

*LaPorte County Auditor
Joie Winski
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**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
JUNE 22, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on June 22, 2020 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

Chief Deputy Kristie Deckard took the Roll Call. Council Members present were Garner, Mollenhauer, Novak, Quinn, Rosenbaum, Santana, and Yagelski. A quorum was noted.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 22, 2020 AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 26, 2020 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Hearing or seeing no one, President Novak closed Department Head Reports.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Santana stated that although EMS, EMA and Maintenance are extremely busy right now, he had nothing to report.

Councilman Garner said he has spoken with Sheriff Boyd regarding the inmate food. Sheriff Boyd explained that the cost is approximately \$1.45 per meal; \$.75 is for the food and \$.70 for the labor. Councilman Garner added that was taken care of last year by hiring the outside firm, so money should be coming back to the County in the next few months. He added that in the future, the Sheriff will be coming before the Council to discuss some police cars.

Councilman Mollenhauer said he has been attending Zoom meetings and toured the EMS Base and found it to be a very nice facility.

Councilman Yagelski discussed the iPads that had been given out during COVID-19 when buildings were closed. Six of the iPads have been returned, of which two have been given to Judge Bergeson's office for completion of his order. Councilman Yagelski said he has a list that can be referred to for future computers that may have to be replaced.

Councilman Rosenbaum said that although he has been in touch with his departments, he has nothing to report at this time.

Councilman Quinn said he has been attending the COVID-19 Task Force and Commissioners' meetings via Zoom. He said he also attended and participated in the quarterly County Health Insurance strategic meeting. Certain modifications to plans were discussed and will be rolled out to members over the next few months. Some highlights of the meeting include the implementation of the APTA Pharmacy Care coordination, which is a program that helps members review their prescription drug benefits by switching to generics with approval of the members and physicians. This program saved the County more than \$33,000.00 in March alone. Similarly, the Care Coordinators have worked with members to achieve savings of nearly \$150,000.00 this year in infusion therapies. By using this type of Care Coordination, the members are receiving equal or better treatment at a significant savings to the County. The Committee will continue to work to find cost savings solutions and provide quality care to the employees.

Commissioner Vidya Kora emphasized that infusions being done at home provide a significant savings. He added that at open enrollment, annual physicals will be encouraged for those enrolled in a program. The cost for preventative physicals has no deductible and by early detection, less money will have to be spent for treatments down the road by catching things early. He added that telehealth can be a useful tool for those who require appointments with behavioral health specialists, with who it can be difficult to get an appointment.

President Novak said there continues to be meetings on PPE/protective equipment, and County-wide Zoom meeting on Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. In addition, as of June 22nd, there have been 71,191 people who visited ALCO to watch meetings on demand. Last year there were 53,000 for the entire year, and ALCO anticipates that there will be 100,000 viewers by the end of the year. Therefore, reaching the public, which is the purpose of ALCO, has been working as it should.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Consider Retroactive Approval of Council President's Authorization to Hire Replacement Position for an Equipment Operator in the Highway Department

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

OLD BUSINESS

Consider Additional Appropriation in the Amount of \$250,000.00 from General Fund (1000), CREDIT (1112) or Emergency Reserve Fund (1186) for OCRA Grant (Motion of Support Approved at May 26, 2020 Meeting) – Tony Rodriguez

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Santana and seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. Councilman Santana asked Auditor Winski out of which fund it should come. Auditor Winski replied the Emergency Reserve Fund, but President Novak and Councilman Yagelski said that fund could not be used for this purpose. Therefore, Auditor Winski said it could come out of the General Fund. Councilman Yagelski said the Council helped write the rules for this and this is a Council’s agenda where money is appropriated, and no one should be coming to ask for money out of that fund; only the Council can determine what comes out of that account. He added that he is very upset that this fund was even put on this appropriation and said this is not a free-for-all cash flow. Councilman Santana said he wants to add to his motion that it should come out of the General (1000) fund. Motion carried 7-0.

President Novak said there are guidelines for the Emergency Reserve Fund and only the Council can approve for what that money can be used.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

La Porte County Sheriff

**Requesting Additional Appropriation
From Riverboat (1191) or General (1000)
For Inmate Food**

\$250,000.00

A motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. Motion carried 7-0.

La Porte County Community Corrections

**Requesting an Additional Appropriation
From Riverboat (1191) or General (1000)
For Intercept Whole Body Detection Scanner Tek84**

\$74,000.00

Judge Alevizos and Director Brown from Community Corrections spoke to the Council. Ms. Brown shared her background and said she is looking forward to working with the Council members. She then explained that since she’s started working in La Porte County in early April, there have been two overdoses. No lives were lost but Narcan and other treatments had to be used. It was discovered that the drugs were being brought in by offenders by inserting them into their anal cavities. Because this is not an area that can be seen with the eye, Ms. Brown feels it is time to consider a scanner. The purpose of the scanner is to detect weapons and contraband hidden in the body cavities, and they have a low level of x-ray to the body. In

Indiana, the Tek84 scanner is in 8 Community Corrections facilities and 15 County jails. The scanner would be installed within a few hours and training would be provided. She looked at the scanner that is currently at the jail and said it is too big to fit in the area she has designated for the it. The total cost is \$149,000.00, \$75,000 of which would come out of the Sheriff's Misdemeanant fund.

Judge Alevizos said that drugs have been a problem in the Community Corrections facility for approximately two decades. Eventually, changes were made and the situation improved. He said this was talked about four years ago but the equipment was more expensive then. Judge Alevizos also discovered a problem with the amount of money being received by participants at Community Corrections. Even though there were approximately 20% more people, the amount of money was staying the same or decreasing. Therefore, he researched and realized that from the first quarter to the last quarter of 2018, the amount collected went down from \$400.00 to \$275.00 per person per month in fees. Once it was determined that only the minimum fee was being charged, the problem was addressed and it is now back up to \$375.00. Judge Alevizos said drug treatments should be given at the same time as incarceration to fully utilize the Community Corrections facility. Therefore, he feels it is imperative that facility gets a scanner.

Councilman Mollenhauer said he is agreement with this purchase, but inquired about the \$10,000.00 yearly maintenance contract. He said there is usually a two- to five-year warranty, so he wondered if this was only for the first year. Ms. Brown said she understood it would be after the first year and is optional. Councilman Mollenhauer then said he understood there were some maintenance issues that would need to take place in order to get the equipment into Community Corrections. Ms. Brown responded that a door would have to be changed or moved to bring the device in at the cost of approximately \$16,000.00. She added that electricity would be needed for the computer portion of the device, which is portable, and is confirming whether or not an additional outlet would be needed. She said her department would be able to cover those additional costs.

Councilman Quinn asked for the volume of individuals that would be put through the scan and who would be subject to it. Ms. Brown said it would be necessary to scan members of the public, staff, participants and visitors. She anticipates that approximately 150 people would be scanned daily.

Councilman Yagelski said he was grateful that the Sheriff wanted to contribute to this, but he inquired whether the Prosecutor would also be able to help financially with this purchase. Ms. Brown said she didn't meet with the Prosecutor. Councilman Yagelski urged whoever makes a motion to have part of it come from the Prosecutor's Office. Judge Alevizos said he didn't understand how discretionary money could be spent that was specifically designated to a completely different office. Councilman Yagelski said that someone has to at least ask and he is trying to come up with an alternative.

A motion to approve out of the General Fund (1000), with the caveat that the Prosecutor will be contacted for assistance, was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Garner.

Councilman Santana said he is in favor, but is not able to support this at this time. However, he stated he has another solution. He said that the offenders could be taken to the jail to be scanned. He continued that a selling point when the jail scanner was obtained was that it would be used not only for the jail population but others when necessary. He then read from September 25, 2017 meeting minutes regarding communication between Sheriff Boyd and Mr. Buell about Community Corrections being invited to use the scanner when needed. He reiterated that his is unable to support this right now, but as the jail scanner increases in age and usage, he would be willing to reevaluate the request so as to get on a rotating schedule of staggering purchases.

Judge Alevizos said that is a potential solution, but expressed concern over the opportunity or fixed costs of having two officers bring 150 individuals to the jail on a daily basis. Councilman Mollenhauer added that times have changed with COVID-19 and he doesn't believe the Sheriff would want that many people coming in and out of the jail.

Ms. Brown said her department has been using the jail scanner but as previously mentioned, two officers have to escort the offender to the jail and there are sometimes only 3 in total at Community Corrections. She said at this time, if someone is suspected of having drugs in an inconspicuous place on/in his/her body, they are brought to the jail to be scanned. Judge Alevizos said without having the scanner at Community Corrections, there will always be drugs at that facility, and the purpose of having them out there in the first place is defeated.

Councilman Quinn asked for the cost of treating the two individuals who overdosed at Community Corrections. Judge Alevizos responded that unlike the jail, Community Corrections is not responsible for their medical costs. He added that any of those costs would be billed to the individual's insurance.

Councilman Yagelski asked for the minimum age of the offenders and Ms. Brown replied 18 years old. Councilman Yagelski said due to the more intrusive nature of the scanning, he wondered if there were any liability issues. Ms. Brown said after doing research and speaking with the representative of the Tek84, there doesn't appear to be any issues. Judge Alevizos added that the offenders have to agree to the rules of the facility as a condition to even be there.

Councilman Santana said he didn't think 150 individuals had to be scanned daily, so he asked Ms. Brown how many individuals leave the facility to work. Judge Alevizos interjected and said the 150 includes visitors, people on GPS or electronic monitoring, and those who have to come in periodically to report. It also includes those who come in to do the counseling services, employees and 60 the offenders who live there. Councilman Santana asked if the employees will be tested daily and Ms. Brown said all 32 will be tested daily. He said he loves the idea but is being very frugal right now with the County's money.

Motion carried 5-2, with Councilmen Garner and Santana voting Nay.

Requesting Permission to Spend

From Misdemeanant Fund (1175)

For Remaining Balance of Intercept Whole Body Detection Scanner Tek84 **\$75,000.00**

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Quinn and seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. Motion carried 6-1, with Councilman Garner voting Nay.

Councilman Yagelski asked Sheriff Boyd if any of the money saved by the salaries being paid through the food service could be used to help pay for the inmate food. He replied yes, and Auditor Winski suggested that out of the \$182,396.73 savings, that \$150,000.00 could be transferred from salaries to food service, with the balance coming out of Riverboat.

Councilman Yagelski made a motion to reconsider the request for Inmate Food which was seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. Motion carried 7-0. A motion to transfer the \$150,000.00 from the Sheriff's department and appropriate the remaining \$100,000.00 out of Riverboat was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Yagelski said he feels a letter needs to be sent downstate regarding the matron of the jail and the antiquated rules. President Novak asked Attorney DiMartino to make a note of that, but he asked for further clarification. President Novak said since a lot is being outsourced, the position of matron is not being utilized like it used to be. Councilman Yagelski said it is being utilized through an in-cost basis of everything. Councilman Mollenhauer offered to contact the Sheriffs' Association for additional solutions.

La Porte County Assessor

Requesting Permission to Spend

From Sales Disclosure Fund (1131)

For COVID Barrier in the Assessor's Office

Not to Exceed

\$16,000.00

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Santana. President Novak clarified that this will be a part of the COVID reimbursement, but the money has to first be spent. Councilman Yagelski said he feels like the individual offices are doing what they want with their offices and there should have been a more unified solution. He said he is not happy with what the costs that some department heads are proposing. He said he doesn't necessarily disagree with what is being done, but with the methodology. President Novak said he has reviewed the barriers and he believes it's a good idea for the COVID-19 and other protection and safety down the road.

Councilman Quinn asked if there are any restrictions on the sales disclosure fund. Auditor Winski replied no, as long as it benefits the Assessor.

Councilman Rosenbaum asked precisely on what the \$16,000.00 is being spent. Building Maintenance Director Larry Levendowski explained each area was researched and for this specific project, it includes the glass, moving some electrical and lighting fixtures, and retrofitting of some doors. He added that, in general, each room was unique and had its own specific needs. President Novak said with the report from the Marshall, a lot of this was recommended and was incorporated with COVID-19 upgrades.

Motion carried 6-1, with Councilman Yagelski voting Nay.

La Porte County Auditor

Requesting Permission to Spend

From Dual Homestead Fund (7110)

For COVID Barrier and Window Installation in the Auditor & Real Estate Offices

Not to Exceed

\$12,000.00

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. Motion carried 6-1, with Councilman Yagelski voting Nay.

Auditor Winski said she missed the end of the Community Corrections request. President Novak said the additional maintenance work was discussed and Ms. Brown said she had funds in her budget to cover the cost. Councilman Rosenbaum added that they also said they could cover the \$10,000.00 maintenance cost. President Novak stated that Judge Alevizos said that when the user fees are back to what they had been, those would then cover the additional years of maintenance should they choose to get it.

Councilman Yagelski asked Mr. Levendowski about the money spent at 8th Street for security, safety and COVID-19. Mr. Levendowski said they were going to leave the doors locked and operate by appointment only. At this point, he said they've lined their counters with plexiglass and have more if it's needed.

Councilman Rosenbaum added that since one of the nurses is retiring, the Health Department office is also going to have limited use.

COUNTY COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Councilman Yagelski inquired about the Budget hearings. He said he had no preference, he just needed to know the date for his work schedule. President Novak said he wanted to ensure that all information was prepared before setting a date. Councilman Yagelski said the binders need to get to the Council members at least a week in advance of the Budget hearings. Auditor Winski said that wouldn't be a problem, but stated that there are always departments who turn in their information at a late date. Therefore, she is going to require the departments to provide their information two weeks in advance of this year's Budget hearings. Councilman Yagelski suggested July 27th, 28th, and 29th and a discussion on these dates took place. Councilman Santana did not feel it would take three days, but understood Councilman Yagelski's feeling that this year it could be more challenging. He added that it was previously discussed having an evaluation company come in and assist with this process.

President Novak asked that before any further discussion, he needed to inform Councilmen Garner and Santana to sign minutes from a previous meeting.

Councilman Santana he told Tony Rodriguez, "Way to run the show." He also said he wants to submit a request to have a complete inventory done in fairness to the new Highway Director. He said it would show complete transparency to everyone. The Council members agreed.

Councilman Mollenhauer wished a speedy recovery to Sheriff's Captain Andrew Hynek after his traffic accident. The Council members echoed his sentiments.

The Council wished Councilman Rosenbaum a happy birthday.

ADJOURNMENT

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

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 27th of July, 2020.



Councilman Terry Garner



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer



Councilman Randy Novak



Councilman Sean Quinn


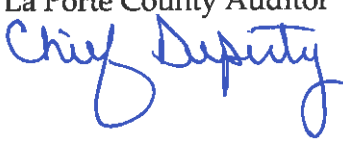


Councilman Mike Rosenbaum



Councilman Jeff Santana


Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 
Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor

Chief Deputy