



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

**MINUTES
REORGANIZATION MEETING OF THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
JANUARY 3, 2017 AT 6:00 P.M.**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Reorganization Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on January 3, 2017 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 Auditor Joie Winski called the Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Deputy Auditor Smith took the Roll Call. Council Members present were Councilmen Sullivan, Garner, Kirkham, Novak, Yagelski and Santana, and Councilwoman Sosinski. A quorum was noted.

NEW BUSINESS

Nomination and Election of 2017 La Porte County Council Officers

Councilman Cary Kirkham nominated Terry Garner for President and Councilman Santana nominated Lois Sosinski. Hearing or seeing no other nominations, Councilman Novak asks that nominations be closed.

Auditor Winski asked that Chief Deputy Smith call the roll for Councilman Garner for President: Ayes: Councilmen Kirkham and Garner. Nays: Councilmen Yagelski, Novak, Santana, Sullivan, and Councilwoman Sosinski. Motion fails 5-2.

Auditor Winski asked that Chief Deputy Smith call the roll for Councilwoman Sosinski for President: Ayes: Councilwoman Sosinski, Councilmen Sullivan, Yagelski, Novak, Santana and Garner. Nays: Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 6-1.

Auditor Winski congratulations President Sosinski and turns the chair over to her.

President Sosinski thanks fellow Councilmembers for their votes of support and asks for nominations for Vice President.

President Sosinski nominates Jeff Santana and there were no other nominations. Hearing or seeing no other nominations, nominations were closed. Voice vote is recorded 7-0. President Sosinski congratulations Vice-President Santana.

Appointment of Legal Counsel

President Sosinski asks for nominations for Legal Counsel.

Vice-President Santana speaks up and would like to table the appointment of legal counsel as "some of us were all basically caught off guard with some of the dealings that have gone on." He states it does not have to be done this evening and would like to entertain the idea of others that might have interest in this position. He was simply putting it out on the floor.

Councilman Kirkham seconds Vice-President Santana's Motion to table.

Roll call by Auditor Winski to table the appointment of legal counsel. Nays: Councilmen Yagelski, Novak, Sullivan and President Sosinski. Ayes: Vice President Santana, Councilmen Kirkham and Garner. Motion fails 4-3.

Councilman Sullivan would like to nominate the Firm of Friedman and Associates. The nomination is seconded by Councilman Yagelski.

Attorney Biege states he will probably be taking over as the Commissioner's attorney tomorrow. He appreciates working with the Council and was privileged to serve them.

Vice-President Santana states he was caught off guard by Attorney Biege's decision to move on to the Commissioners and that's why he was in favor of tabling appointment of legal counsel. He just sees a flip-flop of attorneys in County government and a lot of constituents see that as well.

Auditor Winski takes the roll via voice vote: Ayes: Councilman Yagelski, Novak, Sullivan, Garner and President Sosinski. Nays: Vice-President Santana and Councilman Kirkham. Motion carried 5-2.

President Sosinski also thanks Attorney Biege for his years of service with the Council.

Councilman Yagelski recognizes the students in attendance from La Porte High School.

Planning for Year 2017 (Approval of Regular Meeting Dates)

Auditor Winski stated a few dates had to be changed. They 2017 County Council dates are as follows:

January 23, February 27, March 27, April 24, May 30, June 26, July 24, August 28, September 25, October 30 and November 27. December will be if needed. Motion made by Vice-President Santana and seconded by Councilman Kirkham to approve the meeting dates. Motion carried 7-0.

County Council Liaisons

President Sosinski has the current list and will review and make some adjustments prior to the January 23, 2017 Meeting. She will contact Council Members to see what their interest is.

County Council Committees

Councilman Garner says some of the Committee appointments will line up with Liaisons.

Auditor Winski received a letter from John Sheets asking to be reappointed to the Michigan City Economic Development Commission. A Motion was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Vice-President Santana. Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Yagelski made a Motion to nominate Bob Bailey to the PTABOA Board. The Motion was seconded by Councilman Novak. Bob Bailey explains the reasons why he would like to be reappointed to the PTABOA.

Councilman Sullivan made a Motion to nominate Pam Kieft to the PTABOA which is seconded by Vice-President Santana.

Councilman Novak nominates Matthew Bernacchi to the PTABOA which is seconded by Councilman Kirkham.

Councilman Garner asks Attorney Friedman for clarification on voting.

Attorney Friedman states that only two out of the three nominees will be appointed.

Vice-President Santana received letters from the Auditor's Office in regards to nominees Bailey and Bernacchi. He did also receive correspondence from Pam Kieft indicating her interest serving on the PTABOA. Vice-President Santana reads the letter he received from Pam Kieft. Auditor Winski notes that this letter was never forwarded to her Office and several other Council Members did not receive it either.

Vice-President Santana reads letters of interest from Bob Bailey and Matthew Bernacchi so that all letters were read into the record.

Auditor Winski records the vote for PTABOA:

Mr. Bailey – Ayes: Councilmen Kirkham, Sullivan, Yagelski and President Sosinski. Nays: Vice-President Santana and Councilman Novak. Motion carried 5-2.

Ms. Kieft – Ayes: Councilmen Novak, Santana, Sullivan and President Sosinski. Nays: Councilmen Yagelski, Garner and Kirkham. Motion carried 4-3.

Mr. Bernacchi – Ayes: Councilmen Garner, Yagelski, Novak and Kirkham. Nays: President Sosinski, Vice-President Santana and Councilman Sullivan. Motion carried 4-3.

Auditor Winski states Mr. Bailey is on the PTABOA and there is a tie between Ms. Kieft and Mr. Bernacchi.

Attorney Friedman states there will be a run-off between Ms. Kieft and Mr. Bernacchi and to vote only once for either candidate left (Kieft or Bernacchi).

Auditor Winski calls the roll:

Ms. Kieft: - Councilmen Novak, Santana, Sullivan and President Sosinski (4)

Mr. Bernacchi – Councilmen Yagelski, Garner and Kirkham (3)

Ms. Kieft wins the run-off 4-3.

Auditor Winski asks for a moment so that she can confer with Attorney Friedman regarding Ms. Kieft. Ms. Kieft does appeals within the County and was verifying if there could be a conflict of interest. Attorney Friedman suggests letting the appointment stand pending an attorney's opinion regarding recusals. If there is a problem with this appointment, it can be brought up at the next regular Council Meeting.

Councilman Novak nominates Roger Wolf for the Alcohol Beverage Board. Councilman Kirkham seconds. Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Yagelski nominates Judy Lange for the Michigan City Library Board and Vice-President Santana seconds. Motion carried 7-0.

Prosecutor Espar will be appearing at the next Meeting to ask for Permission to Hire. Attorney Friedman asks that this item be placed on the Agenda for the next Meeting and Councilman Kirkham agrees. President Sosinski received no paperwork regarding this item and agrees with Councilman Kirkham. Auditor Winski takes the roll call to fill the position. Ayes: President Sosinski, Councilmen Sullivan, Yagelski, Garner and Novak. Nays: Councilman Kirkham and Vice-President Santana. The Motion carried 5-2.

Councilman Garner asked if the Uniform Conflict of Interest Forms must be filled out by each Council Member this year. Auditor Winski said they do.

Mark Yagelski spoke about economic development and how all entities need to think out of the box.

ADJOURNMENT

A Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Motion carried 7-0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 23rd day of January, 2017.



Councilman Terry Garner



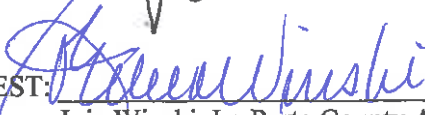
Councilman Randy Novak



Councilwoman Lois Sosinski



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor



Councilman Cary Kirkham



Councilman Jeff Santana



Councilman John Sullivan