



**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202**

**La Porte, IN 46350-3400**

**Phone: (219) 326-6808 ext. 2229**

**Richard Mrozinski  
President**

**Joseph Haney  
Vice President**

**Sheila Matias  
Member**

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, January 20, 2020 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room 3 at 6:00 p.m.  
via Zoom/In-Person**

**President Rich Mrozinski** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilwoman Connie Gramarossa.

**Auditor Tim Stabosz** called the roll: Commissioner Matias - Present; Commissioner Haney - Present; Commissioner Mrozinski - Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

**Considered the agenda. Commissioner Matias motioned to add ‘Consideration for Board Liaisons’ under Old Business and under Requests ‘Consider permission to approach the Council for additional appropriation for the Modernization of the Jail Elevator in the County Complex Building.’ Also added the E-911 Board appointments. Commissioner Joe Haney added ‘Health Department request for Liaison.’ Commissioner Haney seconded the additions to the agenda. Motion carried. Commissioner Haney motioned to accept the amended agenda. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered approval of January 6, 2021 minutes. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Auditor Tim Stabosz** read the Claims with Payroll ending 1/15/2021 - \$1,473,404.80 and Operating Expense Claims - \$303,090.50. Auditor Stabosz stated the amount for payroll was a bit higher than normal due to a \$500 Health Insurance per employee with insurance. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.**

**Public Comment**

None

**Department Reports/Department Head Comments**

**Tony Mancuso**, Health Department Director, stated Danielle Glasgow was on the line to give an update with the vaccine clinic at the fairgrounds. **Danielle Glasgow**, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, reported all is well at the vaccine clinic. Approximately 85 vaccinations per day have been done during the first wave. The testing site formerly located at the Michigan Township Trustees office on Michigan Blvd. has been relocated to 302 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Michigan City at the Health Department location. **Commissioner Haney** thanked the Health Dept for their hard work and wished Director Tony Mancuso a happy retirement. **President Mrozinski** stated he visited the vaccine clinic and said it was a fine, little operation. **Commissioner Matias** said kudos to Tony on his retirement. She then thanked the nursing staff in particular. Commissioner Matias asked Danielle to give more information on the vaccine and how to register for it. **Danielle** replied the scheduling system is

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ran through the State of Indiana. The website is [ourshot.in.gov](http://ourshot.in.gov) and is the best way to schedule an appointment for those that are eligible. You may call 211 as well however there may be a bit of a delay getting through on the call. State of Indiana has been impressed with La Porte County's location for administering the vaccine. In the weeks to come the State will be adding more vaccines site at Walmart, Meijer and Kroger. Mobile units are planned as well. We are District 1 which includes Lake and Porter County. Plans are being made to help those that are homebound, too. **President Mrozinski** wished Tony Mancuso a happy retirement. **Commissioner Haney** asked Director Mancuso to perhaps discuss a letter that was sent out earlier pertaining to a Liaison for the Commissioners. **Director Mancuso** replied at the Health Board meeting the night before he brought up the subject of never having a Commissioner as a Liaison. Tony said they have a Councilman but no Commissioner and it would be nice for a Commissioner to attend their quarterly meetings to know what is going on in their department. Tony recommended the Board write a letter requesting Commissioner Haney as their Liaison due to Joe visiting their vaccine clinic site daily.

### **Requests**

**Considered** permission to approach the Council for additional appropriation for the Modernization of the Jail Elevator in the County Complex. Larry Levendowski, Director of Facilities, stated a couple of months ago the south elevator went down in the jail. This elevator operates for the kitchen and laundry. Otis Elevator states parts are no longer available for this certain elevator therefore a 'modernization' will have to be done and the cost is \$175,000. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** 58.5 unused sick days for Dennis Orr who retired. Erika Stallworth stated he had over 24 years with La Porte County and the department has the funds available to pay him. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** permission to advertise EMS bids to replace 2 ambulances and to obtain a quote for one support vehicle. Andrew McGuire reported this is part of their annual replacement program. No vehicles were replaced last year except one that was involved in an accident. Vehicles that are being replaced/traded-in are a 2012 Marque F450 gasoline ambulance with 141,794 miles and a 2012 Medtec F450 gasoline ambulance with 129,152 miles. The support vehicle is a 2006 GMC Yukon with 113,529 miles. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** 60 unused sick days for Annemarie Polan who is retiring as Building Commissioner. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** permission to approach the Council for additional appropriation of \$15, 670 for Bridge #186 - Jay Sullivan, Engineer. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** request approval of the 80% INDOT matching grant for La Porte County Bridge #97 – Jay Sullivan, Engineer. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.**

**Commissioner Haney** reminded President Mrozinski that there was one more item added under Requests. 'Consider Health Department's unanimous request.' **Commissioner Matias**, "I thought we already discussed that, Mr. President?" **Commissioner Haney**, "Tony mentioned it but we didn't actually consider the request." **President Mrozinski**, "Well, old business is liaison appointments which will be next." **Commissioner Haney**, "So, we have this before us right now though under Request so it should be appropriate to deal with that now under Request." **President Mrozinski**, "Okay, we deal with it." **Commissioner Matias**, "Mr. President, point of order. Commissioner Haney asked Tony Mancuso to discuss the request and we discussed that under request

when Tony spoke so I think that we've already managed this. I'd say that's the *Point of Order*." **Attorney Shaw Friedman** suggested moving up the other motion for the liaison position to now on the agenda under Request. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to move the unanimous request by the La Porte County Health Department for a liaison position and honor their request that it be Commissioner Joe Haney. Commissioner Haney then read into the record the written request from the La Porte County Board of Health. *"The Board of Health by unanimous vote during the trustees' quarterly meeting held January 19, 2021, respectfully request Commissioner Joe Haney as their liaison to the Commission. It is the board's sincere desire their selection be granted as requested. Sincerely, Tony Mancuso, Administrator."* **President Mrozinski** asked Commissioner Matias for her thoughts. **Commissioner Matias**, "Mr. President, we have a motion that was added to the agenda properly that says 'Motion for reconsideration on certain board liaison positions' so my position, unless the attorney has another suggestion, is that we consider this as a motion when we talk about the other corrections, additions, to the board liaison positions." **President Mrozinski**, "Well, we can discuss that now then because we are passed that, that's the next thing – "**Commissioner Haney**, "Point of order, there is a motion on the floor, prior motion on the floor." **Attorney Friedman**, "I would suggest you deal with both motions, there is a first motion on there – vote it up or down and then you can proceed with your other motion if you would." **President Mrozinski**, "Is there a second? **Commissioner Matias**, "No sir." **President Mrozinski**, "Since it dies for lack of a second then we will move on to liaison appointments and consider with them." **Commissioner Matias**, "So my motion was Motion for a reconsideration on certain board liaison positions. There were some Scrivener's errors in the original lists which we voted on at our last meeting and so I would like to make some corrections and additions. My corrections would include Commission President Rich Mrozinski as the liaison to the Redevelopment Commission – that would be a correction. My addition would be Sheila Matias as a liaison to the Health Department and Community Corrections. And an adoption of the E-911 Board as presented by Mr. Novak, I believe the Council President passed that on to us." **Commissioner Haney**, "So, point of order, there was no Scrivener's error on that, that was properly passed as it stood. There was no Health Department liaison position prior so that was not a Scrivener's error, it was lacking because it did not exist prior to this and if you would like to get into the details that came before this Commissioner Mrozinski, I'd be more than happy to get into that now or if you would like to stick with the appointments as they are and assign a Health Board liaison position as unanimously requested by the La Porte County Health Department, I'd be more than happy to." **Commissioner Matias**, "So Mr. President, the motion for reconsideration on certain board liaison appointments, the Scrivener's error was in relation to Rich Mrozinski, has been on the Redevelopment Commission for several terms, he's done a great job and I believe that was a Scrivener's error in removing him and putting him..." **Commissioner Haney**, "It was not, Commissioner Matias, I would caution you not to step in this landmine that you're about to open." **Commissioner Matias**, "What are you talking about?" **Commissioner Haney**, "I would caution strongly against that." **Commissioner Matias**, "Well, first of all, please don't interrupt me..." **Commissioner Haney**, "And you may not be aware..." **Commissioner Matias**, "...I was speaking about the liaison to the Redevelopment Commission and then I went on to say in my motion that my motion include Sheila Matias as the liaison to the Health Department and the Community Corrections and I added E-911 Board as presented by Council President Novak, were part of my motion." **President Mrozinski**, "That is all one motion?" **Commissioner Matias**, "Yes sir." **Auditor Tim Stabosz**, "Who is the Scrivener? Who is the Scrivener that acknowledges the mistake?" **President Mrozinski**, "I'll claim the mistake for the RDC. I had been on the RDC when I was on the Council and also as a Commissioner. And as you know we have a long list of liaison appointments and normally a new person takes the liaison appointments for whoever's position they filled, which would have been Joe filling for Dr. Kora. We did that and then after discussing that with members of the RDC, they informed me, reminded me of how many non-disclosure agreements I have signed while being a part of the RDC, they suggested since I am really in the middle of a lot of negotiations with a lot of Economic Development projects, even as early as last night and two days ago, that they recommended that I stay and after a conversation with them about that I agreed with them to get back on the RDC where I was rather than bring someone new in the middle of all these projects. That's why that is on our agenda for tonight. If you would like to take these one at a time (directed to Commissioner Matias)? You made a motion..." **Attorney**

**Friedman**, “A motion for reconsideration is appropriate the next subsequent meeting and that’s what’s before the Board at this point.” **Commissioner Haney**, “Attorney Friedman, I have a question here about these NDAs. I believe Commissioner Mrozinski approached you about some questions about the – or did you approach him about questions about NDAs? I want to get some clarification on that. **Attorney Friedman**, “Well, there previously were NDAs - that’s not really material to the issue before you, you’ve got a motion of reconsideration.” **Commissioner Haney**, “Well, he just made that germane to this conversation by bringing it up so...” **Attorney Friedman**, “I think he’s trying to point out, Mr. Haney, he’s been involved in Economic Development issues out there for the last 15 years and I believe his intent was to serve as the representative to the Redevelopment Commission.” **Commissioner Haney**, “I understand that’s his intent he’s expressing here today. My question to you is did you discuss any concerns by NDAs with Commissioner Mrozinski after the Board meeting where I was appointed to the RDC?” **Attorney Friedman**, “No, what he’s indicated to me is that it was his intent to go on the RDC. I’ve had prior concerns about NDAs and having elected officials sign them. **Commissioner Haney**, “Sure.” **Attorney Friedman**, “What we have done and recommended Mr. Haney, is that only the officials of the Office of Economic Development sign NDAs. So that’s the practice that we’ve promoted.” **Commissioner Haney**, “Were there any concerns when Commissioner Kora replaced Commissioner Mrozinski two years ago?” **Attorney Friedman**, “Of what, of NDAs?” **Commissioner Haney**, “Of yeah, NDAs.” **Attorney Friedman**, “Mr. Haney, I’ve consistently recommended that elected officials not be required to sign NDAs. What we have asked is that those be confined strictly to the staff members of the Office of Economic Development. What I think the point he’s tried to make is that part of the NDAs is he’s been part of the negotiations with various prospective developers out there for a number of years and so I think that’s the point he is trying to make.” **Commissioner Haney**, “Did you have a conversation with him about NDAs and - right? And specifically me on the RDC around the time of the last meeting when I was appointed?” **Attorney Friedman**, “Not at that - not at that time, what I think he’s made clear tonight is that the list that was presented had an error on it and that he was listed, he was *not* listed as the representative.” **Commissioner Haney**, “So, and I want to get this clear because after the meeting Commissioner Mrozinski came in my office and he approached me, and this may be some concern for your office as your name was invoked and he said that ‘I have to take you off the RDC’ and I asked why and he said, ‘There’s some NDAs.’ I asked some of these questions we still had. And I said, ‘Well, I’m familiar with my line of work. I signed a lot of NDAs for a lot of consulting that I do.’ And he said, ‘Well, Shaw wants you off.’ Those are the exact words he used to me.” **President Mrozinski**, “No, no – I’ll correct you on that. I also mentioned that I had talked to other members of the RDC who have also made it known to me that they – it had nothing to do with you, taking you off had nothing to do with you. It had to do with me, they wanted to make sure that I remain on that since I am in the middle of negotiations, several...” **Commissioner Haney**, “So I’m clear, you never (directed to Attorney Friedman), you never said to Commissioner Mrozinski that you wanted me off the RDC?” **Attorney Friedman**, “No, I’ve said that it’s been beneficial – I was surprised by the appointment and it surprised me that it was, that it even occurred because Mr. Mrozinski’s been involved with Economic Development issues at KIP for the last 13 years, you’ve been involved 13 days so yes, there is a benefit to having Mr. Mrozinski continue on with Economic Development.” **Commissioner Matias**, “So, Mr. President...” **Commissioner Haney**, “And I’d like to...” **President Mrozinski**, “Point of order...” **Commissioner Haney**, “...go further with that because there was - last Friday I was invited to a breakfast by Commissioner Mrozinski where Joe Coar and someone else was there and I declined the invite because of obviously concerns about Open Door Law violations. After which Commissioner Mrozinski told me quote, ‘Joe Coar wanted me replaced on the RDC’ and for Mr. Mrozinski to be put on. The concerns I have here is that either Commissioner Mrozinski is not being forthright in the information he is relaying or there is undue influence being placed upon Commissioner Mrozinski from either the names that he’s been invoking and again, I don’t know because I was not privy to the conversation you two may have had.” **Attorney Friedman**, “Mr. Haney, let’s assume the very best, you know what, let’s assume the very best. Let’s not start out the year questioning others’ motives or sincerity...” **Commissioner Haney**, “I’m simply relaying the words that were espoused to me by Commissioner Mrozinski.” **Attorney Friedman**, “I know but you know what, you’re relatively new to things in terms of Economic Development, you’ve gotten various liaison-ships assigned by the Commission, there is a motion pending in

front of the Board and I would suggest procedurally you vote it up or down at this point.” **Commissioner Matias**, “So, Mr. President, I just have a few comments, I can’t refrain. So, most people know that Mr. Mrozinski and I have not always seen eye to eye on a lot of things over the last couple of years but here’s what I will tell you we see eye to eye on, he’s done a really good job on the Redevelopment Commission and when I got my list of appointments, the documents that we’ve come to agree on, I was surprised when I saw that he wasn’t going to have the Redevelopment Commission. He’s done a good job, KIP is close to his heart. I am going to continue asking for a motion for reconsideration on certain board liaison appointments which would include for whatever purpose, my purpose is that Mr. Mrozinski would like to be on that, he’s the President of the Commission and he’s done a good job in his, I believe, 8 years on the Redevelopment Commission. So, I’m not a big person on coming in front of a meeting where the public is listening and accusing people of different things, I just don’t think that that’s kosher, if we want to have a conversation offline about differences and opinions, that’s great but that really, it’s not pertinent to my - pertaining to my motion. **I asked for a motion for reconsideration on certain board liaison appointments.** There were some things that were exceptions, like we always include approving E-911 board at our organizational meeting, we always have Community Corrections on our list, those were omitted for whoever was to be blamed for that, I don’t really - I’m not a big blame-game person so my **motion stands, Rich Mrozinski, requesting Rich Mrozinski to be placed on the Redevelopment Commission, Commissioner Matias as the liaison to the Health Department and Community Corrections, and the E-911 Board to be adopted with the list that Council President Novak gave us.**” **President Mrozinski stepped down and seconded. Vote taken – 2 ayes. Commissioners Mrozinski and Matias. Motion carried. Commissioner Haney**, “I think it’s ridiculous to ignore the unanimous request by the La Porte County Health Board on this issue. The unanimous request by the entire board.” **Commissioner Matias**, “So, Mr. President, I would like to speak to that. Historically, a board, boards, appoint - the Board of Commission or the Mayor in the position of the cities, ask for people to serve on Boards and Commissions. It is certainly highly irregular that a Board would be requested to send a letter requesting a certain member of the Commission.” **Commissioner Haney**, “They did this on their own volition.” **Commissioner Matias**, “Excuse me Mr. Haney, I’m speaking and I really don’t appreciate you continuing to interrupt me. So, regarding public health, as a former public school teacher, a mother of six, and a grandmother, public health has been close to my heart for the almost 30 years I’ve been involved in public life. Community health and the quality of life is super important to me. We have issues that have not been attended to in our county. Infant mortality, excuse me - please don’t roll your eyes – (directed at Auditor Tim Stabosz) prenatal health, nutrition and food insecurity, mental health for children and adolescence, environmental health and geriatric health. Those are issues that I have worked on in my career, those are issues that I believe under the new direction of the La Porte County Health Department, there will be a new administrator and the board is highly engaged. I think that I would do a really good job on that board and I appreciate the support of Commissioner Mrozinski, thank you.” **President Mrozinski**, “Thank you.”

### **Old Business**

**Considered** additional review of Marissa Lynch’s proposed lobbying contract to protect La Porte County’s gaming dollars distribution. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Mrozinski who stepped down as President to vote. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney did not vote.**

**Discussed** potential re-opening of county buildings. **President Mrozinski** stated the Commissioners have talked to all department heads. Our county is still in the red color. Some departments do not want to open and others do especially those located in the County Complex building that must come down the elevator to meet with the public since the elevators are locked to the public. Offices have Plexiglas and hand sanitizer but have to leave that area when they come downstairs to conduct business with the public. Currently a mix bag of offices wanted to open or stay closed. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve the Hybrid with formation of a committee. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.**

### New Business

**Considered** contract renewal with Tony Rodriguez as Director of Office Community & Economic Development. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** support for plan to renovate and repurpose old Community Corrections Building at 500 Monroe St. for Facilities Dept offices and storage - Larry Levendowski. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** resolution opposing HB 1234 which would eliminate Responsible Bidders Ordinances in Indiana – Marci Kunstek, IN/IL/IA Foundation for Fair Contracting. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Resolution 2021-1**

### Commissioner Comments

**Commissioner Matias** extended congratulations to the new President and Vice President of the Commission. She stated hope for our country to heal among the division that we have experienced. Regardless of the party we are all Americans together. Many of our families came to this country looking for opportunity, fairness and respect and those are the guidelines that make our country the remarkable place that it is and hopes everyone joins in bringing good fortune to our country as we move into this next chapter.

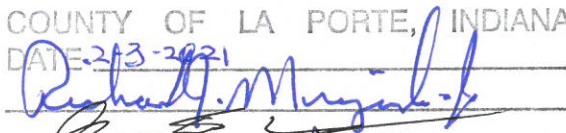
**Commissioner Haney** thanked Tony Mancuso for his years of service as Health Department Director and wished him a Happy Retirement. Thanked Health Department for making the vaccine clinic a success. Thanked the highway department for their help as well. Earlier this week was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and two quotes resonate with him. "One of life's most persistent and urgent questions is what are you doing for others?" The 2<sup>nd</sup> quote is "Courage is an inner resolution to go forward despite obstacles; Cowardice is submissive surrender to circumstances. Courage breeds creativity; Cowardice represses fear and mastered by it. Cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency ask the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience ask the question, is it right? And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right." He stated, "I am worried and I am troubled by some of the things I have seen in my first 20 days in office, I truly am. I have concerns about undue influences exerting themselves over the power of the Commission and I think we touched on some of those earlier today. I have no idea if what I'm seeing and what I'm being told is actually from those outside interests or if it's simply made up out of whole cloth, I don't know but I think as the days and times move forward and more parties step up for what they've witnessed and seen we'll see more of that. I do think it's inappropriate to have outside persons influence any decision here in the Commission, I don't think it's appropriate. To speak to the hard work of the Health Department, this letter (Unanimous request from Board of Health for appointment of Joe Haney to Health Liaison) was not of my own volition, I did not request to be directly appointed and I certainly didn't request a unanimous request from the Health Department. I think we've seen that, you know, literally everyday I've been on the ground, helping and interfacing, making sure to get done everything that's needed. In the midst of a pandemic, I think it's, I think it's irresponsible and reckless to ignore a unanimous request from Physicians, Public Health Officer, Public Health Administrator, as well as the other physicians and clinical people who are on that board. I think it's reckless and while I applaud Commissioner Matias' desire, and some of those things weight close to my heart as well, as a father with three daughters and, previous in the past, with, issue, I certainly, those things are very close to my heart but for two years as President you (directed to Commissioner Matias) had the ability to, and the Commissions prior to that, to appoint a Health Department liaison and for that ball to have been dropped for that many years and come back, I can't help but think it could almost possibly be retaliation for the fact of my calling out some of the curious ways that this RDC appointment was changed."

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**Commissioner Rich Mrozinski** stated no one would stop Commissioner Haney from continuing to do what he has been doing with the vaccine clinic and the Health Department. As he listened to a song by Buffalo Springfield - For what it's worth – carrying signs, saying hooray for my side. Simpler times when you could just carry a sign for your beliefs. People committed vandalism and even murder at the Capital in Washington, D.C. We have control over what happens here in our county. Senator Todd Young wrote an article and in it quoted Abraham Lincoln “Fellow citizens are not enemies but friends with a common shared history of beliefs.”

**President Mrozinski adjourned at 7:17 p.m.**

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA  
DATE: 2-13-2021





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

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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