



**LA PORTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**Sheila Matias
President**

**Richard Mrozinski
Vice President**

**Joseph Haney
Member**

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 5, 2022 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room 3 at 10:00 a.m.**

Auditor Tim Stabosz called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Randy Veatch.

Chief Deputy Auditor Vaughn Galloway called the roll: Commissioner Rich Mrozinski - Present; Commissioner Sheila Matias - Present; Commissioner Joe Haney - Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

Election of officers. Auditor Stabosz asked for nominations for President. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski nominated Sheila Matias for President. Commissioner Sheila Matias seconded. No other nominations heard. Commissioner Matias motioned to close the nominations. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Commissioner Matias motioned to approve the position of President. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 2-1 vote. Commissioner Haney - Nay. Auditor Stabosz then turned the meeting over to President Sheila Matias. President Matias asked for nominations for Vice President. Commissioner Mrozinski nominated Rich Mrozinski for Vice President. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. No other nominations heard. Nominations closed. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned for the Vice President position. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.

Considered the agenda. President Matias asked for a motion to amend the agenda by adding 'Reinstatement of the Coronavirus Paid Sick Leave Policy.' Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to add the policy to the agenda. Commissioner Haney seconded and moved to have Public Comment up on the agenda to its normal position directly after consideration of Claims. President Matias asked for a second to the Covid Policy Reinstatement. Commissioner Haney motioned for the Policy Reinstatement and to move Public Comment up on the agenda after Claims. President Matias said they are two separate items. Commissioner Haney moved to amend his motion by including moving Public Comment up on the agenda. President Matias said there was a motion on the floor for reinstating the Covid Policy and moving Public Comment up the agenda after Claims. No seconded was heard. Motion died. President Matias repeated the original motion to add the Reinstatement of the Coronavirus Paid Sick Leave Policy to the agenda. She then stepped down and seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Haney moved to consider the agenda by moving Public Comment up the agenda and be placed after consideration of Claims with the reasoning that there are a number of positions that will be appointed today on the Boards and Commissions and there are members of the public present that would like to speak on their behalf to be considered for those positions. No seconded was heard therefore motion died.

Considered approval of December 15, 2021 minutes. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor Tim Stabosz read the Claims with Payroll ending 12/17/2021 - \$1,120,152.33/ending 12/31/2021 - \$1,701,240.81 and Operating Expense Claims - \$1,603,716.27 and stated employee bonuses were included in the amount for Claims. Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered Appointment of Department Heads and Professional Advisors:

Insurance Agencies of Record - Michiana Insurance and General Insurance Services; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Financial Advisor - Cender & Company; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. President Matias stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.

County Attorney - Friedman & Associates; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. President Matias stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.

Confidential Executive Assistant - Diane Gonzales; Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Animal Shelter Director - Eric Hayes; Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

ORIGINAL

Community Corrections Director - Rochelle Brown; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Engineer - Jerry 'Jay' Sullivan; Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Highway Superintendent - Duane Werner; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Director of Planning and Regulatory Affairs - Mitch Bishop; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Director of Office of Community & Economic Development - Tony Rodriguez; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

EMA Director - Larry Butcher; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

EMS Director - Andrew McGuire; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

E-911 Director - Barb Huston; Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

IT Director - Darlene Hale; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Museum Curator - Keri Teller Jakubowski; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Parks & Recreation Director - Jeremy Sobeki; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Right-To-Know/Hazmat Director - Jeff Hamilton; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Director of Facilities - Larry Levendowski; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Veterans Service Officer - Joe Golec; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Weights & Measures Inspector - Mike Quinn; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

President Matias thanked Department Heads and Professional Advisors for their great work they do for the County. Commissioner Mrozinski pointed out a few Department Heads have Advisory Boards, the Advisory Boards make their recommendation to the Commissioners and if any changes need to be made then the Commissioners will act accordingly.

Considered Board and Commission Appointments:

Michigan City Public Library - Rose Tejada; Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 2-Yes, 1-Abstained. Commissioner Haney abstained due to lack of information.

Westville Public Library - Allison Swanson; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Alcoholic Beverage Commission - John McDaniel - Commissioner Haney nominated Duane Miller. No seconded heard. Nomination died. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to reappoint John McDaniel. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.

Animal Control Advisory Board - Dr. Lisa Polazzi; Dr. Patrick Dorrah and LuAnn Troxel; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Board of Construction Review - Marcella Kunstek, John Carr and Scott Cooley; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0. ***Record will show only Marcella and Scott's term expired, not John Carr.

Board of Health - Alexandra Laun and Dr. Annabella Juhasz; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Board of Zoning Appeals - April Daly; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried 2-Yes, 1-Abstained. Commissioner Haney abstained due to lack of information.

Community Corrections Advisory Board - Randy Novak; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Convention & Visitors Bureau Boards of Managers - Mike Seitz and Laura Krentz; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-

Drainage Board - Rich Mrozinski; Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

E-911 Advisory Board - Will be discussed under Liaison positions.

Fair Management & Events Corporation - Will be discussed under Liaison positions.

Pioneer Cemetery Commission - Larry Pinkerton; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Plan Commission - Rita Beaty Kelly; Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

ORIGINAL

Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals - Hassan Dabagia, Matt Bernacchi and Amy Blind; **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Redevelopment Commission - Terry Larson, Joe Coar and Scott Cooley; **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Matias** seconded. **Motion carried 2-1.** **Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

Considered Commissioner Liaison Appointments:

Animal Control Board - Commissioner Mrozinski

Community Corrections - Commissioner Haney

Drainage Board - Commissioner Mrozinski

E-911 Board - Commissioner Matias

Fair Board - Commissioner Mrozinski

FMEC - Commissioner Matias

Health Department - Commissioner Matias

Highway Department - Commissioner Mrozinski

Job Evaluation - Commissioner Mrozinski

Juvenile Service Center - Commissioner Matias

Kankakee River Basin & Yellow Basin Development Commission - Commissioner Haney

Museum - Commissioner Mrozinski

NIRPC - Commissioner Matias

Pioneer Cemetery Commission - Commissioner Mrozinski

Plan Commission - Commissioner Mrozinski

Redevelopment Commission - Commissioner Mrozinski

Regional Sewer District - Commissioner Mrozinski

Right-To-Know - Commissioner Matias

Solid Waste - Commissioner Matias, Commissioner Mrozinski and Commissioner Haney

Weights & Measures - Commissioner Matias

Workforce Development - Commissioner Matias

Regional Bus Authority - April Daly

Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve the Liaison Positions. **Commissioner Matias** seconded. **Motion carried 2-1.** **Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

Designation of Publication: Legal Notice/Commission Meeting Agendas/Public Notice. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded and added **Regional News** to the list. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Commissioners' meeting dates for 2022. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

President Matias reminded everyone of respectful discourse, keep it civil, no back and forth or questions to different people in the audience but state your opinions.

Public Comment

Rodney McCormick, Elected State Delegate for Michigan Township, Michigan City, stated Michigan Township only received \$10,000 from the rental assistance money out of \$100,000. He serves as a member of the Michigan City Housing Authority and tenants are going through the court system right now looking for relief due to the last administration not keeping any records. Although he said she is not the only person to blame, he does not understand how Commissioner Matias lives in Michigan Township and doesn't know about the township only receiving \$10,000 in assistance funds. It does not sit well with him and come Election Day he will speak loudly about it. He said she will come to Michigan City in the underserved black, colored community and persuade them to vote for her. He will not be voting straight Democrat. He went on to thank Commissioner Haney, saying he supported him and will continue to do so, he voted for him, he will not vote straight ticket. He stated he is fighting against the same attorney and it's a shame. He said when an elected official goes to work and finds an envelope with a snake in it, he had a lawful act to open his door and go to work, this elected official was fearful. Rodney said it was intimidation and then said, "Mr. Mrozinski, you should be arrested, I don't understand why our County Prosecutor has done nothing about the two-tier system that he speaks of or the Sheriff Department. I'm just going to say this, you be ashamed of yourself, you should step down immediately. Thank you" **President Matias** used the gavel during the last 2 sentences and said there will be no personal attacks under her watch. She reported on the rental assistance under the ARP funds are run by a committee headed by Center Township Trustee Lisa Pierzakowski and there are forms that must be filled out.

Randy Veatch, 4177 W. Schultz Road, La Porte, is troubled as to why he is still in front of the Commission asking why a business is allowed to run as a sand mine in a residential neighborhood. He said the 3 Commissioners have openly allowed this to turn into a political situation and has been well over 6 years now, well beyond belief that it's a man building his dream home. He stated he will continue to come to the semi-monthly meetings asking for an investigation on the people that wrongly supplied paperwork to MS4 and approval from MS4. He will ask for an investigation in the Highway Department who claimed they did road damage with a snowplow when there was no snow on the ground. He will continue to ask for the sitting Commissioner that ordered the signs to be removed

throughout the neighborhood, he said they were removed illegally. Randy said the Commissioners' actions and reactions have strengthened his position. He said he received paperwork on the signs being ordered to be re-installed has given him new insight and has given him more inspiration to keep coming to the meetings. The Sheriff stating he would not stop a business from pulling into the driveways of the operations by code that cannot be there. The actions of the elected or appointed/department heads violating their oath of office, the department leaders misspeaking about things that he has said, misquoting him from emails or while he speaks on record, all trying to discredit him. Provide him with the certificate of compliance on the property and this would be better use of County time and resources then hunting down a plastic snake.

Chris Throgmorton, La Porte, Indiana, wanted to give his opinion without it being labeled hate speech or a personal attack, conveyed that he thinks public comment is a very important part of our democracy, people should be able to attend these meetings and state their opinions about those that they voted in office and tell them whether they are pleased or displeased with the job they are doing and not have the hammer whacked if the Commission doesn't like what is being said. He stated the Commission is playing a dangerous game and should not be using the term hate speech. It is not hate speech if it is comment about the job they are doing as an elected official while in office.

Earl Cunningham, 6311 W. Shiva Drive, La Porte, Indiana, stated last January the Commissioners appointed a former county employee, who had been suspended for threatening a sitting Commissioner on county property, to the Alcohol Beverage Commission. John McDaniel, husband of the former Chairman of the Democratic Party, was the appointee. Last year the decision had been based on the person had to be a Democrat but that was false and has been false for several years. Earl said he gave the information to the Commissioners and was told it was a one-year appointment and it would be taken care of this year. A candidate for this position attended the meeting as well as a few others for consideration on the Boards and Commissions. If the appointee would have been another Democrat, then so be it but because the fact that it was an employee who had been suspended for threatening a Commissioner is an insult to every Republican and Democrat who could have served that position without threatening a Commissioner, let alone on county property. He said the truth of the matter is Commissioner Mrozinski spent the vast majority of his campaign time saying 'Queen Sheila hasn't been in the office for 24 weeks' then it got up to 42 weeks, that and the fact that he was going to get rid of Shaw Friedman as County Attorney was his two campaign statements or were basically what Earl remembers him saying and that Commissioner Mrozinski said he changed his mind. Although Earl said he was not considered a liar then because he changed his mind, he certainly was a liar when asked if he left the white package but responded no, he was out of state. Earl said in a written response to someone Commissioner Mrozinski said he didn't get caught red-handed but there were cameras. Earl compared what Commissioner Mrozinski did to former Commissioner Dave Decker who had an accident in the back parking lot, denied it yet it was on camera. Commissioner Haney thanked Councilman Cunningham for his statements.

William Jonas, Attorney with the law firm of May, Oberfell and Lorber, stated it is his distinct honor to represent Shaw Friedman in the defamation suit filed last February against County Auditor Timothy Stabosz, who at the time he took office swore an oath to perform his duties impartially. Mr. Jonas has practiced law for 40 years, was elected in 2008-2009 to serve as President of the 11,000 Member Indiana State Bar Association. He has had a front row seat to the astonishingly antagonistic smear campaign that has been waged against Mr. Friedman the past year. That stands in marked contrast to the oath sworn by Auditor Stabosz. Attorney Jonas said after watching the county government meetings over the last year he is equally offended at the claims made against Commissioners Matias and Mrozinski. Being referred to as 'henchman' or 'bagmen' or having lost their moral integrity for supporting the retention of County Attorney Friedman. From the view of the neighboring county to the east, La Porte County has a reputation of honest, responsible county government over many years. (Attorney Jonas pauses here due to laughs being made in the room from the Auditor.) Claims of 'corruption' or 'vat of filth' or 'corrupt house of cards' being said by a few elected officials are doing nothing but harm the county's well-earned reputation and may end up having an additional burden on the taxpayers. Attorney Jonas, "Let me be perfectly clear, an experienced trial Judge that Mr. Stabosz agreed to, Elkhart Superior Court Judge Stephen Bowers, issued an order on December 7th in which he determined that 'Mr. Stabosz has not identified any facts from which he concluded that Mr. Friedman is corrupt, has violated professional obligations regarding conflicts of interest, collected referral fees in violation of professional obligations or in any other way engaged in unethical conduct.' The Judge then went on to say that Mr. Stabosz quote 'has not designated the substance support to any of his allegations' end quote. Not only did the Judge deny Mr. Stabosz' motion to dismiss, he approved an amended complaint with additional claims against Mr. Stabosz. As Judge Bowers wrote, 'Mr. Stabosz has not offered a single piece of admissible evidence to support a claim of conflict of interest or unethical conduct by Mr. Friedman.' Just because this baseless nonsense is supposed to earn clicks on Facebook does not make it true. It's a whole different ballgame in a court of law and that's why the claims against him continue and will be prosecuted. Mr. Friedman has a solid track record for fighting for the citizens of this county..." **President Matias** interrupts due to Auditor Stabosz laughing and said if he cannot act in a civil manner then he can leave the room. She apologized to Attorney Jonas and asked him to continue. **Attorney Jonas** said it's interesting then continued with, "Mr. Friedman has a solid track record for fighting for the citizens of this county and the report attached to his proposed contract summarizes just some of the accomplishments he's had as County Attorney. The Proposed contract also lays out clearly the duties and responsibilities of the County Attorney and from my standpoint as a lawyer, as a former President of the Indiana State Bar Association, I believe it's a contract you should approve. Thank you for your time."

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

Barb Huston, E-911 Director, thanked the Commission for her re-appointed as Director of the center. **Requested** permission from the Commissioners to approach the Council for additional funds of \$26,305 needed to move the consoles, monitors, and lights in her office. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.** Barb then asked

for permission to approach the Council for additional appropriation for recording software, a 1-year for \$31,056 or a 5-year for \$138,141, the 5-year comes with a savings of \$17,000. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve the request to approach the Council. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.** Barb reported last week Porter County 911 Center went down due to a fiber issue, all calls were fed to our county 911 Center and one additional dispatcher came in to help. She thanked her staff for 'answering the call.'

Amanda Lahners, Health Department Director, reported that every testing site in our county is overwhelmed and appointments are now being requested instead of walk-ins. Website to schedule an appointment is coronavirus.in.gov and everything pertaining to the virus can be found on this page. Currently there is a shortage nationwide of the rapid tests that began in December and has continued in January of the New Year. Indiana had been going through anywhere from 40,000-50,000 rapid tests per week. Right now, the entire allotment for the state is only 11,000 tests per week. Our county received 100 tests this week. New guidelines have been issued for testing and currently rapid tests are only available for those that are 18 years or younger or if you are 50 years or older and asymptomatic. New treatments are becoming available. Michigan City testing site on 8th Street is still open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Our Gravity site in La Porte on Washington Street is the only facility so far taking walk-ins for testing.

Darlene Hale, IT Director, updated the Commissioners on the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Michigan City Courthouse later this afternoon that the services are all up and running, internet and phones are ready to go.

Tony Rodriguez, OCED, stated at the next Commissioners' meeting on the 19th, the 2021 OCED activity report will be given. Contractors are out in the field working aggressively gathering information for Broadband connectivity that is critical for the County's application. He gave a shout-out to employees Mitch Bishop, Mike Polan, and Janet Cole that have been a big asset in getting the information.

Tim Stabosz, Auditor, spoke on County Attorney Friedman's invoices and his refusal to pay them. He said the Commissioners agreed that effective 1-1-2022 any attorney hired will be bound by a written contract and he sees one for Friedman and Associates on the agenda for consideration. He stated the problem with the 'free rein' two of the three Commissioners have allowed Attorney Friedman. Three questions should be asked when thinking about the elements that an effective contract for the County Attorney should include 1.) What specific actions should a County Attorney be authorized to perform; 2.) What specific actions should the attorney be forbidden or precluded from performing and 3.) What are the means by which the attorney is authorized to perform an action and charge the county? Auditor Stabosz stated a County Attorney is supposed to perform a narrow, but very important function providing legal advice, interpretation to the Commission and protect the county from lawsuits. Broad latitude should be given as long as the attorney is acting within the field of the law. "Where Mr. Friedman has gotten himself into trouble is in his willingness to charge the county for engaging in a myriad of actions not having anything to do with the law. These actions have included serving as an unelected policy director, an **acknowledged** policy director actually and self-acknowledged, engaging in political activity including lobbying and community organizing, acting as the unauthorized Chief of Staff to the Commission, including directing Department Heads or otherwise acting as County Manager and acting as the Commissioner's self-**anointed** political and media relations director. Any contract for attorney services should include specific **exclusions** that forbid the attorney from performing the items I just noted, moreover the attorney should not be able to send an email to the Commission's Secretary instructing her to place items on the Commission agenda quote 'with the Commission President's approval' unquote as is currently the case. In fact, as recently as the first half of 2021 and in times prior Mr Friedman was allowed to unilaterally instruct the Commission's Secretary to place items on the agenda until Mr. Haney confronted that outrage. The ability to - make no mistake - the ability to set the agenda is the ability to set the course of the Commission meeting and direct La Porte County government. It is not a power any attorney should be permitted. Friedman has already been operating de-facto and unauthorized as the county manager. Let's look at why it is a horrible idea to let any attorney, but especially him, be both the policy advocate and County Attorney at the same time. What happens when you allow this specific individual or any attorney to mix policy and legal advice? 1.) He created the county's ARP spending plan and 2 of the 3 of you let him do that, his initial version of the plan included \$700,000 for the Swanson Center which he was the President of at the time. Those monies were since quietly been pulled after I exposed that conflict of interest at one of your Commission meetings. 2.) He sought to meddle in the affairs of the Plan Commission even though they have their own board attorney, contesting the legality of their choice for the powerful position of Building Commissioner on serious grounds because he knew the current appointee would be independent of him. 3.) He completely and inappropriately and outrageously said to my Chief Deputy exactly one year ago at this reorganization meeting quote 'you went from working for one radical to another' unquote in referring to Director of Community Corrections Rochelle Brown and to myself, subjecting the county to a bias claim and legal liability and finally 4.) He meddled in seeking to allow the former Auditor to maintain full access to the Audit functions of the county's financial software without taking the time to understand the statutory protections imbedded in the software access restrictions and how they relate to maintaining proper internal controls until Commissioner Haney and I brought the State Board of Accounts in to the picture and they objected. It is important to note that the Indiana Code section 36-2-2-14 contains a required methodology for utilizing a county administrator or manager. It must be quote 'expressly authorized by resolution of the Commission' unquote. If you want to let Friedman continue to compel you to let him do all the things he is doing to manage the county and run policy, you **must** establish a separate resolution that names him as a county manager or **the** county manager but certainly a county manager and delineate those duties. Interestingly, the conflict of interest in his position is nakedly evident, after all if he is your legal advisor why didn't he advise you to follow the law in the first place and necessarily and properly pass such a resolution last year to authorize him to manage the county. What's clear is allowing one person to wear these two hats creates a conflicts of interest and in Mr. Friedman's case is an irresistible temptation for

unethical and unscrupulous behavior.” Auditor Stabosz went on to say a County Attorney should have a county email address for proper billing, transparency and accountability. A contract should be jointly held by all 3 Commissioners and not with any individual Commissioner so the situation of pitting Commissioner against Commissioner can be avoided. Tearing the county apart. Any email written on billable hours should be available to any Commissioner that requests it. It is important that the public knows the decisions are coming from the Commissioners and not the attorney. He said the contract proposed today is vague, broad, not restrictive in any real way and completely inadequate. There are better options than paying Mr. Friedman over \$400,000 a year like putting it out for competitive bid or hiring a full time County Attorney which could save the county anywhere from \$125,000 to \$150,000 a year as an estimate. He ended with saying he was glad Mr. Jonas was willing to sacrifice his reputation on Mr. Friedman and he looks forward to going to trial and having the truth of Mr. Friedman’s coercive, abusive and bullying behavior come out meanwhile he plans on appealing the Judge’s ruling, he is not afraid and he will see this case through the end. **Commissioner Haney** thanked Auditor Stabosz for his comments.

Requests

Considered 24 unused sick days for Jason Schadt in Circuit Court who resigned - Tom Alevizos, Judge. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Old Business

Considered reinstating the Coronavirus Paid Sick Leave Policy. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve the Policy. **Commissioner Haney** seconded the Policy as presented. President Matias stated coverage date of January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022. Commissioner Mrozinski said it should be revisited in March. **Motion carried 3-0.**

New Business

Considered proposed contract between County Commissioners and Friedman & Associates. **Commissioner Mrozinski** said he examined, read it twice then motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** said the contract is exceptionally broad, extremely vague and would allow the County Attorney, no matter who it is, to do virtually anything they want to do. Over the past year he has seen the ‘hand in the cookie jar’ type behavior and it seems to be rewarding the attorney with the ‘keys to the candy store.’ Emails over the past year show the County Attorney works only for the majority of the Commissioners, emails that say he works individually, this contract at least show delineation that he works for any elected official or department head in the county meaning anyone could direct him, according to this, any department head, elected or unelected, could direct him to do virtually anything and he’d be covered under this contract to do it. No real guardrails for blatant policy advice or non-policy advice. **Commissioner Haney** moved to table this contract, revisit it and possibly have an independent attorney look at it to determine if this is a contract the county should be engaging in. **President Matias** said a motion was on the floor to approve the contract. **She then asked for a second for Commissioner Haney’s motion to table the contract. None heard so his motion died for lack of a seconded. President Matias** said she read the contract, reviewed it, edited it several times, added to it because she did not want it to be ‘too general.’ As former Mayor of Michigan City and having worked with attorneys she stated an attorney that works for a municipality or county needs a broad brush, she has called Attorney Friedman on multiple issues and he has always been available. We are a complex organization with approximately 800 employees, 22 buildings spread out throughout the county, guardrails should not be put up for the attorney. Voters elected the Commissioners to run the county and stay out of liability situations. The County Attorney is a professional with a license. Commissioner Haney has gone to the licensing board about Mr. Friedman and no cause was found. She pointed out there were mistruths in some of the statements made by the Auditor today. She supports the proposed contract. She has worked with Shaw Friedman over the years and acknowledged they did not always agree with each other however as professionals they learn how to work together. She said both Auditor Stabosz and Commissioner Haney requested a contract, now one is being proposed but not in their terms with guardrails. **President Matias stepped down and seconded the motion. Commissioner Mrozinski** said he echoed her statements about Attorney Friedman always being available for them whether it is in the evening time, weekends, holiday or daily, it does not matter. He appreciates Attorney Friedman keeping the county out of trouble. He has not always had a good rapport with other attorneys and even at times has not always agreed with Shaw but he appreciates everything our County Attorney has done for the Commission and the county and his guidance and support. **Commissioner Haney - Nay. Motion carried 2-1 to approve the County Attorney contract for the 2022 year.**

Considered proposed contract between Auditor and SEH - Tim Stabosz, Auditor. **Attorney Friedman** said the contract has been reviewed and recommends approval by the Board, it involves assisting the Auditor’s office with enterprise zone calculations and TIF calculations. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

President Matias discussed operational policy with the Covid numbers on the rise. With home test kits now available and being used the numbers reported may not be a true count. She encouraged those that have tested positive with a home test kit to please report it to our local health department to help with a true numbers count. We do have PPE available from the EMA Department if offices need it. She suggested a mask mandate for the public that come in to our buildings and for our staff when in common areas.

Commissioner Mrozinski said people may not realize they are sick and still go out in the general public. He has been asked about a county-wide mask mandate which he said he would not support. He stated their authority is over the County Buildings. Money has been spent on PPE protection such as Plexiglas, masks, hand sanitizer, shields, whatever the departments requested. A few department heads have asked if they could post a sign requiring face masks be worn before entering their offices, he believes a mask advisory he could support but not a mandate and possibly leaving it up to the department head of that particular office. If a department can work from home then that will be up to the department head as well. **Commissioner Haney** said as we are entering

year 3 with the virus, he likes to give people credit on what is best for themselves and we should not make rash decisions for them. They need to be making that decision for themselves. The N-95 masks are the best for protection from the virus. He reminded the Commissioners that 18 months ago he approached the Commission about the face coverings and they are not 100% protection versus the surgical masks or N-95s instead of cloth masks. He will not pretend to be a doctor for anyone and those decisions should be made by the individuals and their health care provider. **President Matias** said the discussion is about protecting each other, our employees, and the county offices. Due to not knowing who is vaccinated and unvaccinated it is best to post a mask advisory prior to entering the buildings and offices. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to post a mask advisory on the doors entering the county buildings and allowing the department heads to make the decision if the advisory goes for their offices or not. President Matias stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Haney thanked President Matias for acknowledging the votes and calling for them. He has been busy visiting all county offices and meeting the employees. He then spoke about county resources being wasted to track down the anonymous package that was left for Auditor Stabosz. As we now live in a post 911 world then a package is left in a secured government building, to find out who left it was the issue. During the last Commissioner meeting Commissioner Mrozinski twice denied he left the package because he was in Florida. Since then he has admitted leaving it for Auditor Stabosz. "Going in first blush on those initial denials, then we have to look at a security issue that there is an unknown individual who's able to spoof our security systems and who has a key card, a key fob access, to every building in the county, as Commissioners we have key card access to virtually everything in the county, anything with a key fob was then accessed allegedly misappropriately under Commissioner Mrozinski's key fob and they have cart blanche to basically the entire county and county buildings and it's an unknown rogue individuals are able to spoof our systems that's a significant security flaw if it was true so we had to determine and go through and figure out exactly who had used Commissioner Mrozinski's key card and of course, as it turns out it was Commissioner Mrozinski, he has since admitted to it. This is not a misappropriation of anyone's time or efforts." He said what was maybe meant as a trivial prank expounded and spiraled outward into what we have now. He said Commissioner Mrozinski said he left it on behalf of someone else and if that is true then why would he leave it without knowing what was in it? Leaving unsecured packages in secured government buildings under the cover of darkness in a post 911 world would you do that? His overall concern here throughout this past year, actually the last 18 months, is that there has been a number of lies and misrepresentations from Commissioner Mrozinski spanning these past 18 months, he was elected under false promises for example, he now says he has changed his mind. Commissioner Haney said as late as 13 months ago in December he sat on Commissioner Mrozinski's back porch at his house with Rich, his wife and another couple. Conversation was how detrimental Attorney Friedman was to the county and it was good Commissioner Haney got elected so the attorney could finally be removed. Joe said, "It's one thing to lie to me, I'm just a person, it's another thing to lie to the voters and the people of La Porte County in order to get elected and it's another thing entirely to lie to your spouse. I mean, you didn't just betray my trust, you didn't just betray the trust of the people of La Porte County, you betrayed the trust of your wife, sitting there knowing, I believe in my heart that you knew, ya know that two and a half, three weeks before the organizational meeting, you were - Commissioner Mrozinski, that you were going to support Shaw Friedman for County Attorney but you sat there and you lied to your friends, you lied to me and you lied to your wife. This has been, this has been unbelievable and it's set up a chain of events that led to a pattern of lies that have spread over the past year, lying about the RDC appointment last year being a Scrivener's error, lying when I confronted you when you said that it was Attorney Friedman who instructed you to have me removed from the RDC. I can work with and I'm glad now that we have Commissioner Matias as President as opposed to yourself because while we certainly don't agree on a lot of things, I don't really recall her ever blatantly lying to my face, at least we can have reasonable, rational disagreements about certain policy things, at least I can - generally speaking take what she says at face value and that's good so...this whole snake thing, I mean, it is a culmination of what's happened throughout the year that led up to what probably you found as overwhelming but sneaking around in the middle of the night then lying about it, pretending it's not, that's a cowardly act, it's despicable and it wasted our time, our resources, it put the Auditor in fear that someone was trying to send him, ya know, all these mixed messages, this is not ya know, something that was harmless. I don't believe you apologized for it, I believe you should and honestly I believe you should step down for the numerous lies and the issues that you've caused here in La Porte County, it's not right, it's not right, I don't believe that we should have a liar or coward sitting up here, this is not correct." He ended with comments on the contract for the County Attorney, it has no guardrails, no protection in place for the people of the county. He quoted an email Commissioner Mrozinski wrote years ago. He stated there was a lot of things wrong in La Porte County, a long of things wrong in La Porte County government and these are just a few of blatant examples of why he will not stop fighting to get 'this ship righted' and to fix the things that are wrong.

Commissioner Mrozinski reported 2021 was a productive year with 22 miles of roads paved, 6 subdivisions, and 30 miles of chip seal. Highway Department is awesome for all they do. Expansion/Retention program is at a record pace with Mike Seitz visiting current businesses in our county. He said the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Michigan City Courthouse will be today at 2:30 p.m. Rich stated a committee of himself, Darlene Hale, Randy Novak, Larry Levendowski and Joie Winski met with Tonn and Blank every Monday morning to see the project completed. Marquiss Electric had good news today for the Franklin Street Bridge that the material ordered for repairs will be in sometime in February. There will be a small period of time when the bridge will be closed for the repairs with hopes that it will be ready on March 15, 2022 for operation during the summer. Matt Reardon, Mark Yagelski and Rich have been working with Congressman Mrvan's office for funding. He spoke about Broadband in our county. The class action lawsuit for PCB contamination in our county was moving forward, Commissioner Mrozinski said he is glad something is being done about it. He then reported on all of the Economic Development projects currently being worked on by Tony Rodriguez and Matt Reardon. I-94/US 20 (record will show he said US 20 however it should be US 421) Love's Travel Stop project; I-94/US 35/US20 has a \$15 million

dollar investment; 39 North Conservancy District will be discussed for future plans; after 15 years of working on an EMS Base in Rolling Praire Rich reported it was thanks to Attorney Friedman that we were able to secure the land for this to happen and hopefully in the spring work will begin for this project. According to a newsletter he receives the top 5 states to do business in are Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Indiana was number 4. Progress has been made in our county over the years. Bill Hager, Marlow Harmon, Barb Huston, Ken Layton, Clay Turner, Terry Garner, Mark Yagelski, Mike Bohacek, and Ron Clindaniel have helped build La Porte County to what it is today and when he hears from two gentlemen that our county is a 'pit of filth' and 'corruption' for years, it is an insult to those that have contributed to what we have now. "In one year of office I can see that the two of you yahoos have not brought one positive thing to the county but you have plenty of bad things to say about us, it's an insult, it's an insult to 110,000 people who live in La Porte County who appreciate all of the work that we have done for years and years and years. I look forward to doing more, this year we've got a lot of positive things on the agenda."

Commissioner Matias said she is thrilled with the ribbon cutting today because the people on the construction committee have put in countless hours under the leadership of Joie Winski. The project has been under budget and on time. She reported a 2nd Ribbon Cutting was scheduled for today for Corsicana Mattress Company but it was canceled due to Covid. She gave a shout-out to the Economic Development office for bringing this business that offers 350 jobs to our county and are currently hiring. It is located in a building in Pinola that has been empty for several years. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony has been rescheduled for the end of March 2022. President Matias spoke on the Covid virus, a message she received from Dr. Kora where he asked her to emphasize 'the importance of living our lives, doing our work and keeping ourselves out of the hospital by taking vaccines. All of my patients who died of Covid were unvaccinated.' Please take care of yourselves. She then introduced the La Porte County Works! business highlighted for this meeting: **Enprotech Industrial Technologies** was established in La Porte, Indiana at 3234 North State Road 39 in La Porte, Indiana in 2001 in order to expand and better serve steel industry customers in our region. They have over 60 years of experience in designing, manufacturing and repairing manufacturing equipment for the steel manufacturing and aluminum manufacturing industries. Enprotech is one of the largest providers of repairs, rebuild services and new press manufacturing services for metal stamping, metal forming and metal forging equipment in North America. The company is also a leading supplier of repair, rebuilding and new equipment for the steel manufacturing industry. They currently employ 26 employees with wages anywhere from \$25 to \$34 per hour. Attracting good people and keeping them is essential to the success of the company. The company attracts talented, qualified professionals and provides them with opportunities for advancement in all aspects of their professional lives. The company offers the following benefits: health/medical plans, dental plans, vision plans, 401K plans, life insurance, Short- and Long-Term disability plans, and paid vacations and holidays. The company has openings for: Welder (night and day), Machine Disassembly, Manual Machinist, Boring Mill, Mechanical assembly, CNC Mill Machinist (night), Class B Driver (local), Shipping and Receiving Coordinator, Millwright, Project Manager. The wage rate for these positions range from \$25.00 to \$34.00 per hour. To review and apply for these jobs, go to our website. **President Matias** shared her thoughts on the heroes in our community, echoing what Commissioner Mrozinski said about the work done in and for the county. Sheriff Kenny Layton, Sheriff John Boyd, Sheriff Mike Mollenhauer, Sheriff Bobby Blair, Judge Paul Baldoni, Judge Steve King, Prosecutor/Judge Skip Chapala, Sherry Waters, Lynn Waters, and Barb Huston are all people that spent their careers contributing to this community. Commissioner Haney stated our county is stagnant and it hurts our community to hear that said after individuals have worked hard for years to improve our county. She ended with hoping year 2022 will be more about good people in our community, doing good for all of us, solve problems and work together instead of throwing arrows. Let's move forward, be good citizens, be kind to one another and work together because together we can make things happen.

President Matias adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE: 1-19-2022

Joie Matias

Richard Mrozinski

Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

*Commissioner
Haney
Abstained*

ORIGINAL