



**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**Richard Mrozinski**  
President

**Joseph Haney**  
Vice President

**Sheila Matias**  
Member

**LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES**  
Wednesday, December 15, 2021 La Porte County Complex Meeting Room 3 at 6:00 p.m.

**President Rich Mrozinski** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by David Love, Eagle Scout. President Mrozinski asked for a moment of silence after the Pledge of Allegiance for Senator Bob Dole, Long time La Porte Attorney Barbara Friedman and the victims of the recent tornadoes.

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

**Considered the agenda. Commissioner Matias motioned to amend the agenda by adding a Resolution to the Council for ARP funds for County Employees. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried. Commissioner Haney then motioned to accept the agenda as amended. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered approval of December 1, 2021 minutes. Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.**

**Auditor Tim Stabosz** read the Claims with Payroll ending 12/3/2021 - \$1,146,512.55 and Operating Expense Claims - \$4,515,482.97. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve then noted \$2,000,000 went to the Township Trustees for their final draw for the year. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Public Comment**

**Randy Veatch**, 4177 W. Schultz Road, La Porte, distributed paperwork to the Commission. On December 1<sup>st</sup> he made a statement about Mike Polan's email which contained mistruths. Mike Polan disputed the statement saying there were no mistruths and the email was accurate. Randy said that was not true, it is a false statement and totally incorrect. He said the Building Commissioner stated Randy attends every meeting and says the same thing, over and over. Randy said it's the same project that he talks about but the message is different every time. He said Mike Polan did not speak about how he allows a business to run out of a residential area or sand mining legally placed in the county. Randy said Mike did not talk about thousands of trucks or the attorney that he gets his guidance from had to recuse himself at the beginning. He only brought up basic talking points and spinning it as Randy's fault. The truck traffic from the operation allowed to defy the Joint Zoning Code. Why is there a Plan Commission if the Joint Zoning Code is not going to be used? Why have a BZA? If the JZO doesn't matter why is the county paying personnel to work in the Building Commission office? Randy stated Building Commissioner Mike Polan said the court cases were out of the hands of the government. Randy said nothing was solved in the court case, it was stated the attorney could not represent the Commissioners in the case, nothing more was solved. If the land doesn't need a permit today, why did the government need to



give him a permit in the first place? Randy said he did not want this when the county first allowed it in 2015 and still does not want it today. He said he deserves his property rights. When are the County Commissioners going to stop looking down or away when he speaks? Why is it continued to be a political issue? Why not except it as a zoning issue which it is? When are his questions ever going to be answered? When is there going to be an investigation on the paperwork that was used showing mismarked areas, the missing homes? Who ordered the signs removed? Randy said he's pretty sure who ordered them to be removed. Where is the Certificate of Compliance of work being done on the property if it is proper? Randy said he used to believe government was there to protect the people but the last 6 years he's learned that our local government is there only to protect themselves, why? Randy thanked the Commission, said Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Allen Stevens**, South County Community Coalition President, stated the 2020 Census was done and redistricting as needed. He requested from the Board if they would consider resetting the Commissioners' districts, possibly similar to Porter County with a north district, a center district and a south district. He said in the last 20 years what's happened is repeatedly, with no offense to Commissioner Matias, the county ends up with 2 Commissioners from Michigan City. Changing the Commissioners' districts would eliminate this in the future with north, center and south districts. Allen said this would be fairer to the south part of the county. **President Mrozinski** said he agreed and a few months ago he took a map to the Clerk with the same idea, dividing the county by a north, middle and south areas for Commissioners' districts. **Commissioner Matias** asked if there was a deadline. **Attorney Shaw Friedman** said this conversation should have happened a few months ago on the Commission/Council districts changing but right now it is only a few precincts changing due to the redistricting with the Congressional lines redrawn. December 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for any changes to the maps. **Commissioner Haney** said Clerk Stevens has taken some of President Mrozinski's thoughts on the changes for the Commission/Council in to consideration and possibly a proposal will be offered tonight further on the agenda. He said La Porte County is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest county in the state in size, roughly 36 miles long running north to south. He reported prior to him coming on the Commission, the previous 3 Commissioners were all from the top 7 miles of the county. Joe said the current districts had the previous Commissioners living slightly closer to South Bend than to the center of La Crosse. He said it is crucial that south county gets representation that it needs. **Attorney Friedman** said the deadline for the changes is December 31<sup>st</sup>. **Commissioner Haney** said we will see how it goes this evening.

#### Department Reports/Department Head Comments

**Jeremy Sobecki**, Parks Superintendent, introduced Eagle Scout David Love. David reached out to Jeremy for a project to work on. He built a lean-to at Luhr Park for equipment. Jeremy said he did a wonderful job and wanted to recognize him for it. The Commissioners thanked him for his project. Jeremy then updated the Commissioners on the production of playground equipment at Bluhm Park. He said it has been very slow and manufacturing is a contributing factor. Hopefully it will be done before the weather changes for the year. Jeremy thanked the Commissioners and Council for the funding of the parking lot project. His maintenance staff is working on the bathrooms.

**Tim Stabosz**, Auditor, addressed comments made by President Mrozinski at the end of the last Commissioners' meeting. "There's a certain level of things you take as an elected official then it gets down to a man-to-man, I caution you (directly looking at Auditor Stabosz and speaking to Commissioner Haney) to choose your words very carefully in the future because as a man, I do have certain limits of what I will accept and what I will put up without taking some sort of action and trust me boys, you don't want to go there." Auditor Stabosz said he found the comments disturbing and felt it was a threat. He stated two days after the Commissioners' meeting, on a Friday morning before the building opened, a white envelope was left outside his office door, addressed to Auditor Tim Stabosz with no return address. "I opened the envelope and inside I find wrapped paper with a snake in it and I'm wondering Commissioner Mrozinski did you leave this by my door, sir?" (Tim held up a green plastic snake for public viewing.) **President Mrozinski** said he was not there, he was in Florida. **Auditor Stabosz** asked again if Commissioner Mrozinski left the envelope at his office door. **Commissioner**



**Matias** asked for point of order. **Commissioner Haney** said it is a legitimate question and Commissioner Mrozinski could defend himself if he needed. **Commissioner Matias** said it is not question and answer time. **Auditor Stabosz** asked if Commissioner Mrozinski was willing to answer if he left the snake in the envelope outside the Auditor's office door or not. **President Mrozinski** said he was not there. **Auditor Stabosz** said it sounds like a denial. **President Mrozinski** said he was not in Indiana.

### Requests

None

### Old Business

**Considered** amendment to agreement for Pictometry services - Mike Schultz, Assessor/**Mike Ordziejewski**, GIS. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried. Mike Ordziejewski** thanked the Commissioners, wished them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

### New Business

**Considered** Resolution ratifying support for RDC and Plan Commission findings establishing I-94/U.S. 35 Economic Development Area - Phil Faccenda/Karl Cender. Phil Faccenda, via Zoom, stated this is a necessary step for the I-94/U.S. 35 development area. This would be a TIF area which would allow for infrastructure to be extended and funded. One retail project is in the works and in order to capture the tax increment a resolution must be passed. RDC adopted a resolution October 27, 2021 and Plan Commission followed with their support on November 23, 2021. If approved at this meeting a public notice will take place before the Redevelopment Commission in January 2022. **Karl Cender** said once it is approved with the Commissioners and a public hearing set then a tax impact will be put together. **Commissioner Matias** requested a ballpark figure be given to the public for information of the tax increase once the development begins for that area. **Matt Reardon** said the targeted project is located on the southeast side of the interchange 94/35/20 with a projected investment for the project of \$15,320,000. The current assessed evaluation at this location is roughly \$26,000. **Commissioner Haney** commented on the TIF areas outlawed in some states. A private sector with 'skin in the game' is good for the county. He asked for clarity on what the possible exposure might be to the county or ultimately the tax payers which has been his paramount concern. The proposed \$3 million dollars in TIF bonds for this TIF, in this case there would be zero exposure to the county and tax payers. In the very unlikely event of a default it would be burdened by the bonds of the private developer so having some of that 'skin in the game' is crucial. After getting the clarity on his concerns, **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried.** \*\*\*Resolution 2021-16 (Record will show this Resolution was not fully completed at the time of these minutes.)

**Considered** agreement with Stanley for cameras and integration - Erika Stalworth, JSC. **Mike Callahan** stated his department does not have the funds for the cameras however they did receive approval from the Council at their meeting for funding. IT Director **Darlene Hale** clarified the agreement is with Security Automation Systems and Stanley, two different agreements. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** Commissioners' Certificate Sale services with SRI - Joie Winski, Treasurer. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried.**

**Considered** request to Congressman Frank Mrvan for federal funding to assist potential long-term rebuild/renovation of the Franklin St. Bridge from funds now available in the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill. **President Mrozinski** reported he received a call recently from Marquiss Electric on damage on the Franklin Street Bridge, due to the delay in the approval of repairing the bridge this year, the parts needed may not be in on time in order to open the bridge on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Brakes and motors are the two main issues right now. Brakes



have to be specially made. A formal letter requesting assistance was requested from the county. **Councilman Mark Yagelski** stated 5 weeks ago he met with Congressman Frank Mrvan and only a sliver of Michigan City is in his district. Congressman Mrvan told him he has no projects currently in this area for the infrastructure bill and requested our county to submit a letter. Mark said the concrete is falling apart on the bridge and we were given exemptions for that and hopefully it will hold another year. He sees the deterioration going fast on the bridge. Commissioner Matias read the letter in to the record. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried. \*\*\*Letter attached to the minutes**

**Considered** proposed settlement of *Board of Commissioners v. Stabosz* negotiated by Council Finance Committee. **Commissioner Matias motioned to approve stating it was negotiated by the Council Finance Committee. Commissioner Haney seconded and noted it would be the most recent version sent over by Council Attorney Guy DiMartino. Auditor Tim Stabosz** clarified by asking if he has the most recent version. **Alan Sirinek**, 2710 Franklin Street, Michigan City, Attorney appointed as special counsel for this litigation, reported to the Commission he was requested to submit a draft to the Council's Attorney Guy DiMartino on Monday. He received a response back sometime this afternoon and he just wanted to state where they were originally at on Monday compared to today, Wednesday afternoon, are not the same agreement. Alan advised that one of three things can take place right now: Reject it outright and start all over again; Table it until January and continue working within the original framework/Table it, continue negotiations and bring it back in January or Continue to negotiate. He said the last version he saw was around 4:00 p.m. this afternoon. **Commissioner Matias** asked if the Commission could approve the concept and then the Attorneys could work out the details if there is any. **Attorney Sirinek** said yes. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** corrected from the podium that it was not the Finance Committee but a few Councilmen who met to negotiate then the Council appointed President Randy Novak and Vice President Mark Yagelski to approach the Commission. Guy understood the glitch in this is the speed of resolving the issue, the matter of payment. He understood it to be the terms were sufficient but it is the advertising of the claims that is the hold-up of the payment. **Commissioner Haney** said he appreciated all of the work of those involved and requested the time stamp on the paperwork. **Attorney DiMartino** said it will work as long as the payment is expedited. He requested 10 minutes to speak to Attorney Sirinek, showing him the printed version then they will come back to the meeting. **Commissioner Haney** asked President Mrozinski if he would allow a 10 minute discussion for the two attorneys. **President Mrozinski** said the agenda does not say anything about changes. **Commissioner Haney** said he may have used improper verbiage but he had only recently seen paperwork in the last 90 minutes and he was asking if that was the most recent agreement. **Commissioner Matias** suggested allowing the attorneys 10 minutes to look over the proposed agreement. The next item on the agenda will be discussed then the attorneys may come back.

**Considered** minor, technical changes to precincts in county commission/council districts for compliance with state election law, conditioned on approval by both county chairs - Heather Stevens, Clerk of the Circuit Court. **Clerk Stevens** said, "Nothing has changed, what happened was its reprecincting and really it wasn't even that, this is simply when they drew the new Congressional lines, they kind of ran them right through 3 of our precincts and we cannot have split precincts therefore we had to make corrections to the precincts. It also involves making sure that, I think your population has to be above so much, your active voter have to be above 600 so there was a lot of maneuvering." She thanked Mike Ordziejewski from GIS for his help. Heather said she was at the Election Administrator's conference in Indianapolis where she was able to finalize the changes in the precincts. She did state the reprecincting is up to the Commissioners, she is not authorized to do it right at this moment. She said the redistricting is the job of the Commissioners, not the Clerk. She does have everything ready to go, if the Commissioners want to take a look at possible changes however there is a deadline of December 31<sup>st</sup> but she did say she was ready and had sent an email. **Attorney Friedman** said there was the deadline of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December then he asked if it is new Commissioner/Council District maps. **Clerk Stevens** replied the Council Districts are by population, townships cannot be split. She has ran all the numbers and said she could not do any better than how the current districts are set up. The Commissioner Districts



though are different where the entire county votes for the candidates even though they represent a certain area or district. The rules are different and the guidelines do not have to be followed compared to the Council Districts Clerk Stevens said. **Attorney Friedman** clarified for the public the Commissioners represent an area in the county that they live in however their seats are voted on by **all** registered voters in the county. He went on to say the difficulty is making the changes to these current districts so late in the year while having approximately two weeks to vote on it/pass it and have candidates filing January 5, 2022 is not really enough time. **Clerk Stevens** stated Commissioner Mrozinski has the changes, he emailed it to her. **President Mrozinski** said yes, he emailed her a few months ago. **She** stated again it is not her job but the Commissioners' however she is ready to do it if they request it of her, she would be able to have it done by 10:00 a.m. the following day. **Attorney Friedman** said this is the last meeting of the year and unless there is a special meeting called for then the districts stay the same for the year 2022. **Commissioner Matias** said Allen Stevens made a good point when he said all voters may vote for the candidates regardless of what district they live in. As a Commissioner you represent all citizens of the county. Council Districts are different. **Clerk Stevens** said again it is not her place as Clerk to change the districts but the Commissioners. **Commissioner Haney moved for the Clerk to allow her to provide the maps for Commissioner/Council Districts so they could take a look at them.** **Commissioner Matias** asked if this would be prior to the end of the year and **he** said yes. **President Mrozinski** said he would like to see this happen and asked for a second. **Attorney Friedman** reminded them a special meeting would have to be called in the next two weeks in order to have enough time by December 31<sup>st</sup> to get it done. **Commissioner Haney** said he would like to see the new maps and his motion stands. **President Mrozinski stepped down and seconded it with the stipulation that the new Congressional districts be approved, the Commissioners will look at the proposed maps for the Commissioner/Council Districts and if they decide they want to go with them by the end of the year then a special meeting will be called. If they decide not to go with the new proposed Commission/Council District maps then they will remain the same for the year 2022.** **Commissioner Matias** asked President Mrozinski if his motion is to consider minor, technical changes to the precincts, etc. which is on the agenda. **President Mrozinski** said they will vote on the new Congressional District maps that are proposed tonight then after looking at the maps when they are provided by the Clerk if it is deemed they agree on the changes made a special meeting will be called for by the end of the year to vote on the Commissioner/Council District maps. **Attorney Friedman** stated to make it cleaner for the motion just simply indicate yes to the proposed precinct changes for the new Congressional Districts changes and secondly approving the **existing** Commission and Council Districts unless there is a desire by at least 2 Commissioners to convene a special meeting to change one or the other. **President Mrozinski** said perfect. **Commissioner Matias seconded that motion. Motion carried. Commissioner Haney did not vote for or against the motion.** **Clerk Stevens** said she will have the proposed Commission/Council District maps to them in the morning.

**Considered** the proposed Resolution from the Commission to the County Council requesting the Council call a special meeting before the end of the year to reconsider the ARP funding that they discussed at their Monday evening's meeting for employee retention stipends. **President Mrozinski** said discussion has been held on this topic, emails have been sent to the Commission from employees. He said there is a difference between the Commission and the Council. The Commission hired Cender & Company, Baker Tilly, Waggoner, Irwin and Sheely for guidance on the ARP funds. The requests have been submitted to the Council. Meetings were held. A record number of employees have left their positions in the county for better paying jobs elsewhere and we have the opportunity to retain them with the ARP funds. **Commissioner Matias** stated a \$4,000 bonus was approved by the Council with distribution in their paychecks the next 2 years. \$2,000 for year 2022 divided by 26 pay days and \$2,000 for year 2023 divided by pay days. After taxes are taken out it is not much of a bonus. The Commission requested a one-time sum for year 2021 to show appreciation to the employees. **Commissioner Matias motioned in the verbal Resolution requesting the Council to call a special meeting before the end of the year to reconsider the ARP funding for the employee retention stipend.** **Commissioner Haney** asked if it is a verbal Resolution because he did not see a document in front of him. **Commissioner Matias** said it is a verbal Resolution. **Commissioner Haney** stated one of his concerns with the



ARP funds and the Council was to allow them to do it at their discretion with guidelines. His suggestion was some of the funds up front with the rest of it spread out over the next couple of months up to a year in the paychecks. For example, \$1,000 up front this year then \$3,000 spread out over next year on paydays. **Auditor Stabosz** stated for the record the \$2,000 for year 2022 paid in 26 paydays would be \$76.92 per check before taxes are removed. **Commissioner Haney** said for clarity that would be almost equivalent to a 5% raise for employees making an average of \$36-\$40,000 per year. **Auditor Stabosz** said a 5% bonus. **Commissioner Haney** said he is happy the Council acted on some type of bonus for the employees but he does not want to see the Council put in a bad position, they did give a 5% raise to the employees for next year. He stated he had remorse that the Commission did not give better guidance to the Council for the ARP funding. **President Mrozinski** asked Commissioner Haney if that was a second or not. **President Rich Mrozinski stepped down and seconded the motion to send the verbal Resolution to the Council. Council President Randy Novak** said from the podium he is not opposed to having another special meeting however during their meeting that was just held on Monday Commissioners were either in the room or via zoom and none of them said anything. Speaking for himself only, he was not opposed to taking another look at the bonus options for the employees. He said though that the Commissioners should have spoken up during the meeting the Council held instead of chastising the Council now at the Commissioners' meeting. **All 3 Commissioners voted for the verbal Resolution requesting the Council to take another look at the bonus from the ARP funds for the County employees for the year of 2021. Commissioner Haney** stated he did not speak at that special Council meeting but he did speak on the matter at the Council meeting held in December. **Commissioner Matias** followed up on Council President Randy Novak's comments by saying the Commission was not chastising the Council only asking that they listen to the employees and the Commission's request. **Council President Randy Novak** said an email or notification would have been sufficient instead of here at the meeting. **Attorney Friedman** reminded those present that a letter was sent on behalf of President Rich Mrozinski to the Council on November 5<sup>th</sup>, six weeks ago, suggesting the one-time bonus/stipend.

**President Mrozinski** asked Council President Randy Novak if there was a decision made from the previous agenda item after the 2 attorneys met and went over the paperwork in the hallway in considering a proposed settlement in the matter of Board of Commissioners v. Stabosz. **Attorney Alan Sirinek** asked Commissioner Haney if there was a way to expedite payment in this settlement. **Commissioner Haney** stated previously attorney's invoices would be paid in the same manner as utility bills, for example telephones, electric and water bills, they would be expedited and paid before actually being advertised and approved as a claim. He said at the beginning of this year professional services were not allowed to be expedited but that doesn't mean it cannot be allowed to be paid. **Auditor Stabosz** said that's not correct so he explained that the ordinance was reviewed at the beginning of this year, "Expedited claims must be annotated by ordinance, we have an ordinance that passed many years ago, I don't have it on me right now that says, as Commissioner Haney is indicating, things like utility bills or an attorney amount that is a monthly regular stipend can be paid in an expedited basis because an attorney is going to get it no matter what, Waggoner, Irwin and Sheely gets \$400 a month, \$450 a month from La Porte County, we write the check, they're going to get it, it can be expedited. As far as this potential settlement goes, and the potential for coming to terms on it, which it seems like we may have, I'd love to pay the amount and write a check tonight but the nature of the way that payments to Friedman and Associates were held back by my office is that I held those bills, the September, October, November bills, they were not paid obviously, they did not go to the Commissioners and were not listed on a claims docket, they need to be advertised, they need to be on the claims docket, the Commissioners need to approve them and then they can be paid so there's a statutory issue. I am more than happy to write an email to the State Board of Accounts regarding this issue if there's otherwise terms for a settlement and to the degree they've taken an interest in this issue, I don't expect them to waive statute or waive law, I'm certainly happy to write to the State Board of Accounts and ask if they would take Audit exception if as a means of settling between the Auditor and the Commissioners on this issue. They would take exception to my paying this promptly upon the approval of settlement." **Commissioner Haney** asked Auditor Stabosz how many days' notice for advertising the Commissioners' claims. **Auditor Stabosz** said he was not sure but the amount of these claims could get on the



docket, be advertised and on the next Commissioners' agenda which would be the first meeting in January. **Commissioner Haney** stated if there was a special meeting held to look at the Commissioner/Council Districts before the end of the year could this claim amount be added for approval at that meeting. **Auditor Stabosz** said he did not know. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** added due to this being 'litigation' and a settlement, could this fall under the ordinance as an expedited claim. **Auditor Stabosz** replied he believes the statutory protection is the Auditor is not supposed to be paying out anything until the Commissioners authorize it at one of their meetings. **Attorney Alan Sirinek** said the Council has been acting as an intermediary, Auditor Stabosz is the respondent and the Commissioners are the petitioners, Auditor Stabosz is unrepresented at this point so are the Council members who are acting as intermediaries truly representing him? If Auditor Stabosz gives authorization or consent to the Council to negotiate on his behalf would they even be comfortable doing that? **Auditor Stabosz** said he is acting on his own behalf to save the taxpayers money. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** stated the Commissioners are the clients yet they have to be the same ones to approve the expedited payment so this is just circular. **Council President Randy Novak** stated first, the Council gave permission to Council Attorney DiMartino to assist Auditor Stabosz in this matter; secondly, why can't the Commission do a favorable vote, just like the Council has done many times for certain projects, then the claim amount can be added to the docket later so at least action will be taken at tonight's meeting. **Attorney Friedman** started to make a suggestion then **Auditor Stabosz** said he, Attorney Friedman, should recuse himself because it is about him. **President Mrozinski** said he would hear Attorney Friedman's advice. **Attorney Shaw Friedman** suggested considering approval in principle, subject to the attorneys for both sides, Attorney Sirinek and Attorney DiMartino, agreeing on the final wording for the settlement agreement which is then presented to Auditor Stabosz and the Commission to sign. **Council President Randy Novak** said this needs to be agreed upon by the Commissioners and the Auditor soon, the Council members attending tonight will only do this one time so please fix it. **Commissioner Haney moved to approve the agreement and approved the claim amount to be on the docket for the Commissioners' meeting.** **Attorney Guy DiMartino** stated for the record that Auditor Tim Stabosz would reach out to the State Board of Accounts tomorrow to see if the payment could be expedited. **Auditor Stabosz** agreed so **Commissioner Haney included it in his motion.** **President Mrozinski** asked for the motion to be stated again. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve the agreement negotiated by Council members between the Commissioners and Auditor Stabosz which also included a voice vote motion of support for approval of the bills listed in the agreement that was negotiated by the Council and if it is able to be paid in an expedited fashion then so be it and if not then the amount owed will be on the January 5, 2022 Commissioners' claims docket.** Let the record show it is not the Council Finance Committee but Council President Randy Novak and Council Vice President Mark Yagelski that assisted as intermediaries. **Commissioner Matias seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

### Commissioner Comments

**Commissioner Haney** acknowledged Christopher Throgmorton, who was in the audience, for being recognized for his work by bringing a predator to justice. He went on to report the last two weeks have been busy for him. He attended business grand openings, Solid Waste meeting, and Parks/Rec board meeting. He quoted Thomas Paine, 'He who dares not offend cannot be honest.' Looking at the last year of 2021 there have been 236 business days of which he has spent 231 of them in the office, he missed 5 days this year but was able to attend a few meetings virtual. He said there is no substitute for being on the ground, being in county buildings, interacting directly with the public, employees, other elected officials and department heads. He spoke about Elon Musk building successful companies and one of his strategies is spending time **out** of the office instead of **in** the office. Joe said this does not mean via zoom but on the ground going in to buildings, finding and solving the issues that exist out and about. He said our buildings have not seen our Commissioners in years or decades. Doesn't matter if a Commissioner is a liaison or not to certain departments, the Commissioners are responsible for the buildings. Yes, our county is second largest in the state in size but not too large to visit the offices or departments. Commissioner Haney said he has heard different statements made this year, for example, 'I've never heard anything like that' or 'I've never seen anything like that.' He said if that is true then stop living out



of state 4 or 5 months out of the year while claiming you're in the office most days. Show up for work more than 2 to 3 dozen times a year as opposed to saying how much you can get done sitting in front of your home computer. He said he hears the employees but also stated finances come through the Council. He then quoted George Orwell, 'All tyrannies rule through fraud and force, once the fraud is exposed they must rely exclusively on force.' He then said, "Last Friday morning members of the Auditor's staff arrived at the Hiler building at approximately 7:50 in the morning. When they arrived they found a package leaning up against the Auditor office's door because the doors are locked there, you can't get in, you actually require a key for that outer door. This envelope was addressed, and I've seen it and it was shown earlier tonight, to the Auditor Tim Stabosz, Auditor of La Porte County, 555 Michigan Avenue, there's no postage on it, there's no return address. At the last Commissioner meeting Commissioner Mrozinski threatened both the Auditor and myself that he would quote 'take action' and he went on to say that he would do it as a man against us and it's kind of ironic because at the end of the last meeting Commissioner Matias spoke on 'people online hiding behind their keyboards.' Commissioner Mrozinski then, the day after this meeting and the day after threatening the Auditor, slinks into the Hiler building under the cover of darkness and leaves an anonymous package, **that** package, for the Auditor and then he promptly flees the state for his second home. I mean think about, a Commissioner sneaking into the building, at night, dropping off an anonymous package with a fake snake then hopping on a plane and running to his second home in Florida. This is the kind of preposterous thing that we've been talking about up here that happens in La Porte County government. These actions that are being displayed to talk about during the meetings, the things that have been exposed and continue to be exposed, corroborate all the statements that have been made throughout the year in which we talk about county employees, department heads and elected officials getting threatened, getting intimidated right here in La Porte County. This is a quintessential aspect of that. Now of course as you recall another example is earlier this year when I was threatened by the County Attorney that my office will be taken away, the retribution of course there is proportional to what can be wielded over someone's head. For myself, I'm here for the next 3 years no matter what but for the employee that could lose their job, lose their benefits and lose their insurance, all of that, that counts on this to live and pay their mortgage and to survive, that's something else completely and entirely different." Thomas Jefferson said, 'I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.' Enough is enough. He said to all employees, no matter who they are, that they are not alone, don't be afraid. "At the end of the day, these bullies puffing their chests are nothing but petty cowards. They talk big in public but they slink around under the cover of darkness when they decide to take action. They hate the truth and they hate the light both figuratively and literally and they count on your silence. Understand that silence can equate to consent, do not consent." He then wished everyone a very, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. "We'll be watching and next year we'll bring this to a conclusion. Thank you."

**Commissioner Matias** said she was not going to talk about tyranny or cowards or rubber snakes. Snake Gate or the Mystery of the snake in the Hiler Building, she said really it is all silly and she hoped county resources were not used or wasted for an investigation such as IT or law enforcement. She spoke about La Porte County Works! program and how important it is to highlight area businesses whether it is for the employer or citizens looking for job opportunities. Alexander Chemical Corporation, "In 1950, Alexander Maley founded the Alexander Chemical Company and in 1959, it became the Chemical Division of North American Car Corporation. Alexander Chemical grew its product line, and in 1985 opened their doors as a consolidated corporation, Cardinal Chemical Corporation. They are located at 7593 S. First Road in Kingsbury, Indiana. Alexander Chemical Corporation is a leader in the water purification industry, they produce industrial gasses and chlor-alkali products to major chemical and petroleum companies, pharmaceuticals, industrial users, and municipalities all across the Midwest. Alexander Chemical is also an industry leading supplier of industrial gasses to a wide array of industries such as the pulp paper, steel, and agricultural industries. Alexander continues to be a leader in the industry because they are proud of their tireless dedication to safety and their employee's education training. They have a transportation arm, Circle Transport, Inc., with an extensive fleet which allows them the opportunity to offer safe and dependable transportation of their products to their very

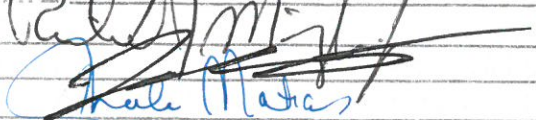


own customers. Their trucks are equipped with specialized equipment and unloading configurations to assure efficient and safe transport of products to their receiving sites. They are a privately held company with a total of 62 employees for both Alexander Chemical and Circle Transport, of which 38 are union positions, with an average wage of \$29.50 per hour. Alexander Chemical is proud to offer many different career pathways to those who want to build a career and a life with their company. They offer competitive wages, union benefits with a 401(K) with company matches, and competitive paid time off. For more information on ACC's markets, products, and services, please visit <https://www.alexanderchemical.com/>. To review the open positions at Alexander Chemical and Circle Transport, Inc. please go to <https://www.alexanderchemical.com/careers/>. Send your resume to [recruitment@alexchem.com](mailto:recruitment@alexchem.com)." Commissioner Matias reported on the positivity rate of 17.39 and 500 new cases just this month. This week we've seen 123 new cases which is the highest number of cases for one week so far this year for our county. There have been 13 deaths this month due to Covid. Today is December 15<sup>th</sup> so that is almost one death per day. Our county has 45% of the population vaccinated. Friday a press release will have information on testing sites. Currently we are at 18,343 public cases with 279 deaths in our county. Commissioner Matias reminded everyone it doesn't hurt to wear a mask. She said she does travel the county and listens to people talk about Covid. Why not talk about heart disease or diabetes? She was given a post from someone that shared Commissioner Haney's comments comparing Covid to the risk of 'falling out of bed.' She said it is not factual and after doing a bit of research on numbers she said, "If we expand our concern from local data for the last 21 months since Covid deaths were counted, 17,400 people have died in Indiana of Covid or Covid related issues." CDC website have 2017 stats of 14,445 Indiana residents died of heart disease, 13,000 died of cancer, 2,096 died from complications of diabetes. Her research showed approximately 450 people die annually from falling out of bed so the chance of dying from falling out of bed are one in 2 million. She said you can even die from a coconut falling on your head. She urged the people of La Porte County to be careful, to be safe and be smart. Wear a mask, get vaccinated and a booster, social distance and continue to wash/sanitize your hands. Take care of yourself and others. She wished all a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday. May the New Year be filled with the best of God's blessings.

**Commissioner Mrozinski** said he appreciated the fact they <sup>at</sup> yes, they do County business pretty much every day including evenings, weekends and holidays. They do it for the right reasons and not for a blown up ego and be a narcissist about things. Commissioner Mrozinski, "We do it for the right reasons because we love our County, we love our job. We do the best we can do to serve the people that elected us." He said Commissioner Matias shares the same view as he does in not thinking our County is a pit of filth or full of corruption. He said remember the reason for the season. Our next meeting will be January 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. and he looks forward to seeing everyone.

**President Mrozinski adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA  
DATE 5-2022

  
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ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ Auditor  
LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL





**LA PORTE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202  
La Porte, IN 46350-3400  
(219) 326-6808 ext. 2229

**Richard Mrozinski  
President**

**Joseph Haney  
Vice President**

**Sheila Matias  
Member**

December 15, 2021

Honorable Frank Mrvan  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1607 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Franklin Street Bascule Bridge

Dear Congressman Mrvan,

As you may be aware, La Porte County has an issue with the Franklin Street Bridge. The bridge, located in the northern most part of the County is unique in the County's inventory in that it is a bascule bridge (lift bridge) crossing Trail Creek and it connects the public to Lake Michigan.

For years the County has maintained this bascule bridge with local funding. Most recently the Commissioners and Council dedicated a significant amount of funds (\$1.5MM) annually for five years for maintenance. This bridge is required to be fully functional, or the bridge is required to remain open to allow for the use of Trail Creek by the US Coast Guard. Simply stated, La Porte County has no option regarding this asset.

Now time has come for our County to replace this asset. In 2017-2018 the County engages the services of an engineering team to develop a feasibility study including review existing conditions, provide maintenance alternative as well as to identify engineers' estimate of probable cost for bridge replacement.

Previously identified solutions and cost are listed below (in 2017 dollars):

Full Rehabilitation of Existing Bridge	\$45MM
New Fixed Bridge	\$68.4MM
New Trunnion Bascule Bridge	\$74.5MM
New Vertical Lift Bridge	\$80MM

To that end, the La Porte County Commissioners and Council respectfully requests federal financial support for engineering and design for a new bridge. We estimate that amount to be in the range of \$6 to 8 MM depending on the type of structure selected.

Subsequent to finalizing engineering and design, the County will again rely on your Office to facilitate construction funding.

If you or your staff have any questions regarding this request, please contact our office at 219-326-6808 ext 2229. We look forward to working with you on this important project in La Porte County.

Sincerely,

Rich Mrozinski

Joseph Haney

Sheila Matias