



**LA PORTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**Sheila Matias,
President**

**Dr. Vidya Kora,
Vice President**

**Richard Mrozinski,
Member**

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 15, 2020 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room #3 at 10:00 a.m.**

Vice President Vidya Kora called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Auditor Joie Winski called the roll: Commissioner Kora - Present; Commissioner Matias - Absent; Commissioner Mrozinski - Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

Considered the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to amend the agenda by adding: "Requesting permission to travel to Phoenix, Arizona March 9-12 for the 2020 Eagleview (Pictometry) User Conference – Mike Schultz, Assessor." Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to accept the agenda with the additional item. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered approval of January 8, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Auditor Joie Winski read the Miscellaneous claims of \$429,062.37. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Gary Radtke – Radtke Engineering announced his partnership with VS Engineering. Thanked his clients for the past 30 years.

Donna McCleary – 135 W. McClung Road La Porte – Stated after reading an article in the newspaper about a County Highway Department employee who was involved in an accident she inquired as to how this individual was still driving as an employee after being involved in an accident in 1985 involving her father.

Commissioner Kora assured Ms. McCleary the Commissioners will look into the matter.

Presentation by Scott Pelath – Kankakee River Basin Commission – Tony Hendricks – County Surveyor. Scott reported on the new Kankakee River Basin commission formed by Governor Eric Holcomb. Previously 240 miles long but currently only 80 miles. There are 8 counties that make up the Commission: Jasper, Newton, Lake, Porter, La Porte, Marshall, Starke and St. Joseph counties. Due to the recently enacted Public Law 282, resources and new powers should be able to help the flooding issues along the Kankakee River. The Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission advances Northwest Indiana's safety, economic prosperity, and quality of its natural resources.

Department Head Comment

Jeremy Sobecki – Parks Department – Reported on the 2019 year. Estimated visitation was hovering around 330,000 people according to the traffic counters. School and group programs were at a record number. Eighty One public programs that reached just under \$3,000 people. Grants and Donations for 2019 were \$77,000 from the Healthcare Foundation; just over \$50,000 from the Coolspring Township Trustee for Creek Ridge Park; and

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\$30,000 from DNR for Bioswale Project. The DNR \$400,000 Grant (\$200,000 DNR/\$200,000 match) project at Luhr Park is finishing up. The new shelter is half way completed, new parking lots paved, a new trail and a new restroom. 2020 year looks to be busy with seven full time employees. A grant will be applied for to replace several trees that have died due to the wet spring. Red Mill Park will eventually need the parking lot paved. The five year Master Plan with the DNR will also be done in 2020. The Shared Bikeway System, the green and white bikeway signs designating bikeways throughout the county, began in 2001 with 400 miles of 20 bike routes. Almost 1800 signs were displayed. Not a lot of funds to maintain the bikeway system. In 2017 an assessment was done using volunteers to address the maintenance. In 2019 a committee of people: Todd & Trina Walsworth from the Bike Stop in Michigan City, Jim Jessup, Jane Dailey, Mitch Bishop, Tony Rodriguez and Jeremy Sobecki met to determine how to improve the Shared Bikeway System in La Porte County. Several routes were on roads that cyclists avoid due to heavy traffic. Reducing the number of routes was one idea. Using GPS to download a map for the routes was another improvement. The goal within the first year is to get 4-5 routes marked, online and an app available to use. Reducing the number of miles from 400 to 150-180 and 6 routes total versus 20 routes. This will allow money to be saved, time, bring the county current for cyclists. A local grant will be applied through the Healthcare foundation to help with removing, sorting, and replacing signs along the routes. Commissioner Kora thanked Jeremy for his great presentation. He stated he attended a Vibrant Communities meeting where 3 things were being focused on – “People, Place and Prosperity.” Commissioner Mrozinski stated Jeremy has done a great job with the Parks Department. Thank you!

Bob Young – Highway Superintendent – Requested permission to approach the Council for a replacement vehicle with a proposal. The insurance company issued a check for \$41,323 which leaves a balance of \$147,230 which Bob would like to use the Cedit fund for the difference. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.** Bob introduced Brian Gresham, a certified license herbicide applicator employee for the county highway department. Once a year Brian attends a class to be certified in Indianapolis. Highway department pays for him to attend the class. Brian reported the applicator license is governed by the state as a regulatory body “OISC – Office of Indiana State Chemist.” State provides testing and regulations for people to become licensed to apply commercial products. Educational hours are requested to maintain the license. Brian is allowed to purchase dry and/or liquid chemicals then apply it as well as train fellow employees. Bob stated Brian uses his vacation time to attend the 3 day conference which Commissioner Mrozinski asked why he would use his vacation time. Attorney Shaw Friedman said as per HR Barb Mossman he should attend the classes using county time not vacation. Commissioners thanked Brian for his report.

Barb Mossman – Human Resources Director – Announced events for the 2020 year. April 22nd -24th County Wellness Days for employees; June 12th tentatively set for American Red Cross Blood Drive which honors our Fallen Officers and November 16th for the 2021 open enrollment. Barb stated Ta-Tanesha George took a job in Michigan City as the Director for Human Rights and Monique Thomas will be the new assistant to Barb beginning January 27th.

Considered appointments. Commissioner Kora motioned to appoint Hassan Dabagia, Matt Bernacchi, and Amy Blind as per Assessor Mike Schultz’s recommendation. Mike stated paperwork had been submitted to the Commissioners to waive the Level II requirement for the members. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to accept the names and waive the Level II requirement by statue. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.** The La Porte County Convention & Visitors Bureau appointments will be announced at a later date. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Marcella “Marci” Kunstek to the Regional Sewer District Board. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Dr. Mark A. Nelson to the Health Board replacing Dr. Richard Houck who retired. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.** Attorney Shaw Friedman reminded the Commissioners a vacancy will be on the Health Board due to the hiring of Monique Thomas to the Human Resources office. Commissioner Kora stated once Monique starts her employment a replacement will be announced.

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Old Business

Considered recommendation of Bituminous Material/Hot Asphalt Concrete – Class 11/12 bids- Bob Young, Highway Superintendent. Oil used for chip seal and asphalt paving.

Class 11 – Bituminous Materials

Two Bidders:

Bit-Mat Products of Indiana

Asphalt Materials

We will accept both bids. Bit-Mat Products will be our primary bidder and Asphalt Materials will be our Secondary bidder.

Class 12 – Hot Asphalt Concrete

Two Bidders:

Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc.

Walsh & Kelly, Inc.

We will accept both bids. Rieth-Riley Construction Co. will be our primary bidder and Walsh & Kelly, Inc. will be our secondary bidder.

Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

New Business

Considered providing authority for the Fairgrounds Events & Management Corporation Board to approach County Council for \$125,000.00 to assist in maintenance/repairs at county owned Fairgrounds. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered commercial vehicle/weight limits Ordinance on 1st reading – Laura Nirenberg, Esq., Friedman & Associates P.C. and Deputy Ryan Elcock, La Porte County Sheriff's Department. Seven different counties' ordinances were looked at while drafting this ordinance as well as the Indiana Association of Counties. Commissioner Kora asked for public comment at this time. None was heard for the record. Attorney Shaw Friedman stated a stakeholder's workshop will be scheduled before final vote on this ordinance.

Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve 1st reading by title only with stipulation that a stakeholders' workshop will be held before final vote to pass this ordinance. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.

Considered engagement agreement between La Porte Circuit Court and JDAI-approved speaker. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered contract for Marissa Lynch (G2) regarding lobbying legislature to obtain favorable 'hold harmless' language protecting La Porte County share of gaming tax proceeds from new land-based casinos in South Bend and Gary. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered approval for New Avenues contract for EAP – Barb Mossman, HR Director. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered travel request for Assessor Mike Schultz, Mike Ordziejewski and Steve Pawlak for travel to Phoenix, Arizona March 9th -12th for the 2020 Eagleview (Pictometry) User Conference. No additional funds are requested. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.**

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