullo stated that this item was discussed at the November 2015 Meeting, but there wasn't enough information at that time to support a Motion/vote. However, a packet has now been provided to the Council by Weaver Consulting Group. Mr. Yacullo said this project will eventually pay off in Federal funds to go towards roadway maintenance, and will also document the decisions on which roadways are chosen.

Councilman Yagelski asked President Garner if permission was given for this item to be put back on the Agenda. President Garner replied no. Councilman Yagelski said permission was necessary, but Attorney Biege said that a previous Motion made on this item died due to the lack of a second.

President Garner inquired as to who will oversee this project. Mr. Yacullo answered that he would most likely oversee any projects that improve the roadways. The GIS department could implement that data, as the project will supply a GIS database of the roadway inventory.

President Garner said he would have appreciated that information being printed and presented to the Council.

Councilman Novak asked if Mr. Yacullo could come back before the Council with more organized information.

Attorney Biege suggested that a proposed ordinance be submitted so there is a record of the promises and obligations.. The Council members discussed tabling the item, but Mr. Yacullo cautioned that the grant is in its 11th hour. He continued that, to receive the match, the funds would have to be approved tonight.

A Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Novak to approve out of WIN TAX (4220), with the condition that there is a joint Resolution made with the Commissioners.

Councilman Bernacchi expressed frustration over just hearing about how great these projects are but not receiving any documentation on the savings to the County. He asked if a report could be generated on how much is actually being saved. Mr. Yacullo said he would be able to provide those reports and Councilman Novak said it could be written into the Ordinance.

Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Yagelski asked for an update on the signs. Mr. Yacullo said the field data is now 100% collected and it is just a matter of compiling the information for the bid documents as to which signs will/can be replaced. There is approximately \$80,000.00 to spend on the signs, which will be used to target the townships that have the most number of accidents and bring those signs up to code.

The Project Manager said there is a policy being processed now to assist Mr. Yacullo in the future with the sign inventory. There is a web-based application for the sign inventory, where the information will be input and then transmitted to GIS and continually be updated and monitored. The policy will meet federal regulations to meet sign retro-reflectivity. These requirements are to insure these programs continue to meet the needs of the community where they are implemented.

Councilman Yagelski asked if the signs will be installed by a contractor or the County. The Project Manager replied it would have to be a contractor since it is an INDOT project.

President Yagelski questioned the process regarding the replacement of the signs, but the Project Manager stated those standards are already established in uniform codes. Mr. Yacullo added that there are not preferences, but requirements. He added that signs that are replaced can only be put into the County's inventory if they still have the necessary reflectivity.

Councilman Santana questioned if the cost of the contractor to install signs will be an additional cost, but the Project Manager did not have that information.

Gary Evers from NIRPC explained the process of this project. The program is for mass replacement of signs. The units of government were given the option of replacing all signs or assessing individual signs for replacement. This is a database that will maintained, so when a sign is replaced, that information will be entered into the database. In order to access the Federal money, the project must be let out by INDOT, so the bidding will be offered statewide and will go to the lowest bidder. This is 90% Federal money, which is usually 80%/20%, so it is a good deal for the County. La Porte County is allocated \$265,000.00 per year in Highway Safety Improvement money which can be used for guard rails, striping, reflectors, among other uses. Mr. Evers commended La Porte County for sticking its neck out and putting this project out there, as if the County doesn't use the money, it will, frankly, go to another County.

Councilman Santana said his question was not answered and asked, again, if there will be additional cost for the contractor who will install the signs. Mr. Evers said there should be enough money, but it is a big County. Mr. Yacullo said this is Phase 1, which was to inventory the signs and replace as many signs as could be afforded. He continued that it is possible he may have to come back before the County for

additional funds to use in Phase 2. Mr. Evers informed the County that the signs are regulatory and warning signs only. Additionally, sign posts are not being replaced and only signs on posts are being replaced.

La Porte County Engineer

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
from MAJOR BRIDGE (1171)
for Franklin Street Lift Bridge Feasibility Study

\$400,000.00

Mr. Yacullo said this project has been previously discussed and the scope of the project has not changed. A summary report was given and this is to determine viable alternatives to replace the Franklin Street Lift Bridge. The information can be provided to the Federal government to show that research has been completed. The County needs to be prepared because the cost will be significant and Federal aid will be necessary. With the Engineer's assessment, survey work, geodetic work and environmental report will create the Stage 1 plan, or 30% milestone.

President Garner asked for how long the study is good. Mr. Yacullo replied approximately 20 years.

Councilman Novak asked for the amount of time it will take to complete the report. The Project Manager said approximately 12-18 months. It will be done through the public involvement process which will meet the needs, not only the community of La Porte, but the citizens of the State of Indiana. The Franklin Street Lift Bridge and Washington Park are the main access to one of Indiana's natural resources, Lake Michigan.

Councilman Yagelski said, according to his records, the bridge is 85 years old. He discussed the problems with the bridge closing and that it was never intended for the type of traffic it has. Mr. Yacullo mentioned that money has been shuffled around by unused funds and is able to increase the Federal amount from \$400,000.00 to \$540,000.00, therefore reducing the requested amount from the Council.

Councilman Bernacchi said this project has been discussed many times and the projected cost is estimated to be between \$38 and \$57 million. Per the Beacon website, Michigan City owns the property adjoined on Center Street. He questioned whether other alternatives were considered, such as widening Lake Shore Drive and Center Street and not having the bridge at all. The Project Manager said that the feasibility study will address that option.

Councilman Yagelski added that engineering firms have looked at it, but part of the park is protected and special permission would be needed. The cost would be prohibitive to go in that direction.

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

There was a discussion regarding the actual amount being approved. Mr. Yacullo confirmed that it would be 20% of \$800,000.00 or \$160,000.00. The Motion was amended to approve \$160,000.00. Motion carried 7-0.

La Porte County Maintenance

Requesting and Additional Appropriation
from RIVERBOAT (1191), CCD (1138), OR WIN TAX (4220)
for Maintenance Patch Repairs to Radiator Locations at Courthouse (CCD)
for Maintenance Reinstate Gas, Fuel and Oil Account

\$60,000.00
\$3,000.00

This item was removed from the Agenda at the beginning of the Meeting.

COUNTY COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

President Garner asked the high school students to come forward and have a Council Member sign their papers.

Councilman Kirkham asked Mr. Cooley when the fence will be coming down, since the storage units and trucks have been moved from the parking lot. Mr. Cooley said it should be down any day.

Councilman Yagelski said that Mr. Cooley has been promised a vehicle and said vehicles were supposed to have been approved last year. However, since the lease program was introduced, nothing has been happening and no questions are being answered. Councilman Santana said Commissioner Bohacek is still compiling information. He does, however, agree that the vehicles need replacement.

Mr. Cooley explained the heating problems at the La Porte County Courthouse. Through discussions, Ameresco agreed to pay for the removal and replacement of all heaters in the Courthouse for approximately \$60,000.00. However, in return, they requested the County to pay for the replacement of the attic, which is necessary. However, the funds are not available right now.

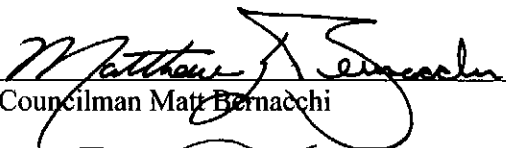
Councilman Novak asked that a vehicle rotation be considered and compare it to the lease program.

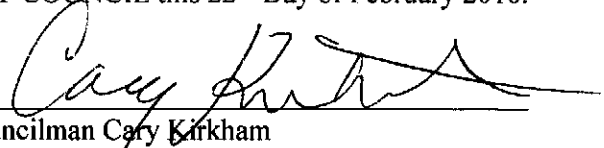
Councilman Yagelski acknowledged the ADA compliant bathroom, commended how well it turned out and thanked all who were involved.


ADJOURNMENT

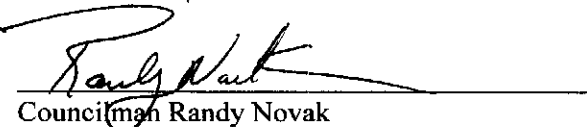
A Motion was made by Councilwoman Sosinski and seconded by Councilman Novak to adjourn the Meeting. Motion passed 7-0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 22nd Day of February 2016.


Councilman Matt Bernacchi


Councilman Cary Kirkham


Councilman Terry Garner


Councilman Randy Novak


Councilwoman Lois Sosinski


Councilman Jeff Santana


Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 
Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor