



**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202  
La Porte, IN 46350-3400  
Phone: (219) 326-6808 ext. 2229**

**Sheila Matias  
President**

**Dr. Vidya Kora  
Vice President**

**Richard Mrozinski  
Member**

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, October 7, 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 Matias - Present; Commissioner Kora - Present; Commissioner Mrozinski - Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

**Considered** the agenda. **Commissioner Kora** motioned to add two items and delete one: **Consider** leasing vehicles for APS and Commercial/Political signs on county property and delete item 9 'c' **Consider** request from HR for funding for online training and risk management. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded the two additions and one subtraction. Motion carried. **Commissioner Kora then motioned to accept the amended agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. President Matias stated political signs will go under Old Business and Leasing vehicles will go under New Business.**

**Considered** approval of September 16, 2020 minutes. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Executive Assistant Diane Gonzales** read the claims with Payroll ending 9/25/2020 - \$1,184,049.61 and Miscellaneous claims in the amount of \$1,952,509.51. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**President Sheila Matias** reminded everyone of civility. Expectations of the Commissioners' rules are no personal attacks, three minutes to speak and Election Day is less than 30 days away therefore this is not a political campaign stop, it is a business meeting.

**Public Comment**

**John Matwyshyn** – Deputy Trustee of Hudson Township – “I’m here to address an issue that’s working its way through your stack of tasks regarding vacating of a street in Hudson Township. We had plans and envisioned using that particular street to access the water for rescue purposes. Over the – just a short time in the last couple of years we’ve had a heart attack on the ice and a drowning in a section of water near that location. The current only public launch site is two miles away across the water and I believe Commissioner Matias has a better understanding of how long it takes for a boat to move, make a round trip across two miles, I think it’s like 6 to 8 minutes. And adding 6 to 8 minutes to a person suffering a heart attack or a drowning reduces their likelihood of successful revival. So it’s working its way through the mill and I believe we’ll have another attempt to discuss the issue. I would like to provide information that would aide and I’d like to not make this a rush decision. The planning board unanimously recommended vacating the street but I think that’s a mistake.”

**Commissioners** thanked John for his comments. **Commissioner Mrozinski** addressed the comment, “I sit on the Plan Commission, that was brought before the Plan Commission. That is the proper venue for that, remonstrance on that is over at the Plan Commission. It was voted unanimously to approve it and when he talks

**ORIGINAL**

about boat launches there is one right exactly behind it at the Yacht Club so I'm not sure what he is saying when he says there is not one there. It has already been settled at the Plan Commission, that's why we have the Plan Commission so I wanted to bring that to your attention."

**Rodney McCormick** – 617 Union Street Michigan City – “I had a question, I had to call down to the Indiana Board of Elections and I wanted to ask you guys – by the way I just came from voting in Michigan City, it took an hour and a half to vote, that's ridiculous. It seems like every day a machine breaks down but there have been complaints about, I believe its Jamie Oss sign in front of the complex about the size of it. I called down state and they asked me to come here today and ask you guys do you have an ordinance on signage. Its county property, do you have any ordinance that say you can't put up a big sign or what size signs you can put up or what color the signs are? I wanted to know that if that's possible. And then next, a while back I had asked you guys to do something about helping the less fortunate people in Michigan City by giving out thermometers to those families who are less fortunate and their kids that receive free and reduced lunches, can you help us out. County didn't get nowhere with that until I partnered up with Franciscan Alliance and Dean Mazzone. I sent you guys an email. I didn't call no one out by name. I never talked about Marty Corley or the Ministerial Alliance. I never said 'who like you' and 'who hate you.' I received a response back from the representative of the Commissioner, the – Shaw Friedman and it was a personal attack. He said that people in this county don't like me, even black people - my own black people in my city don't like me. I didn't know where that was going when I never addressed the email to him or nor was I indignant with any of you guys in my email. He also went on to talk about a lot of other things about Marty Corley. None of – no email have I ever said anything about Marty Corley and all I asked – I sent the response and I asked you guys to give me an apology. Dr. Kora, I've been knowing you for quite a while, you're my doctor, still my doctor. I see things different on the political side but I still appreciate you and I care about you but right is right and wrong is wrong. I'm owed an apology because I never said nothing about Marty Corley and Ministerial Alliance. I never said nothing about anybody else, only talked about thermometers and I don't know where we going with this...I did a lot of work for the party and I did a lot of work for a lot of individuals. I didn't back stab nobody or do nobody wrong. I didn't deserve that email, it was wrong, it was slanderous and it defamed me. And I'm going to take actions on that but I think this Commission owe me an apology and I appreciate it if y'all do it, it's just the right thing to do. Oh, and by the way, can you just tell me have we done anything about early voting - I mean for the - the replacement of the Teamsters Union yet? It's been approved?” **Commissioner Kora**, “It's on the agenda today.” **Rodney**, “All right, Thank you very much.”

**Joe Haney** – 2695 W. Joliet Road La Porte – “Several items on the agenda here but the one that jumps out at me is one from September 2<sup>nd</sup> is back on the agenda for today and thats 507 Monroe Street. Looking to acquire that property to store PPE. I have some concerns here about this property. One of the initial concerns was you guys need storage for additional PPE storage especially with transition of moving things. One of the issues I've heard raised at the September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was that some of the PPE items you had got lost due to mold and other concerns. I heard that brought up. The property you're looking at, at least as far as public disclosures, as of September 1<sup>st</sup> anyway, did not have any heat or air conditioning so no climate control in this warehouse. I'm not sure if that's necessarily such a good idea to enter into a building that has no climate control if you're looking specifically to store things to prevent issues that have been had in the past. In addition to that I see that it's on the agenda here today to be purchased for \$185,000. Back on September 2<sup>nd</sup> Commission meeting Commissioner Kora made a motion to explore this property and to do some due diligence as far as looking into purchasing it. Obviously today with it listed at a hundred eighty five thousand dollars I do have some questions relating to that – this property was originally listed for sale in January of 2018 for a hundred sixty thousand dollars, through the rest of the year it was listed for a hundred sixty thousand dollars, through 2019 it was listed a hundred sixty thousand dollars and all the way up – according to MLS records – up until the end of August beginning September of this year, a hundred sixty thousand dollars. That's about 2 ½ years on the market at one sixty and the property did not sell. On September 1<sup>st</sup> it was pulled from the MLS listing and incidentally or coincidentally enough on September 2<sup>nd</sup> when this Commission met and Commissioner Kora made a motion to

explore purchasing the property the day before it was removed from the MLS for \$160,000. Now here today, one month later, we're looking at, ya know, you're looking at purchasing this property for \$185,000. I'm curious as to why, you know, we're looking at \$185,000 versus \$160,000. It doesn't make any sense to me and is there anything that's been done to the property in the past, you know, 30 days that's increased the value by \$25,000? You know, is there anything along those lines?" **Commissioner Kora**, "We'll address that when this item is discussed." **Joe Haney**, "Sure, all right, thank you so much...and just for public records sake, I'm sure this due diligence was done here, this property's been appraised at about \$108,000, give or take a thousand dollars, for the past 5 years, and in addition to that in 2015 this property was purchased for \$76,000 so again, we're looking at some major discrepancies here financially that just don't, at least from the public information we have and the records we have just don't make any sense at all."

### **Department Reports/Department Head Comments**

**Darlene Hale** – IT Director – Updated Commissioners on the Absentee Voting with 4 sites up and running.

**Tony Mancuso** – Health Department Director – IU Fairbanks was at the Health Department on Friday and Saturday completing 60 tests. Scheduled tests for both days and all subjects showed up. Results should be available in a few weeks for northern Indiana. La Porte County was randomly selected to participate in a survey testing for the Coronavirus. Purpose was to see how the virus is spreading in the northwest part of the state. Certain locations were set up throughout the county, people were invited by invitation only, blood was drawn and nasal swabs taken as well. A site manager has been hired and she is forming her team for the testing sites. Currently working with EMA director looking for a place in Michigan City. Testing site in La Porte at the civic will be there until the end of October. Higher number of people getting tested per day than two months ago. Tony reminded everyone flu shots will be available to employees on Friday and then to the public the following Friday at the Health Department.

**Tony Rodriguez** – OCED - Briefly updated Commissioners on projects in the works. Deadline for paperwork is due October 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:00 p.m. for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Small Business Covid assistance.

**Larry Butcher** – EMA Director – Larry reported he has been working with the Michigan City sanitation department with an emergency drill using Rave notification in case of a chemical spill.

### **Requests**

**Considered** request to purchase a computer for the highway department – Duane Werner. Cost will be approximately \$1500 and money is in the budget to cover this request however permission to approach the Council to purchase the computer will be needed. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** request to pay 60 unused sick days for Bob Young. Duane Werner stated Bob will be retiring and has unused sick days that the highway department will be paying him. They have the money in their budget. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** permission to change Life Insurance Carriers – John Jones, Life Insurance Agent of Record. John reported to the Commissioners that he received word about 10 days ago that Grange Life will no longer provide life insurance to the county employees. Grange Life was bought by Kansas City Life about two years ago. Moved to the next meeting for more information. **\*\*\*Moved to next meeting**

**Considered** request for permission to approach the Council for funding of online training and risk management platform in the amount of \$8,000.00 – Barb Mossman, HR. **\*\*\*Removed**

**Considered** 2020 General Election Polling Locations – Kathy Chroback, Clerk. All locations with the exception of one, MC13 in Michigan City, will be the same as the Primary Election. MC13 will now be at the Southwind Immanuel Church on Southwind Drive in Michigan City instead of the Teamsters Union on Ohio Street which has been sold. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve the request. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

### Old Business

**Considered** La Porte County Commemoration Commission. **President Matias** read into the record a draft of the commemoration. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Draft attached to minutes**

**Considered** 2<sup>nd</sup>/final reading on petition to vacate portion of Beach Drive – Chris Willoughby. Petitioners Mark A. Nelson and Mary M. Nelson filed a petition that received a favorable recommendation by the Plan Commission. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve on 2<sup>nd</sup>/Final reading. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Ordinance 2020-5**

**Considered** action by Commissioners to reinstate policy pertaining to commercial or political signs on county property. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Policy attached to minutes**

### New Business

**Considered** MOU agreement between Healthline and La Porte County Sheriff's Office for involvement in mobile opioid response team – John Boyd, Sheriff. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** consultant agreement between County and VS Engineering – Jay Sullivan, Engineer. “Get Connected” Union Mills sidewalk improvement project with Council approving \$127,150 in matching funds, INDOT putting in \$508,600 with a total cost of \$635,750 for the project. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** contract for engineering services for Bridge #97 over the Kankakee River in the southern part of the county – Jay Sullivan, Engineer. Jay reported this is a \$248,000 contract with United Consultant. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** recognizing benefits agent-of-record recommendation on guaranteed interest rates regarding county personnel Fixed Annuity-457 Plan – Barb Mossman, HR. Nationwide made a change to their guaranteed minimum interest rates. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** conducting a Public Hearing on proposed Build/Operate/Transfer Agreement (per I.C. 5-23 *et seq.*) between the Board of Commissioners and successful RFP respondent JBC Rail Services, Inc. for construction of rail connections at Kingsbury Industrial Park and to provide switcher services (to be paid for by state IEDC grant) – Matt Reardon, RDC. **Matt Reardon** gave a background on how they came to be at this point in time. “On or about the summer of 2018 the County Commissioners exercised their authority in holding the previous Development accountable by taking control and ownership of rights-of-way and improvements made at the Kingsbury Industrial Park and for those listening those are the rail lines that are within this park. The Kingsbury Industrial Park is approximately 8,000 acres of the former armory and there are several different types of businesses out there at this time as well as farming operations. That area is part of an area designated by the county as an Economic Development target area, it's an Economic Development TIF area as well. Parcel

to that our group has been working towards continued development operations at that location and as a result of that and once the county took title to this improvement we went hard after an Indiana Economic Development Corporation grant to help fund the infrastructure at this location for further improvement of rail. On or about summer time or July of 2019 we received notification from IDC that we received a one million dollar grant to continue building and development of rail opportunities at the Kingsbury Industrial Park.” No public comment was heard at this time. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** resolution awarding Build/Operate/Transfer Agreement to JBC Rail Services – Phil Faccenda, Special Counsel, RDC. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Resolution 2020-22**

**Considered** favorable recommendation for Love’s Travel Shops – Matt Reardon, RDC. Matt Reardon stated final approval after favorable recommendation by the Plan Commission. On September 22, 2020 the favorable recommendation was given for a proposed PUD and Primary plat with fueling stations, convenience store, restaurant and a truck tire repair facility located at the intersection of US 421 and 300 North in Coolspring Township, Michigan City. The development will be known as Love’s Travel Shop and will only utilize 17 acres in Phase 1 with the remaining acreage to be used for a future PUD developments in Phase 2 that may include two hotels. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** authorizing submission by EMA for county multi-hazard mitigation plan grant - Larry Butcher, EMA. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** contract renewals for Building Maintenance for 2021 year – Larry Levendowski. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** engagement of DLZ to conduct CARES Act study of county buildings for ventilation improvements that will prevent/reduce spread of the Covid-19 virus and be reimbursable by CARES Act Funds – Joe Zwierzynski, Chief Operating Officer, DLZ. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** authorizing purchase of warehouse (at a price of \$185,000.00) at 507 Monroe Street, La Porte for safe, secure storage of PPE supplies and emergency equipment conditioned on obtaining written or verbal approval from Governor’s CARES Act committee for use of CARES Act funds to cover expenditure. **Commissioner Kora stated concerns for the asking price therefore he motioned to table this item until the next meeting. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Tabled**

**Considered** resolution approving Covid-related assessment/study of needed ventilation equipment and purchases of equipment/supplies to reduce Covid transmission risk and to authorize acquisition of warehouse for PPE supplies/emergency equipment storage – all reimbursable expenditures under CARES Act. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Resolution 2020-23**

**Considered** leasing two vehicles for the Adult Protection Services Division under Prosecutor John Lake’s office. The cost will be reimbursed from the State of Indiana and will not be any expense to the county. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

**Commissioner Comments**

**Commissioner Rich Mrozinski** attended the Grand Opening of Circa 1856 on Johnson Road which is a reception hall for events. Rich commented on attending the Tuesday's zoom meetings at 10:00 a.m. pertaining to the move of the Michigan City Courthouse to the Brown Mackie Building. Outstanding job by Larry Levendowski and his employees for the wonderful job they have done. Darlene Hale and her IT staff. Joie Winski and her great job having her finger on the pulse of the whole project. Diane Gonzales, Executive Assistant to the Commissioners, great job with securing polling locations and cleaning the Coolspring library for Absentee Voting.

**Commissioner Vidya Kora** echoed Commissioner Mrozinski's comments on our staff. Thanked County Election Board for allowing two additional sites to be added this election. Commissioner Kora urged everyone to continue with the four pillars due to our numbers rising after the state moved to Stage 5. Thanked Economic Development for items on the agenda today. During the Vibrant Communities meetings when approximately 1,000 participated 'new housing' was one of the main topics. A housing study will take place. Thanked President Matias with her leadership with broadband in our county.

**Commissioner Sheila Matias** said 'timing is everything' when the new website was released for the county on March 4, 2020. Since then 564,870 visitors had accessed our site. Unique visits 431,000, Covid-19 information had been visited by 130,000 and 100,205. Thanked Tony, Matt and Bailey for work done with Economic Development.

**President Sheila Matias adjourned at 11:39 a.m.**

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA  
DATE 10-21-2020 *Sheila Matias*

*Vidya Kora*  
*Rich Mrozinski*

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

**ORIGINAL**



**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202  
La Porte, IN 46350-3400  
(219) 326-6808 ext. 2229

Sheila Matias,  
President

Dr. Vidya Kora,  
Vice President

Richard Mrozinski,  
Member

**Draft**

Commissioner Sheila Matias  
October 1, 2020

**LaPorte County Commemoration Commission**

This LaPorte County Commemoration Commission is created to implement LaPorte County Commission Resolution 2019-14 which codified a community effort to permanently commemorate and honor those exemplary LaPorte County citizens who, as civic, business, non-profit and community leaders, have made lasting and impactful contributions to our county.

The LaPorte County Commission will work collaboratively with the Commissioners, the County Council, the Office of Community and Economic Development, County staff and LaPorte County citizens in the creation and implementation of the Commemoration Commission whose charge it is to propose commemorative naming and placement of memorial plaques on various public infrastructure such as buildings, bridges, roadways, locations and structures as a way of remembering and honoring these admirable citizens who have given great effort, contributions and services to our community.

The Commemoration Commission will be made up of seven (7) citizens who are currently not elected officials or officeholders: two (2) citizen appointees selected by each commissioner and one (1) citizen appointee selected by the county council president for a total of seven voting members. The County Planner, Facilities Director, County Engineer and Highway Superintendent will serve as advisors if and when needed.

This Commemoration Commission will use the nomination form developed and made available on the county website to gather nominations from citizens. The committee will vet, analyze, discuss and agree to forward recommendations from the LaPorte County Commemoration Commission to the County Commission for action. The Commemoration Commission will be staffed by the Office of Community and Economic Development.

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

*Richard Mrozinski*  
*Dr. Vidya Kora*

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

**ORIGINAL**



**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202  
La Porte, IN 46350-3400  
(219) 326-6808 ext. 2229

Sheila Matias  
President

Dr. Vidya Kora  
Vice President

Richard Mrozinski  
Member

7 October 2020

**Formal written notification reaffirming long-standing custom and practice of the La Porte County Commissioners prohibiting the installation or placement of any political signs on county property**

Consistent with decades of custom and practice by the County Commissioners of not permitting any commercial or political signs to be placed on county property, this motion places that policy into the minutes of the Commission and reaffirms the policy – consistent with direction given by the Indiana Election Division dated November 2019 requiring that if any signs are permitted, then all candidates and parties have a right to display them. If no political signs are permitted, such policy applies across the board prohibiting all parties and candidates from placing or installing signs on public property.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheila Matias, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Vidya Kora, Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Mrozinski, Member

**ORIGINAL**