

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL

May 24, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.

The meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on May 24, 2021 at 6:00 P.M. (local time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex located at 809 State Street, La Porte, Indiana, 46350.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6pm by the Council President, Randy Novak.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Novak asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing for a moment of silence for long time county employee, Jackie Atwater, and Bill Greene, who have passed away.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted by Auditor Timothy Stabosz. All Council members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 26, 2021 AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer. All council members voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Lisa Pierzakowski, Center Township Trustee:

Ms. Pierzakowski presented a map of what her proposed new office will look like, to slow the spread of unfounded rumors of the office being made into a homeless shelter. Discussion was had on whether or not the second floor of the plans are indeed storage space.

Mark Parkman, former 4H Council President:

Mr. Parkman read an impassioned letter pertaining to 4H in La Porte County, criticizing its current management, expressing his grave concerns about the organization, and referring to the rapid loss of volunteers, under the current administration.

Joe Haney, La Porte County Commissioner:

Commissioner Haney commented on two issues that were on the agenda. On the hiring ordinance, he expressed how he feels it is important that department heads are able to fill existing vacancies and/or replace people as they leave in a timely fashion. The second was pertaining to the Whistle Blower Protection Ordinance, where he stated that he would like to see the Whistle Blower Ordinance approved and that it be tied to a selection process so that it is fair and transparent for everyone.

Tim Stabosz, County Auditor:

Auditor Stabosz spoke in agreement with Commissioner Haney when it comes to the Hiring Freeze Resolution. He urged the Council's repeal of the freeze and went in depth about the origin of the Resolution.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Rich Mrozinski, La Porte County Commission President:

President Mrozinski spoke with regard to the commission giving him, and Mr. Yagelski by President Novak, authority to research the Michigan City draw bridge. Mr. Mrozinski stated that the state inspectors found several things wrong with the bridge, mainly in the control and drive systems. He asked the council to start thinking of a funding mechanism for up to \$1.5 million.

Joie Winski, La Porte County Treasurer:

Ms. Winski gave an update on the Michigan City Courthouse Project. She stated that everything is on time and on budget. She said that the county saved \$350,000 by not doing phasing and noted that the project has only had 22 change orders. Ms. Winski also notified the council that the completion date for the project is still January of 2022.

Barb Mossman, Human Resource Director:

Ms. Mossman informed the council that she made a new appointment to the Job Evaluation Committee.

Angie Rose, Chief Deputy Recorder:

Ms. Rose approached the council seeking to spend from the Perpetuation Fund for a part-time worker for the Recorder's Office. Motion to approve the request from the Recorder's office made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer. The motion carried 5-2 with Mrs. Gramarossa and Mr. Rosenbaum against.

Tony Rodriguez, Director of Community & Economic Development:

Mr. Rodriguez spoke of a hiring event on May 26th at the La Porte Civic Auditorium speaking of different employers hiring on the spot. The second item Mr. Rodriguez presented was in regards to the U.S. Hwy 30 Coalition and how important it is. Mr. Rodriguez asked if the Planning Commission can join the Coalition with the endorsement of the council, ensuring the council that there are funds in the budget to afford the yearly dues of around \$12,000. Mr. Yagelski stressed the importance of the county not picking sides when it comes to the project, and is unsure why the county wants to get involved with the Coalition. An in-depth discussion was had concerning the pros and cons of being a part of the discussion of the Coalition. Justin Kiel, Town Board President of La Crosse and NIRPC Vice Chair, was called upon

from the Zoom audience to provide background on the topic, as well as a message read by Mr. Cunningham from the President of the South County Community Coalition, Allen Stevens. The analogy Mr. Cunningham offered the council concerning the U.S. Hwy 30 Coalition was this: It is better to be at the table, than on the menu.

Mr. Garner made a motion of support, seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum. All of the council members voted in favor.

LIAISON REPORTS

President Novak asked for a motion to approve Mr. Mollenhauer as the liaison appointee to NIRPC. Mr. Rosenbaum made the motion to approve, seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Garner mentioned that he spoke with the Sheriff about the business that he, the Sheriff, has with the Council concerning the new vehicles.

Mrs. Gramarossa mentioned that she spoke to the departments that she is appointed to and that everything is going well.

Mr. Mollenhauer mentioned that he attended the Commissioners workshop regarding the American Rescue Plan and on May 19th he attended the GIS quarterly insurance meeting and they are moving forward to release information concerning the county budget with employee insurance. Mr. Mollenhauer also stated that he spoke with Sheriff Boyd regarding his purchases of new vehicles, and also Human Resource Director, Barb Mossman, pertaining to her request.

Mr. Cunningham stated that he spoke with Sheriff Boyd, Community Corrections, as well as the Juvenile Services Center. He also mentioned that he will be attending the job fair on Wednesday, May 26th.

Mr. Yagelski spoke about the Highway Department and the trucks that they are in need of.

Mr. Rosenbaum spoke of ARP reimbursement for lost revenue.

Mr. Novak mentioned that he attended the RDC meeting, as well as the Courthouse Update weekly meetings and the Vaccine Clinic weekly meetings. Mr. Novak said that he does a weekly county-wide call and stated that there are plenty of jobs hiring. He attended the FMEC meeting, and noted that he went to the MAAC Foundation event in Valparaiso, where Governor Holcomb came to dedicate a law enforcement training center.

CORRESPONDENCE

Auditor Stabosz stated that there was no correspondence.

Mr. Novak asked if the Council received the correspondence letter from Farm Bureau and ensured that it will be added on to the next meeting.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

North South Corridor Resolution:

Motion to read by title only made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer. All members voted in favor.

Auditor Stabosz read the resolution by title only.

Mr. Novak stated that the resolution would allow them to have a member appointed from the Redevelopment Commission where Mr. Rosenbaum is the appointment. Motion to approve by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Novak asked if any of the councilmembers would like to be on the sub-committee. Mrs. Gramarossa showed her interest. All the members voted in favor of having Mrs. Gramarossa as the council appointment.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider approval to hire replacement position for Deputy Clerk position in the County Clerk's office; Field Crew Assistant position in the Surveyor's office; Archivist position and part-time employee in the Recorder's office; and Senior Investigator/Program Supervisor and an Investigator position in the Prosecuting Attorney's office.

Motion to approve Deputy Clerk Position by Mr. Garner and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum. All members voted in favor.

Motion to approve Field Crew Assistant by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Cunningham. All members voted in favor.

Motion to approve Archivist Position for Recorder's office made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Cunningham. All members voted in favor.

Motion to approve Senior Investigator and Program Supervisor and an Investigator position in the Prosecuting Attorney's office by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer. All members voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Review Resolution 2009-06 --- A Resolution Establishing Hiring Freeze, and Resolution 2010-02 --- A Resolution Amending Hiring Freeze Provisions.

Mr. Cunningham made a motion to establish a committee to review the hiring freeze consisting of the Council Attorney, Guy DiMartino; Human Resource Director, Barb Mossman; and three councilmembers: Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, and Mr. Rosenbaum. Motion seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa. All members voted in favor.

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

1. La Porte County Sheriff's request

- a. Requesting Permission to spend not to exceed \$3460 from Vehicle Inspection account for printers, scanners, and docking stations for patrol vehicles.
 - i. Motion to approve by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.
 - ii. All members voted in favor.
- b. Requesting to spend from Commissary Account in the amount of \$10,000 for matching grant for patrol boat.
 - i. Motion to approve by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.

- ii. All members voted in favor.
- 2. **La Porte County Sheriff's request**
 - a. Requesting additional appropriations from Riverboat (1191) or General (1000) in the amount of \$391,000 for nine 2021 Ford Police Interceptors, three 2021 Dodge Special Service pickup trucks, and Miscellaneous equipment to equip vehicles. Additionally, request appropriation for a matching grant in the amount of \$18,571 for a new patrol boat.
 - i. Motion to approve the funds for the patrol boat from the General Fund by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer. All members voted in favor.
 - ii. Motion of support for the \$391,000 for the vehicles/equipment made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum with the idea of the request being on the next agenda, in order to clarify which fund the monies will be coming from. All members voted in favor.
- 3. **La Porte County Maintenance request**
 - a. Requesting additional appropriation from LIT (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or General (1000) in the amount of \$125,000 for: FMEC (Fair Management Events Corp.)
 - i. Motion to approve by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Garner.
 - ii. The motion carried 7-1 with Mrs. Gramarossa voting against.
- 4. **La Porte County Parks Department**
 - a. Requesting additional appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or General (1000) in the amount of \$70,000 for: Paving of Bluhm Parking Lot
 - i. Motion to approve from Riverboat Fund by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - ii. All members voted in favor.
- 5. **La Porte County Human Resources**
 - a. Requesting additional appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or General (1000) in the amount of \$20,000 for: Ethics/EEO Consulting Agreement
 - i. A great deal of discussion was had between the council and the County Attorney
 - ii. Motion to table the discussion for next month by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.
 - iii. All members were in favor.
- 6. **La Porte County E911**
 - a. Requesting additional appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or General (1000) in the amount of \$5,413 for: Repay surcharges for copier/printer
 - i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
 - ii. All members were in favor.
- 7. **La Porte County Engineer**
 - a. Requesting additional appropriation from Major Bridge (1171) in the amount of \$15,670 for: Bridge #186 environment work
 - i. Mr. Yagelski made a motion to hold it over for attorneys to review. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa.
 - ii. The motion carried 6-1 with a nay from Mr. Mollenhauer.

COUNCIL AND OR ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Auditor Stabosz made comments concerning the budget, asking which dates would be suitable for the council. July 27th, 28th, and 29th were the dates tentatively set.


ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mrs. Gramarossa. Motion carried 7-0.

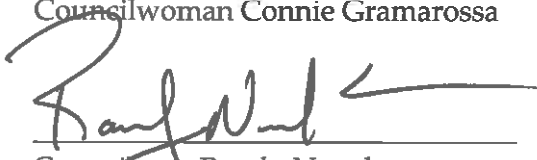
EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 28th day of June, 2021.



Councilman Earl Cunningham



Councilwoman Connie Gramarossa



Councilman Randy Novak



Councilman Mark Yagelski



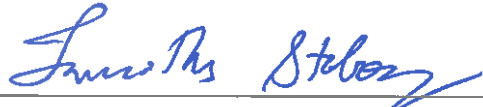
Councilman Terry Garner



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer



Councilman Mike Rosenbaum

ATTEST: 

Timothy Stabosz, La Porte County Auditor