



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

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
MAY 28, 2019 AT 6:30 P.M.**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on May 28, 2019 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, Mollenhauer, Novak, Rosenbaum, Santana, Sullivan, and Yagelski. A quorum was noted.

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 28, 2019 AGENDA

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. President Novak stated that the La Porte County Engineer appropriation has been removed from the agenda. The amended motion carried 7-0.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 22, 2019 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 8, 2019 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Sullivan and seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. Councilman Santana said he voted against reimbursing the Riverboat funds. He explained that he was mournful over the passing of his sister and absolutely meant to vote Aye instead of Nay on this issue. He asked Attorney Guy DiMartino if the motion had to be amended or if his public statement would suffice since the motion did already carry 5-1. Attorney DiMartino replied the public statement would be sufficient. Motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Tony Rodriguez, Director of the Office of Community and Economic Development

Mr. Rodriguez introduced Quinn White, a summer intern working in his office. He is a senior at Indiana University Kelly School of Business, majoring in Finance. Councilman Yagelski asked if the Retention/Expansion/Visitation report has been completed. Mr. Rodriguez replied that a Community Development Specialist is being sought, whose salary is already in the budget submitted to the Council. He added that a small part of this person's responsibility would be to work on the report, even though the majority lies on Mr. Rodriguez. Councilman Yagelski said the Council receives this report on a yearly basis and said to update the one that was used last year. He also suggested that Mr. Rodriguez contact the young lady at Purdue's Economic Development from whom he can learn and share ideas.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Rosenbaum attended the NIRPC Finance and Personnel Committee meeting where the budget and recent activity was reviewed. The Executive Board had resolutions on ongoing projects. Surprisingly, both Porter and Lake Counties had far more projects than La Porte, so changing that will be looked into as well as working closer with Mitch Bishop on projects. He will also be attending upcoming meetings with La Porte County Redevelopment and the Parks Department.

Councilman Sullivan and Santana had nothing to report.

Councilman Garner said the majority of Council members attended the Purdue Extension meeting where they were brought up to date.

Councilman Mollenhauer stated that he wanted to comment on the May 8th Executive Session, and wants the Public to understand that the Council attended multiple meetings, had numerous discussions, and put a lot of thought into the decision(s) made regarding the Courthouse Renovation project. He added the decisions made were deliberate and not made quickly. He attended the Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony on May 10th. He said speaker Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart was outstanding. He also attended an Insurance Committee meeting with Barb Mossman and the insurance company where it was reported things are on track to stay within the budget. He attended the Small Animal Shelter Open House, where a gazebo was dedicated in honor of the late Sergeant Roger Bernard.

Councilman Yagelski said it was his privilege to have served on the NIKTD Board for the last 17 years. He has faith that the important issues will still be completed. However, the Republican Senate/State House, Representatives and the Governor felt that there was too much money allocated out and a new Committee would be formed. Unfortunately, the Governor will now appoint a President instead of the Committee voting on the Boards. In addition, the Governor can change appointments at any time if he is unhappy with his/her performance. He said lessons are learned about how politics works, but he wished the NIKTD employees and supervisors the best of luck. He added that Mayor Ron Meer will be the representative from La Porte County to the Committee.

President Novak attended the EMS awards and he congratulated the award recipients. He also attended the Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony and said it was very good. He attended the Redevelopment Commission and the 911 Advisory Board meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Consider Approval of Prosecutor's Request for Part-Time Adult Protective Services Case Monitor to be paid at \$17.00 an hour/Consider Approval of Amended Salary Ordinance 2019-01 to add Part-Time Case Monitor Position at \$17.00 an hour

Kristine Harlow, Director of Adult Protective Services, explained she is seeking the approval to hire a part-time Case Monitor at \$17.00 per hour for 16 hours per week. Financially, this would be \$272.00 times 43 weeks for a total of \$11,696.00; this money is coming from the State and is already in her budget starting July 1, 2019. President Novak asked where the \$17.00 figure came from and Ms. Harlow explained she contacted other agencies in the State and arrived at that amount. Councilman Yagelski said the Salary Ordinance would also have to be amended and Attorney DiMartino confirmed that. A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. Motion carried 7-0.

2. Consider Approval of 911 Director's Request to add Additional Full-Time 911 Dispatcher in an Amount Not to Exceed \$37,000 for 2019 (Approx. \$73,238.49 for Full Year) from the Statewide 911 Fund (1222)/Consider Approval of 911 Director's Request for Permission to Spend from the Statewide 911 Fund (1222) for Air Conditioning Unit for 911 Center in the Amount of \$12,394.00

A motion to approve the Air Conditioning Unit for the 911 Center out of Statewide 911 Fund (1222) was made by Councilman Rosenbaum and seconded by Councilman Santana. Motion carried 6-1, with Councilman Garner voting Nay.

911 Director Steve Alt distributed information to the Council. He acknowledged Ashley from 911 who came in during the storm of her own accord to be of assistance. He said that in 2010, the County merged to make a remote dispatch center; currently, there are 18 fire departments and EMS using only one console. That dispatcher answers the telephone and calls from 911, EMS, and fire. In 2018, there were 160,095 calls for service, of which 44,000 calls were by the Michigan City Police Department, all handled by one dispatcher. In 2010, when the County merged to make the remote dispatch center, there were two dispatchers but one position was ultimately eliminated. In addition, calls for service have progressively increased over the years. The dispatcher is often overwhelmed and at times expresses frustration. The State 911 Board is visiting his office next week to look at redesigning how 911 surcharges are being dispersed. Porter County only had 140,000 calls for service but maintain 8 to 9 consoles. He stated that the Long Beach Police Department has also been acquired by 911; he said the Chief of Long Beach called six times and received no response. To complicate the issue, Long Beach is on a different frequency which creates a challenge. His vision is to use a dispatcher for the smaller agencies and another for the Sheriff's Department. He added that Long Beach is busy in the summer and there is no longer a dispatcher there.

Councilman Yagelski said he cannot support this unless the Police Chief of Long Beach decides to come on the same frequency as the County. He has a problem with the County taking over the dispatching when Long Beach Police Department is not addressing the frequency issue on their end. They had the opportunity to come on the same frequency when the County switched over, but chose not to change. Mr. Alt said a solution would be to put all of the smaller agencies on one frequency handled by one dispatcher, and the Sheriff's Department would stay on its frequency to be handled by another dispatcher. Councilman Yagelski said there must be some sort of agreement. Councilman Santana agreed but said he feels that the cart is being put before the horse and the smaller agencies should be contacted to insure they are on board with the idea. Councilman Rosenbaum asked how many calls are received from the smaller agencies and why Michigan City isn't put on its own frequency. Mr. Alt said

Michigan City and the Sheriff do share a frequency but Michigan City does have its own dispatcher. He added that the small agencies add a lot of radio traffic and if they were separated, that traffic would be reduced. President Novak asked if the 911 Advisory Board was in a position to tell Long Beach what was necessary for them to do if they wanted to use the County for dispatching. When the County moved the 800 MHz, Long Beach and City of La Porte chose not to switch. Therefore, there should have been some type of stipulation to Long Beach that they had to change if they wanted to come to the County. He added there is no reason they should be putting this type of burden on the dispatcher and should be told it is necessary for them to switch to the same frequency as the County. Councilman Yagelski said he feels this issue should be tabled until the next meeting so there can be further discussion and alternative solutions can be examined. Mr. Alt added that \$90,332.19 was accrued in overtime last year. President Novak said if anyone on the Council hasn't visited the 911 center, he should to see how it works. Councilman Santana said another issue is if the County is still under a hiring freeze. Hiring a new full-time employee with benefits would violate this freeze, although adding one or two part-time employees could be an option.

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

Councilman Yagelski asked Mr. Alt to supply the Council with a chart of how his employees are being utilized, and President Novak asked that an email be sent as to when it would be a good time for Council members to visit the 911 Center.

3. Consider Approval of County Assessor Employee Job Evaluation/Recommendation – County Assessor Mike Schultz

Assessor Mike Schultz explained the job evaluations are usually done at budget time, but has had an employee vacancy since January. Therefore, he has reevaluated positions in the office and instead of filling the vacancy, he would like to use the funds to increase the salary for an existing employee. He said it is becoming more apparent that it is necessary to have employees that can analyze data over measuring a home. This Level III employee would assist with last year's ratio study and analyze sales for the following year. He is asking that the employee be changed to a COMOT VI and the vacancy will not be filled. The increase will be about \$4,000.00, so the savings will be approximately \$60,000.00. In addition, if that person should leave, the replacement would have to have the same qualifications as the existing employee. The increase would begin with the next scheduled pay. A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Councilman Santana asked if this was approved by Human Resources, and Assessor Schultz replied that Barb Mossman was aware and spoke with President Novak about it. Councilman Rosenbaum asked for the difference between Level II and Level III positions. Assessor Schultz explained that a Level II is a one-week class that includes understanding the sales, income, and market approaches at basic levels. The Level III is a five-week class which gets more in depth into these approaches and how to run a good Assessor's Office.

Motion carried 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilman Garner asked about the Fairgrounds Lease. President Novak said the last communication he had was from Attorney Doug Biege, the Commissioners' and Fairground Management's attorney, and

Anthony Novak, the Fair Board's attorney. He said an agreement is still being negotiated. He added something would have to be worked out by the June Council meeting, prior to Budget Hearings.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Ordinance No. 2019-5 – An Ordinance Setting Mileage Reimbursement for La Porte County Employees and Officers

Councilman Yagelski said this usually comes up at Budget Hearings, so he asked why this is being addressed at this time. Auditor JoEileen Winski replied that there was a department that claimed mileage and inquired as to why the County is not following the maximum \$.58 per mile per State statute. Attorney DiMartino said the Commission previously set the amount at \$.53.5 per mile and after looking at the statute, it is a Council and not a Commissioner decision. Councilman Yagelski expressed his frustration that once again, the Commissioners are attempting to authorize something over which they do not have the power to approve. Auditor Winski stated that at the last Budget Hearings, the amount was set at \$.53.5 per mile. However, due to the inquiry of the department, the issue needed to be addressed by the Council. Auditor Winski added due to the questions by the department and the Commissioners, this issue arose. A motion to deny was made by Councilman Santana and seconded by Councilman Yagelski. Motion carried 7-0.

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

**Michigan Township Assessor
Requesting Permission to Spend
For Replacement of Retiring Employee**

Scott Bell, Michigan Township Assessor, asked for the replacement of a retiring COMOT IV employee. Councilman Yagelski addressed the possibility of hiring two part-time employees as needed instead of a full-time employee with benefits. In addition, he said that Assessor Schultz agreed to give up to two part-time employees as needed. A motion to deny this request, with the stipulation that Assessor Schultz could replace as needed, was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Santana. Motion carried 7-0.

**La Porte County Parks Department
Requesting Permission to Spend
From Parks Non-Reverting Fund (2052)
For the Replacement of Color Printer**

**Not to Exceed
\$1,635.00**

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

Jeremy Sobecki, Parks Department Supervisor, said there are areas that have not been mowed due to flooding. He added that he wanted to give an update on the Luhr Park grant. He said there is a \$400,000.00 grant of which they have to come up with \$200,000.00. They received a \$70,000.00 grant from the Healthcare Foundation to build a walking trail. The 35th Class of Leadership La Porte County gave a \$5,000.00 donation and the Park Foundation donated 15 acres which equates to approximately \$70,000.00.

The Park Foundation will donate additional money, and he hopes to come before the Council to be able to spend money from the Non-Reverting Capital Fund. In addition, a shelter to house 90-100 people is going to be built by the Building Trades at La Porte High School which will save a lot of money.

La Porte County Engineer

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation
From Cumulative Bridge Fund (1135)
For Repairs to Bridge #34**

**Not to Exceed
\$636,480.00**

This item was previously removed from the agenda.

La Porte County Coroner

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation
From Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220)
For the Purchase of a Replacement Vehicle
(Tabled from April 8, 2019 Meeting)**

\$28,576.00

There was a discussion on whether or not this item had previously been voted upon or was tabled. Auditor Winski agreed and Councilman Rosenbaum said the used ambulances are not going to be a viable option for a solution. Councilman Yagelski said these ambulances are being used right now and replacement vehicles are going to be needed over the next few years. A motion to untable was made by Councilman Rosenbaum and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Motion carried 6-1, with Councilman Santana voting Nay.

Coroner Cutler said he was asked by the Council for an alternative solution and that is what he found. He found a smaller vehicle and not 4-wheel drive, but will serve its purpose. It will last for at least 10 years and will be purchased in Michigan City so it can be serviced in the County. Mr. Cutler said a previous vehicle was purchased approximately one year ago, and Councilman Santana asked for the location of that vehicle. Mr. Cutler replied it was parked outside, but explained he is on call so he needed to have the vehicle nearby. He also said there is a trade-in vehicle that has 170,000 miles which the garage will no longer fix. He added that the new vehicle will be used to cover the entire County instead of just a portion. The vehicle is no-frills and will serve its purpose. Councilman Santana expressed his displeasure that the research on the vehicle was not done the first time Coroner Cutler approached the Council.

A motion to approve \$28,576.00 out of Riverboat (1191) was made by Councilman Sullivan and seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. Motion carried 5-2, with Councilmen Santana and Yagelski voting Nay.

Councilman Yagelski said three agencies have wanted to donate coloring books and Mr. Cutler replied he would pursue it.

La Porte County Sheriff

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation
From Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220)
For Merit Overtime
And Courthouse Security Overtime
Total**

**\$60,000.00
\$ 5,000.00
\$65,000.00**

A motion to approve \$60,000.00 for Merit Overtime out of Win Tax (4220) was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Santana. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion to approve \$5,000.00 for Courthouse Security Overtime out of Win Tax (4220) was made by Councilman Rosenbaum and seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Motion carried 7-0.

Requesting Permission to Spend

From Firearms Fund (1156)

For Replacement of Water Heater at Range/Training Facility

Not to Exceed

\$500.00

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

Councilman Yagelski asked about security early voting. Sheriff Boyd replied that there has been discussion with the County attorney about moving early voting out of the Courthouse which would alleviate the need for security on Saturdays when it is traditionally closed. However, Sheriff Boyd is concerned that the problem will just be pushed to another entity that might also require security for early voting. Councilman Yagelski feels the early voting at the Courthouse is very secure and discussed early voting at schools. President Novak said he believes the Election Board said changes wouldn't occur until after this fall. The Board is concerned about voting turnout so the location is not changed thoughtlessly.

La Porte County Probation/Superior Court #3

Requesting Permission to Spend

From Probation User Fees (2102)

For the Purchase of Laptop for Superior Court #3

\$1,137.14

And 2 Printers for Probation Department

\$ 655.00

Total

\$1,792.14

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

COUNTY COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Councilman Santana discussed an article he read in the News Dispatch regarding agreement on the Trade Unions signing an agreement with La Porte Hospital. He said the Council has been discussing this and he said it what's the Council wanted. He said it was a good job, way to negotiate and way to get the people working.

Councilman Rosenbaum thanked Councilman Yagelski for his work on the NIKTD Board. He also offered Mayor Meer luck while serving. He said there has been discussion from the State on the J-Turn at Highway 30 and 39. There is still discussion on the US 30 Coalition, and creating a bypass for heavy trucks to alleviate traffic from downtown streets which other large cities are researching. He also said he is continuing to meet with departments to learn more about what they do so he is prepared during budget hearings. He added that he has taken a tour of the Michigan City Courthouse and has gone through the La Porte Courthouse building. He also said there was an issue due the absence of the person doing in-house printing, but Auditor Winski said it was resolved. President Novak added that Maintenance is filling in with part-time people in the short-term. Councilman Rosenbaum said the County offers opportunities for training to interns and he wished them well.

Councilman Garner asked the Sheriff to re-approach the Council to discuss security for the County Fair. Sheriff Boyd said there is a contract which is going before the Commissioners in June. It was drafted and approved by the Fair Board, calls for the same amount of security as last year, and will be paid for by the Fair Board.

President Novak said the Judges have requested a workshop on June 17th at 5:00 p.m. on Criminal Rule 26. The dates for Budget Hearings will begin at 8:30 a.m. starting July 22nd, 23rd, and 24th if necessary. The next regular Council meeting will be 5:00 p.m. on July 22nd, right after Budget Hearings.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Rosenbaum.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 24th of June, 2019.

ABSENT
Councilman Terry Garner

Michael M. Mollenhauer
Councilman Mike Mollenhauer

Randy Novak
Councilman Randy Novak

Mike Rosenbaum
Councilman Mike Rosenbaum

Jeff Santana
Councilman Jeff Santana

John P. Sullivan
Councilman John Sullivan

Mark Jagelski
Councilman Mark Jagelski

ATTEST: Joie Winski
Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor