



**LA PORTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202
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Phone: (219) 326-6808 ext. 2229**

**Sheila Matias
President**

**Dr. Vidya Kora
Vice President**

**Richard Mrozinski
Member**

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 17, 2020 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room 3 at 6:00 p.m.
via ALCO and Zoom**

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 accept the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

Considered approval of June 3, 2020 minutes. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Assistant Diane Gonzales read the claims with Payroll ending 6/5/2020 - \$1,184,227.81 and Miscellaneous claims - \$3,242,830.10. Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Kora stated the amount in Miscellaneous claims includes paving done by Rieth-Riley.

Public Comment

None

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

Larry Levendowski – Director of Facilities – Announced EMS building is now open on State Street in La Porte. Cost was \$939,576.90 coming in under the budget of \$999,000. Commissioner Kora thanked Larry and congratulated him for a job well done. Commissioner Mrozinski inquired to the status of the Michigan City base on Coolspring Avenue and Wabash Street. Larry reported the roof has been started on and the siding will be next, taking approximately 4-5 weeks to complete. President Matias said the amount saved on the project in La Porte was able to be used for the Michigan City base.

Tony Rodriguez – Closing of the La Porte County Action Fund with 28 applications through OCRA. Small businesses **outside** the cities of La Porte and Michigan City effected by COVID-19, by no fault of their own, could apply for relief funds. La Porte County was approved for \$250,000 in funds. President Matias thanked Tony and Bailey McGrath for their efforts. A handout was distributed to the Commissioners.

Requests

None

Old Business

Bids for Michigan City Courthouse Renovation Project – Joie Winski, Auditor/Tonn and Blank. Attorney Doug Biege stated this is a construction services agreement, unlike annual paving bids there will not be any bids

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accepted tonight. Instead, Attorney Biege **requested approval** for the Guaranteed Maximum Price in the contract. Attorney Biege explained there is a budget, a design, and the bids. There are a few bids that will have to be “re-bid.” There is a *bottom line number* that will be the Guaranteed Maximum Price which is on budget. In addition to the Guaranteed Maximum Price Attorney Biege **requested authorization** to enter into a Construction Services Contract for the actual construction of the Michigan City Courthouse. Tonn and Blank will handle the bids and bid categories. President Sheila Matias asked what the benefit of doing it this way is for the public’s better understanding of it. Attorney Biege replied the state came out a few years ago with a new statue, only municipalities can do this, the Guaranteed Maximum Price contract will be locked in, cannot go over at all. The advantage is the construction company participates in the design which netted the county a significant amount of savings. Doug spoke to the Bond Counsel, revisions are being made and there may be a need for a special meeting with that group but the project is on track for the bids and timeline. Matt Hubbard, Senior Pre-Construction Manager for Tonn and Blank Construction in Michigan City, presented the Commissioners with good news. There were about 548 vendors, contractors, sub-contractors and different entities that were invited to bid on the project of which 67 total bids came back in on 28 different categories. Within those bid categories, there are 17 alternates. Matt went over the approved budget from April 2019. Attorney Shaw Friedman recommended putting in the record the receipt of the bids and the task of Tonn and Blank to bring a budget to the Council that would be acceptable to all which was done. Attorney Doug Biege stated **two motions** are being requested at this meeting. **Commissioner Kora motioned to accept the Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$22,492,025.00. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Kora motioned to give authorization to proceed with the construction services contract. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Ratified Commission President’s June 11, 2020 memo to department heads on revised/updated county buildings re-opening plan and discuss Judges’ signed order requiring masks for all who enter courthouses. **Commissioner Kora motioned** to ratify President Matias’ memo to department heads. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. Attorney Shaw Friedman stated copies of the judges’ order requiring masks to be worn in the courthouses were available for the press. Commissioner Kora stated if the judges ask people to come for legal proceedings they want to be sure to protect the health and well-being of the public coming in to their courtrooms. For example jury trials. Commissioner Kora said he fully supports the requirement. Attorney Friedman said both President Sheila Matias and Council President Randy Novak have attended meetings pertaining to re-opening the county buildings using the 4 pillars of keeping everyone safe. Hand hygiene, social distancing, temperature taking and wearing masks. **Commissioner Kora motioned that the Commission recognizes the judges’ order that has been issued requiring masks to be worn in the courthouses. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.** President Matias requested the President’s June 11, 2020 memo be sent to the press.

New Business

Considered Hawk contract for Protected Left Turn Signal installation – Jay Sullivan, Engineer. Jay, via Zoom, stated this left turn signal light will be installed at the intersection of CR 400 North and Johnson Road in Michigan City with a cost of \$9,287.79. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.** Jay Sullivan gave a report on Bridges 77 and 78 in Union Mills which are currently under construction. He also said the Community Crossings paving project on 1000 North is complete. On the Cougar Road Project Jay stated he has a completed survey but property still needs to be purchased by the County.

Considered C. R. Bailey Subdivision in Cass Township – Matt Garritano, Charles Hendricks & Associates Surveying and Engineering. Distributed handouts to the Commission including the secondary plat. Matt stated he hoped for a favorable consideration of a 3 lot minor subdivision by the owner, Charles R. Bailey. Presently mixed Agriculture/Residential area with 8 adjacent parcels already Residential. The owner, C. R. Bailey, would like to subdivide this last remaining piece into 3 potential home sites. Meets all zoning requirements and has favorable recommendation by the Plan Commission. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.** Signatures were approved for the secondary plat.

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Considered agreement between Health Department and Independent Contractors – Tony Mancuso, Director, Health Department. Director Mancuso stated 5 individuals have applied to be part-time, temporary screeners for visitors once the buildings re-open to the public July 6th. Commissioner Kora said a questionnaire and temperature will be taken before allowing entry to the buildings. Attorney Shaw Friedman stated he has been working with HR to come up with the description for the positions. There will be no benefits, no status or tenure rights with the county. They will simply be independent contractors. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered resolution hailing landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling recognizing LGBTQ employees as protected against employment discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1967. Commissioner Kora said, “Madame President, in 2015 this County Commission had adopted a non-discrimination policy and we reaffirmed a commitment that no vendor, contractor, grant recipient or anyone receiving public benefits of any kind from the County should discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, disability, national origin, age, and we specifically, at that time, referenced sexual orientation and gender identity in such an ordinance.” He thanked the Supreme Court for reaffirming the county policy we already have in existence. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve.** Commissioner Rich Mrozinski stated he thought civil rights covered everybody. His concerns are when a special interest group comes in and wants reasonable accommodations. He said he hopes we don’t regret it. **Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.** Attorney Shaw Friedman addressed Commissioner Mrozinski’s concerns with “individuals based on both sexual orientation and gender identity were *not* covered or protected under Title VII prior to this particular case.” This resolution will acknowledge that the Bostock decision written by Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch this week finally recognizes that and simply puts those in the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) community in the same category as other protected groups against unfair firings, demotions, or discharges. President Sheila Matias thanked Attorney Friedman for the explanation saying it is important for the public to know the Commission is doing what is right, this is huge for our country. *****Resolution 2020-15**

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Vidya Kora addressed the Primary Election. He gave a “shout out” to the vendor Microvote for giving an explanation of errors that happened. Two mistakes were admitted, corrected before the certification of the election and then a plan was put in place to be used in the General Election. **Commissioner Kora** spoke on the Corona Virus situation. Fewer cases reported in the last couple of days with a total of 475 cases for our county. Total number of deaths in our county is 25. Testing station at Michigan City High School on Pahs Road. No doctor’s order needed to get a test done. Possibly at our next meeting we could have a Resolution supporting “no excuse” mail-in ballot applications to send to the Secretary of State Connie Lawson’s office for the General Election in November. This pandemic will not be over by November unless a vaccine is developed. Social distancing, wear masks, hand hygiene and temperature taking will help to prevent the spread of the virus.

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski said the recent election was monumental for the county and state. Several county employees worked long hours to get the job done for the election under the circumstances with the virus.

President Sheila Matias thanked Rich for his statement, saying there were 10 times the amount of mail-in ballots than any previous election in our county. In the state of Washington there is only mail-in voting, not in-person voting. She stated we are lucky to have Dr. Kora as a Commissioner during this time with the virus.

Adjournment

President Matias adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

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

[Signature]

[Signature]

ATTEST: _____

Auditor

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