



LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

Sheila Matias
President

Richard Mrozinski
Vice President

Joseph Haney
Member

La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. County Complex Room 3 & via Zoom

President Sheila Matias called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. She asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Dick Reel, Founder of Pioneer Land at the fairgrounds.

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

Considered the agenda. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to add to the agenda a Resolution approving the issuance of bonds for the project at Highway 421 and I-94. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to accept the amended the agenda. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered approval of February 2, 2022 minutes. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Deputy Auditor Vaughn Galloway read the Claims with Payroll ending 2/11/2022 - \$1,307,877.56 and Operating Expense Claims - \$4,502,586.28. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment

Randall Veatch, 4177 W. Schultz Road, La Porte, commented on what has been happening on the property behind his house since June 2015, the hauling and selling of sand. In July of 2021, a neighborhood-wide decision was made to quit paying attorney fees to battle the elected and appointed. He stated he would continue to attend the meetings and voice his concerns which he has done. Excavating sand from the surface is sand mining and is not allowed in a residential neighborhood. He would like the operation behind his property to stop, he deserves it after six years.

Stephen Nightingale, via Zoom, 998 E. 1000 N., La Porte, his statement would take 4 minutes and 45 seconds to read, it would publicly document federal, state and local laws and regulations that would make Mr. Versaw's sand mining operation on land adjacent to his own, illegal. He filed a complaint on January 9th with the office of the Inspector General of the EPA.

Chris Klein, 9522 N. 125 E., La Porte, he owns 40 acres one property over from the Versaw property on 1000 N. Stated his family moved out to the rural area of our county where it is generally quiet but when the sand mining started on 1000 N. dump trucks are on the roads in front of his house, silica is in the air from the sand. He asked if anyone from the County or affiliated with the County is getting sand from this property. Is the County tied to these people? Has the County purchased any sand from either one of these sand locations?

Dr. Vidya Kora, commented on rumors circulating on social media on the sale of the County Home. The home was closed to minimal use, lack of arch funding from the state and the rooms did not have attached bathrooms. Many attempts were made to repurpose the home from both sides of the political parties, Democrats and Republicans. Twice funding was applied for from the Indiana Housing Development Authority for a tax credit project to create a mixed-use building for veterans, seniors and the disabled. The cost was close to ten million dollars to rehab the building and bring it up to

ORIGINAL

code. A third attempt was suggested to reapply for the tax credit but the Council voiced their concerns to get the building back on the tax rolls. Only a few potential buyers were interested but they wanted the 100+ acres surrounding the building to be included in the sale. There was no written offer for the County Home and the 5 acres surrounding it. Appraisals were done over the years. A public auction was conducted which went by state rules and it was sold. Only one entity bid at the auction.

Joie Winski, Treasurer, stated the County tried to repurpose the property for several years through a grant application but was it unsuccessful. A mental health facility was suggested but the Council wanted the home to go back on the tax rolls and urged the Commission to sell it. There is a process through the state that requires specific rules and regulations to dispose of property in Indiana and one is to have two appraisals. One was valued at \$60,000 and another was at \$110,000 which included the 5.39 acres. The auction was held after the proper advertising was done for the sale. Three prospects that were interested were able to tour the property. Two were from out of state and one was from Porter County. The auction was held at the complex in room 3 but no one showed up until a bidder walked in the door and offered \$50,000 for the home. There were never any written agreements prior to the auction to purchase this property. The building was in rough shape and required many improvements.

Allen Stevens, Republican Chair, made statements from the back of the room about time limit under Public Comment. **President Matias** said Treasurer Winski is a department head, an elected official, and she is allowed to answer a question. **Allen** went on to say Dr. Kora is a member of the public and spoke under Public Comment, going over the allotted 3 minutes. He stated there is a timer and the rules should be enforced uniformly. He said Dr. Kora wants to talk about facts and the Republican Party was not going to bring the subject up or discuss the sale of the County Home until it went on the market for \$895,000 when the County sold it for only \$50,000. He stated the La Porte County Republican Party would be more than happy to present the facts and truth with the sale of the County Home, it was botched, the wrong property address on Zigler Road was used in the sale notice which was found at the back of the newspaper. No other advertising was done, no signage was put out front which could have led to more bidders. "Lack of due diligence by the Commissioners during the botched sale led to 2.5 acres of County property south of the County Home being land-locked. So right now, there's 2.5 acres, behind the County Home property that was sold, that's wedged between the County Home property and the lake back there and its completely worthless to the County at this point." **President Matias** asked Attorney Friedman to comment on the asking price versus the sale/bid price. **Attorney Friedman** replied he pulled the file for review on the sale of the County Home from two years ago. A press release was issued by then Auditor Joie Winski on February 25, 2020 reporting on the outcome of the public auction held the day before for the County. It was done by the books and in full compliance of the law. There is an elaborate legal process for buying or selling county property and the Commissioners utilized property loss specialist Alex Bruggenschmidt of Zionsville, on this transaction. Legal ads were placed in both the Herald-Argus and NewsDispatch on February 12 and 19, 2020. Both Commission and Council passed Resolutions authorizing the sale at different public meetings, there was nothing secret, botched or sinister done with the sale. Facilities Director Larry Levendowski took 6 prospected buyers through the building in the 2 months leading up to the auction. Mr. Bruggenschmidt recommended a minimum bid of \$50,000, one bidder showed up, J&B West Properties. Attorney Friedman asked before any social media postings or comments are done to please check with those that have the records. **Commissioner Mrozinski** stated a grant was applied for but not approved to help update the building. When calls came in to his office to tour the facility, he would direct them to Building Maintenance but after seeing asbestos and lead paint in the building they decided against it. He had members from the VA, VFW, and Jackie Walorski's office tour the facility in hopes that it could be used for veterans. No written offers ever came in to the Commissioners' office or the Auditor's office.

Elizabeth Bergeron, 1018 Providence Street, Michigan City, she spoke on the right to speak during public comment. She stated when issues are brought to the attention of the Commission they are forgotten and ignored. The public speakers are often met with rudeness, underhanded comments, blatant contempt or discuss or reminders that they are not the Commissioners. They are told these are business meetings. Elizabeth stated Commissioners are elected officials, elected by the people of the County and therefore work for the people. She does not see any Commissioners at any community events, except Commissioner Haney, unless it is a large political donor. Promises are made while campaigning then forgotten once elected and in office. The tax payers are the bosses to the Commissioners. Comments should be encouraged and embraced.

April Daly, 1707 N. 675 W., La Porte, she has seen nothing but transparency while attending the Commission meetings. April then inquired about the final rule on ARPA funds that goes into effect April of 2022. For example, in Porter County

ORIGINAL

the Auditor is responsible for the compliance and training for the funds and she wondered if that would happen in our County, is our Auditor going to be in charge of the reporting, compliance and training of the ARPA funds? **President Matias** stated the Auditor is not here so we will get that information for April. **Commissioner Haney** said Baker Tilly was hired to help with the compliance. **Attorney Friedman** replied yes, there are tight rules that need to be followed and both Commission and Council are aware of the allocations. **President Matias** said there has been a lot of press lately pertaining to the Porter County Auditor having public sessions or reporting back to the public how the ARP funds are being used then **Attorney Friedman** agreed that some meetings in Porter County were held privately but that has not happened here in La Porte County. Two 'listening session' workshops were held for the public and employees.

Pat Meaney, 4078 W. Schultz Road, La Porte, spoke in support of the Commission President as the MS4 permit holder. He encouraged the Commission to do a 'top-down' review of the permits that were issued from the previous MS4 Coordinator for both sites at 400 West and 1000 North. He said it probably only covered storm water. Now it is a large-scale movement of sand. "Modern day folks who just want to blow the law off." There are joint zoning ordinances and codes that need to be followed by everyone. Now a third operation, another business selling sand, is working on Schultz Road, Ray Selke. The County has an obligation when the Plan Commission gives an individual a permit to build something and now it is almost 8 years since a 2-year permit for a pond was issued and still there is no pond on 4 acres, it is a hole in the ground 20 feet deep, still selling sand. Who in the County oversees what he is doing on his 22 acres? He encouraged the Commission to find an independent individual to look into the issuing of the permits for both sites on 400 West and 1000 North. He believes both attorneys Doug Biege and Shaw Friedman are bias on this subject. He does support the Commissioners' efforts on this agenda item.

Stephen Nightingale, via Zoom, he requested 4 minutes and 45 seconds to continue his statement about the laws with MS4. He read his email in to the record.

Andrew Voeltz, via Zoom, stated the individuals that made the statements that the activity at the two locations is considered 'sand mining' is completely inaccurate. He requested the neighbors on 1000 N. to address where their materials to build their foundations came from, it came from the address in question on 1000 N. Specific definitions and descriptions of what exactly is sand mining needs to be addressed. Social media posts and other areas have statements being made that this is industrial work being done and it is completely false. Andrew stated he does represent both parties and it is not by coincidence, it is because he understands the law. These are not industrial businesses like Ozinga or Satoski in south county. There is no screening, no secondary process being done on these two sites. His client on 1000 N. has 3 trucks and the one on 400 W. sub-contracts to other entities. If Versaw and D&M are going to be targeted, why not Pavey on 400, City Sand on 421, the barrow pit on 100 N.? Why is it only these two individuals? Both sites use a street sweeper and water truck to keep the area clean. He stated both of these sites are not industrialized sand mining operations. He questioned who would be the enforcer on item 10 'a' and would IDEM no longer be involved?

Randall Veatch, stated June, 2015. Constant bulldozers, excavators, trucks backing up, truck beds constantly slamming. The sand is not washed because it doesn't need to be, that's what makes the property so valuable. Why are the rest of us all wrong? They don't belong there and I don't want them there.

Todd Sims, via Zoom, 9444 N. 125 E., La Porte, he echoed the mining going on near his home on 1000 N. He said he sees trucks coming out of that location, an excavator on the site. When looking at an aerial view at the property you can see a gigantic hole. He voiced his concerns for property value after the work is done and an EPA issue as well.

Dan Sales, 10152 N. Halstead Drive, La Porte, stated he lives near the property on 1000 N. He said the definition of mining is the extraction of minerals so if you're taking minerals out of the ground and transporting them somewhere so that's one point. The County must have a process that needs to be followed and Mr. Versaw had a way of side-stepping this by going the MS4 approach but early on, he intended to follow the process because he put up a sign or notice on the property that this site was going to be presented to the board for approval, a variance or a special permit. A tower for internet service was done several years ago in his subdivision and the rules were followed including displaying a visible sign and notifying all of the adjacent residents. The County should impose the same rules for everyone. It may not be large-scale mining or a mine underground but it is still mining.

Chris Klein, he addressed Mr. Voeltz by saying his two clients are not victims. The neighbors that live near the site on 1000 N. are the victims, when they stand on the side of the road with their sons or daughters while dump trucks fly pass

them, on the county roads that were just paved with tax dollars, there are no weight restrictions on these roads. If Mr. Versaw has 3 trucks and makes 20 runs a day then that is 60 runs pass their houses on 1000 N. and 125 E. Sand is being taken out of a pit, out of the ground, then that is mining. Chris said he took the time away from his family to inform the Commissioners of the problem in his neighborhood. There was no dedicated route made for the transporting of the sand. There have been multiple car accidents on that hill, 2 people have died in the last 5-6 years. Is Mr. Voeltz's clients going to have a stop light installed? How about a sign displaying dump trucks entering/exiting? Back roads are being taken, sneaking around. Safety aspect of it needs to be looked at, the hill, traffic, which way are they allowed to travel, weight restrictions, there are multiple issues that are wrong about this and it needs to be investigated.

Linda Jakubs, 7272 E. 1000 N., New Carlisle, via Zoom, along with her husband Bill Wigoda, live on 1000 N. She corrected Counsel Voeltz that a home owner cannot do what he/she wants to do with their property just because they own it. She is an attorney, stated she was impressed with her fellow neighbors that have come out and stated what a wonderful job of paving that was done on their road however it is now 'groaning' due to the dump truck traffic that has been on it as early as 7am when she is on her way to work coming out of Danny Versaw's property. She said to Attorney Voeltz that his client, Mr. Versaw, is operating a sand mining operation and 'even in a snow storm the plumes of silica are bloaring the sky.' She hopes the Commission will take this matter serious and look at what Mr. Versaw has been permitted to do.

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

Tony Rodriguez, OCED, distributed his 2021 report that shared the positive outcomes of progress in the County. The team of Economic Development for our County has been working hard to bring new businesses to our area. He spoke about the Broadband Task Force then recognized all the members. He thanked all of them and stated the work done would not have happened without their efforts. **President Matias** thanked Farm Bureau and REMC who are big participants as well. Tony stated the Business and Retention side of his office is led by Mike Seitz. Matt Reardon and Viviana Plaza are two key team members as well for the La Porte County Office of Community and Economic Development. Work was done on a housing study and completed in July 2021. The county website has been updated and thanks was given to the Super User group. Annual report will be available online. **Mike Seitz**, Business and Retention Program Manager, distributed a handout which included a survey and a follow-up email to a current business as an example of a visitation follow-up.

Requests

Considered permission to pay 60 unused sick days to Sharon Gralik in the Clerk's office who is retiring. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.** Consider permission to approach the Council to spend funds to purchase a new computer - Heather Stevens, Clerk of the Circuit Court. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission for road closure during La Porte County Family YMCA's 42nd annual Triathlon on June 11, 2022 - Jessica Durham, Director. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to approach the Council for additional appropriation of \$7,875 for heating unit in a new restroom at Bluhm Park - Jeremy Sobbecki, Parks Superintendent. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to approach the Council for additional appropriation to repair sirens. **Rob Sabie**, EMA, stated two sirens were struck by lightning last year, one in Fish Lake and one in Michigan City. He reported there is a siren pole that needs to be relocated at the Springfield Fire Department. He has bids for the repairs. Money was encumbered from last year to help with the repairs however it is not enough. The total for repairs and relocation is \$54,297 minus the encumbered money, \$8,297.19 leaves a balance of about \$46,000. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Old Business

Considered authorizing Commission President as MS4 permit holder to request IDEM issue stays of disputed MS4 permits at Versaw location on 1000 North and D&M location on 400 West pending top-down review of both permits by SWCD staff and/or by independent environmental consultant to determine compliance with local zoning and environmental requirements as part of permit review. **President Matias** stated the office staff of MS4 has been

decimated due to the retirement of the coordinator and the part-time employee decided to do something else and is not returning. This is an opportunity to reorganize this office. The Soil and Water Conservation office has stepped-up as interim until a decision is made for the department. The merging of the two offices is one possibility. **President Matias** said there two areas in question and to her, they both look like sand mining operations. Maybe not in the legal sense but still it looks like sand mining. She was out at the sites and saw the trucks. She asked Attorney Friedman to explain the legalities and what they are attempting to do. **Attorney Friedman** replied now that the Soil and Water Conservation staff are taking over the permitting responsibility, it is a perfect time to allow a top-down review of the disputed MS4 permits at both locations, 400 W. and 1000 N. If either of the developers can convince IDEM that there is a basis for continued operation then that would be up to IDEM. The request at this meeting is authority by fellow Commissioners as per statute, as the MS4 permit holder, President of the Commission, to issue stays at both locations pending the review of either the Soil and Water Conservation staff or an independent consultant. **Commissioner Haney** said he has visited the 400 W. location, both with the owner and the neighbors, he has spent time with the former MS4 Coordinator, the Building Commissioner, Plan Commission, he spoke to various State agencies as well trying to understand all of the particulars and a lot of the contention seems to be about the definition of 'sand mining' as it relates to permits and federal regulations, IDEM and EPA. Digging stuff out of the ground is considered mining at times or if there is a secondary process such as screening or washing it then it is said to be mining. Commissioner Haney said he does agree that there is a good team with the Soil and Water Conservation staff and having an independent review of the permits is probably the right way to go. He does have a concern with asking IDEM to put a 'stay' on the operations because we would have to give them justification other than 'we are reviewing the permit.' He spoke with the State and legal team at IDEM and he would not like to see any further animosity or consternation come between the state and our local group. He would not like to see our MS4 program alienated and losing relationships with the State and going totally on our own. There is also the liability of requesting a 'stay' without giving something that we have or can show specifically why it is being requested other than because we want a review of the permits. IDEM's approval or at least 99.9% of their approvals are based on the local MS4 office already issuing the permit, it is pretty much cut and dry. If the local MS4 office pulls the permit then the IDEM approval ceases to exist. **Commissioner Haney then moved to hire an independent consultant to review and determine compliance of MS4 permits relating to local zoning and environmental requirements where alleged sand mining is occurring.** **Attorney Friedman** addressed Commissioner Haney's concerns from a legal standpoint. The 'stays' are not recommended lightly, in 2019 a 'stay' was gained at 400 W. and again in 2020 by petitioning an IDEM administrative law judge. The case can be made to IDEM, due to the Commission President as the permit holder, that a review is being requested. The permits in question were sent down to IDEM on the day of receipt by the former MS4 Coordinator. **Attorney Friedman** stated it would be beneficial to have IDEM staff fully review the sufficiency of both permits. Both operations are occurring only as a result of the MS4 permit. One testimony heard was that Mr. Versaw attempted to come in the front door and be fully honest about his intentions to operate a sand mining operation but when that was tabled by the BZA, he then took advantage of a loop-hole but it is up to the Commission, as the regulators, not to allow a loop-hole that you can literally drive a truck through it. The 400 West's location permit, issued by MS4, is being used as a 5-year safe harbor to conduct any kind of land contouring on site. It would be appropriate to have IDEM, only upon request, review these permits and then provide both neighborhoods a 'cooling off' period, a 'quiet time,' while the review occurs. "I would suggest that the damage is phenomenal to the developers, if they can make the case that they're entitled to the continued 5-year, no questions asked permit, and that's really what the MS4 is and that's the problem, it's a 5-year safe harbor to conduct any kind of land contouring under the rubric of stormwater prevention." The MS4 permit is a way to evade the normal zoning and permitting that is usually done. **President Matias** stated the Soil and Water staff are currently going through all paperwork and it appears that there are items in the permit that are not being followed, such as weekly reports, inspection reports, therefore the Commission is not doing their due diligence by maintaining the permits as the state law requires. A 'stay' is critical to ensure we are doing the job correctly. **Commissioner Mrozinski** said this has gone on for a long time. The overweight trucks on the roads are reported to the Sheriff's office. He has listened to the neighbors on 1000 N. about the banging of truck beds at 6:30 in the morning. He also listened to Attorney Voeltz who has valid points and he does agree with Commissioner Haney on the need for a 'top-down' review of both sites. He stated if we shut the businesses down then the Commission is assuming they are operating wrongfully and that should be a decision made by MS4 or IDEM, preferably by IDEM. A review needs to be done now. **President Matias** asked Commissioner Haney if his motion is different then what is on the agenda and asked him to repeat his motion. **Commissioner Haney motioned to hire an independent consultant to review and determine compliance of MS4 permits in relation to local zoning and environmental requirements where alleged sand mining is occurring and he added working with MS4/Soil and Water Conservation.** He agrees an independent source needs to come in and do the review. **President Matias** stated there are two separate items on the agenda, authorizing the Commission President as the MS4 permit holder to request 'stays' at both sites until reviews are done on the current permits that were

issued. **She asked if his motion includes this authorization and he replied it does not.** **Commissioner Haney** said there have been 2 'stays' issued before and the business was allowed to start back up so unless there is additional information to be had then he believes this could potentially harm the County in doing this, unless there is something different now to be added then he would not vote for the authorization. If the review comes back from MS4 to pull the permit then IDEM would cease to exist. Only then he would agree to the authorization of the Commission President requesting a 'stay.' He spoke to the state and he does not believe this would be in our best interest right now to order a stay prior to the permit being reviewed. **Attorney Friedman** said one 'stay' was local and issued by the BZA and the 2nd one by IDEM. The neighbors were advised to file an appeal in a timely fashion of the MS4 permit but for various reasons they chose not to file one. **President Matias** stated her concerns for the permits to continue if not all requirements are met. **Commissioner Haney** said this is the first time he is hearing anything about the requirements not being fulfilled or complied with by the operators and if this is found out to be true then MS4 can revoke the permits, we would not have to have the state do anything. He said he does not understand what President Matias is saying. **President Matias** said she is the MS4 permit holder as the President of the Commission and was hoping to get support from her 2 fellow Commissioners or authorization to order 'stays' on the two permits until they are reviewed. **Attorney Friedman** said it would be helpful if the Commission would authorize their President as the permit holder to seek a 'stay' if she felt it warranted based on lack of sufficient information to support the permit. **Commissioner Haney** replied if there is not additional information then no, he would not agree to the authorization. He said if there is a violation of the current permit then MS4 can pull it. **Commissioner Mrozinski** said to be clear, who would hire the consultant? RFQ will be put out? **Attorney Friedman** said no RFQ is required. **Commissioner Mrozinski** agreed we need to hire an outside consultant and we need our MS4 involved as well. Once the review is completed and if it is determined that certain requirements are not being fulfilled then the permit can be pulled. **Attorney Friedman** asked for clarification from Commissioner Mrozinski if his motion included authorization for the President to order a 'stay' if need be. **Commissioner Haney** said no, he does not agree to that authorization. **Commissioner Mrozinski seconded the motion by Commissioner Haney by agreeing to hire the outside consultant.** It was then stated recognizing the existing authority by the President of the Commission as the MS4 permit holder. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered authorization by County Engineer requesting execution of contract with Woodruff & Sons for drainage repair project for Meadowview Estates and Consider authorizing Engineer to request additional \$433,830.25 beyond initial appropriation by Council of \$700,000.00 to pay Woodruff's winning bid of \$1,043,497.88 plus remaining costs for extension and construction inspection. **Commissioner Haney motioned to send this request on to the Council.** **Commissioner Mrozinski** asked if once this project is done, will the roads be repaved, is that amount figured in to the bid. He stated an amount of \$600,000 may be needed additionally for this paving and cannot come from the annual paving budget. **Commissioner Haney** stated he thought it was everything except the top layer or final coating that needed funding. **Mitch Bishop**, Planner, via Zoom, said 2 years ago an estimate from Christopher Burke engineering had in the plans the base, intermediate, surface layers of asphalt plus the curb and gutter are in bad shape on the south side of the road, they will need to be replaced and 2 years ago it was about \$600,000 to do the repairs. If it is only the surface then it might be around \$75,000 - \$90,000. **Jerry Sullivan**, Engineer, via Zoom, the paving was not included in the bid from Woodruff & Sons and the cost would be absorbed from the County Highway Department, he thought the cost may be around \$250,000 and mostly on Nowak Avenue and some of the crossings on 75 West. This would be subject to approval by the Council for the additional amount. **Duane Werner**, Highway Superintendent, via Zoom, said originally talk was about the damage to the roads from the water in this subdivision. His understanding was that his department would only go in and mill out then fill in the damaged roads which would be about \$100,000. Once you get into major construction where you're disturbing the main base and underlaying of the roads, total reconstruction with concrete, curb and gutter will become a cost of close to \$600,000 which should not be taken from the annual paving budget. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to Table this request.** **Commissioner Haney** asked where the difference is between the \$600,000 and \$250,000. **Jay Sullivan** said he was not figuring in a full depth reconstruction of the roads plus concrete and manholes. **President Matias** stepped down and seconded the request to table. **Motion carried 2-1.** **Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

New Business

Considered NICTD's offer to purchase 1,100 sq. foot county parcel needed for South Shore railroad double-track project right of way. Parcel ID 46-01-31-238-021.000-022 on W. 10th Street in Michigan City. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve.** **Commissioner Haney seconded.** **Motion carried 3-0.**

ORIGINAL

Considered appointment of April Daly to the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. President Matias stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

Considered permission for Michiana Insurance to be onsite for employee insurance enrollment for EMC Life Insurance Company transitioning from Grange Life. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to host annual Wellness Days April 26th, 27th and 28th - Barb Mossman, HR. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to host annual Red Cross Blood Drive June 10th - Barb Mossman, HR. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Received report requested by Commission President from Financial Advisor Karl Cender on viable alternatives for paying salary increases to public employees other than increasing the current local income tax (LIT). Presentation will be available on our website.

Considered resolution approving the issuance of TIF bonds for the project at I-94/U.S. 421 for water and sewer infrastructure improvements. **Matt Reardon, RDC**, gave an introduction on the project and **Lisa Lee, Ice Miller**, finished up the presentation. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve the resolution. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried. ***Resolution 2022-2**

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Haney followed up on the public LIT tax talk that has been going on. He would like to see additional increase for the first responders moving forward and if a public safety LIT is the only way to accomplish this then he hopes it is done as minimally as possible to accomplish the needed raises. He attended an insurance meeting and talk was about a possible employee clinic which would be strictly 100% voluntary. Earlier he was on a Zoom meeting with the National Weather Service where we could possibly get anywhere from 6-12 inches of snow. He quoted Martin Luther King, Jr., "Stand up for justice, stand up for truth and God will be at your side forever."

Commissioner Mrozinski said they continue to have meetings with Purdue representatives to resolve differences between the extension board and the 4-H council. He had a long conversation with Jose Diaz, the representative from Senator Todd Young's office, about veterans' issues and the Franklin Street draw bridge. He added that Congresswoman Jackie Walorski's office is aware of the situation as well. He thanked the committee that has met every week while the Michigan City courthouse was under construction, Joie Winski, Darlene Hale and Larry Levendowski were all key to the project including Randy Novak and Rich himself. He also stated all 3 Commissioners were on the Zoom call with the National Weather Service and the Highway Department, Sheriff's Department including the garage, and Building Maintenance will all get a workout if the amount of snow predicted arrives to our County. Rich welcomed April Daly to the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission.

Commissioner Matias shared a La Porte County Works! area business with Securall. A & A Sheet Metal Products - Securall was founded in 1964 as a manufacturer of high-quality safety products. The company is a 3rd generation family-owned company with a proud history of longevity for its valued employees. Their motto is 'We do not offer jobs but careers.' Located at 5122 N State Road 39, La Porte. A & A Sheet Metal Products is the manufacturer of the Securall brand of storage products including containers used for flammable, corrosive, industrial, and pesticide storage as well as containers for paint, laboratory and hazardous waste, oxygen gas cylinder storage equipment, and various custom applications. The company additionally manufactures tornado shelters, explosive storage magazines, & commercial or tornado-rated doors. Their customers include NASA, Space X, Microsoft, Hershey, Intel, Disney, and all branches of the military service, among many others. A & A Sheet Metal Products is committed to quality which is reflected in all workmanship and products. The A & A-Securall team maintains knowledge and understanding of the latest codes and regulations, which dictate the use and build design of safety storage products. Their products are manufactured using the highest quality materials, including high grade steel and commercial quality hardware. Every product is designed with a focus on detail. The company has a total of 80 employees with a wide salary range. The company offers a 99% employer-funded health care coverage, supplemental eye and dental coverage, and optional life insurance. The company

has approximately 20 current open positions. Entry level positions have a starting pay of \$17. Persons with experience in vocational positions such as welders, material handlers, CNC machine operators, etc. may apply at a higher starting wage depending on experience level and position. On-the-job training is available. For further information for employment, please contact Human Resources at #219-326-7890 and this will be on our County website. President Matias finished by speaking on public comment, saying the citizens should be allowed to speak. She encouraged public comments and for the people watching the meetings to participate.

President Sheila Matias adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 3-2-2022

Sheila Matias

ATTEST:

Richard W. Mojzisch
Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL