



*LaPorte County Auditor
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**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL**

October 17, 2016

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on October 17, 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

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Council President Terry Garner.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Auditor Winski took the Roll Call. All members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 17, 2016 AGENDA

The Agenda was approved as read on a motion made by Councilperson Lois Sosinski and supported by Councilperson Matt Bernacchi. The Agenda was amended to include a discussion on Exempt Employee changes as mandated by the IRS. A 7 – 0 vote as amended was recorded.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2016 MEETING MINUTES - BUDGET HEARING, PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

All minutes were approved as read on a motion made by Councilperson Randy Novak and supported by Councilperson Lois Sosinski. A 7 – 0 vote was recorded.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Earl Cunningham approached the Council to speak about road funding. He wanted to address the rumor that the Council was responsible for not applying for the road funding grant from the State. He felt this was ludicrous. He sent the councilmembers an email explaining that the only grants available at the present time from the State were 90-10 grants and breaks down the 9.2 million dollars available. He could not find anything that tells us what the County spends their money on and he could not find anything that talks about roads and how much we spend on them. A discussion took place. President Garner told him that this was addressed at last month's meeting.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Assessor Michael Schultz requests permission to spend \$2,799.99 from his Sales Disclosure Fund for a refurbished printer and \$400 for a desk for one of his part time employees for a total amount of \$3,200. A 3 year maintenance contract will be \$79 per month which he will spend each month from the same fund.

A motion to accept was made by Councilperson Bernacchi and supported by Councilperson Jeff Santana. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Jerry Cooley, director of building maintenance, commented on the meeting room cameras and microphones. Mr. Yagelski commended Mr. Cooley on the meeting room podium. He said it was a nice addition to the room. A discussion took place on the monitor in the room. Councilperson Santana asked about picture in picture on the television recording of the meetings. Councilperson Bernacchi asked how the work release garage was being renovated – if these repairs were in the budget. Mr. Cooley said that the funds were in his budget. President Garner asked Mr. Cooley to inform the Council on the grinder situation at the jail. A discussion on the grinders in the jail and the emergency declaration took place. Mr. Cooley said that the grinders take care of the entire jail and two of the grinders went out. An emergency declaration was declared by the Commission President and Council President to replace these as soon as possible. These are required by the City before the waste goes into the sewers. These are older grinders that are being replaced, not the newer ones that were replaced a short time ago.

Rick Brown, MS4, presented a handout and thanked the Council for approving the funding for the 618 Plaza. MS4 notice is now on the back of all building permits. New rules on retention ponds. MS4 will continue to review all commercial projects.

Chief Deputy Prosecutor Mark Ruhle, here representing Prosecutor John Espar, requests permission to hire another deputy prosecutor at \$45,000 for the first six months and then \$50,000 after her probationary period. A motion to accept was made by Councilperson Yagelski and supported by Councilperson Novak. The motion carried 7 – 0.

Larry Butcher, EMA, informed the Council that the 800 MHz project is ahead of schedule and expected to be completed in January. There will be a trial period prior to going live.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilperson Bernacchi spoke about the Redevelopment Commission and what the Commission is doing at the KIP. Councilpersons Novak and Sosinski also attended the meeting. He also commented on the PTABOA that had one meeting since the last Council meeting. Less than 100 appeals remain.

Councilperson Novak also commented on the KIP saying that a lot is going on there. The County is in the process of taking control of the easements there (KIP). Mrs. Stallworth is here for permission to hire. Mr. Novak attended the Sheriff's Town Hall meeting in Springfield Township. He attended the Drug Court graduation and the RDC meeting.

Councilperson Santana said that Building Maintenance will be coming before the Council tonight on the 8th Street property where there is an electrical issue. He commended Mr. Cooley on the good job he and his crew do. Tony Hendricks and Bob Young have been working on a ditch on 400 N and it is almost complete. He also thanked Mike Yacullo for getting the permits. He's meeting with EMS – Andrew McGuire – next week on several issues. He commented on EMA being ahead of schedule on the 800 MHz project. Should be in operation the first week of January. MC Now is having a breakfast on the double tracking in Michigan City. Mr. Santana also raised the question of part time help for EMA as addressed in the meeting minutes of September 19, 2016. He read from the minutes that Mr. Yagelski made a motion to add \$10,000 to the EMA budget for 2017, but the additional position in the EMA office was withdrawn. He asked who withdrew it. Auditor Winski explained that Mr. Santana was talking about a totally different issue. The part time money allocated was meant for a different purpose.

Councilperson Kirkham said he has a NIRPC meeting on Thursday in Portage. He also attended a government affairs meeting last week. He was contacted by Jeremy Sobecki who told him that the Park Department upgraded the electrical in several places at Red Mill Park at a cost of two thousand dollars but with NIPSCO's energy savings reimbursement plan it came out to only \$400.

Councilperson Sosinski also attended the RDC meeting with Mr. Bernacchi and Mr. Novak but said she would not comment further on the meeting. She said the Clerk's office is still in need of Poll workers for the election. There have been 1190 walk-in voters and 1279 ballots have been mailed out. That number is up from 2012. She also attended an Insurance meeting and will attend another one next week. She also addresses an email she saw going around that had her name in it and wanted to clarify a couple of issues in it – it was in regard to someone seeing that several "desk jockeys" consistently getting raises and others getting left out. This particular person also commented on the personnel committee not being able to meet, not being able to meet because they did not have a quorum. The last time this person was in front of the committee was 2012. She explained how the committee works. She did call the person who sent the email and encouraged that person to talk with their department head or elected official if they feel their job description has really changed that drastically.

Councilperson Yagelski commented on the NICTD issue is not strictly Michigan City. The double tracking goes from Gary to South Bend. When it is completed, you will be able to get from South Bend to Chicago in one hour. There is support from Senators, Congressmen and other elected officials.

President Garner said the Sheriff will be coming before the Council for a request, Mr. Brown was here for MS4 and he's had discussions with Mrs. Winski.

New Business

2017 Budget for Kankakee and Hanna Township

Attorney Brad Adamsky came before the Council representing both Kankakee and Hanna Townships. Because there is a conflict of interest with a majority of their Township Board also on their volunteer Fire Department, the Council must approve or deny their budget per State Statute.

A motion was made by Councilperson Kirkham and supported by Councilperson Santana to accept the Kankakee Township budget. Motion carried 7 – 0.

A motion to accept Hanna Township's budget was then made by Councilperson Novak and supported by Councilperson Kirkham. Motion carried 7 – 0.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilperson Yagelski inquired about a December meeting. President Garner said he thought there would have to be a meeting in December to discuss salaries. Auditor Winski concurred. Mr. Yagelski then stated that meeting does not have to be a regularly scheduled meeting it could be anytime but we need to let the public know December will be a special meeting not regularly scheduled. All agreed.

President Garner then announced that January 3rd, 2017 will be the Council's reorganization meeting.

Councilperson Sosinski then made a motion to approve for the month of December, December 1st through December 31st, as proposed prior all non-exempt positions affected by new FLSA rulings be made exempt. Supported by Councilperson Novak. Motion carried 7 – 0.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS AND REQUESTS

La Porte County Plan Commission

Annemarie Polan, department head, came before the Council to request permission to spend from the Contractor's Registration Fees (Fund #2067): For a new truck (\$33,000) and new desk top computer (\$1,500).

President Garner stated that Annemarie Polan did contact him with this request and he told her as long as she has money in her non reverting account he didn't see a problem but she would still have to come before the Council with the request.

Motion to accept was made by Councilperson Yagelski and supported by Councilperson Kirkham. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Mrs. Sosinski inquired about the current truck. Mrs. Polan said it would be traded in on the new truck.

Mr. Yagelski then asked Mrs. Polan about the new computer program for building permits and going online to obtain the permits. She said she was excited about the program and thought it would be very helpful. Mr. Novak said he attended the presentation and thought it would be great for several departments in the county. They would all be notified of building permits that pertain to their office. He explained it a little more thoroughly. A short discussion took place. Auditor Winski said that Darlene Hale would be at next month's meeting to explain the program. She said the committee is waiting for final figures before presenting it next month.

Councilperson Santana asked about going back to Correspondence because the Council received a letter from ALCO with a list of what they do for the County. He asked if we should go back to Correspondence to discuss this. Auditor Winski told him that had to go before the Commissioners to sign the contract first before it comes back to the Council. Mrs. Winski stated that the money may have to be appropriated next year. She explained that she gave the Council a figure of the franchise fees collected this year and last year. Mr. Novak asked if there were specified uses for the Comcast funds. Mrs. Winski will look into that. Mr. Yagelski stated that the money should not go into the General Fund.

La Porte County Small Animal Shelter

Department head Jane Bernard appeared to request permission to hire. President Garner said he told her that even though the position is already funded she needed to come before the Council to hire.

Motion to approve made by Councilperson Kirkham and supported by Councilperson Novak. Motion passed 7 – 0.

Clarification was made on the hiring freeze by President Garner and Auditor Winski. President Garner stated that all positions must be voted on by the Council. Auditor Winski said that positions will not be funded until voted on by the Council.

La Porte County Juvenile Services Center

Department head Erica Stallworth appeared to ask permission to hire for the Evening Reporting program.

A motion was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Bernacchi. Motion carried 7 – 0.

La Porte County EMS

Andrew McGuire, department head, appeared to request an additional appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220) for computers (\$11,900) and requests permission to apply for matching funds for an AFG (assistance for firefighters) grant (\$22,000). The computers are desktop computers for billing. He explained he would like to replace 6 or 7 per year. Mrs. Hale approved replacing these every 5 years.

A motion to accept was made by Councilperson Yagelski and supported by Councilperson Santana. Motion passed 7 – 0. (From Riverboat)

The AFG grant is a 10% match.

Motion for permission to apply was made by Mr. Yagelski and supported by Mr. Novak. Motion carried 7 – 0.

La Porte County Sheriff

Sheriff Boyd appeared to request an additional appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220) for inmate food (\$140,000) and overtime (\$25,000). Sheriff Boyd explained that the inmate population continues to grow and that he also feeds the Community Corrections population. His original appropriation was \$210,000 and he explained that the Council told him to come back for additional funds at that time.

A motion to approve was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Santana. Motion carried 7 – 0. (Riverboat)

A motion was made to approve overtime by Mr. Bernacchi and supported by Mr. Novak. Motion carried 7 – 0. (Riverboat)

La Porte County Coroner

Requests additional appropriation for Autopsies.

Chief Deputy Auditor Andrea Smith asked to remove this. She stated that she feels he has money to cover these expenses and she will work with him to do that.

Request removed.

La Porte County Building Maintenance

Jerry Cooley, head of maintenance, requesting additional appropriation (\$8,259.55) for electrical repairs at the 8th Street building. Repairs are needed as a result of an inspection by the Michigan City Electrical Code inspection by Inspector Francis Rooney. This will not bring the building up to code. This is in the Health Department and IT. Francis is working with Mr. Cooley on the repairs. Waiting for Ameresco to also address repairs and upgrades.

Mr. Bernacchi asked about the building next to the old Community Corrections building. He asked how much is being spent on it. A discussion took place between the Council, Mr. Cooley, and the Auditor.

A motion to approve the appropriation was made by Mr. Santana and supported by Mr. Yagelski. Motion carried 6 – 1 with Mr. Bernacchi voting nay. (Riverboat)

President Garner asked about several projects discussed during the year with Mr. Cooley. He said because of the space study being done, many of these projects have been put on hold. President Garner said that we need to take care of what we have presently. A discussion took place.

La Porte County Auditor

Auditor Winski requests permission to transfer \$2,300 from 1000.20001.000.0102 to 1000.10130.000.0102 for part time help.

Mr. Yagelski made the motion to approve the transfer and Mr. Novak seconded. Motion carried 7 – 0.

COUNTY COUNCIL /ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Auditor Winski told the Council that the CAGIT fund will again be used to support the General Fund as we have for the last 3 years.

Mr. Bernacchi would like to know the cost of the building maintenance project.

Mr. Novak – nothing.

Mr. Santana thanked Mr. Dempsey for the ALCO correspondence, said that Building Maintenance did a great job taking the tree down and wants to know where we stand with the MOU between the City of Michigan City and the County with regard to the equipment in the EMA room at City Hall. He will speak with Shaw Friedman about this. He also congratulated all the County football teams.

Mr. Kirkham attended the AIC conference and while there attended a workshop for Councilmembers on reverse 911 would like to know if we could do this in La Porte County. Many counties have part time court house security. Would like political signs removed on easements – code violations.

Mr. Yagelski asked if Mr. Bernacchi would serve on the PTABOA again next year.

President Garner said he and Mr. Yagelski have been on the council for 14 years. He said he thinks the Council has done a good job for the last 14 years despite problems and commented that it was the Council that kept the County out of debt.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Sosinski and supported by Mr. Santana at 7:45 p.m.
Motion carried 7 – 0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 28th day of November, 2016.



Councilman Matt Bernaschi

Absent

Councilman Cory Kirkham



Councilman Terry Garner



Councilman Randy Novak



Councilwoman Lois Sosinski



Councilman Jeff Santana



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Jole Winski, La Porte County Auditor