



**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, July 1, 2020 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room 3 at 10:00 a.m.
via ALCO and Zoom**

President Sheila Matias called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Considered the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski stated Jeremy Sobecki asked for item '8 a' to be removed from the agenda. Commissioner Kora motioned to remove item '8 a'. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Kora motioned to accept the amended agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

Considered approval of June 17, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Assistant Diane Gonzales read the claims with Payroll ending 6/19/2020 - \$1,201,123.34 and Miscellaneous claims - \$830,885.75. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Dr. Kristen Dauss, Medical Director for Indiana Department of Corrections – Reported on the increase in numbers of COVID-19 at Westville Correctional Facility. Stated low-level offenders at the facility go out and work in the community. She said before they were allowed to go out to work their temperatures were taken as a precaution and 17-18 came back positive. All were asymptomatic and quarantined.

Attorney Shaw Friedman followed up on the Parks Superintendent's concerns on fireworks in the county parks. Shaw clarified for the record that despite the explicit wording of fireworks there was a provision found in an existing Parks Dept ordinance that allows the Sheriff's Department to continue to enforce against any fireworks in the parks. Pursuant to Ordinance #90-15 which was passed on December 3, 1990 by the Board of Commissioners all combustibles are prohibited in county parks.

President Sheila Matias said a transition is taking place in the highway department. As of today, July 1, 2020, Duane Werner will be Superintendent and Bob Young will be Assistant Superintendent until his retirement at the end of the year.

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

Tony Mancuso, Health Department Director, reported 19 new COVID-19 positive cases yesterday. Tony said our numbers are going up however more testing is being done. Optum site has moved from Michigan City to La Porte at the Civic Auditorium on Ridge Street. Approximately 100 tests being done daily. Flyers have been distributed announcing new site. Nursing Homes are doing well. A day care had a few cases.

ORIGINAL

Requests

Considered request from Voter Registration Office to approach the Council for permission to update their computers. Gail Cains and Heather Stevens were present. Four computers in the office run on Windows 7 which IT Director Darlene Hale said is no longer supported. Darlene estimated the cost will be \$6,000 - \$7,000 to replace all 4 computers. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Old Business

None

New Business

Considered John Emory Road final design proposal. Mitch Bishop, via Zoom, said a contract for design services with Weaver Consultants for an intersection and railroad crossing on John Emory Road and 700 North in New Carlisle in the amount of \$52,200 is requiring signatures. An MOU was signed between the county, INDOT and NICTD approximately 6-9 months ago for grant funds which will be reimbursed at 105% for this project. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered proposed addendum to Tiger Foods Service contract. Jail Commander Al Ott, Jr. stated currently 3 'cooked' meals are served daily to the inmates, State standard is only 1. The addendum allows 2 cooked meals per day, breakfast and lunch, then a 'sack' meal for dinner. President Matias asked if this will save money and Al replied the cost will remain the same but more items will be served in the 'sack' meal. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered Maximus IV-D Child Support Cost Allocation contract – Joie Winski, Auditor. Joie said this is an annual IV-D review that Maximus has done in the past. This is a 3-year contract. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered ratifying June 29th submission of three names given to the Governor's office for consideration as appointment under SB 367 to NICTD board for input on allocation of Transit Development District (TDD) funds to La Porte County. Names of Don Babcock, Leah Konrady and Clarence Hulse were all submitted. Don is a La Porte County resident, employed with NIPSCO as Economic Development Director and has a long history with Redevelopment Commission in Michigan City. Leah is former President/CEO of One Region and currently has taken the helm at Konrady Plastics in Portage. Clarence Hulse is Executive Director of the Economic Development Corporation in Michigan City. Commissioner Kora congratulated all 3 individuals on their names being submitted to the Governor's office. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered resolution supporting 'no excuse' mail-in ballot request for the fall election. Commissioner Kora said he believes the virus is here to stay for the next few months. He requested a resolution to be drafted in hopes of protecting voters and keeping them safe during this pandemic. In the Primary Election the Governor and Secretary of State issued an Executive Order declaring 'no excuse' for mail-in ballot requests and hopefully the same will be done for the General Election in November. Commissioner Mrozinski asked if public comment needed to be heard before voting on the resolution. President Matias said the resolution will be read into the record then public comment will be heard. Commissioner Kora read the resolution. Joe Golec, via Zoom, voiced his concerns on mail-in ballots regarding the possibilities of fraud. Will the signature on the application be compared to your record on file with Voter Registration? Commissioner Kora said he voted by mail in the Primary and his signature from the BMV was used on his online application. The state has ensured safety and security to vote by mail. Commissioner Mrozinski reminded everyone of an individual requesting ballots to be mailed to his home address instead of to the voter who signed the application. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. ***Resolution 2020-16**

ORIGINAL

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski reported on this year’s Stand Down for veterans which is usually held at the Armory in La Porte. This year the event will be held at the fairgrounds with drive through only on August 7th. This is the Fourth of July weekend, Independence Day, declared Independence from England. Thank a veteran. Fly your flag. Be safe. Proud to be an American.

Commissioner Vidya Kora said he thought about the first 6 months of this year and everything we have been through with the COVID crisis, economic crisis, and social unrest due to the death of George Floyd. Mental stress due to lost jobs and the economic impact. As we reopen the buildings to the public in a safe manner, still trying to control the virus, a reminder of the four pillars is emphasized. Wear a mask; Social Distancing; Hand Hygiene and Temperature check. Please do not go to work if you are sick. It is your civic duty to protect yourself and others at the same time. He thanked his fellow Commissioners for working together during this challenge. Thanked them for supporting the 21st Century Policing Reform Report. The law enforcement leadership in our county embraced the report and shared it with other counties in the state. Thank you to Sheriff John Boyd. Last year Commissioner Kora traveled to Normandy, visited the battlefields and museums. The best way to honor the men that fought at Normandy is to fight this virus here at home. Wished everyone a happy 4th of July.

President Sheila Matias voiced her concerns with the virus and the increase in numbers of positive cases in our county. Yesterday our number was 19 positive cases which is probably the highest number in 3-4 weeks. Nine of the 19 were at Westville Correctional Facility. States around us, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois are bright red meaning positive cases are increasing. The numbers across the country have surged by 80% with people under the age of 50 testing positive. The science is clear. The CDC says to wear a mask, wash your hands and social distance. Really is common sense. Beaches and the bars have lots of people not social distancing and not wearing masks. We all want to celebrate the 4th of July as we normally do but this is not a normal time right now. This year is different than any other year we have experienced in our lifetime. We have a civic responsibility to one another, whether we are concerned about ourselves, a child struggling with cancer or an elderly person who is immune compromised that could pick up the virus. Strongly encouraged everyone to abide by the CDC guidelines so our county stays out of the mix of the surge of the virus. This 4th of July we have a lot to be thankful for particularly those that gave their lives. Gave their lives for our right to vote.

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski said when Sheila was talking about the youths he was reminded of an issue that has been happening in La Porte on Waverly Road between Pine and Stone Lake. It was reported that youths have been jumping off the bridge trying to see who can get the closes to a boat. Signs have been put up instructing the public that no jumping is allowed.

Adjournment

President Matias adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 7-15-20

Sheila Matias
Vidya Kora
Rich Mrozinski

ATTEST: _____
Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL