

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
JUNE 28, 2021 AT 6:00PM

The meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on June 28, 2021 at 6:00pm (central 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 Member Earl Cunningham requested a moment of silence for Ron Clindaniel, a former County Councilman, who has recently passed away.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted by Auditor Timothy Stabosz. Six of seven Council members were physically present, with member Connie Gramarossa entering the meeting at 8:15pm via Zoom.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 28, 2021 AGENDA

President Novak asked for approval of the June 28 agenda.

Mr. Yagelski mentioned that the bridge “clapper” technology from the May 24, 2021 meeting was being investigated in an effort to improve infrastructure and efficiency of the Franklin St. bridge. He noted that the project should be added to the agenda under additional appropriations. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum. All council members voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Home Team of La Porte County:

Several members of the group, along with the general public, came forth to speak about how they would like to see recently acquired ARP (American Rescue Plan) funds dispersed throughout the county, including: alleviating apartment/home rental costs, relieving homeless shelter backup, and rental assistance for seniors. Additional members spoke about minding the pacing of how the money is spent

(urging to stretch the funding out over time and ensuring a fair distribution) and utilizing the funds to hire more staff in the Michigan City soup kitchen.

Sheila Matias, La Porte County Commissioner:

Mrs. Matias asked the Council to try and move forward with the Franklin St. Bridge construction before the winter season begins and backed support for utilizing ARP funding to alleviate La Porte County's seniors, children, and many other citizens who are facing uncertainty.

Joe Haney, La Porte County Commissioner:

Mr. Haney expressed interest in establishing new regulations regarding how often Council members should be permitted to meet electronically (via Zoom) and expressed concern with the current system in place. Mr. Haney also noted the difficulties that are to be expected with the work to begin on the Franklin St. Bridge. Additionally, Mr. Haney praised the Sheriff Department's plan for integration of new fleet vehicles and requested new trucks for the County Highway Department. Mr. Haney urged caution, outlook, and planning when dispersing ARP funds, especially highlighting how lacking care in doing so may result in various state funding being withdrawn from individuals who have been utilizing state assistance programs. Mr. Haney concluded that having guidelines in place to prevent this, as well as ensuring that any reimbursed funds find their way back to the county instead of the state, could assist with these issues.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Darlene Hale, La Porte County IT:

Ms. Hale reported that a member of the La Porte County IT Department will be leaving in the very near future and requested that the La Porte County HR Department post the position to ensure the vacancy gets filled. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum. All members of the council voted in favor. Mrs. Hale also requested considering for ARP funds to apply to disaster recovery and IT infrastructure, in order to prevent cyberattacks on La Porte County entities going into the future. Mr. Yagelski supports this cause, and requests that this topic should be included on the future agenda.

Larry Levandowski, Director of County Facilities:

Mr. Levandowski reported that he would like to replace the Facilities Department's 2 transport vans and 1 SUV in exchange for newer vehicles. Noting the smaller payloads of materials and equipment which the vehicles are known for transporting, Mr. Yagelski recommended replacing the vans with smaller SUVs. Mr. Rosenbaum also noted that a more economical vehicle may be more practical for the Facilities Department's everyday use, while Mr. Mollenhauer noted that pickup trucks may also be a viable option. A budgeting list has been requested for these items for the next Council Meeting.

Mr. Levandowski also requested that a full-time position for the maintenance staff be made available to help retain staffing, and in exchange, when one of the seasoned staffers retires or moves on, the

replacement position for their vacancy will be switched to part-time. Motion to approve made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Garner. All members of the Council voted in favor.

For his last request, Mr. Levandowski asked that the Council prioritize repairs to the roof of the La Porte County Historical Society Museum. Mr. Yagelski mentioned that in the past, Dr. Kesling has offered funds of up to \$30,000 to help repair the roof, however withdrew the funds when the county did not step in to make repairs. Mr. Levandowski noted that while the department is still getting estimates for the repair, at this time, the cost should not exceed \$150,000. Mr. Yagelski noted the economic importance of Dr. Kesling's vehicles as displays in the Historical Society Museum, and motioned to support the request, seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum, with the actual formal funding request to come at the July Council meeting. All members of the council voted in favor. Mr. Levandowski finished his statement with a thank-you to all the staff and contractors who have been assisting with setup for the upcoming La Porte County Fair.

Steve Eyrick, Chief Probation Officer:

Mr. Eyrick approached the council with a request for funding for the department's Intensive Case Manager position, which in the past has been funded by the Healthcare Foundation. The Healthcare Foundation approached Mr. Eyrick and asked that the funding be reverted to being funded by the county. Mr. Eyrick will explore the exact cost of this and have an updated budgeting expectation for the July Council Meeting, while Mr. Rosenbaum suggested that ARP funding may assist with this cost.

Mike Polan, La Porte County Building Commissioner:

Mr. Polan opened with informing the Council that while permits for working at the fairgrounds are free, Mr. Polan simply requests that they must be processed through the Building Commission to ensure that all work performed is safe and up to standard. Mr. Polan also noted that Beacon, the platform the Building Commission uses for online permits, is about to have a major overhaul, with changes such as consolidating two previously used programs into one as to streamline the permit-acquiring process. Additional improvements that he hopes to achieve with this update include more direct access to documents required from NIPSCO and the Surveyor's Department, as well as being mobile-phone compliant. Mr. Novak noted issues that the Health Department has had using the program, and Mr. Polan responded that the issues will be investigated.

Mr. Polan also expressed interest in utilizing preliminary code enforcement with the county and explained that he is in the early stages of exploring it as an option. Mr. Polan noted that if the Council is interested, various ordinances will need to be explored.

Mr. Yagelski recapped with a question about streamlining the website, and to what degree of efficiency will it work for permits. Mr. Polan explained that simple permits can be run through the program at this time, and that he will provide the council with regular updates as the website develops.

DEPARTMENT HEADS OPEN FLOOR CLOSED

LIASON REPORTS

Council Member Mike Mollenhauer:

Mr. Mollenhauer met with HR Director Barbara Mossman and the Job Evaluation Committee on June 3rd regarding one employee reclassification. On June 9th, he attended a Joint Commission/Council workshop regarding the ARP. Mr. Mollenhauer met with Barbara Mossman again on June 22nd regarding 3 employee reclassifications, while, also on June 22nd, he met with E911 Director Barbara Houston to review the 911 console center and observe the future floor plan.

Council Member Michael Rosenbaum:

Mr. Rosenbaum explained that he had spoken with his liaison positions and coordinated with various members and staff regarding the June 28th, 2021 La Porte County Council agenda. He continued to explain that he may be presenting for the coroner should the need arise later in the meeting, as well as that he attended a RDC Meeting in the recent month.

Council Member Earl Cunningham:

Mr. Cunningham informed the council that he and Mr. Rosenbaum attended the statewide meeting for County Councils in Plainfield. Mr. Cunningham noted that many councils recommended to take the month of July slowly and patiently, to endure the many changes that will be happening within the month.

Council Member Terry Garner:

Mr. Garner expressed his pleasure in being able to return to meet with county staff in-person yet again, and his eagerness to keep doing so in the future.

Vice President Mark Yagelski:

Mr. Yagelski made note to Auditor Tim Stabosz to post ARP requests additionally to standard requests made during the Council Meeting.

Council President Randy Novak:

Mr. Novak described his attending the LEAP Legislative Affairs meeting, FMEC, RDC, and touring the Michigan City courthouse with Larry Levandowski & Treasurer Winski. Mr. Novak also mentioned that on July 8th at a 3pm dedication ceremony, the La Porte County Animal Shelter will be newly renamed the Jane Bernard Animal Shelter.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Auditor Tim Stabosz declared that there is one piece of correspondence from Mark Scarborough, the President of the La Porte County Farm Bureau. Mr. Scarborough expressed frustration with the state of staffing at the La Porte County Purdue Extension, noting a high volume of 4-H staff and volunteers who were being dismissed without due process. Mr. Scarborough explained in his letter how he fears that this will lead to high dropout of 4-H staff and participants, and the danger this serves toward the 4-H legacy.

Mr. Yagelski noted multiple volunteers who were lost as a result of being removed from the board and pressed the issue of the Purdue Extension 4-H volunteering concerns. President Novak confirmed that the Commissioners reached out to the Purdue Extension, to which Purdue Director of HR Trent Klingerman explained that Purdue would create a new Business Partner position to help quash some of these issues. President Novak offered hope that this will resolve the issue, given the importance of 4-H in the local community. Mr. Garner attested to this importance and urged the Council to keep note on the matter.

Auditor Stabosz noted that there was no other correspondence.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

President Novak orated Resolution 2021-6: "A Resolution Establishing a Policy by Which Means Members of the County Council May Participate in Electronic Means of Communication."

Presiding Attorney Guy DiMartino explained to the council that the statutes for means of electronic communication that were set in place by the state are going to be lifted on June 30, 2021 and as such, the Council may make restrictions for electronic communication tighter following that date. Mr. DiMartino proceeded to explain that the current restrictions state that Council Members can only attend two meetings electronically at this time, barring illness, emergency, or military service. Mr. DiMartino also indicated that during these electronic appearances, any Council Members partaking in voting must appear visually and not just via telephone. He also explained that should Council Members exhaust their two electronic attendances, they are free to view more Council Meetings electronically; they simply cannot communicate, partake or vote during the meeting.

Mr. Yagelski reminded the room that the Council took a leadership role the year prior when Covid-19 peaked, and in turn, La Porte County had high attendance which assuredly promoted increased attendance in other local government bodies. Mr. Rosenbaum mentioned that the Council also had the option to turn down the means of attending the meetings electronically all together, while he additionally praised the convenience it offered to allow the public to join in on said Council meetings. Mr. Garner took a moment at this time to commend IT Director Darlene Hale on her work in establishing business communication via Zoom when Covid-19 quarantine measures were declared.

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

Auditor Tim Stabosz orated the Resolution 2021-6: "A Resolution Establishing a Policy by Which Means Members of the County Council May Participate in Electronic Means of Communication."

Motion to pass the resolution made by Mr. Rosenbaum, seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer. All members voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Vacancy on the La Porte County Library Board

Mr. Cunningham invited Library Director Fonda Owens to the microphone, who proceeded to explain the requirements to be considered for the La Porte County Library Board, including the candidate must live within the county where the library is established. With high praise, Mr. Cunningham nominated Dara Jeffries to fill the open position. President Novak asked if there were any other nominations, and the Council did not bring up any additional nominees. Motion to approve was made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Yagelski. All members voted in favor.

Consider Approval of the Council President’s Authorization to Hire a Victim Advocate Position in the La Porte County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office and Replacement for Deputy Clerk Position in Clerk’s office.

Motion to approve by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham. All members voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

APPROPRATIONS, TRANSFERS, AND REQUESTS

La Porte County Commissioners

A. Emergency Rental Assistance (\$750,000) From ARP:

Judge Greta Friedman requested integrating a landlord-tenant settlement program as an effort to frontline a potential influx of eviction filings as a result of the lifting of the CDC’s nationwide eviction moratorium. Judge Jeffrey Thorne supported the hope that ARP funds will be able to assist to hire a facilitator to accommodate this request. Center Township Trustee Lisa Pierzakowski urged the council to accommodate funding from the ARP for use with Michigan City’s Sandcastle Shelter to help prevent a wave of evictions as a result of the lift of the moratorium. Mr. Yagelski inquired if these funds will inhibit State funding which applicants may be eligible for, and Mrs. Pierzakowski explained that IERA will provide up to 12 months of funding for applicants (i.e., if an applicant received 3 months of paid assistance from the proposed program, said applicant would still be able to receive 9 months of IERA aid).

At this time, Mr. Rosenbaum proposed that the Trustees reach out to programs such as United Way, Catholic charities, FSSA First Steps, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Indiana Housing to supplement the costs requested for the development of the proposed program. Mr. Rosenbaum inquired about the length of processing a new applicant for the proposed program would be compared to Indiana Housing, to which Mrs. Pierzakowski noted that candidates can often be held up in processing, only to be denied

later in the process, thus prolonging the application. Mrs. Pierzakowski also noted that while United Way could offer matching grants for the proposed program, First Steps and St. Vincent de Paul are limited only to the La Porte area, and the Catholic charities are still temporarily absent due to Covid-19. Mr. Rosenbaum expressed how he would prefer that the Trustees process the grants for matching funds, and not the Judges, while he made clear that a vetting process needed to be abided by and urged the outreach to additional outlets and agencies to acquire additional funding for the proposed program.

Mr. Rosenbaum inquired about the chain of command in which the program would function, in which Judge Thorne explained that a mediator would work with the tenant and landlord parties respectively and assist in helping the parties come to an agreement. Judge Thorne continued to explain that the priority was to pay off back-rent to prevent evictions, as an eviction on a tenant's record would further inhibit said tenant's ability to find housing in the current market. It was recommended at this point that a mediator work directly with the Trustees to ensure such agreements could be coordinated. Mr. Rosenbaum reiterated that he requested a solid plan to move forward with this program in order to comply with Federal, State, or even potential accounting firm audits, in addition to ensuring the spending of the funds is as efficient and legal as it can be. He also recommending planning a special meeting to fully establish a plan before diving into the proposed program.

On the topic of procedure for the proposed program, Attorney DiMartino explained that candidates for the program would reach out to the Trustees for qualification and would in-turn receive a packet of information to present to the mediator to indicate that they are in fact qualified for the proposed program. Attorney DiMartino also noted that State programs for mediation are still open for enrollment and can be utilized to funnel applicants from County programs to State programs instead, resulting in the mediation funds being paid for by the State of Indiana instead of the County. Judge Friedman noted that though State programming does assist with mediation, it doesn't provide direct funding to pay a tenant's rent. Mr. Cunningham inquired about how far the back-pay for a tenant's rent would be, to which the timeframe of 12 months was noted, and Judge Friedman noted that the cost of paying for a tenant's arrears would be on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Cunningham also noted how the income from many State and Federal programs, such as unemployment, increased during quarantine; Judge Friedman assured Mr. Cunningham that looking into the rise of such aid would be investigated during the Trustee investigation and mediation process.

Mr. Yagelski asked about whether NIPSCO would comply with the proposed program, as to prevent sudden utility shut offs. Mr. Garner mentioned his history in working with NIPSCO on such tasks and noted that it has been arduous to do so in the past.

Mr. Novak proposed that the Trustees work closely with United Way to ensure that \$100,000 of ARP funds would be directly matched and potentially reimbursed, in addition to reaching out to the City of La Porte and City of Michigan City to further expand the ARP money offered.

Mr. Yagelski motioned for \$100,000 for the proposed project under the condition that the Trustees will reach out to the previously mentioned grantors to supplement the ARP funding offered.

Mr. Rosenbaum questioned about the average cap of funding per candidate that the council should expect, to which Mrs. Pierzakowski explained the intricacies of having to likely pay a landlord's owed rent in full in relation to the cost of a tenant's rent.

Mr. Yagelski mentioned that he did not want ARP funding being spent to pay off late fees, only rent, and that United Way funds could be used to pay off any late fees instead of ARP funds.

Mr. Rosenbaum reiterated that he would like to see \$100,000 as a start, but not a ceiling, and re-established his request that a definitive plan and procedure be in place before more funding is considered, and even mentioned that conducting a specialized meeting might be in order.

- i. Motion to approve \$100,000 from ARP by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Engineer

A. Requesting Additional Appropriation from Major Bridge (1171) for:
Bridge #186 environmental work (\$15,670).

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

B. Requesting to spend \$77,832.96 from MVH (1173) Restricted for:
The Cougar Rd. project.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. The vote was called and roll called to confirm.
- iii. 4 members voted in favor (Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Mollenhauer, President Novak) and 2 members voted not in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Garner); the request was approved.

Prosecuting Attorney

A. Request to pay part-time Investigator for Adult Protective Services Division salary of \$19,760/\$22 an hour.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Circuit Court

A. Requesting to transfer \$8,000 from Care of inmates in institution 1000.30074.000.0148 to Legal intern 1000.10135000.0148 due to increased prisoner filings and correspondence.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Adult Probation

- A. Requesting to spend \$1,449 from Probation User Fees to purchase a new printer and toner cartridges for La Porte Superior Court No. 3.
 - i. Councilwoman Gramarossa arrived via Zoom prior to the vote.
 - ii. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Garner.
 - iii. All members voted in favor.

Michigan City Township Assessor

- A. Via Mike Schultz, is requesting to spend \$16,064.93 from Sales Disclosure Fund 1131.20200.00.0340 for computer upgrades.

After some discussion, the Council agreed that \$8,000 can be offered at this time to accommodate the 3 computers, 3 monitors, and 2 desk scanners needed by the Assessor, and an additional \$8,000 (as transfer of funds) will be offered in January of 2022.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County MS4

- A. Requesting to transfer \$9,900 from non-reverting 9001.20200.000.0351 to General part-time fund 100.10130.000.01611.
 - i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Garner and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County E911

- A. Requesting Additional Appropriations from Riverboat (1191) for:
Reconfigure Dispatch Center (\$47,680).
 - i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
 - ii. All members of the council voted in favor.

Replenish Radio Account (\$259,360).

- i. Motion to **deny** made by Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

- ii. All members of the council voted in favor.

La Porte County E911

A. Requesting to spend \$125,407.52 from Surcharge Account to replace the old analog T1 lines.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members of the council voted in favor.

B. Requesting to spend from Surcharge Account for one of three Plans to upgrade phone system: One year \$274,868, Three year \$399,826.75, or Five year \$502,471.75.

After some discussion, a one-year plan to renew the Surcharge Account was approved after it was noted that the phone system is on its 6th year, and updates are recommended around 5 years.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members of the council voted in favor.

La Porte County Economic Development

A. Requesting Additional Appropriation from LIT (1112) for:

Balance of 2021 Budget (\$110,000).

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Highway Department

A. Requesting Additional Appropriation from LIT (1112) for:

Eight New Dump Trucks (\$1,601,904).

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Highway Department

A. Requesting Additional Appropriation from Cumulative Bridge (1135) for:

Bridge #512 Superstructure replacement (\$100,000).

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Highway Department

- A. Requesting Additional Appropriation from Wintax (4220) for:

Purchase of Land to Improve Intersection Safety at 250 E and 150 N. Lofgren Rd (\$3,620)

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Sheriff

- A. Requesting Additional Appropriation from CCD (1138) for:

Nine 2021 Ford Police Interceptors,

Three 2021 Dodge Special Service pickup trucks,

Miscellaneous equipment to equip vehicles (\$391,000).

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Sheriff

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) for:

- A. Inmate Food Money (\$341,000)

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

- B. Body Cameras for Reimbursement Grant (\$129,862)

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

- C. Merit Overtime (\$60,000)

Mr. Yagelski requested that ARP funds be appropriated to accommodate the Sheriff's Merit Overtime in full.

- i. Motion to approve ARP funds made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Coroner

A. Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) for:
Autopsy Fund (\$60,000).

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

At this time, Attorney DiMartino requested to reopen the Sheriff's Merit Overtime Case. Mr. DiMartino noted that even though there had been a motion made to approve ARP funds to cover the costs of the Sheriff Department's merit overtime costs, regardless of whether the Sheriff's Department got approved for the ARP or not, that there would not be enough funding to cover said overtime for the upcoming month. Mr. Rosenbaum discussed whether the overtime could be paid for regularly and then reimbursed from ARP, while Mr. DiMartino mentioned that he would research whether the funds would be ARP compliant.

A. Requesting to Reopen La Porte County Sheriff's Merit Overtime (\$60,000).

- i. Motion to support the reopening of the Sheriff's Department Merit Overtime Request made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

B. Requesting Additional Appropriations from ARP or Riverboat (1191) for:

La Porte County Sheriff's Merit Overtime (\$60,000).

- i. Motion to approve \$50,000 ARP funding with potential reimbursement and \$10,000 from Riverboat made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Garner.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Commissioners

A. Requesting Additional Appropriations from Riverboat (1191) for:

Kingsbury Creek Culvert/Drainage Improvements (\$700,000).

President Novak confirmed with Mr. Polan that this project will be performed to fix drainage issues in the Meadowview Estates area, which Mr. Polan confirmed. Mr. Yagelski asked if the project will be performed by the County Highway department, to which Commissioner Haney explained that even though the Commissioners were able to save \$27,000 in drawing and design fees by using the La Porte Engineer, Surveyor, and MS4, the ability to use the County Highway Department to fulfill the project in-house didn't seem feasible with the unavailability of manpower and up-to-date machines in the department.

Mr. Rosenbaum asked Mr. Polan if the drawings for the said project had been checked by an outside source to ensure quality work would be performed. Mr. Polan explained that between consulting Burke

Engineering and executing a workshop for the project, that he felt confident about the plan that was drawn out as well as the cost for it that was presented.

Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Garner inquired once more why County Highway cannot perform the task, while Mr. Novak asked if it was an issue with equipment. La Porte County Highway Department superintendent Duane Werner approached the podium to confirm that the concerns for County Highway performing the task were in fact a result of lack of manpower and lack of new equipment, and additionally, the La Porte County Highway Department has never performed a task of such magnitude in the past, while the project may even take an entire summer to complete.

President Novak asked if a contractor had been selected and Mr. Polan explained that no contractor had been reached out to at this time; the not-to-exceed \$700,000 request had been estimated by calculating material costs and labor costs collectively.

President Novak made note that he would prefer that the funds for the project be taken from LIT funding, while Mr. Garner urged the Commissioners to work closely with County avenues such as the County Highway Department to cut down on costs. Auditor Tim Stabosz also recommended potentially using ARP funding to supplement the project if they are applicable, which Mr. Rosenbaum backed as well, noting that money could be reimbursed from the ARP to help with funding of the project.

Councilwoman Gramarossa pressed that the contract should be bid out before settling on a \$700,000 request for funding.

- i. After considerable discussion, the Council consensus decision was that funds to be drawn from the LIT or ARP for this project, and advertised as such for next month's meeting.
- ii. Motion of support made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- iii. All members voted in favor.

McCline/800 North (\$120,000).

Mr. Polan explained that the drainage issue on 800 North had been a long-standing issue with the property owners in the area, particularly with flooding as a result of the area wetlands. He also noted having disputed the issue with INDOT time after time regarding whether the county or the state should retain jurisdiction on repairing the problem, without any resolve up to this point. Mr. Yagelski mentioned that if the County were to issue such effort on a property which may not even be within the authority of La Porte County, that other property owners might request similar efforts on their own pieces of property, and the County would not be able to afford such an influx of requests.

Mr. Mollenhauer inquired as to what \$120,000 would offer for the project. Mr. Werner responded that to start, a \$45,000 quote provided by the homeowner from two years prior indicated that removing large trees from a nearby ditch on I-94 would help bring back some of the flow needed to redirect running water. He noted that a surveyor had been hired to determine if the property belonged to La Porte County or the State of Indiana. The surveyor resolved that the property did in fact belong to the State of Indiana and INDOT simply had not done anything about the drainage issue up until this point.

Mr. Polan urged the council to investigate the matter, noting the ongoing legal fees being poured into staving off the project.

Mr. Haney explained that the property in question was located at the very end of INDOT's jurisdiction, while also being partially located on La Porte County property.

Mr. Yagelski noted his frustration with INDOT and La Porte County not working together to resolve the issue.

- i. Motion to **deny** made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Garner.
- ii. A roll call vote was taken.
- iii. 3 members voted in favor (Mr. Garner, Mr. Mollenhauer, Mr. Yagelski) and 4 members voted not in favor (Mrs. Gramarossa, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Rosenbaum, President Novak); the request was not denied but did not pass.
- iv. Motion to table the request until next month made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum and by Mrs. Gramarossa via Zoom.
- v. All members voted in favor.

Franklin St. Bridge Request (Councilman Yagelski)

- A. Requesting Additional Appropriations from Cumulative Bridge (1135) or Major Bridge (1171) for Franklin St. Bridge repairs (\$1.5 million).

Mr. Rosenbaum requested to make a motion to use funds from the Cumulative Bridge budget to begin making repairs on the bridge, to which Auditor Stabosz recommended utilizing Major Bridge funding instead as it was a more restricted account, while the Cumulative Bridge account would cover a broader variety of projects. Mr. Rosenbaum and Mr. Yagelski responded that they expect to use many funds from the Major Bridge account before the year is over.

- i. Motion to approve \$1.5 million from Cumulative Bridge account to make repairs to the Franklin St. Bridge made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Council/Attorney Comments

President Novak expressed support for Mike Dempsey, who has become recently ill, and reminded the Council that the fair is beginning on July 5th 2021 and is celebrating its 175th anniversary.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by President Novak and seconded by Mr. Garner. Motion carried 7-0.

June

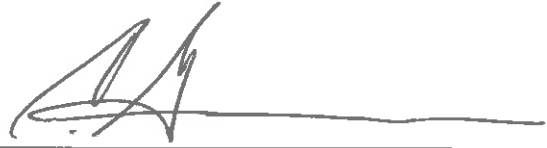
Examined & Approved by The La Porte County Council this 26th day of July, 2021.



Councilman Earl Cunningham



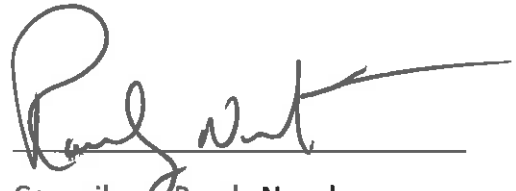
Councilman Terry Garner



Councilwoman Connie Gramarossa



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer



Councilman Randy Novak



Councilman Mike Rosenbaum



Councilman Mark Yagelski



ATTEST: _____

Timothy Stabosz, Auditor