



**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
Tuesday, November 10, 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 Matias - Present; Commissioner Mrozinski - Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

Considered the agenda. **Commissioner Kora** motioned to accept the agenda after adding under **New Business** consider renewal for medical and dental for county employees. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. **Motion carried.** **Commissioner Kora** then motioned to accept the amended agenda. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. **Motion carried.**

Considered approval of October 21, 2020 minutes. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Kora** seconded. **Motion carried.**

Executive Assistant Diane Gonzales read the claims with Payroll ending 10/23/2020 - \$1,171,639.59 and ending 11/6/2020 - \$1,175,671.70. Miscellaneous claims in the amount of \$1,526,558.83. **Commissioner Kora** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. **Motion carried.**

Commissioner Kora thanked the people of La Porte County for giving him the privilege of serving as County Commissioner for 8 years. "I've thoroughly enjoyed it. I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish by working together. I'm proud of all of our employees, our department heads, and our elected officials. You are an amazing team. Many years ago I was running for office and an elderly patient of mine was at a polling place to vote and she was carrying an oxygen tank. I asked her why she took the trouble of coming out with her oxygen tank to vote and she said, 'I have come here to vote for you. But I vote for you only if you promise me that you will continue to practice medicine and take care of me.' I did promise her that, that I would continue to practice medicine and I am so grateful that I have been able to keep that promise and the reason I am telling you this story is that doing this job, by practicing medicine has been challenging. This would not have been made possible had it not been for the extraordinary cooperation that I have received from my fellow Commissioners, both of you here and the Commissioners who proceeded you. Commissioner Milsap, Commissioner Decker, Commissioner Bohacek, Commissioner Gonder, and Commissioner Gramarossa. I want to thank you all for your generosity and understanding. I will also add that this would not have been possible had it not been for innovations like texting, email and this year, zoom. I called Commissioner-elect Haney, whose here today, and I congratulated him. I also wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone else who won during last week's elections and also I want to thank all the candidates who participated. For those who have served our county for many years and who did not win your elections, thank you for your years of service. Madame President, in health care we pay particular importance to the hand-off when one team, caring for a patient, hands off the care of the patient to another team, we call this 'transitions of care' and during this transition I want to

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highlight a few items which need the ongoing attention of the next county commission. 1) Office of Economic Development – Establishing this office was an important priority for me when I came in and this office has done a phenomenal job with Tony Rodriguez, Bailey McGrath and others who have proceeded you. You've been able to attract new businesses and create jobs. This office needs to be supported and nurtured. I also want to thank Matt Reardon and Mitch Bishop who worked very closely with the office of Economic Development. Now Workforce Development also a very important aspect of Economic Development. I've been the liaison from this Commission to the Workforce Development, I've been on the Chief Elected Officials Board for Northwest Indiana and I've chaired it for the past few years. This board works very closely with the Northwest Indiana Businesses. So whoever represents this commission as a liaison for Workforce Development should pay particular attention to this because of the coronavirus situation, unemployment rate in Northwest Indiana and in La Porte County is high and the other complicating problem is that Miss Linda Woloshansky, who is with the Centers for Workforce Innovation, she is retiring at the end of this year. And she has been a very, very strong advocate for Workforce Development so I think this is an area that needs particular attention. The county health department – we are in the midst of a pandemic, the health department team has done well by working together and I want to give a special thanks and a shout out to our Council President Randy Novak, I don't know if Randy is on the Zoom call, he has been hosting this weekly Zoom calls which involves the participation of many stake holders in La Porte County and that has helped coordinate the efforts in addressing the issue of this pandemic. And a special thanks to EMA Director Larry Butcher for his efforts. Larry has transported people suspected of Covid and Larry has really stepped up nicely during this pandemic. And our IT Director Darlene Hale, Facilities Director Larry Levendowski, all of you have done a phenomenal job. I feel our capacity for testing is good at this time. Our capacity to take care of sick patients as we experience this surge will be challenging. We have our hospital administrators on the Zoom call today who will be speaking shortly but we all need to work together to make sure that we take care of all of those that are affected by the Covid-19. Mr. Mancuso has indicated that he will be retiring early next year and this will be an important hire. I hope you can get started soon on this because next year the administration of the vaccine will be a key priority and how that vaccine needs to be stored and all will be critical so I think we need to work on that and actually with the Covid-19 there are two other areas of public health that is of significant attention are substance abuse and mental health issues and because of Covid-19 the stress level on human beings has increased quite a bit and also the incidents of substance abuse. I am very pleased with the opening of the recovery center recently and that work needs to be continued and strengthened. The other important priority is lowering infant mortality. The work that is currently being done with the help and cooperation and leadership of the Healthcare Foundation of La Porte is very important and I hope one of you will take an active interest in working with this group to address the issue of lowering infant mortality, addressing the issue of low birth rate babies and improving neonatal health. Housing, our Office of Economic Development and Community Development is working on the Vibrant Communities Initiative with the Unity Foundation of La Porte County and the La Porte County Visitor's Bureau, they are in the process of choosing a firm to do the housing study which will develop a housing strategy for the county which will develop new housing which will be attractive to young people to stay here in La Porte County and attract skilled young people to move into our communities. It will also create housing for the retirees and young families and will help our community grow, develop and thrive. The housing that is being proposed will meet the requirements of various income groups at various price points. And this is particularly important in the context of the Double Tracking of the South Shore that I am sure will attract more people to come to La Porte County and make this their home. KIP, KIP has been 'work in progress' when I joined the Commission and it continues to be a 'work in progress' but a lot has happened to move this along and I'm very grateful for that, all the legal problems related to obtaining easements have been addressed and more or less resolved. The million dollar grant that we got from IEDC, thanks to the efforts of Matt Reardon, will help connect KIP to two class 1 carriers with regent services of JBC Rail to operate the switch, the whole KIP project is primed and ready to take off. I hope you will continue to pay attention to this so we can realize the full potential of KIP. The Michigan City Courthouse Project is coming along nicely thanks to the efforts of our entire team who have worked hard on this and I especially want to give a shout out to our Auditor and soon-to-be Treasurer Joie Winski. Madame President, whenever I am asked to serve on a board I usually check to see

who is the person staffing the board and I usually join it if I'm confident we have good staff. From that perspective it has been a blessing to have Diane to serve as our administrative assistant. Diane, you have made my work very easy, thank you very much. Lastly I want to share my joy about the news that I heard yesterday and that is related to the efficacy of the Pfizer vaccine. I believe this will be a game changer, we have struggled this year with the Coronavirus and with the wide availability of the vaccine and the administration of this vaccine it will help bring this pandemic to a close – hopefully, hopefully, in the next 6-9 months and that will help our economy get back to normal, it will help our kids get back to school safely and most importantly it will help all of us get together with family and friends and I will particularly look forward to getting on a plane, travel and have a good time. Thank you very much.”

Public Comment

Joe Haney – 2695 W. Joliet Road La Porte – Commented on the CARES Act funds, congratulated the county for receiving the funds. Thanked Commissioner Kora for his service as Commissioner. Looking forward to a smooth transition.

Mayor Tom Dermody requested support for his COVID-19 Action Plan. After discussion took place **Commissioner Kora motioned to move forward with the COVID-19 Action Plan under the directive of the county health officer and all 3 jurisdictions – County, City of La Porte and Michigan City – come together and adopt a plan based on comments made today. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Sharon Stine - 22686 Remington Court Elkhart - via Zoom. Questioned the vacate on Beach Drive in La Porte. Sharon did not have Counsel. She asked if a vacate had ever been reversed. Attorney Shaw Friedman stated a unanimous ruling had been made by the Commission to approve the vacate on Beach Drive. Sharon stated she did not believe a 1st/2nd reading had been done in the Commissioners meeting to which Attorney Friedman said it passed on both readings and is done with the Board of Commissioners.

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

Larry Levendowski - Director of Facilities - Updated Commissioners on projects that need to be finished.

Steve Alt – 911 Director – Reported a dispatcher delivered her first baby by giving directions over the phone.

Tony Rodriguez – Office of Community & Economic Development – Highlighted work that has been done by his office.

Jeremy Sobecki – Parks Department – Reported on the opening of new mountain bike trails that have been opened to the public. Shared bikeways will be having new signs and Luhr Park has a new shelter.

Requests

Considered permission to approach Council for filling a position at the Parks Department – Jeremy Sobecki, Superintendent. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered sick days pay for a retiring employee, Scott Pierce, in the Sheriff's department – John Boyd. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Old Business

Considered 2nd/final reading of favorable recommendation from Plan Commission to vacate portion of Canal Street in Hudson Township - Andrew Voeltz, Attorney for Petitioners. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Kora seconded. Motion carried. ***Ordinance 2020-7**

Considered update on drainage issue in Meadowview Estates subdivision – Al Walus, CB Burke Engineering/Jay Sullivan, Engineer. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve Option 1 in the amount of \$772,500 to go before the Council. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

New Business

Considered opening material bids for 2021 year – Duane Werner, Highway Superintendent.

Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.

*****Bid list attached to minutes**

Considered 2021 La Porte County Holiday calendar. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered contract amendment for Securus – John Boyd, Sheriff. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered contract with UniFirst for uniform replacement – John Boyd, Sheriff. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered grant agreement with INDOT for engineering services for Union Mills sidewalks – Jay Sullivan on behalf of Mitch Bishop. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered renewal of Anthem Dental for 2021 year – Barb Mossman, HR. Two year rate locked in. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Considered medical for 2021 year – Barb Mossman, HR. 3% increase. Requested permission to approach Council for approval for the medical 2021 year. **Commissioner Kora motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

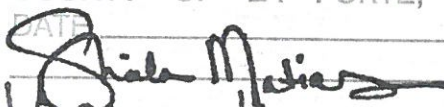
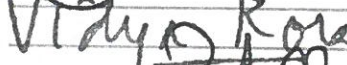

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski stated it has been 45 years ago today, November 10, 1975. Happy Birthday to the Marines. Veterans Day program has been pre-recorded and will be available on Facebook, YouTube ad ALCO for viewing.

Commissioner Vidya Kora wished Commissioner Mrozinski a Happy Veterans Day.

Commissioner Sheila Matias thanked the veterans for their service. Thanked all workers who made Election Day possible – Voter Registration, Absentee Voting, Poll workers – a historic election took place.

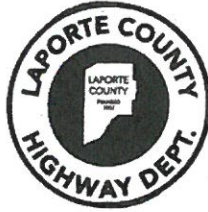
President Sheila Matias adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 11-24-2020


ATTEST: 
Auditor
LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL

LaPorte County Highway Department

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1805 W. 5th Street
LaPorte, Indiana 46350

RE: LaPorte County Highway Annual Material Bid Recommendations for 2021

Class 1 - Crushed Limestone

Three Bidder:

US Aggregates Inc.
South Lake Stone
Ozinga Materials & Logistics

Class 2 – Bituminous Patching / Rap Materials

Four Bidders:

Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc.
Walsh & Kelly, Inc.
Phend & Brown, Inc.
Central Paving Inc.

Class 3 – Blast Furnace Crushed Slag

Two Bidders:

Phoenix Services
Beemsterboer Aggregates

Class 5 – No-lead, Diesel and E-85

Three Bidders:

Triple J-Mar Petroleum, Inc.
PetroChoice / Rackham Service
Pinkerton Oil Co., Inc.

Class 6 – Signs and Sign Posts

Two Bidders:

Hall Signs

Osburn Associates

Class 7 – Culvert Pipe and Guardrail

Two Bidders:

Debco Metal Culverts

Metal Culverts, Inc.