

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

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
MARCH 7, 2016 AT 6:00 P.M.**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Special Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on March 7, 2016 at 6:00 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 Vice-President Mark Yagelski called the Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-President Yagelski led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice-President 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, Kirkham, Novak and Santana and Vice-President Yagelski. President Garner and Councilman Sosinski were absent. A quorum was noted.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 7, 2016 SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

A Motion was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Kirkham to approve. Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

La Porte County Sheriff

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
from CCD (1138)

4 Civil Process Server Vehicles	\$73,460.00
9 Police Interceptor SUVs	\$259,725.00
Equipment for Vehicles	\$44,300.00

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

Vice-President Yagelski inquired about the trade-in vehicles. The Commissioners are asking for two new cars, so the trade-in cars should be used for those purposes. Sheriff Boyd confirmed that he is also holding one vehicle back for emergencies.

Councilman Santana expressed his frustration over receiving no feedback from the Commissioners regarding repurposing the vehicles. The EMA Director has requested an updated vehicle and as vehicles are repurposed, the Commissioners indicate that he is next on the list. However, he is still awaiting a vehicle. As he has stated before, the proper tools need to be given to the individuals to do their jobs effectively. If not, it is supporting failure and he reiterated one of the trade-in vehicles should be held back for the EMA Director.

Vice-President Yagelski suggested that all of the trade-in vehicles be held back to evaluate them for alternative uses.

Sheriff Boyd said there are six cars being traded in for the Process Server Vehicles and 8 cars for the Police Interceptors.

Councilman Novak asked if the Process Server trade-ins would also be held back. Vice President Yagelski replied those with reasonable mileage and useful life should be held back. Sheriff Boyd added there are two special purpose police vehicles. One is a 2012 Tahoe and the other a 2011 Tahoe and have slightly over 100,000 miles on each respectively. In addition, these vehicles were by Captains and were not hard-driven.

Councilman Novak confirmed that only the vehicles being traded in for the Police Interceptors are the ones being held back. Vice-President Yagelski confirmed that.

Sheriff Boyd said the price may change due to the amount of vehicles being traded in. Vice-President Yagelski replied that the records on some of these parcels indicate that there has been minimal major maintenance on them. He then asked Sheriff Boyd if any of the vehicles are dual colored. Sheriff Boyd replied that a few may still be tan/brown, however, they would have to be painted before they could be driven. He also said the trade-in value for the vehicles is approximately \$16,000.00. He clarified that for the Police vehicles, the trade-in value per vehicle is \$3,900.00 and for the Process Server vehicles, \$1,600.00 per vehicle.

Councilman Bernacchi questioned why one of the Tahoe vehicles is not being held back for the EMA Director. At the last Finance Committee meeting, it was discussed that no other County allows Commissioners to have take-home vehicles. It is understandable to possibly have a pool vehicle, but it has been discussed at Budget Hearings to take those vehicles away from the Commissioners. However, since they are the owners of that property, it is difficult to accomplish that. In all reality, they should be driving their own vehicles and getting mileage, not for going to and from the office, but for checking on projects or meeting with taxpayers. Also, if the Commissioners' vehicles were turned in, it would create a pool of vehicles and the only one needed would be for the EMA Director. The better of the two Tahoe vehicles should then be held back for the EMA Director, as the value would most likely be between \$12,000.00 and \$13,000.00. Councilman Bernacchi suggested that a meeting be set with the Commissioner regarding changing police regarding the vehicles. He has heard that they, the Highway Department and the Building Department have already looked for new vehicles. Vice-President Yagelski confirmed that Auditor Winski already has the list.

Councilman Santana inquired as to the value of the vehicle and Sheriff Boyd said the trade-in amount for the vehicle is \$3,900.00. Councilman Santana stated that one of those vehicles should definitely be held back. Sheriff Boyd added that one is in better shape than the other, due to damage sustained to one of them during a felony drug pursuit.

Vice-President Yagelski said that new the Sheriff School Resource Officers will be driving older cars.

Sheriff Boyd said Chief Heeg and he are trying to be fiscally responsible by trading in vehicles with value and not trading in the 2009 vehicles they are driving and keep them another year, against the advice of the Chief Mechanic. He wants to insure that those who are on the front lines, working 24/7 and driving in inclement weather are the people who receive the new vehicles.

