



**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202  
La Porte, IN 46350-3400  
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**Sheila Matias  
President**

**Dr. Vidya Kora  
Vice President**

**Richard Mrozinski  
Member**

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 18, 2020 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room #3 at 6:00 p.m.  
via ALCO, Zoom and Facebook Live**

**President** Sheila Matias called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Executive Assistant** Diane Gonzales called the roll: Commissioner Kora - Present; Commissioner Matias - Present; Commissioner Mrozinski - Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

**Considered** the agenda. Commissioner Kora motioned to amend the agenda by adding under New Business items 'h: Consider supplement to Economic Development Corridor – Mitch Bishop;' 'i: Consider La Porte County COVID-19 Employee and Operations Policy;' 'j: Consider resolution requesting Governor of Indiana to provide immediate relief to local government to permit us to best serve our constituents during the COVID-19 emergency;' and 'k: Consider resolution urging the Indiana Election Commission to authorize "no excuse" mail-in voting for 2020 elections' to the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** approval of March 4, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Executive Assistant** Diane Gonzales read the claims of Payroll ending 3/13/2020 - \$1,181,551.68 and Miscellaneous claims - \$1,053,439.49. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**President Matias** reminded everyone the rules for public comment. Civility whether you are commenting online or in the room. Due to the Coronavirus social distancing is being implemented by allowing people to attend the meeting via Zoom, Facebook Live and only a few allowed to attend the meeting in person.

**Commissioner Kora** stated social media is like medications having both benefits and side effects. If this meeting has positive results by using Zoom and Facebook Live then possibly it will be continued for future meetings.

**Public Comment**

None

**Department Reports/Department Head Comments**

**President Sheila Matias** moved item 'g' under New Business allowing Community Corrections Board President Steve Klosowski to announce the new Director. Steve stated Rob Neary resigned his position March 2nd as Director of Community Corrections. His position was posted by HR resulting in 14 applications received. Human Resources filtered the apps down to 10 with 6 being 'internal candidates' and 4 'external candidates.' All 10 were interviewed by a panel of 7 advisory board members. **Considered** recommendation hire of Rochelle Brown to be the Director of Community Corrections. Rochelle currently is a probation officer in South Bend. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**ORIGINAL**



**Rick Brown – MS4** – Reported on the outreach program which is less than 7 months old and has over 204,000 hits. Rick will speak at the MS4 conference in Indianapolis. MS4 has \$24,000 that will match the City of La Porte's \$24,000 so \$48,000 will be used to study the Schurz's Ditch.

### Requests

None

### Old Business

**Considered** second reading of commercial vehicle ordinance – Sheriff John Boyd and Laura Nirenberg, County Attorney's office. Laura said first meeting was in January then later a Stakeholder/ Public Hearing took place. Ryan Elcock echoed Laura's comments on no negative feedback. Sheriff Boyd stated this version is much more enforceable and will protect our county roads and bridges. No Public Comment was heard at this meeting. Commissioner Kora motioned to accept the ordinance on second and final reading. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\***Ordinance 2020-2**

**Considered** second reading on ordinance establishing Cougar Road (CR 700 East) as a one-way street between State Road 2 and New Prairie High School – Mike Yacullo, INDOT. A Public information hearing was held at the middle school. Good feedback came out of this meeting. No Public Comment was heard at this meeting. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

\*\*\***Ordinance 2020-3**

**Considered** preliminary lease approvals and lease agreements with La Porte County Building Corporation regarding financing for the Michigan City Courthouse renovations/construction – Pattie Zelmer, Ice Miller via Zoom. Pattie thanked the Commissioners for allowing her to attend via Zoom. This is step 1 of the financing process for the Michigan City Courthouse renovation project. Pattie gave an overview for those attending the meeting. The county officials have been looking at the necessary improvements, working with engineers and others to decide what can be constructed and renovated at the courthouse in Michigan City. A conclusion was met and we now have a defined project. There are lots of steps for this structure of financing which is a lease financing but with a good benefit. Amount of the bond issue will not count towards the constitutional debt limit of the county. In a lease financing structure a not-for-profit building corporation is created. The building corporation issues the bonds, constructs the project and then leases the project to the County. The County then pays the building corporation through lease rental payments which are basically and exactly like the bond payments. The building corporation's 3 member board has been created and is now incorporated with the Secretary of State's office. The resolution is now step 1 for the Commissioners. The Council will have a role as well in the financing of the lease and the newly created building corporation. Andy with Baker Tilly was in person and he handed out paperwork to the Commissioners. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\***Resolution 2020-5**

### New Business

**Considered** Marquette Trail contract extension of current deadline – Mitch Bishop via Zoom. Mitch stated this is a timeline extension of the current Marquette Trail plan running north of Highway 12 from roughly Meer Road to the state line, approximately 1.1 miles. This is a contract between INDOT and La Porte County, good for two years and the money is in place. Attorney Friedman has reviewed the contract and recommends approval. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** bid openings for bridges #77 and #78 located in Mill Creek – Jay Sullivan, County Engineer. Attorney Shaw Friedman opened 3 submitted bids. All timely received. All with RBOs included. Will not be the lowest bid but lowest and best as per Jay Sullivan.

**La Porte Construction:** Bridge #77 – \$289,287 and Bridge #78 - \$268,075

**Rieth/Riley:** Bridge #77 - \$324,399 and Bridge #78 - \$306,984

**Larson-Danielson:** Bridge #77 - \$193,781.62 and Bridge #78 - \$177,684.83

ORIGINAL



Commissioner Kora motioned to accept bids received, turned them over to Jay Sullivan for review then recommendation back to the Board. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** 3<sup>rd</sup> amendment to agreement for inmate phone systems – Sheriff John Boyd. Currently the department has an agreement with Securus Technologies for the inmate phone system which is the video visitation and kiosk systems. Sheriff Boyd requested the agreement to be amended until the end of his term December 31, 2022. Inmates would be allowed access to the law library and raise the commission rate which is well within the FCC guidelines. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** transfer of tax sale certificate to La Porte County Library for property on E. West Street in Hanna. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**\*\*\*Resolution 2020-6**

**Considered** resolution proclaiming World Creativity and Innovation Week April 15-21, 2020. Commissioner Kora stated during this COVID-19 crisis we need innovation to create new medications, tests with a quick turnaround time for results and vaccines. Commissioner Kora read the proclamation submitted by Cynthia Hedge then motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. **\*\*\*Resolution 2020-7**

**Considered** proposed list of Election Day voting sites – Kathy Chroback, Clerk. Kathy said as of right now with the COVID-19 crisis and social distancing the Primary election may be done by mail-ins. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** Supplement #1 to Economic Development Corridor – Mitch Bishop, Planner. Mitch stated this includes a website which was recently developed. Two additional possible routes have been suggested from State Road 2 to Highway 35 through recent committee meetings for the south corridor. This would be a total of 4 possible routes. City of La Porte agreed to split the cost. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** La Porte County COVID-19 Employee and Operations Policy. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

**Considered** resolution requesting Governor of Indiana to provide immediate relief to local government to permit us to best serve our constituents during the COVID-19 emergency. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. **\*\*\*Resolution 2020-8**

**Considered** resolution urging the Indiana Election Commission to authorize ‘no excuse’ mail-in voting for 2020 elections. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. **\*\*\*Resolution 2020-9**

**First Responders Response to COVID-19:**

**Steve Alt – E-911** – Stated his office has been working very hard. All backup sites are functioning. Michigan City is a standalone center and would be available if power went out. Thanked EMS for taking the lead on this protocol. Steve also thanked EMA Director Larry Butcher. Steve read into the minutes a statement he posted on social media. “As of Friday, March 13, 2020 anyone that calls the E-911 center with a medical complaint of difficulty breathing, chest pain, headache, or general sickness will be screened for COVID-19. These screening questions are the same that the CDC has posted which is being used throughout the nation and are designed to give first responders advance notice that the patient has COVID-19 symptoms. The questions will not delay the dispatching of Fire and EMS but will make sure the appropriate resources are dispatched with the ability to wear the appropriate PPE.” President Matias thanked all employees involved as “First Responders.”

ORIGINAL



**Eric Fenstermaker – EMS** – Definitely has been a group effort, they cannot go to a location unless E-911 sends EMS there and the prescreening is a plus. Larry Levendowski's team has been supplying EMS with cleaning products to disinfect the ambulances. Larry Butcher with EMA has been supplying the equipment for First Responders. A few months' supply is currently on hand but the state should be delivering more supplies soon. Eric said they supply the area Fire Departments as well. Training with the equipment has taken place to keep all employees safe. Porter County, Michigan City and La Porte were included in the training. EMS Department has halted all 1<sup>st</sup> Responder classes to stop the flow of people coming into the building and office. Andrew McGuire, Director of EMS, passed along his 'Thank You' to Education Coordinator Terri Youngman and Equipment Coordinator Captain Jeff Koon for all of their hard work the last few weeks. All of the crews have been diligent in taking the training.

**John Boyd – Sheriff** – Knocked on wood as he approached the podium, saying so far, so good. Calls for service have dropped a bit. Population in the jail is still a concern during this crisis with COVID-19. Screening sheets are being used for each arrestee as they enter the facility. Best practices were looked at throughout the state of Indiana with other Sheriff associations. Hand sanitizer is needed right now for all patrol deputies. Four school resource officers have been temporarily reassigned to assist other departments.

**Larry Butcher – EMA, via Zoom** – State released a method of reimbursement for supplies bought during this crisis. Employees not working qualify as well. Keep all receipts. National stockpile of supplies have been released.

**Larry Levendowski – Director of Facilities, via Zoom** – Housekeeping are teaming up and going throughout each county building wiping down door handles, railings, anywhere a hand may touch. After hours an employee is going through each building spraying disinfectant. Supplies are good for a few months but on a waiting list for hand sanitizer which looks like is in backlog for a month.

### Commissioner Comments

**Commissioner Vidya Kora** confirmed one case of COVID-19 in our county. Reported the Health Department has been fielding lots of calls on testing. Not enough test kits available. Franciscan Health hospital in Michigan City began a drive-thru test area in their parking lot. Prioritizing high risk individuals will be first tested. You must show symptoms first before a doctor can order a test for an individual. If you get an order from the doctor call #219-877-1474. La Porte Hospital has a hotline at #833-576-3627. Turnaround time for results is 4-5 days right now. Do not go to work if you have symptoms. One of the areas of concern are nursing homes. Reminded everyone the food pantries are short of food, please make a donation if you can. Insurance meeting held for county employees. Over the next 3 months if employees use Teladoc there will be no charge.

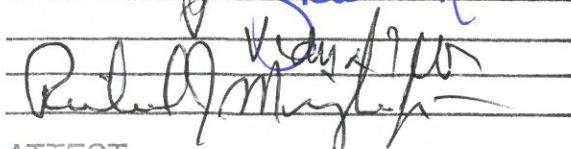
**Commissioner Rich Mrozinski** said a positive outcome is the coming together of the department heads during this pandemic. March 29<sup>th</sup> is National Vietnam War Veterans Day, please fly your flag.

**Commissioner Sheila Matias** stated we are all a bit nervous. Time as Americans to come together. La Porte County has pride and spirit. Check on the elderly, people with children at home. We love our superheroes and right now our superheroes are the doctors, nurses, first responders during this time. Let it be said when we look back at this time in La Porte County "When things were at their worst we were at our best."

### Adjournment

**President Matias adjourned at 8:00 p.m.**

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA  
DATE 4-1-2020



ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Auditor  
LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL