



LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Sheila Matias
President

Richard Mrozinski
Vice President

Joseph Haney
Member

La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. County Complex Room 3 & via Zoom

President Sheila Matias called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Auditor Tim Stabosz 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 Haney** motioned to accept the agenda. **Commissioner Mrozinski** added one item under **New Business** as 11 'f' for introduction and review only, a resolution initiating action for removal of La Porte County Auditor Timothy Stabosz from public office pursuant to Indiana Code section 36-2-8.7 then motioned to accept the amended agenda. **Auditor Stabosz** asked for the code to be repeated. **Commissioner Haney** did not second the amended agenda. **President Matias** stepped down and seconded. **Commissioner Haney - Nay. Auditor Stabosz** took a roll vote: **Commissioner Mrozinski - Aye; Commissioner Haney - Nay; Commissioner Matias - Aye. Motion carried 2-1.**

Considered approval of April 6, 2022 minutes. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Auditor Tim Stabosz read the Claims with Payroll ending 4/8/2022 - \$1,263,937.88 and Operating Expense Claims - \$4,337,338.96. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

President Matias, please keep comments germane, civil and respectful.

Public Comment

Sherry Banic, 4551 S. 75 W., La Porte, concerned about the drainage in Meadowview Estates flowing down to her home which is the first homesite on the other side of the creek. Inquired as to the workshop that will be held, when and what time. Sump pumps are currently not being used in the Meadowview subdivision so she questioned why the project is still moving forward now.

Allen Stevens, President of the La Porte County Republican Party, listened to news this week on the radio, heard Commissioner Mrozinski questioned Auditor Stabosz, "Yeah, we all know there was a mistake in the office and I think he owns up for it but there was a mistake that slipped through multiple levels, multiple cracks, that being said Commissioner Mrozinski is questioning the amount of time that Auditor Stabosz is spending in the office, I mean we all, we all sat here for 10 minutes and witnessed the clown show going on with the audio/video so we could accommodate him from his home in Florida, it's disgraceful to sit and listen to it, it's disgraceful to sit and listen to Rich question anybody's time in the office when him and his wife have moved to Florida, so I would ah, you know, there's several people wearing Hawaiian shirts here tonight and that's in honor of Rich's move to Florida, we wish him the best of luck down there."

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

Barb Huston, E-911 Director, thanked everyone that participated during last week's Dispatchers' week. Overwhelming response from departments and the public. It was an amazing week and thank you for remembering the 'Hero behind the Headset.'

Joie Winski, Treasurer, **Tim Stabosz**, Auditor, and **Mike Schultz**, Assessor, "We, the three of us together, represent the financial arm of the La Porte County Government," said **Joie Winski**. "Everyone has heard about the mistake that was made so I wanted to read first of all a release that was released today to the media and then I want to go further and explain kind of a little bit about the process." She said no one was being blamed, then read into the record the press release, "Due to a mistake in the calculation of the 2021 payable 2022 tax bills, the La Porte County Auditor will be recalculating bills in the coming weeks. The error was a miscalculation of deductions, because the issue was widespread, we believe the overall rate has been affected. The La Porte County

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Government has been working in a coordinated effort along with the State of Indiana to resolve this issue as quickly and efficiently as possible, new tax bills will be sent out to all the tax payers in the next several weeks. We anticipate the end of May, first part of June. We encourage all taxpayers to pay the current installment of the spring bill that you have already received prior to the May 10th deadline. This is an evolving issue and we will continue to issue statements as more information is available.” Treasurer Winski stated the Department of Local Government Finance, DLGF, has been contacted, this is the arm of state government that controls the budget and the financial part of county government along with state government. State Auditor has been in contact with the county as well. Three meetings have taken place with the DLGF so far and more to come to resolve the issue. Tax bills were mailed on Friday, April 8th, by vendor L&D Mail Masters out of New Albany, Indiana. By Sunday night, April 10th, inquiries were coming in as to the increase on the tax bills. Monday morning the Assessor, Auditor and Treasurer had multiple calls coming in to their offices. Tuesday morning Commissioner Matias called a meeting of the Treasurer, Assessor and Auditor to discuss and understand why this happened. The taxing process begins with the Assessor who assesses all property and assigns value to each parcel. The values are sent to the Auditor who then applies all qualified exemptions, deductions and calculates the taxes. The Treasurer then receives the information from the Auditor to print and mail the bills to the taxpayers. The process is completed when the Treasurer collects and posts the payments. This problem happened in the Auditor’s office which the Auditor himself has admitted it was his responsibility and happened while in the process of certifying the net assessed values, also known as CNAVs, a crucial step was missed that should have updated all the properties with Homestead Deductions to the new values. This must be done before tax rates can be set and since this step was missed, the DLGF, was given the wrong information which resulted in incorrect tax rates and miscalculations. Because of an error in the application of the Homestead and Supplemental Homestead deductions, the department is asking the County Auditor to recertify the net assessed values for each taxing unit in the county. This process will then allow the department to recertify the rates of all local governments or units as well as to amend the DLGF budget order, which is what we operate from, this will also provide the county the opportunity to resubmit their abstract to the Indiana State Auditor’s office and reissue corrected tax bills. Local units should be prepared to receive a new 1782 notice, a notice that every government entity in the county receives that proposes the revenue, levy and the budget for the coming year for the county and each taxing unit. We do not have a certified budget to work off of right now. Approximately \$100,000 will be spent on vendor fees and postage to correct the error. Taxpayers with mortgages should contact the lender to see what impact possibly could be with their escrow. After paying the spring installment, if it is determined that too much was paid on a parcel after corrections are made then a surplus will be created on the account. If after the fall installments are paid and there is still a surplus on the account then a letter will be sent out to the property owner requiring a certified statement that they are the true owner of the property and have a right to collect the surplus on the parcel. The Auditor and Treasurer will then send a check to the property owner. **Auditor Stabosz** clarified they are not expecting a lot of surplus due to rectifying new tax bills soon so by time the fall installment is made the amounts should be correct. **Treasurer Winski**, it will be in the form of a credit on the fall bill. **Assessor Mike Schultz**, if a \$500 payment is made, for example, then after the new bill comes out showing \$487 was due it will show that a \$500 payment was made. If, after the new bills come out and it reflects \$487 is due for each installment, both spring and fall will still show the \$487 amount. After crediting the \$500 payment, it will show the amount applied to the installments. **Treasurer Winski**, taxes should be paid regardless of the error right now because the county operates on the monies collected from the taxes. We are at the beginning of the tax cycle but at the end of the first 6 months of our settlement payments. Nine years ago, the county had to borrow money from different accounts to fund the daily operations of county government. Cities, towns, townships, libraries, schools, police departments, etc. benefit from the taxes collected. Taxing entities can borrow from Indiana Bond Bank or can request a ‘draw’ from the county but in order to do a ‘draw’ a hefty amount of taxes need to be collected prior to that in order to have the funds being requested. Auditor and Treasurer work together to disburse the advanced request. The Indiana Bond Bank charges an interest that the county could be liable for because the error made that set this into motion was not the fault of the entities requesting the ‘draw.’ About 11 million dollars has been collected so far which is low because normally it is between 75-90 million dollars between the April and May timeframe. May 10th is the statutory deadline for paying spring taxes. During Covid there was a ‘one-time’ extension to June 20th (?). DLGF stated penalties will be added this time, no extension, however I.C. 6-1-1-15-12 allows the county to remove penalties for an ‘objective error’ only. Previous taxes cannot be removed. There will be a date, yet to be determined, across the top of the new tax bills stating if you pay the taxes by the deadline, the penalties will be removed. After money is collected then it goes to the Auditor for settlement. **Auditor Stabosz** encouraged people to pay the incorrect tax bill because preliminary statistics shows the Homesteaders’ typical bill is only off by perhaps 2-4% from what the corrected bill, not in all cases, but in many cases by a small amount, in fact some of the bills may actually be right because they may be Capped at paying the 1% gross assessed value, they’re capped, they’re hitting their property tax cap, their taxes may not change at all because they’re paying 1% of the gross assessed value. The Assessor’s assessed values are completely correct. The point is if they pay that incorrect amount, and it goes up or down by whatever amount, if they in good faith pay the spring and fall installments, the Council may decide to allow no penalties to be added to the taxes. **Treasurer Winski**, the tax rate for every entity will have to be recalculated. The budgets may have to be redone as well but she is hoping it won’t go that far. **Commissioner Haney**, edification for the homeowners, every year his property taxes have gone up no matter where he has lived. “There is, there’s some years when, you know, if it just goes up by a smaller amount, you know, your escrow doesn’t change at all and from what I’m hearing and from what I’m seeing, you know, if you’re talking about a deviation of about \$20 roughly, plus or minus for most homeowners and some did kind of fall outside of that but for most homeowners a deviation of about \$20, you know in either direction so we’re talking about they’re billing incorrect for the vast majority of homeowners it’s going to be you know, a \$20 discrepancy, plus or minus, you know,…” **Treasurer Winski**, ‘Hopefully.’ **Commissioner Haney**, “...hopefully, it should be, hopefully, right, so it’s not a huge amount which for most

homeowners with most of their mortgages may not even affect their escrow at all because it's within that buffer level from year to year that's set, there's a maximum amount and we won't get into all that but..." **Auditor Stabosz**, the median difference is \$32. **Commissioner Haney**, a lot of information has been put out to the public. Pay your bill, at worst you may be paying an extra \$32, that money will be credited to the fall installment if you overpaid. **Treasurer Winski**, we are living in a time right now where everything is increasing, at the grocery stores, gas, other areas as well. She does not want to burden the taxpayers with additional amounts. Hopefully this can be resolved quickly, painless and we move forward. **Auditor Stabosz**, added two points for clarification, he agreed with the statements made by Treasurer Winski but wanted to add points of clarification with regard to the units of government that the expected settlement of monies is to come from his office and the concern with when are they going out. Keep in mind the nature of the property taxes is intended to fund government for the next six months, if we collect a good amount of the taxes in the spring and entities need an advance 'draw' then it will be available. Cash flow issues and the needs of different entities to borrow money from the Indiana Bond Bank or other methods that will incur interest costs are unlikely. **President Matias**, suggested once all areas are ironed out to send the information out to the taxing units. Porter County's Auditor was on the call with concerns for Pine School and St. Joseph County Auditor had concerns with John Glenn School Corporation. **Treasurer Winski**, as soon as DLGF puts together the timeline they will be sending out a notice to all the entities. May 10th is the statutory deadline to pay the spring installment. A request for an extension was denied. **Assessor Schultz**, Form 11s will be going out in the mail, they're for next year's assessment and are on bright green paper. Taxpayers have 45 days to appeal the assessment. **Councilman Earl Cunningham** suggested a banner across the top of the form 11 stating this is for next year or a sticker on the outside envelope. **Treasurer Winski**, current tax bills have a pink border on them but the corrected tax bill will have a different color.

Jerry 'Jay' Sullivan, Engineer, reported on current projects going on throughout the county. On 150 N. or 500 W. construction going on with the Community Crossings Grant, about 10 miles of resurfacing, project will take about two weeks to complete. On the Meadowview project a preconstruction meeting was held on Monday, hopefully in the next 4-6 weeks the contractor will start on the job. IDEM has had several inquiries from residents and he will get the requested information to them. Love's project is under way on 421/300 N. in Michigan City. A lift station will be put in the next few weeks.

Tim Stabosz, Auditor, disappointed that two of the Commissioners placed on the agenda, a form of ambush, a resolution that turns the unfortunate tax situation into politicizing it and not all working together. The Indiana code cited for the resolution added to the agenda is a new section that states a county officer must be physically present in the county officer's office during regular hours for a reasonable amount of time each month during the term of office. If in violation the elected official could be removed. "I'm in the office and I am in the office daily and I want to note that unfortunately when you bring something like this before hand you are prostituting a new state law that was intended to hold people accountable for literally not showing up for work, I'm in the office every day, if you go forward with reading this resolution, your actions are unconscionable. There is a lot of blame to go around if we insist on focusing with that, I stand by my Chief Tax Deputy who was misguided and misled by the former person in her position, retired, who was also...and she was also misguided by our financial service provider who walked her through the process of creating the tax abstract over the telephone when she had **insisted** multiple times that that be in person because she was relatively new to the job. I didn't catch the error before the bills were sent to the Treasurer, I take responsibility for that, for the Treasurer to print and mail them, the Treasurer didn't catch the error before sending the bills to the mailing vendor. Even the Department of Local Government Finance of the State of Indiana approved certified net assessed values that were incorrect. We need to focus on making sure this doesn't happen again rather than forming a circular firing squad. I want to point out that of the 3, since January 1st of 2021 when I took office, by far, of the 3 members of the financial function of La Porte County, I have been here the most total of number of aggregate hours so your resolution needs to seek to remove all three members of the financial function of La Porte County that apparently, you're going to be reading later today. It is misguided, it is outrageous, it is outlandish, is a violation of the intent of state law, you will compel the state legislature next year to make La Porte County the 'poster child' of abuse of state law or they change the state law back because it was intended to go after someone who literally didn't show up at all. This was an honest mistake and if you go forth with this, again, you're politicizing the situation of property tax issue which we should all be working together because Mr. Friedman is seeking to retaliate against me doing a 90-minute radio show expose on him a week ago today and because he just lost round two in his defamation suit against me. You should be ashamed of yourself and in the case of you, Miss Matias, you will surely pay at the ballot box in the fall. To quote citizen Rodney McCormick, 'I'm tired of Shaw Friedman puppets.' Thank you."

Darlene Hale, IT Director, apologized for the issue earlier prior to the start of the meeting with audio. Take into consideration other offices use the meeting room and often times equipment and cords are moved around, unplugged.

Requests

Considered permission to approach the Council reference camera system and narcotic locks. **Andrew McGuire**, EMS Director, around October of last year received notification from the State EMS Commission of a change being implemented in regards to purchasing and handling controlled medication for EMS agencies within Indiana. The primary objective of the State Pharmacy Board and the DEA is to eliminate the 3rd party purchasing of the controlled medications. This forces everybody to purchase directly which in turn requires the purchaser to have a state and DEA license with a number. Policies and procedures will have to be changed to be compliant with the regulations. Not to exceed \$20,000 for the locks and not to exceed \$70,000 for the cameras. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to approach the Council for additional appropriation for Vaccine and Covid Clinics. **Amanda Lahners**, Health Department Director, additional funds are needed to keep the clinics open until the end of June when the state will be shutting down Covid operations. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Old Business

None

New Business

Considered 2nd addendum to agreement between Tax Management Associates and La Porte County Assessor. **Mike Schultz**, Assessor, this is a continuation of the personal property audits. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered contract with Schneider Geospatial LLC for linkages on Beacon site to pdf files. **Mike Schultz**, Assessor, statute now requires the actual hard card or property record to be displayed with the information and needs to be done by July 1st. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered retroactive resolution naming Rob Sabie as the Emergency Management Interim Director. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney**, Mr. Sabie is the most capable person for the job. Pointed out an ongoing issue of not being included on emails among the 3 Commissioners. This did not happen last year. "This idea that you continue to cut me out of extremely important communications, I mean, its...we've got one member living in Florida, I'm the only one who's here literally every day and you're completely cutting me out of all of these things, this is for an EMA position, Emergency Management, if there's an issue in the county or something comes up and there's a disaster, why would you not want your entire executive body to know there was a new EMA Director, it's just preposterous to me that you just act with absolute impunity without regard for anything including safety and well being of La Porte County." **Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Leads On-line contract with the Sheriff's Department. **John Boyd**, Sheriff, previously this was done in the Prosecutor's office but they no longer have the funding for it and the Sheriff's department would like to continue using the electronic reporting and criminal investigation system for receiving transaction data for the use of Law Enforcement Officials in their official duties. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered 1st reading on an Ordinance amending the code of ordinances of La Porte County concerning prevention of certain contractor fraud. **John Carr**, Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters and Senator **Mike Bohacek**, just about every municipality in Northwest Indiana has adopted a tax fraud ordinance, including La Porte and Michigan City, this ordinance will ensure that local contractors are protected from outside contractors coming in and being paid cash, 1099s or misclassifying them. This is a rampant problem in the construction industry and due to recent events here in the City of La Porte it is definitely needed in our county. This will protect our local contractors and tradesmen will be assured the county is looking out for them. Indiana loses out on over 400 million dollars each year from taxes because contractors misclassify their workers, paying them as independent contractors then when that is done there is no local taxes paid, no workers comp, no unemployment and it deprives our community. **Senator Bohacek**, representing the citizens of the State of Indiana and his district, "I find this practice explicitly repulsive because what it does is it not only takes advantage of the good will of our communities when we trust a developer with tax advantage projects." This could be in the form of tax abatements for multiple years. "I saw a project in a different county in southern Indiana where there were 3 different school buses of drywallers that were driven there and it was a labor broker that actually orchestrated it so the developer, it was a well-known developer, they were a sub of a subcontractor that provided labor so they told them they needed 60 people that day so they brought them 60 people. And the labor broker gets paid the check and they distributed it out per rod." It is a big problem and he appreciates the Commissioners passing the ordinance. **President Matais**, basically theft of tax payers' fair share. **Commissioner Haney**, "I believe you are planning on introducing legislation next year that's going to address some of this?" **Senator Bohacek**, they will start again next year, they had a bill two years ago to address it with a task force that would actually intervene more than just a tip line, it was a hard-cut way to be able to investigate the claims and act more swiftly. His opinion is it should go beyond the subcontractor level. For example, in La Porte at The Banks project, only the sub is being sought. The general contractor should be looked into as well. "Because if you think about it, if you're the owner of the project, and you hire a general contractor, they don't perform properly, are you going to sue the sub of the sub of the drywall contractor? No, you're going to sue the general contractor." His opinion is the general contractor should have ultimate responsibility and liability for all of those that he hires. The bill will be very similar to the one from two years ago but with a little more teeth and they will continue to push it through. **Commissioner Haney**, he saw some of the verbiage, a task force will be formed, funded and asked if it will be additional burdens on the current state employees, for example in Senator Bohacek's case? **Senator Bohacek**, a few ways to word a task force, you could create employees or use existing employees. "Now, will it, could it potentially require the County to do more work? Well sure, I mean if we go to the County and the Task Force says, 'Hey look, you have a contractor that's not following the law' then you should use your Building Inspection department to go there and double check because that's their job but to also make sure that folks are licensed and insured." He added that they meet all the requirements to be a contractor in your county. Yes, the county will be informed if/when there is a problem. **Commissioner Haney**, he referred to the most recent event in the City of La Porte with the construction of The Banks in the

NewPorte Landing area, two contractors are looking at numerous different charges from wage theft, unemployment issues, workers' comp issues and facing potential racketeering charges for not following the law in Indiana on hiring contractors. "Definitely interesting, it's good to see there's a lot of state laws on the books already to address this, is that some of the reason why this legislation similar to this has failed down, down at the State House multiple times now, is because you know, those laws are pretty much on the books already? **Senator Bohacek**, asked Commissioner Haney to enlighten him to which **Commissioner Haney** replied that Senator Bohacek is down there in Indianapolis, the State House has let it drop many times. **Senator Bohacek** asked Commissioner Haney to answer the first question, enlighten him on what he may know, "You just told me this has failed before at the State House, many legislations failed at the State House and not because of who's responsible for anything, it's just it's people's opinions of 150 legislators so it's not just a singular issue or what Senator Bohacek wants or doesn't want..." **Commissioner Haney**, "Sure." **Senator Bohacek**, "...so..." **Commissioner Haney**, "Right, so are there any, Mr. Carr, are there any counties up here in northern Indiana that have adopted this or is it just a couple of municipalities like Michigan City, Gary?" **John Carr**, no counties yet just La Porte, Michigan City, Valparaiso, Chesterton, Portage, Merrillville, Hobart, Hammond, Dyer, and Lowell so as of now no counties, just municipalities. **Commissioner Mrozinski**, via Zoom, **motioned to accept the Ordinance on first reading.** **President Matias** asked for input from the public but also inquired as to whether or not both 1st and 2nd reading can be voted on at tonight's meeting. **Attorney Friedman** replied yes, then stated for the record that the Building Commissioner, Mike Polan, has conveyed his support of the ordinance. **Jody Slabaugh**, 2402 N. State Road 39, why is a county ordinance needed if the State law can prosecute people. He questioned the union guys, three to five years ago he watched the credit union build a new building in La Porte near Walmart, union representatives erected a giant inflatable rat, hired a pedophile to stand out front and harass any workers hired to build the new bank. Union was all over it, comments made where you must hire union workers even though this was a private company building the bank. Where were the union guys, protesters and the rat when The Banks was being built in La Porte by illegal workers? **Senator Bohacek** thanked the remonstrator for his comments then addressed Commissioner Haney's concerns as to why the state didn't pass these types of laws in the past by using a task force, supporting labor and using language similar to the current ordinance in front of the Commissioners tonight. He pointed out to the year 2016 when he was a sitting Commissioner for our county and passed an RBO, Responsible Bidders Ordinance, which has yet to be appealed and is still an active ordinance. **Commissioner Haney** stated for clarification that he did not vote in favor of the 2nd RBO that was passed in 2021 (Ordinance 2021-7) because it was 'political in nature, useless, burdensome and went against minorities, women owned businesses.' **Senator Bohacek**, there is legislative support for RBOs and for PLAs, just in the past session the House of Representatives passed an amendment through to the Senate that asked the Senate to revoke all of the Commissioners' ability to pass private labor agreements or responsible bidders' ordinances and the Senate killed it so do not think it isn't supported at the local level because it is so when he is asked 'what has the state legislature done,' he will speak with actions and not hyperbole in what the Indiana Senate has done. **President Matias** asked for a 2nd on the first reading to Commissioner Mrozinski's motion to approve. **Commissioner Haney** did not second it so **President Matias stepped down and seconded the motion to pass on first reading.** **Commissioner Haney - Nay.** **Motion carried 2-1.** **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to suspend the rules and pass on 2nd reading.** **Commissioner Haney** did not second it. **President Matias stepped down to second the motion.** **Attorney Friedmann** stated it had to be a unanimous vote to suspend the rules to pass on 1st and 2nd readings. Since it was **not a unanimous vote** then the 2nd reading would be at the next Commissioners' meeting, May 4th.

Considered Resolution initiating action for removal of La Porte County Auditor Timothy Stabosz from public office pursuant to Indiana Code section 36-2-8.7. **Commissioner Mrozinski**, for introduction only, stated this is a 10-day public notice prior to a public hearing set for our next meeting on May 4th at 10:00 a.m. **President Matias** asked if this was a motion, **Commissioner Mrozinski** replied yes. She asked if there is a second and **Commissioner Haney**, no then said Rich did a good job of reading it, **President Matias**, that was uncalled for, **Commissioner Haney** said we know Commissioner Mrozinski did not write it. **President Matias**, Commissioner Mrozinski has a motion on the floor to set a public hearing date initiating action to remove the Auditor from public office however there was no second from either Commissioner Haney nor herself and she explained why she would not second it. "I would like us, as a community, to manage the tax issues that we have presently in front of us. You heard the Treasurer, you heard the Auditor and you heard the Assessor speaking at length to the public about the questions the public has, the concerns and the fears quite frankly, the calls that I'm getting, people are fearful, you know when it comes down to taxes most of us want to be good citizens and when our taxes are messed up it makes us anxious." We need to manage the issue, working together, to get it straightened out before we begin something that is very emotionally charged. Yes, the Auditor does tend to create some 'flash points' and there are items in the proposed resolution that does need to be discussed but the time is not right now. "I will entertain a motion or I'll make it myself to table this indefinitely until our tax issues are resolved, that the community has a sense of security about their tax issues and their tax bills and that we, at that time, can take this off the table. **Attorney Friedman**, suggested reading the resolution into the record then take it under advisement and table indefinitely but at least it would be in the record. **President Matias**, she will not read it into the record, it is a lengthy resolution and defeats the purpose of tabling it. The tax issue should be handled first for the community. **President Matias** asked for a motion to table and if not then she would make the motion herself to table the resolution. **Commissioner Haney**, as president, is she even allowed to make a motion? **Attorney Friedman**, yes, she may 'step down' from the position of President and motion or second if need be. Any pending motions on the floor need action. **President Matias**, Commissioner Mrozinski's motion to conduct a public hearing at the next meeting died for lack of a seconded. **President Matias** asked Commissioner Haney if he wished to make the motion to table. **Commissioner Haney** said no because then it can be pulled off the table at any time and he would rather no action be taken at this time. **President Matias stepped down and motioned to table the**

proposed resolution indefinitely, taking it under advisement as well. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded the motion. Commissioner Haney - Nay. Motion carried 2-1.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Haney, claims were a bit high on this agenda due to about \$2,000,000 in LIT payments, Sheriff's pension \$650,000 and Marquiss Electric \$856,000 in payments as well. Attended a meeting for the May 4th opening of a health care clinic for employees, this is voluntary only, no co-pays for visits and prescriptions, the county and employees should see a lot of savings. An open house will be held on April 28th, tours will be given and employees can meet the medical staff. "I'm glad the...some of the issues got addressed surrounding our tax bill situation from earlier, it's interesting to see and listen to some of the meetings we've been a part of with the DLGF about some of the other counties surrounding the state who are also having to 'reissue' some of their tax...some of their tax bills as well, it's been a very peculiar year around the state and I know that both here locally and at the state level they're going to be working hard to make sure all those different checks along the way, how it - this got missed, through so many checks, both at the local and the state level, how this wound up slipping through, it's uh...it's uh, it's quite curious so I'm looking forward to seeing where - they're going to deal more with that setting up checks after we get everything hammered out here so you'll want to make sure you go through the process, correcting the problem, getting it solved and then working on addressing taking those corrective actions to make sure things, you know, something like this doesn't happen again, either here or in other counties throughout the state." Broadband projects will be moving forward in our county. We've been collaborating this week with both local and state with an issue that came up while entering Easter weekend with one of the local mobile home facilities, negative circumstances that occurred there and both local and state are working to resolve the issues. He also attended a District 1/District 5 meeting for EMA in northern Indiana regional planning and sharing resources among 5 counties. Yesterday marked the 247th anniversary of The Battle of Lexington and Concord, more commonly known as 'the shot heard around the world.' Paul Revere was one 3 men who rode that night. Captain John Parker was a militia commander at the battle 'on the green' and Samuel Whittmore, a farmer, participated as well. "When I look at a lot of the issues that are confronting the county, actually before I do that, I wanted to just touch briefly on this ordinance that we considered earlier, this tax fraud ordinance, when I look through this, there's some good things in here, there are some good things, of course as you read deeper into it that's where things start to fall apart. Nobody wants any tax fraud, everybody wants our employees to be, you know, their employees to be covered under workmen's comp, these things are already against state law to do and these are already documentation that needs to be provided through the state, as a small business owner myself I know how important it is, I don't work in the construction field but I know how important it is to make sure all those i's are dotted and t's are crossed every single quarter and there's just such odd verbiage in here such as 'the contractor must properly classify employees as employees' - on the surface that sounds great, classify employees as employees, an employee should be an employee but of course this ties in later with independent contractors and things like that, we've seen at the national level especially a very large shift and with some public policy to try and go after and attack legitimate independent contractors. Federal government, especially the IRS, hates people who are 1099'd, you know, we see that, we see these attacks going on from everything to the most easiest thing of course you'd see is via your Uber driver or your DoorDash or the services that provide your food delivery like Shipt, for example. They work hard to go against these because they want the little bit of extra money right up front out of the paycheck, they don't like seeing that money come in the form of a 1099 so they don't like to see that but at the same time there're only some ways certain services can actually work via independent contractors so the...that's one of the reasons why I had the largest problems with this ordinance here before us here tonight because it's not looking out necessarily for your average worker, it's not looking out for your average union member even and it's looking out for those national poli...national ideas that are being driven at the national level and pushed down to the local level, you know, the average person, this isn't it and you know, I represent the 110,000 people of La Porte County and the thousands of tradesmen here in La Porte County, not a handful of union bosses that are getting put peer pressure from the national level to pass political stunt pieces like this (holds up the ordinance), that's why I opposed that here today." He referred to a statement made earlier in the meeting by Mr. Stephens, the clown show that sometimes goes on here. Old proverb 'you shouldn't cast pearls before swine' and all the quotes from founding fathers to Martin Luther King, instead of wasting those tonight he quoted something more recent, Trent Reznor, singer/songwriter from the 1990's, 'Bow down before the one you serve, you're going to get what you deserve.'


Commissioner Mrozinski, two upcoming events, one being election day. Please learn about the candidates before voting. Following our next Commissioners' meeting on May 4th, at 2:00 p.m. will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the new EMS Base/Highway Garage in Rolling Prairie which is much needed and has been talked about for the last 15 years. July 9-16 will be the 176th year for the La Porte County Fair. Thanked County Council, Randy Novak, FMEC and especially Director of Facilities, Larry Levendowski, for getting the grandstand bleachers inspected then repaired in time for the fair. Concert tickets have already been sold. He continues to work to move the county forward.

Commissioner Matias, there are hidden treasures right here in our county and to showcase one every meeting is a goal for La Porte County Works! This week is Garwood Orchards, located at 5911 W. 50 S., La Porte. Garwood's Orchard and Farm Market, a family managed farm and market that the Garwood family has been running for over 180 years. For 6 generations, the Garwood family has maintained a focus on farming, family, and community. It was started by John Garwood, a carpenter who moved to La Porte County in 1831 and took up farming. He was considered to be one of the founding fathers of the La Porte County area in Scipio Township and Pinola. Garwood Orchards is a recipient of the Hoosier Homestead Award (1992) and the AgriVision Award (2020) for being a

family-owned farm that has made significant contributions to the agricultural industry and has been owned by the same family for 100 years or more. Currently, the day-to-day operations are operated by the 6th generation Garwood's: Tom, Brian and Mike Garwood. The Garwood's currently farm over 440 acres which includes approximately 100 acres of apples and 340 acres of peaches, raspberries, pumpkins, strawberries, cherries, sweet corn, peppers, cucumbers and a variety of other vegetables. The market will open May 5, 2022. During the season, school and group tours can be booked through their website. Booking must be done in advance only. Scheduling is from May-August. Tours are available from early September into early October, and prices start at \$5 per person. More information can be found at <https://www.garwoodapplefarm.com/school-tours>. Garwood's Orchard currently employs 24 people at an average wage \$18- \$19 per hour. In the summer months of operation, Garwood's will hire 40 to 50 persons to work the retail store at a wage range from \$10.50 to \$14.00, depending on position and experience. Employment opportunities provide an excellent opportunity for individuals, including high school students, to obtain new skills and work experience through seasonal employment. To apply, call and ask for Carey Garwood. The e-mail address is apples@garwoodorchard.com; the website is www.garwoodorchard.com and the phone number is 219-362-4385. The market hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. seasonally from May to November. **President Matias** announced a message came from the Governor Holcomb's office that the third time our county applied for Broadband through the NextLevel Connection Grant was approved with the help of OCRA, Surf Broadband, Comcast and Mercury Wireless and awarded 6.5 million dollars for our county. In 2019 a Broadband Task Force was organized and have been laser focused on getting funding from the state. Federal dollars are coming back to our county. She closed with a bit of political commentary, "We have some issues in this county and we tend to bring them forward but you know there's that if you see something, say something, and you know we heard today about casting pearls before swine and we often hear about Martin Luther King so the values of this community are really important to most of us, this community is a community of family values and when you think about integrity and you think about faith and family and respect, those of us who are elected officials we have to be held accountable so you heard reference earlier in our meeting today about a radio show that was held the day that we were discovering that there was a huge tax issue, there was a 90-minute radio show and you know, my political head would say it was 'hack-job' but you know, people have a right to their political views but there were 2 things that were said on that show that have nothing to do with politics but are just plain wrong and they don't fit this community's values and I have been struggling to say you know, should I just ignore it or not but there was a mimic done of Dr. Kora's accent on that show where our Auditor mimicked the way an Indian person, who is an immigrant to this country, speaks and I found that so egregious and maybe because I am the daughter of immigrants, it was especially offensive to me, but we talk about quoting from Martin Luther and we say all this you know, highfalutin language but when the rubber meets the road it's talking about people respectfully, and then my colleague to the left (Commissioner Haney) made fun of Dr. Kora's skin tone, that he didn't know he could blush that color of the blush because of his skin tone, you know that's not La Porte County..." **Auditor Stabosz**, "He did not. He did not do that." **Commissioner Matias**, "...excuse me, I'm speaking, I have the floor, this is not the values of La Porte County, La Porte County is a caring community that respects all kinds of people, we are a diverse county with all kinds of people and we need to respect them, thank you very much, meeting is adjourned." **Auditor Tim Stabosz** is heard saying, "Misrepresentation of that interview, Commissioner."

President Sheila Matias adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 5-4-2022



ATTEST: _____ Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL