



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

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL  
APRIL 23, 2018 AT 6:30 P.M.**

*(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)*

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on April 23, 2018 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 Randy Novak called the Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**ROLL CALL**

Auditor Joie Winski took the Roll Call. Council Members present were Garner, Kirkham, Mollenhauer, Novak, Santana, Sullivan, and Yagelski. A quorum was noted.

**APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 23, 2018 AGENDA**

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Sullivan and seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer.

Councilman Santana said an updated copy of the financial figures from La Porte County Maintenance on the Courthouse basement was distributed to the Council. He was concerned that the previous amounts had already been advertised but President Novak said they were advertised as not to exceed. Councilman Santana said it will be discussed later. Auditor Winski asked for an updated copy.

Motion carried 7-0.

**APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 26, 2018 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Motion carried 7-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Dennis Metheny, 6757 W 450 N, Michigan City, IN 46360*

After receiving a previous copy of the meeting's agenda, Mr. Metheny questioned the abatement for Michigan City Hospitality. Although it was ultimately removed from tonight's agenda, he still had the following questions: Which hotel is requesting the abatement? How much will it cost to build the hotel?

How much loss in tax revenue for a 10-year abatement? He said he doesn't have a problem with the abatement but with the loss of revenue. President Novak said because it is not an item on the agenda, it is not an issue before the Council. Mr. Metheny said it didn't keep him from having the questions, so President Novak said that Economic Development would address the questions during Department Head Reports. Mr. Metheny expressed his appreciation.

*Lisa Pierzakowski, Center Township Trustee*

Ms. Pierzakowski distributed a letter to the Council in reference to the Transit Triangle. She explained that it is addressed to Robin Tillman requesting some changes. She believes that adding a stop at the 4<sup>th</sup> Street Library would assist people in getting from La Porte to Michigan City where they would have improved access to homeless shelters, overnight shelters, the Social Security office, and the 4D office in the lower half of the Courthouse. In addition, a stop at the FSSA office in Michigan City would assist those people who may not have a mode of transportation to get them to the office for food stamps, etc. The current problem is that La Porte residents have to take more than one bus to get to their destinations. By adding these additional stops, it would provide the opportunity for residents of La Porte to frequent various shopping areas and restaurants in Michigan City, and bring them closer to the train to Chicago. It may also add more ridership to the Transit Triangle.

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

#### **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

*Barb Mossman, La Porte County Human Resources Director*

The Job Evaluation Committee evaluated two positions and as budget hearings approach, she will be forwarding details. One position was out of the Circuit Court and one out of the Clerk's Office; both were evaluated to a higher step.

*Mike Seitz, Office of Economic Development*

Mr. Seitz explained that the office was in negotiations with a hotel company out of South Bend, but they weren't ready to make an application, so the item was removed from the agenda. The company was Marriot, which will be an \$8,000,000.00 investment of a 4-story hotel containing 92 rooms on 421.

Hearing or seeing no additional Department Heads, President Novak closed Department Head Reports.

#### **LIAISON REPORTS**

Councilman Garner said he attended the Job Evaluation Committee meeting. He also spoke with the Recorder and the Sheriff who are both making presentations at tonight's meeting. He met with Councilman Yagelski, President Novak, and Auditor Winski to discuss items on tonight's agenda.

Councilman Mollenhauer attended the La Porte County Redevelopment Commission meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> and on April 6<sup>th</sup> attended a workshop for Behavioral Health Issues in La Porte County. The workshop was well attended and provided important information. On April 11<sup>th</sup>, Councilman Mollenhauer attended and conducted the La Porte County Solid Waste District Board meeting and on April 20<sup>th</sup>, he and his wife attended a fundraiser for the Sheriff's office and the Michigan City Fire Department K-9 program. The night was very enjoyable and gave congratulations for the fundraising effort.

Councilman Yagelski said the long-awaited bridge study is complete and a final copy will be included with the agenda for the next Council meeting. The group was comprised of Lochner, DLZ, and Structurepoint.

Councilman Kirkham attended a NIRPC meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>, which included a discussion of the reconfiguration at 2 and 20. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, he attended the South County Community Coalition, and on April 13<sup>th</sup>, he attended a Government Affairs breakfast.

Councilman Sullivan said per Treasurer Spevak, the tax bills were mailed on April 9<sup>th</sup>. He added that collections are steady with approximately 1,000 payments per day. He also attended the South County Coalition meeting at the new Westville police station, which was the old La Porte Hospital doctor's office. He stated that Marshal Darin Mercer did an excellent job on the transformation.

Councilman Santana said EMS, EMA and Maintenance are all on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

President Novak attended the Ethics Summit in Merrillville last month. He also attended Redevelopment Commission, Finance Committee, and Community Corrections meetings. He also attended the Opioid Study Report provided by La Porte Health Coalition. They spent a lot of time and effort interviewing health care providers, first responders, police, fire, and community members. The final report is available on their website. He said the fundraising event was outstanding and he thanked the owner of Little Tavern for being the highest bidder on the fire helmet.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Consider Approval of Council President's Authorization to Hire Replacement for EMS Insurance Clerk**

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

**2. Consider Retroactive Approval of Council President's Declaration of Emergency Repairs Needed for Franklin Street Bridge**

President Novak explained that the cost came in at \$134,000.00, which Bob Young said was in the Major Bridge Fund so an additional appropriation is not necessary. A motion to approve was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Motion carried 7-0.

**OLD BUSINESS**

A motion to un-table the discussion of the new La Porte County website that was tabled at last month's meeting was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion to reschedule discussion of the new La Porte County website to budget hearings was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 7-0.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

None

**APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS**

**La Porte County Recorder**

**Requesting Permission to Spend**

**From Recorder's Perpetuation Fund**

**For Production Scanner Equipment and Peripherals**

**\$10,509.00**

Recorder Sosinski explained that the list of equipment was sent to Darlene Hale to insure compatibility. The equipment includes hand-held scanners and when a scanned document is printed, it will have a barcode that can automatically scan information instead of having the clerks manually enter the information. In this way, clerical errors can be minimized and efficiency improved. She also said label printers came with the package. The original request was for \$6,130.00; the current invoice includes \$7,291.00, annual maintenance of \$1,182.00, and peripherals at a cost of \$8,166.00. Applying the previous approved amount of \$6,130.00, the balance being requested is \$10,509.00. With this, the entire system will be enhanced.

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

Recorder Sosinski invited the Council members to visit her office to see a demonstration.

**La Porte County Superior Court #1**

**Requesting Permission to Spend**

**From Probation User Fees (2102)**

**For a Workstation**

**\$3,373.22**

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

**La Porte County Superior Court #3**

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation**

**From Probation User Fees (2102)**

**For Computers, Computer Cart, Shredder and Shredder Bags**

**\$4,997.63**

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

**La Porte County Maintenance**

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation**

**From Riverboat (1191), Win Tax (4220), or General (1000)**

**For La Porte County Complex Probation Project**

**\$654,000.00**

A motion to approve \$429,000.00 out of the General Fund, that is minus the \$150,000.00 for which the Judges agreed, was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Santana. Councilman Yagelski thanked the Judges for stepping up and helping out for this project. President Novak added that this is for completing the downstairs area for Probation that was displaced when Superior 3 went up on the second floor several years ago.

Rich Gramarossa from Building Maintenance stated that the actual contract price was \$754,000.00. Per his handout, if the first three items are deducted because Maintenance and IT will be taking care of them, and add what the Fire Marshall and La Porte County Inspector included, plus the additional that occurred from

the RFP, the total is \$579,000.00. This doesn't include anything from Probation. He asked if everyone is on the same page. Councilman Santana asked if the \$150,000.00 would be deducted from the \$579,000.00. Mr. Gramarossa replied that \$579,000.00 is the total contract price, after deductions not including anything from Probation at all. Ms. Darlene Hale added that the \$150,000.00 would cover the first three items on the handout. Auditor Winski added that \$579,000.00 is the total allocation which does not include Probation; \$579,000.00 is needed and not the \$429,000.00. Therefore, Auditor Winski said \$529,000.00 plus \$150,000.00 from Probation is needed. Councilman Yagelski amended his motion to approve \$529,000.00 from the General fund which was seconded by Councilman Santana. Councilman Garner asked to put on record that no additional monies would be needed for this project and Mr. Gramarossa replied affirmatively. Motion carried 7-0.

<b>Requesting Permission to Spend</b>	
<b>From Probation User Fees (2102)</b>	
<b>For La Porte County Complex Probation Project</b>	<u>\$150,000.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$754,000.00</b>

Councilman Santana asked if it is common courtesy or legality for departments to ask for permission to spend. Auditor Winski replied that it is a state statute.

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

<b><u>La Porte County EMS</u></b>	
<b>Requesting an Additional Appropriation</b>	
<b>From CCD Fund (1138)</b>	
<b>For Purchase of Replacement Ambulance</b>	<b>\$176,110.00</b>
<b>For Loose Equipment for Ambulance</b>	<b>\$ 13,800.00</b>
<b>For Replacement of ALS Support Vehicle</b>	<b>\$ 36,790.00</b>
<b>For Loose Equipment of Support Vehicle</b>	<u><b>\$ 11,500.00</b></u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$238,200.00</b>

**(Motion of Support Granted at March Meeting, Re-Advertised for Additional Appropriation from the CCD Fund)**

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. President Novak clarified that this is not for an additional ambulance but for a replacement. Motion carried 7-0.

<b>Requesting Permission to Spend</b>	
<b>From EMS Donation Fund (4103)</b>	
<b>For EMS Week</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>

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

Andrew McGuire stated that this is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Responder Program in La Porte County. It was started in La Porte County and has been adopted throughout the state of Indiana. EMS Week is May 20<sup>th</sup> through May 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. McGuire invited everyone to the annual awards ceremony to be held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:00 a.m. in the County Complex. Brian Langley from Homeland Security will be the Guest Speaker.

**La Porte County EMA**

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation**

**From Riverboat (1191), Win Tax (4220), or General (1000)**

**For Siren Repair**

**\$26,350.95**

EMA Director Larry Butcher explained that by having the electric company complete the electrical repair instead of the vendor American Signal, he was able to save \$4,000.00. A motion to approve out of Win Tax (4220) was made by Councilman Sullivan and seconded by Councilman Santana. Councilman Yagelski reiterated that the Council would be responsible for the addition of a new siren, but repairs should be done by the Townships or Counties, so La Porte City should be paying for this repair. Councilman Santana said there must be some kind of clarification on whose obligation it is for the repair. Mr. Butcher stated that his position since he became Director is that the sirens are bought and paid for by La Porte County. He added that EMA and Building Maintenance used to take care of the electrical bills. However, approximately one year ago, the Maintenance department said they would no longer pay the electric bills for the townships so the townships acquired those bills and additional fees. The sirens have always been bought and paid for by the County, including repairs and maintenance. Councilman Garner said there has to be some type of documentation that describes on who the responsibility falls. Councilman Yagelski stated that for many years, the policy has been that the Townships or Cities pay for repairs and the County pays for new or replacement sirens. He added that La Porte City should be paying for part of this repair. Mr. Butcher stated that the sirens have always been bought, paid for, and maintained by EMA. He said he has not experienced anything different since he's been EMA Director.

President Novak stated that it is necessary for legal to research if there are any existing documents. He questioned whether this repair could be approved at tonight's meeting. Attorney Friedman said it could be approved tonight and reimbursement sought later if necessary. Councilman Sullivan amended his motion to approve, subject to what is ascertained about who is responsible for repairs and Councilman Santana seconded. Motion carried 6-1, with Councilman Kirkham voting Nay.

**Requesting Permission to Spend**

**From the General Fund (1000)**

**For Funds Acquired from the Sale of the Surplus Radio Equipment**

**To Purchase Portable Radios for EMS**

**\$12,250.00**

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. President Novak explained that this is regarding the 800 MHz surplus radios; EMA received \$12,250.00 from the radios that were sold and is adding \$11,863.31 to buy additional radios for EMS. Motion carried 7-0.

**Requesting Permission to Spend**

**From Emergency Reserve Fund (1186)**

**For the Additional Funds Needed to Purchase Portable Radios for EMS**

**\$11,863.31**

**Total**

**\$24,113.31**

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

**La Porte County Sheriff's Department**  
**Requesting an Additional Appropriation**  
**From the General Fund (1000)**

**Not to Exceed**

**For Additional Deputy**

**\$66,756.50**

**(Motion of Support Granted at March Meeting, Re-Advertised for Additional Appropriation from the General Fund)**

President Novak confirmed with Auditor Winski that this request could be taken out of the General Fund, and she replied affirmatively. A motion to approve was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Councilman Mollenhauer questioned the amount because the salary would only be paid through the end of the year and next year's salary would be put into the budget. Sheriff Boyd agreed and President Novak said it would be a *Not to Exceed*. Councilman Santana added that it would most likely be closer to half of the request by the time the deputy is hired. Chief Deputy Heeg said it would probably be closer to \$40,000.00 but would appreciate having extra in case it is more. In addition, Sheriff Boyd told Councilman Yagelski that he was able to find money in his budget to transfer.

A motion to hire a full-time deputy was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Councilman Yagelski asked if there was any special pay associated with this position, but Sheriff Boyd replied there wasn't and that it would actually be a Junior Officer which would be at a lower salary. Motion carried 7-0.

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation**  
**From Riverboat (1191), Win Tax (4220), or General (1000)**

**For Inmate Food**

**\$210,000.00**

**For Merit Overtime**

**\$ 60,000.00**

**Total**

**\$270,000.00**

A motion to approve \$210,000.00 out of the General Fund (1000) for Inmate Food was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Kirkham. Councilman Mollenhauer stated he feels that the Work Release should be paying their share of the meals. In the first 30 days, he can understand providing meals, but once the person gets a job, he or she should pay for his or her own meals. Per last year's budget, meals for Work Release were \$1.19 per meal for 14,398 meals at a cost of approximately \$17,000.00. President Novak said he believed that Community Corrections reimbursed the Sheriff's Office for Work Release meals. Sheriff Boyd said he would have to check with Connie Trojanowski and doesn't know if they have in the past. He added that the jail kitchen staff is not only serving meals at the jail but their meals as well. President Novak said the bill also includes November and December of 2017. Councilman Santana questioned, if those people in Community Corrections are paying a fee for meals, where does the money go if not to reimburse the Sheriff's Office? Sheriff Boyd said he assumes it would go back into the General Fund. Auditor Winski said that Community Corrections has their own fund in which the fees are put. Councilman Mollenhauer asked if they were paying for their meals then, and Auditor Winski replied that she would have to ask Ms. Trojanowski if the office receives a check for that. However, she said she would try to check the budget to see if she can find an immediate answer. Councilman Santana said if money is sitting there, it needs to be used to reimburse for the meals. Councilman Kirkham asked if an ordinance or mandate was established to feed and charge people from Work Release for meals. Sheriff Boyd replied that Mr. Buell would have to respond to that because he runs the Work Release. Being the Liaison for Community Corrections, President Novak stated that the people are charged a daily fee and he believes part of that is for meals. He also believes the money goes into the General Fund. Auditor Winski said it goes into the Work Release fund. Various expenses are paid out of this fund but she did not see that meals are not listed. She added if she would have to research if it is State statute. President Novak said it is a

Court Order that the people from Work Release have to pay. Councilman Mollenhauer believed that vending machines were supposed to be available, but the people continue to be provided with meals.

Motion carried 7-0.

Sheriff Boyd said approximately one-third of overtime to date has been in emergency detention transport. Money has been spent from Merit Overtime and Jail, and Jail officers are preferable because they get paid at a lower rate. However, Merit Overtime is nearly depleted. There are more calls in addition to the court-ordered emergency transport, and various other challenges have impacted overtime. Also, in the previous weekend alone, there were five emergency transports anywhere from Lafayette to Fort Wayne to Indianapolis. The farthest destination has been Evansville. There is no immediate resolution to this issue.

A motion to approve \$60,000.00 out of the General Fund (1000) for Merit Overtime was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Santana. Motion carried 6-1, with Councilman Garner voting Nay.

Councilman Santana stated he will not approve continuing expenses out of Riverboat or Win Tax.

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation  
From CCD Fund (1138)  
For 13 Vehicles and Vehicle Equipment**

**Not to Exceed  
\$405,000.00**

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Sheriff Boyd said one of the vehicles is a Scuba van. Councilman Yagelski stated two different departments inquired into the used vehicles but would not serve the desired purpose for either of them. He added that these trade-in vehicles were supposed to replace older vehicles that could be used for the trade-ins. A lot of money is spent and he hopes that the Commissioners would look into it. Councilman Santana agrees with Councilman Yagelski and thinks some of the vehicles might be useful to the County. However, that decision is up to the Commissioners. Motion carried 7-0.

Sheriff Boyd said he takes the comments from the Council as compliments because his office takes pride in taking care of the vehicles. The mechanical maintenance staff is outstanding and the cars are routinely inspected. His office often receives comments on the condition of the vehicles.

**Requesting Permission to Spend  
From Misdemeanant Fund (1175)  
For Purchase of Van**

**\$50,804.00**

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

Sheriff Boyd said on April 24<sup>th</sup>, the Sheriff's Office is co-hosting a Town Hall style meeting with La Porte Police Department at Cummins Lodge. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. and at 7:00 p.m. the meeting with begin.

**COUNTY COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS**



Councilman Kirkham asked Councilman Yagelski about the ridership numbers, and he replied that they just came out and are in the mail. Councilman Yagelski said he was unsure if they were divided by stop.

Councilman Santana wished luck to all the candidates in the May 8<sup>th</sup> election. He added that in May, the Council meeting will be Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> and the June meeting will be June 18<sup>th</sup>. He also discussed the idea of training employees, such as officers, paramedics, etc., and contracting with them so they don't pursue another position as soon as their training is complete. He asked Attorney Friedman is it is something that the County could accomplish. Attorney Friedman said that in the private sector, there are non-compete agreements, but he would have to look into whether it has been done in the public sector.

Councilman Yagelski said sometimes the public misunderstands what occurs during the meeting. He stated it is the job of the Council to inquire into and research things that could assist the County. At the previous meeting, there was a discussion regarding a new law relating to the opioid crisis and if money was available to the County. It was inferred by someone from the community that taxes would now be raised due to the law, but there was no discussion of that.

President Novak reminded the students in the audience to come up and have their papers signed.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Kirkham and seconded by Councilman Santana. Motion carried 7-0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 29<sup>th</sup> of May, 2018.

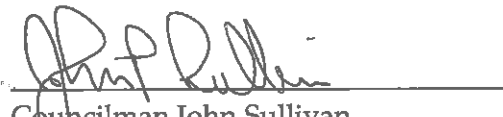
  
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Councilman Terry Garner

  
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Councilman Cary Kirkham

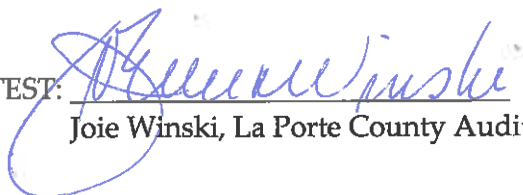
  
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Councilman Mike Mollenhauer

  
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Councilman Randy Novak

  
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Councilman Jeff Santana

  
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Councilman John Sullivan

  
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Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST:   
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Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor