

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
MARCH 22, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.

The meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on March 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. (Central Standard 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 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Novak asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. President Novak asked that everyone, except emergency personnel, turn off their cell phones.

ROLL CALL

Auditor Timothy Stabosz took the Roll Call. Council Members present were Cunningham, Gramarossa, Rosenbaum, Garner, Yagelski, Mollenhauer, and Novak. A quorum was noted as all seven Council Members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 22, 2021 AGENDA

Councilman Yagelski asked to add a request for a computer for HR under New Business.

Another item was asked to be added to the agenda by President Novak. County Surveyor Tony Hendrix has asked to hire a replacement for an employee who is retiring. This will appear under New Business.

Scott Pelath, Executive Director of the Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission has asked to speak, and will talk after Public Comment and before Department Heads.

Ⓢ A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. Motion carried 7-0.

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the February 22, 2021 meeting minutes was made by Councilman Mollenhauer and seconded by Councilwoman Gramarossa. Motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Patty Nocek, 255 N. 450 East, Rolling Prairie, IN 46371

Ms. Nocek discussed the special assessment added to tax bills for the Kankakee River Basin. There was a \$7.00 charge listed on her property taxes on Beacon for the Kankakee River Basin. She supports this special assessment, but didn't know the charge was going on her tax bill, as she had not heard anything about it. The fees were \$7.00 per residential parcel, \$1.00 per acre of farmland, \$2 per acre for undeveloped commercial land, \$50 per acre for developed commercial land, and \$360 per acre for industrial land. The purpose of the assessment is to prevent farmland

from flooding. A Northwest Indiana Times article about the assessments for the Kankakee River Basin indicated that Porter County will pick up the tab so Porter County residents will not have to pay it. Patty would like to see the La Porte County Council vote on any tax assessments assessed to La Porte County residents. She did not know how this came about in La Porte County without her knowing about it. She wanted to bring it to the attention of the La Porte County Council so that maybe next year the La Porte County Council would consider picking up the tab or half the tab. Ms. Nocek wanted the Council to know what districts are paying for this. An estimate of the amounts of the assessments in different councilmen's districts included \$315,000 in Mr. Garner's district, \$26,000 in Mr. Novak's district, \$31,000 in Mr. Yagelski's district, and \$330,000 in Mr. Rosenbaum's district.

Scott Pelath indicated that the Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission was created by the Indiana General Assembly. \$2.3 million in appropriations was given for the project, much of which was reinvested in La Porte County. This year is the first year the monies go on the tax bill. The information on the assessments was presented publicly in a number of different forums. It would be fiscally very difficult for La Porte County to absorb that kind of expense. He stated that other options are available for counties which are not promoted or discouraged by him because the fiscal situation and tax base for each county are different.

Option 1: The County Council can pay what the assessments would have raised from another source of funds.

Option 2: The county could use funds to lower some of the assessments.

Option 3: The county can adopt its own assessment schedule.

Option 4: A greater amount could be assessed so funds could be used for other needs.

Mr. Pelath said he would be happy to support La Porte County regarding their assessment schedule. The assessment fees are working to stabilize the banks of the river, to fund an upstream erosion project, to make a number of bank repairs, and to look for places to reconnect the flood plain to the Kankakee River. The grand purpose is to preserve the agricultural tax bases of the county. Mr. Pelath stated that he is here to support the county including crunching data.

President Novak thanked Mr. Pelath and Ms. Nocek. Mr. Novak stated that the Northwest Indiana Times emailed him asking if La Porte County was going to pick up the tab on the river basin. Mr. Novak indicated to the Times that he was unaware of the situation. He stated that the County Council will have more discussions regarding the assessments and what's equitable, look at restructuring the fees, and whether the county can contribute anything.

Councilman Cunningham asked Ms. Nocek if the fee is labeled. Ms. Nocek stated that it was not labeled on Beacon, but she had not received her tax bill yet. Mr. Cunningham stated the Council should make sure that it is clearly indicated on the tax bill what it is for.

Auditor Stabosz shared that the tax abstract that was printed three times in the newspaper by state law lists every taxing district and which of the townships and who is charged for that so the tax abstract should show the charges and who is affected by those charges; that's one of the required

disclosures, before we can create that tax bill. The charge for the Kankakee River Basin is on the tax abstract, so the approval of the budget orders from the state, which is the authorization to charge the taxes, lists each and every element. It should be out there in what's mailed to you, so we create and get approved from the state then send it down to the Treasurer's office for the creation of the actual tax bill. There's a double check - the Auditor's office and the Treasurer's office. Mr. Stabosz said he would clarify this before the end of the meeting.

Lisa Pierzakowski, Center Township Trustee, 1700 Lincoln Way, Suite 6, La Porte, Indiana 46350; With Kaelynn Deckard, Scipio Township Trustee

Ms. Pierzakowski sent a letter to President Novak over the weekend and asked him to forward it to everybody. Ms. Deckard and Ms. Pierzakowski have worked with Paige Sansone of Baker Tilly the last couple of years. Paige notified them what they would be receiving money from the American Rescue Plan. Ms. Pierzakowski was to receive \$700,000 and Ms. Deckard was to receive \$250,000, then at the last minute on the 17th they received an email saying that the townships were eliminated and that they would need to go in front of the County Council to request funding. Ms. Pierzakowski would have to go in front of both the City and County Council both as she is Center Township Trustee. She asked for \$200,000 from the County Council and listed some items that she would like to use the money for. The Center Township Fire Department indicated to Ms. Pierzakowski that the brush truck is 15 years old and the tankers are 28 years old. She plans to request money from the city and county both, and inquired about what they need to do next.

Councilman Yagelski stated that the Council had just found out how much money there will be and how it can be spent. The money is going to be half now and half next year. The Council does not have all the details yet. Other counties aren't necessarily going to do things the same way as La Porte County. In Lake and St. Joe counties, the commissioners handle the funding.

Ms. Pierzakowski stated that she contacted the president of the commission who told her that since she is her own government entity that she wouldn't need to go in front of the commissioners, only in front of the County Council.

President Novak indicated that the commissioners establish the fund, what it is supposed to be used for, and then the County Council has to figure it out before it is parceled out. He stated that he was glad the trustees came forward now so that the County Council would at least know that they were both looking for assistance, and possibly the other townships as well. It is something the County Council members and the commissioners would need to take into consideration.

President Novak informed Ms. Pierzakowski to wait until the county has the funds, then come back to the County Council to make the request again, and to get on the agenda as soon as possible.

Kaelynn Deckard stated that Scipio Township was initially told they were to receive \$250,000. Ms. Deckard would ask for about \$200,000. The Scipio Township Fire Department also had a list of needs. They are currently in the stages of building a new fire station, and are seeking land. Township assistance has hit Scipio Township harder in the past three months than it has in the past. For example, a 75-year-old veteran contacted Ms. Deckard about a threatened disconnect,

and Scipio Township did not have any funds in the Township Assistance. Ms. Deckard was able to rectify the situation and the disconnect was cancelled. The funds would go for services such as that. Also, funds are needed to update Door Village Park. The money would be greatly appreciated. Once the money is in the account, Ms. Deckard and Ms. Pierzakowski will get on the agenda and plead their case.

President Novak asked about the breakdown of the amount of funds.

Lisa Pierzakowski indicated that Paige Sansone of Baker Tilly sent her the preliminary of what she had received and what the townships would be receiving so Ms. Pierzakowski highlighted each of the townships of La Porte County, and then discussed with President Novak the different townships. The year end reports for each of the townships are attached highlighting what has been done in Township Assistance and the population of each of the townships because Councilman Cunningham had asked about the population.

President Novak asked if the different townships do different levels of citizen assistance.

Lisa Pierzakowski responded that that was correct, and that she had asked for part of the funds to help clients with items not eligible to be paid for through the budget. People get referred frequently to Ms. Pierzakowski's office asking for furnaces, hot water heaters, electric work, roofs and things like that. Many clients are on Social Security of \$794 so it's really hard for them to afford improvements. Ms. Pierzakowski is working with a gentleman in Middlebury who is involved with building a trailer with shower and laundry services for the homeless. There is a lot of homelessness in La Porte County, so Ms. Pierzakowski is looking for a permanent township office with transitional housing above. She would like to include a resource center/food pantry on the main floor and transitional housing above which would help eliminate paying for some clients to go into a hotel. A homeless man came into her office today who could not go into a homeless shelter and he had to be put in a hotel for a week until it can be determined where to go next with him. There's not a shelter in La Porte, but there is one in Michigan City. One man works from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. so the bus would not work for him. The funding would go to good things.

Councilman Yagelski asked how the initial figures were determined before the promised funds were withdrawn. Lisa Pierzakowski indicated that the information was in the packet from Paige Sansone, and that it was explained.

Councilman Cunningham asked if Center and Michigan Townships make up over 50% of the county's population. Lisa Pierzakowski indicated that was correct, and that Michigan Township is number one, Center Township is number two, and Coolspring Township is number three in terms of population. The populations are listed on each of the reports.

Allen Stevens, 115 N. Illinois St., Hanna, Indiana 46340

Mr. Stevens indicated that initially CSX was going to abandon the railroad line from Union Mills to La Crosse, and from North Judson to Malden, so it would have been very detrimental to a lot of the farmers in the area. So, North Judson hatched a plan with grants and no money out of pocket. North Judson asked La Porte, Starke, and Porter Counties to contribute because they were

\$300,000 short. They got \$100,000 from all three counties. Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Garner were two of the councilmen on the council at the time it was approved. Seventeen years later, it was put up for sale at \$2.75 million. North Judson owned it for a common good and it was operated by a lessee. Mr. Stevens asked, "Where is our \$100,000?"

Councilman Yagelski asked if the council's attorney could look into it.

Mr. Stevens indicated that it was going to be a municipal entity, and that over the past 17 years, millions have been spent on that line by INDOT. He stated that La Porte County should get the \$100,000 back. A municipal entity, North Judson, leased it out to a private entity.

Jeff Santana, 4954 Lindsey Lane, Michigan City, IN 46360

Mr. Santana expressed that he appreciated that the county has been more liberal with public comments. With resignations being asked for in La Porte and Michigan City, he is in favor of Duane Parry in Michigan City needing to resign. He thinks it would be good for Mr. Friedman to resign.

President Novak indicated to Mr. Santana that the public comments should be related to the agenda.

Mr. Santana expressed that the county could take a different approach, and that the public should be able to air their grievances. He indicated that there are some issues in this county.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Barb Mossman, Human Resources Director

Director Mossman's computer broke down and IT said that it needs to be replaced. She was told she was added under New Business.

Anthony Rodriguez, Director of Community and Economic Development

Director Rodriguez handed out a detailed report, an extensive list of project activities. La Porte County's website has just over a million users, which is a tremendous tribute to our team of superusers who update it multiple times a day. A tremendous accomplishment. Mr. Rodriguez said he would be happy to answer any questions; or just send him an email with any questions about the report. President Novak asked if it was going to be on the website, and Director Rodriguez stated that a section would be created under Economic Development. He indicated that they are working on some community updates that they will post, and will keep it up to date.

Andrew McGuire, EMS

Mr. McGuire indicated that he wanted to update the County Council on the Medicaid reimbursement program. He had just received an approval for Medicaid reimbursements of \$52,000 that should be going into the general fund as soon as the check is received. They are still participating in this program. The funds aren't as much as they used to be, and keep dwindling each year. As long as the program is still there, they will continue to participate in it. They just completed the application process for the 2019 year. Mr. McGuire thanked the EMS office manager, Karen Parkerson, for working on the application.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Garner spoke with Sheriff Boyd on the pension, and that it is coming before us for the full amount. He's expecting half of it. The County Council will address that later in the year. Regarding COVID issues in the jail, Sheriff Boyd said there are a few issues with staff having it, and he said the future of the cars is pretty much up to the Council when to appropriate. The County Recorder is here to tell us what she's spending her money for. Councilman Garner said Mike Quinn had his trailer and truck inspected down state for Weights and Measures. Councilman Yagelski and Councilman Garner are liaisons with Larry Levendowski who has kept us up-to-date about the process there. He reported that the Clerk's office is coming along nicely. Ceiling tile was unloaded today. Also, the Clerk brought Councilman Garner up-to-date about desks.

Councilwoman Gramarossa touched base with a quite of few of the departments for which she serves as liaison. There are Regional Sewer District problems with phase 2. Residents are coming forward and complaining about hook-ups. Many residents were not expecting the cost and that it would be mandated. At the last regional meeting, a public hearing will be scheduled. Councilwoman Gramarossa would like to have it before the next council meeting. NIRPC and Regional Sewer meet on the same day and time. She requested that someone else be found to take the NIRPC so she can stay on the Regional Sewer Board.

Councilman Cunningham had an extensive phone conversation with Erika Stallworth at the Juvenile Services Center and she is on Zoom tonight. He also met with the building commissioner Mike Polan, and there was nothing important to discuss.

Councilman Yagelski stated that the Highway Department wants to get a new sweeper, and he suggested they get some bids and get back to the County Council. The Highway Department has not had one for a couple of years. The one they had deteriorated. So it was suggested they go through that process. Mr. Yagelski met with the finance committee. The project at the Courthouse is going real well. Construction is ahead of schedule. A thank you went out to Franciscan Health for the desks, chairs, and filing cabinets from the old St. Anthony's Hospital. They saved the county a lot of money.

Councilman Mollenhauer reported that he attended the following meetings: Feb 24th, the La Porte Redevelopment Commission; March 3rd, the La Porte County Commissioners' meeting; March 17th, the La Porte County Commissioners' meeting. Also on March 3rd, GIS put on a presentation for La Porte County government for the 2021 strategic health plan meeting. On March 16th, Mr. Mollenhauer met with the maintenance supervisor, Larry Levendowski, and reviewed the Monroe Street maintenance building, the one that's being renovated. So far, Mr. Levendowski is within budget. He is using some things that were removed from the Michigan City Courthouse so that is saving taxpayers money. Mr. Mollenhauer also spoke with Andrew McGuire, EMS director, in reference to his request for ambulances and one SUV-type vehicle, and spoke to the mechanic about those vehicles in reference to the Sheriff's request on his vehicles.

Councilman Rosenbaum attended part of the La Porte Redevelopment Commission meeting,

FMEC meetings and additional meetings, the vaccination clinic every week, the COVID calls every week, and Leadership La Porte as part of a panel with President Novak and Commissioner Joe Haney. Mr. Rosenbaum also spoke with his department heads.

President Novak attended a lot of meetings and Zoom calls. He reported the Courthouse in Michigan City is coming along, with a beam signing today. He noted there are weekly meetings on that. The vaccine clinic is doing incredibly well. We have joint meetings with the Health Department, Franciscan Health, and Northwest Health. Health Link is on the there, also.

CORRESPONDENCE

Auditor Stabosz reported that none had been received.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. President Novak indicated that La Porte County Juvenile Services requested the salary of a Senior Community Supervisor be increased to that of the other shift supervisors in the building. Funds are available in the budget to accommodate this request.

Erika Stallworth, Executive Director of the Juvenile Services Center, requested an increase of \$2,189 for the Senior Community Supervisor. When the position was created in 2008, it did not include responsibilities that she has taken on since that time, and the role has evolved so that she is doing a little more than other shift supervisors. She's on-call, she sits on work groups, and she is in charge of a new program. She has asked to be put on the same level as other shift supervisors. Director Stallworth supports her, and indicated she is doing a great job.

Barb Mossman agreed with Director Stallworth. The positions require the same educational level, a bachelor's degree. Ms. Mossman forwarded the paperwork to the personnel committee to review the request. Everybody that responded approved.

Councilman Cunningham made a motion to approve. Councilman Mollenhauer seconded. All approved, 7-0.

2. President Novak indicated that Tony Hendrix, County Surveyor, is requesting permission to hire. One of his office personnel is leaving on the 26th. Councilman Cunningham made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilwoman Gramarossa. All approved, 7-0.
3. Consider approval of the Council President's authorization to hire replacement position for COMOT 3 Registrar and PAT 3 Environmental Health/Food Specialist positions in the La Porte County Health Department Office. Councilman Yagelski made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. All approved, 7-0.
4. Permission for IT to proceed with the replacement of Barb Mossman's computer. This would not be an additional appropriation; funds are available. A motion of support,

permission to spend not to exceed \$2,000, was made by Councilman Yagelski, and seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. It will come up at next month's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Councilman Cunningham indicated that Resolution 21-2B, Resolution of La Porte County Council Expressing its Support for County Auditor Tim Stabosz and County Commissioner Joe Haney was on the table. A motion was made by Councilman Cunningham to remove it from the table, seconded by Councilman Garner. Roll call: Yagelski no, Garner yes, Cunningham yes, Rosenbaum yes, Novak no, Mollenhauer no, Gramarossa no. Four no votes, three yes votes. Motion remains tabled.

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

La Porte County Sheriff

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From Riverboat (1191)

For Pension Plan

\$1,395,633.00

Sheriff Boyd requested an appropriation for a merit pension in the amount of \$1,395,633. He indicated that an appropriation had been requested last month of \$697,816.50, and that he was instructed to come back with the actuary. Sheriff Boyd introduced Pension Consultant Chris Dilts. A packet of information was provided by Mr. Dilts before the meeting. Sheriff Boyd turned the discussion over to Chief Heeg and Mr. Dilts.

Chief Heeg indicated that he is asking for the yearly pension contribution of \$1.395 million, up front or in payments. 2022 payments will go down by \$95,000. Steps have been taken to get this money up front so it can be immediately invested, and it is starting to pay dividends. The future amounts are anticipated to remain the same or go down. Attorney DiMartino has provided some information by email.

Councilman Yagelski: One of the county's contributions is interest received. Are there any other contributions that go into the pension program?

Chief Heeg: Service or process fees.

Councilman Yagelski: Process fees have gone down with the government shutdown. How does that affect the contributions for next year?

Chief Heeg: Process fees go into the pension. Process fees have gone down the last couple of years. In the last few years, the initial uploading of the money was done at the beginning of the year, then the civil process fees were dumped into the General Fund at the end of the year. Last year, it was about \$115,000.

Councilman Mollenhauer stated that, in the last few years, we've agreed to front load that money so it can be invested, and reap some benefits instead of sitting.

Councilman Yagelski indicated that, last year, it was \$1 million up front.

Attorney DiMartino indicated that, last year, it was 2 equal payments.

Chief Heeg: In the past, the process fees amounted to about \$300,000.

Councilman Rosenbaum: What is the minimum required contribution for 2021? Would you mind confirming it?

Mr. Dilts: There is a minimum amount for funding, a recommended amount, and a bonus. The amount you are paying is the recommended. The problem with the minimum is the less you fund, the more it goes up the next year.

Councilman Rosebaum: I would like to make a motion to pay \$697,816.50 at this time. Seconded by Councilman Yagelski.

Councilman Yagelski: So what is the minimum amount?

Chief Heeg: \$1.33 million

Councilman Yagelski: What was the amount of money that the fund made? What was the interest?

Mr. Dilts: I don't know. I will have to send it to you.

Councilman Yagelski: What was the year before that?

Mr. Dilts: The fund has gone up from \$24 million to \$29 million probably in two years. I don't have those numbers with me.

Councilman Yagelski: So, we can count that interest as a donation.

Attorney DiMartino: There is a year's lag on the interest.

Mr. Dilts: I caution that that is not an interest rate. The markets dropped during the pandemic. We would have made a whole lot more had we invested in March. The Trustee did not invest it right away. If you put in the whole amount today, the longer it's in there, the more we'll make.

Auditor Stabosz: Could the actuary explain the smoothing effect?

Mr. Dilts: In the memo, a short line says that the calculations used are based on 6 3/4%, and the five-year smoothing effect. They are averaged and carried forward. That page is in every actuarial evaluation.

Auditor Stabosz: Like the budget plan in NIPSCO. Smoothing helps in budgeting and planning. You can contribute the minimum but you're setting yourself up for potential issues.

Councilman Rosenbaum: Tonight we've received a huge amount of requests. The account would

be drained drastically. We're not going to be replenishing that fund very much. For the second half, we may have to look at other options. I know there's money in the General Fund but we don't have that option right now. We have some money that we don't know what we can use it for. I'm trying to help manage the funds.

Councilman Yagelski: Five year rolling average?

Mr. Dilts: I can provide you last year's right now.

Councilman Mollenhauer: Mr. Dilts has been the department's financial advisor for eight to ten years and has done a great job. There is also a five-member pension board that goes over this quarterly.

Auditor Stabosz: What percentage of the pension fund is invested in common stocks?

Mr. Dilts: Very steady at 50/50.

Auditor Stabosz: Domestic?

Mr. Dilts: Mostly.

Councilman Cunningham: Even if we gave them the \$1 million up front it gives them a chance to earn more than 1.15 percent.

Auditor Stabosz: It's important to focus on statutory requirements of fulfilling people's pensions. I wouldn't get involved in trying to time the markets. The recommended amount is the best amount because you're showing a discipline.

Council Gramarossa: It is mandated and we should follow the recommendation.

Attorney DiMartino: It's mandated that it be funded based on the pension engineer or actuary. Whether you do it in one, two, or three payments, it doesn't matter.

Vote was 6-1 in favor with Mr. Mollenhauer abstaining.

La Porte County Adult Probation

Requesting permission to spend \$2,972.94 for Computer equipment and \$2,052.00 for a desk, filing cabinet, and a chair from Probation user fee account

\$5,024.94

Mr. Eyrick: These are two separate requests. One on behalf of the circuit court for the furniture purchase and then La Porte Superior Court 3 for the computer purchase. Apparently her computer no longer is able to manage; it's out of date.

President Novak: Did they go out and look at filing cabinets at the fairgrounds?

Mr. Eyrick: I don't know. I could reach out to see if they are interested.

President Novak: We're going to split them in half. Motion to spend \$2,972.94 for computers by Councilman Rosenbaum, seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. All approved, 7-0.

Permission to spend \$2,052 for desk, filing cabinet, and chair from the Probation User Fee. Motion to table by Councilman Yagelski, seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. All approved, 7-0. Motion is tabled.

La Porte County Coroner

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From Riverboat (1191)

for Two FERNO Cots:

\$25,300.00

Payroll for Clerk:

\$9,151.00

Lynn Swanson, La Porte County Coroner: The two cots we currently have are 1) a 1970s funeral cot from Cutler Funeral Home, and the second one is from EMS. There is a reason they retire things. Legs don't work correctly; they are unsafe. Nothing ties the cots down. We are looking at potential injuries for the deputies.

Councilman Yagelski: Anything available from EMS?

Andrew McGuire: We do have some cots.

President Novak: Can't you get a locking bracket?

Andrew McGuire: Yes

Coroner Swanson: The cots I'm asking for are powered. We run one-person teams. It is very difficult for one person to lift a cot by themselves.

President Novak: These are the same cots you're ordering now, Andrew?

Andrew McGuire: Yes, we went to powered cots. They are the standard these days. The cots we would have to give to her are manual cots. The powered cots are similar to what we're ordering now.

Coroner Swanson: The cost of the two cots is \$23,926.32 and the cost of the locking brackets are \$1,313.28.

Councilman Mollenhauer: I'd like to make a motion to table this until the Coroner has an opportunity to look at the cots and talk to Andrew or Eric to see what they have.

President Novak: Motion to table by Councilman Mollenhauer, seconded by Councilman Yagelski. The auditor called the roll: Garner no, Yagelski yes, Mollenhauer yes, Cunningham

no, Rosenbaum no, Novak no, Gramarossa no. 2 ayes, 5 nays.

President Novak: Can you function with one powered cot and one manual?

Coroner Swanson: That still leaves us with one cot that is not functioning properly and with one person having to lift it.

Councilman Rosenbaum made a motion to purchase two FERNO cots for \$25,300, seconded by Councilwoman Gramarossa. The motion passed 4-3.

President Novak: Next item, Payroll Clerk for \$9,151.

Coroner Swanson: For the first time, the coroner is going to have an office. We currently have a salary of about \$5,000 at about \$100 per week for working at home. In the office, we would have it staffed three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 24 hours at \$10 an hour. For 52 weeks, it would be \$12,480, at the end of March the balance in the account would be \$3,329.88, so that's how I get the balance of \$9,151 to complete the rest of the year. This is not a full-time position.

Councilman Rosenbaum made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Yagelski.

Councilman Mollenhauer: How often do you anticipate getting walk-ins?

Coroner Swanson: We get a lot of phone calls and have to meet people in parking lots and restaurants. It's not professional.

Councilman Mollenhauer: I have a problem with this as I've worked with many coroners and no one has expressed that they needed an office.

Coroner Swanson: I'll be in and out of the office, delivering reports. The other deputy coroners have to make deliveries also and this will eliminate some of that. Now, everything is in my spare bedroom.

Councilwoman Gramarossa: So, currently how are they paid?

Coroner Swanson: Out of the budget. The \$9,151 is what I'd need to finish out the year.

Councilman Cunningham: Do we have a lot more deaths in the county?

Coroner Swanson: Over the last two years, they've increased 20%.

Councilman Yagelski: This department keeps asking for more. You're going to be back, trust me.

Councilman Garner: She doesn't send out bills, right?

Coroner Swanson: We can't charge people for our services. We get reimbursement from the prison.

Councilman Rosenbaum: Is it possible to gradually increase the hours?

Coroner Swanson: It would be difficult to get someone to work several hours per day over several days.

Councilwoman Gramarossa: We are going from 10 to 24 hours.

President Novak: When the commissioners decided to give you this space, the cart came before the horse in terms of funding the position. Councilman Cunningham asked for the original motion to be reread. The roll call vote was as follows: Yagelski no, Mollenhauer no, Cunningham no, Rosenbaum yes, Gramarossa no, Novak yes, Garner yes - 3 ayes, 4 nays.

La Porte County EMS

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From Riverboat (1191) For Two Ambulances	\$441,647.08
Ambulance Loose Equipment	\$27,780.70
GMC Yukon Vehicle	\$36,800.00
Equipment for Support Vehicle	\$11,413.00

Andrew McGuire, EMS Head: Per our annual vehicle replacement program, we're due to replace three vehicles this year, two ambulances and one support vehicle. Last year, we were asked to hold off on vehicle replacement due to other projects the county had going on and, luckily, our fleet was in good enough shape to do it. The downside is that it made us due for two ambulances this year, so my goal is if to get approved for two ambulances this year and to get back on track to get one per year and have a skip year if we get our fleet caught up. The vehicles we are looking to replace are a 2012 E450 Mark ambulance with approximately 143,000 miles. This vehicle burns excessive oil and we are afraid of engine failure. We are having our transfer crew using it. We are trying not to use it as much as possible. It's being used in a non-emergency mode. The other ambulance is a 2012 E450 Medtech with approximately 133,000 miles. This vehicle is in the shop today. They're looking at a potential transmission problem and a crack on the frame where the cab mounts to the frame. It's also using an excessive amount of coolant, so they're looking into an engine issue. The support vehicle is a 2006 GMC Yukon with approximately 114,000 miles. It's long overdue for replacement. It's no longer reliable. We've had to put some major repairs into it the last couple of years.

The lowest qualifying bid for the ambulances was from North Central Emergency Vehicles. So, after the four GPC rebates and trade-ins the total bid price is \$441,647.08. So, as we have in the past, we ask for loose equipment. There are also some electronic updates and components that we need to update. The quote we received for the support vehicle was from Kelly Chevrolet. They gave us the state bid price for a special service vehicle with an after trade-in value of \$36,800 so if you're not familiar with the service vehicle, it's all stripped out, it's made for emergency use, and has a lot of room. All the higher end options are stripped out and it's made for a fleet vehicle. The emergency warning and loose equipment it would need to put it on the

road is \$11,413 and we will do the install in house.

Councilman Yagelski: Move to accept (half the money comes from the Riverboat and the other half to support coming out of CCD which would be next month) for the two ambulances only, seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum to include one-half of the loose equipment from Riverboat, and the other half as a motion of support from CCD.

Andrew McGuire: We don't need the money until later in the year.

Motion passed 7-0.

Councilman Mollenhauer made a motion to purchase the GMC Yukon for \$36,800, seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum, to include the support equipment.

Councilman Yagelski: Can someone else take a look at the trade-in amount?

Andrew McGuire: Sure

Motion passed 7-0. It was noted that the old Yukon will be used by County Maintenance.

La Porte County Emergency Management & 911 Center

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From 911 USER Fees (1222)

For Motorola Invoices

\$259,360.00

President Novak: Several radio dispatch centers were purchased and placed at different locations around the county. There's an \$80,000 maintenance bill on those units. There is some discrepancy in the bills. The yearly fee is \$80,000. It's gone up a little bit each year.

Councilman Mollenhauer made a motion to pay the invoices, seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum.

Councilman Yagelski: We should have paid more attention to this contract when it was written. I disagreed with the methodology

All approved, 7-0.

La Porte County Emergency Management

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From General (1000)

For Upkeep of District #1 Assets

\$3,000.00

Councilman Yagelski: This is the district trailer with the explanation that we pay a fee for the District 1 command center in Porter County.

A motion was made by Councilman Yagelski, seconded by Councilman Cunningham. All

approved, 7-0.

La Porte County Emergency Management

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From General (1000)

For Tower expenses

\$13,200.00

Jeff Wiatrowski: We have two towers for the 911 system, Rolling Prairie and Kingsbury. We are responsible for the gas and electric for those buildings. I was informed that the gas was empty in the Rolling Prairie building. Building Maintenance has been paying the electric. However, they only gave me \$2,500 to start but each bill is between \$300 and \$350. This was not funded at all for 2021. I've been paying the electric bills in a deficit. Electric bills for all of this year, fuel for the back-up generator, as well as fixing the generators because nothing has been done to them since they were put in service in 2017. So, this should cover everything in 2021.

Councilman Mollenhauer made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Yagelski, from the General Fund. All approved, 7-0.

Councilman Yagelski made a motion, seconded by Councilman Cunningham, that the Westville tower does not come up again this year. President Novak: It can come back for repairs. All approved, 7-0.

La Porte County Planner

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From MVH Restricted Fund (1173)

For matching Community Crossing Grant for Fail/Severs Road Paving

\$996,975.00

La Porte County Planner Mitch Bishop: In the September 2020 meeting, I came before you with a commitment letter we needed for the Community crossing grant, that the council would meet the 50/50 requirement. The project was bid, and it was awarded.

Councilman Rosenbaum made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Cunningham. Motion passed 7-0.

La Porte County Planner

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220)

For ROW services for Lincoln Trail Extension Project

\$48,994.00

La Porte County Planner Mitch Bishop: Right of Way services is the second phase of our Lincoln Trail project, an 80/20 grant. The county received \$2.1 million. The county would be responsible for 20% of that; total project cost would be \$2.6 million. You gave me 20% 2 ½ years ago. It's a two-mile asphalt trail. The next phase is the right of way services and the total cost would be \$369.72 [sic] for which the county would be responsible for 20%. I was able to secure a \$25,000 commitment from Northwest Right of Way Services which brought the total down to \$48,994 which would bring the county's commitment down to 13% instead of 20%.

Councilman Rosenbaum made a motion, seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer, out of Riverboat. All approved, 7-0.

La Porte County Planner

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From Cumulative Bridge (1135)

For Bridge #104 (to replace superstructure)

\$340,000.00

La Porte County Planner Mitch Bishop: This is similar to the community crossings. Back in November of 2020 as part of the INDOT application, I was seeking a commitment letter for 20% of total funds, and at that time council gave me the commitment letter approval, and I used that as the application. We were awarded just under \$1.4 million. 20% of that would be \$340,000, that would cover your engineering, right of way services, construction, and inspections. I'm asking for it all and it would come out of the Cum Bridge. This is for Bridge #104 on 1000 South over the Kankakee River. This would not be constructed until 2025. We are being proactive in requesting these funds in advance.

Councilman Garner made a motion, seconded by Rosenbaum. All approved, 7-0.

La Porte County Parks Department

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From General (1000)

For 7 Sets of cameras

\$3,000.00

Jeremy Sobbecki, La Porte County Parks Superintendent: Just protecting our assets and deterring vandalism issues we've been having. We will install them ourselves.

Councilman Mollenhauer made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. All approved, 7-0.

Pioneer Cemetery Commission

Requesting Additional Appropriation

From General (1000)

For Replacement amounts cut from budget

\$1,705.00

Susan Webster, Pioneer Cemetery Commission: \$700 of cemetery maintenance fees, \$700 gravestone restorers, \$305 for mileage. We had already signed a contract for \$12,000 for gravestone restoration. Now, with the \$700 cut back we don't have the money to pay that. We spent a lot on our cemetery maintenance. We had several bad storms. The La Porte County Highway Dept sent out some people to clean up downed trees.

Councilwoman Gramarossa made a motion, seconded by Councilman Cunningham. All approved, 7-0.

La Porte County Clerk

Requesting Additional Appropriation
From Riverboat (1191)
For Office Furniture

\$5,000.00

Heather Stevens, La Porte County Clerk: I have gotten a lot of desks and filing cabinets from the fairgrounds: six desks from the fairgrounds, 11 purchased. She emphasized that neither her nor her chief deputy were getting new desks.

Councilman Yagelski made a motion, seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum, to approve the \$5,000 out of Riverboat. Motion passed 6-1, with Councilman Mollenhauer voting against.

La Porte County Recorder

Requesting to spend money from the Recorder's Record Perpetuation Fund
For computers and office equipment/furniture

\$25,000.00

Elzbieta Bilderback, La Porte County Recorder: Our computers are 11 years old. We do not have enough memory. We only have 4 gigabytes and IT tells us we need 16.

Councilman Garner noted that no formal Council approval was required on this request.

La Porte County Community Corrections

Requesting permission to spend from Commissary for training and conference attendance.

Rochelle Brown, Director of Community Corrections: Training approved for one person, coming out of commissary. The Advisory Board did not approve the training. One person, myself, will be attending.

Councilman Yagelski made a motion, seconded by Councilman Rosenbaum. All approved, 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Yagelski made a motion to adjourn. seconded by Councilman Mollenhauer. Motion carried 7-0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 26th day of April, 2021.



Councilman Earl Cunningham



Councilman Terry Garner



Councilwoman Connie Gramarossa



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer



Councilman Randy Novak



Councilman Mike Rosenbaum

Mark Yagelski

Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: *Timothy Stabosz*

Timothy Stabosz, La Porte County Auditor