President Yagelski said that he has worked during the tenure of the last 3 Sheriffs and the Council has never turned down the Sheriff's request for new vehicles. However, if the cars can be repurposed and not traded it in for an amount beneath their value, it would be a preferable solution. He also clarified that he wasn't asking Sheriff Boyd to keep the vehicles for the Sheriff's Office, but to use them in other areas of the County as needed.

Councilman Kirkham asked if not using the vehicles for trade-in will affect the price for the new vehicles. Sheriff Boyd was unsure. Vice-President Yagelski said that, in his experience, the dealers do not keep the vehicles but sell them to auctions. Councilman Bernacchi added that approximately \$500.00 are made per car, as he bought one from Sauers for \$500.00 over the trade-in value. However, the Tahoe vehicles would probably be more.

Auditor Winski asked if the EMA Director would be getting a replacement vehicle or an additional vehicle. Councilman Santana replied that the that the plan was to get a replacement vehicle for the EMA Director and let Jeff Wiatrowski use the Impala, as he will be working in the field. However, if it was decided to use the Impala for trade-in or to be held back, Mr. Wiatrowski could use a vehicle from the pool of vehicles. Auditor Winski said, as a fiscal office of this County, the latter idea would be suggested. Councilman Santana agreed and added that when the 800MHz towers are built, Mr. Wiatrowski will need a vehicle to visit the sites. Councilman Novak said that project is at least a year away from completion, so obtaining a vehicle for him is not an immediate priority.

Attorney Biege reminded the Council that the top dollar that can be approved at the meeting is what was advertised, which is \$377,485.00. In addition, that amount includes the value of the trade-in vehicles. Vice-President Yagelski said that if the amount advertised was not correct, it is not his fault and that he has asked about the used cars on many occasions. Councilman Santana confirmed that to get the vehicles at the quoted 2016 price, they would have to be ordered by March 11th. Councilman Bernacchi added that the advertised amount could be approved and then an additional appropriation could be requested at a later meeting. He also said to just hold one Tahoe back which would put the Impala into the pool of vehicles. And if the Commissioners' cars are given back, there be 2 additional cars for the pool. Vice-President Yagelski said there are a lot of people requesting vehicles, but that's another meeting in itself. Councilman Kirkham added that the Commissioners could use their own vehicles and receive mileage reimbursement.

Councilman Santana asked Auditor Winski the amount given for per mile for mileage. Auditor Winski replied it is \$.50/mile. The State has lowered their mileage rate, but the County's has stayed the same.

Councilman Novak said that the vehicles being requested in the County are for newer vehicles, so he amended his Motion to approve but to hold back the one Tahoe vehicle. Councilman Santana seconded and wanted that in the record.

Councilman Kirkham said, after looking at the photographs of the vehicles, he saw one with a push bar on it and wondered if it was used as a personal vehicle. Sheriff Boyd said it is not allowed to put any personal items on the vehicle and the push bar was installed by the Department. Councilman Kirkham also asked if those items would be removed prior to trade in/repurposing, but Sheriff Boyd said he would have to check with the mechanic. He added that those items are added to the cars per the Department.

Councilman Novak said that the Commissioners should have looked at the photographs of the cars to see if there were any that could be used by them. He added that, if the Commissioners think they are going to get brand new vehicles, he believes they are sadly mistaken.

Motion carried 4-1, with Vice-President Yagelski voting Nay. He said his vote was due not holding back the trade-in vehicles. He thanked Sheriff Boyd for the information and Sheriff Boyd thanked the Council for coming in on a night they wouldn't otherwise been there.

Councilman Bernacchi asked Sheriff Boyd if any of the Sheriff vehicles were damaged in either of the two recent storms. Sheriff Boyd replied yes, that one police car was totaled and that it was scheduled for trade-in. However, Sauers was already aware of the damage. He added that the car was struck from behind by another vehicle and the Deputy was not at fault.

ADJOURNMENT

A Motion was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Santana to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 21st Day of March, 2016.




Councilman Matt Bernacchi



Councilman Cary Kirkham

Abstain


Councilman Terry Garner



Councilman Randy Novak

Abstain

Councilwoman Lois Sosinski



Councilman Jeff Santana



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor