



**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, May 18, 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.

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

Considered the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to accept the agenda. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered approval of May 4, 2022 minutes. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Auditor Tim Stabosz read the Claims with Payroll ending 5/6/2022 - \$1,288,875.84 and Operating Expense Claims - \$3,724,821.15. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** **Commissioner Mrozinski** pointed out the claims have been approved, he motioned to order the Auditor to pay overdue claims in the amount of \$37,275.10 that go back to January of this year. State Board of Accounts instructed Auditor Stabosz to pay the claims as presented. Discussion was held on the invoices to Friedman and Associates that are overdue. **President Matias** stepped down and seconded. **Motion carried 2-0.** **Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

President Matias reminded the public to please be respectful and stay with the 3-minutes for comments. **Commissioner Mrozinski**, if anyone is present for the Meadowview Estates/Kingsbury Creek drainage issue a meeting will be rescheduled for the workshop that was to be held last week, information was not ready. County Engineer, Planner and Surveyor will be in attendance.

Public Comment

Randy Veatch, 4177 W. Schultz Road, La Porte, thanked President Matias for the stop-work order on the industrial operations conducted on the property adjacent to his home. He tried for over 5 years to get this stopped. While the pit has since been ordered closed, the people that helped it gain its operational status remain in public office and most likely continuing a helping hand in allowing other code violations to continue. Anthony Hendricks filled out the paperwork; MS4 operational charts that allowed this to happen and are still active in decision making - Richard Mrozinski, Mike Polan, and Sheila Matias; Mike Polan making unfounded accusations about people in the neighborhood while sitting as Building Commissioner; County Attorney Shaw Friedman's emails; was told Commissioner Mrozinski had the overweight signs removed; he added a new name to the 6-year list, Sheriff John Boyd, then commented on emails.

Allen Stevens, South County Community Coalition President, distributed a handout, IDEM Permit, to the Commission, Prairie Township group attended a recent meeting with concerns about Ozinga Materials located at 2626 W. 1650 S. in Hanna. This is a sand mining operation with permission to operate from the County BZA and now the business would like to expand with crushing aggregate produced at the plant. Neighbors fear construction debris will be brought in, concrete asphalt, crush it for resale. Hours approved for operation were 7am-7pm but routinely start at 5-5:30am, lots of

ORIGINAL

truck traffic and noise, currently working with Representative Pressel and Commissioner Haney to force IDEM to hold a hearing in Prairie Township on this matter. Requested a letter of support from the Commissioners to IDEM for a hearing. **Commissioner Mrozinski**, has this been presented to the Building Commission yet. **Commissioner Haney**, yes. **President Matias**, Building Commissioner has sent a letter to IDEM requesting a public hearing. **Commissioner Haney motioned to send a letter on behalf of the Commissioners to IDEM requesting a public hearing to be held in Prairie Township pertaining to Old School Crushing Company. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried.**

Dennis Lantz, Kingsbury Creek, handed out paperwork to the Commission showing the flow of the stream but dated November 1, 1970, 52-year-old report being used for paperwork. Very bad information is being given out for the project. Concerns about retention pond overflowing. Laterals were brought up to be removed. **Commissioner Mrozinski** insisted on no laterals and a shut-off valve must be made available, he agrees something needs to be done but it needs to be right for everyone.

Andy Minich, Kingsbury Creek, thanked the Commission and Engineer for communicating via phone on concerns for the Meadowview Estates/Kingsbury Creek drainage issue. When he bought his farm along Kingsbury Creek and wanted to clear tree lines, he was informed by NRCS that it was a wetland and a flood zone during high rain events, he is not allowed to do any drainage, remove trees or blockage by rules of the DNR and IDEM. Kingsbury Creek is not a drainage ditch, not under the jurisdiction of the Drainage Board and should not be used as a loophole. All options are draining into Kingsbury Creek, laterals are still shown on the plans and the hired out-of-county engineer who had a power point presentation did not seem too impressed with the county plan and brought up water quality issues.

Harold Barr, Kingsbury Creek, farm area is next to Kingsbury Creek, if he has a loss of income, where does he go? To the county? To Nowak? **President Matias**, the meeting that was rescheduled was due to not enough information for everyone who has concerns and/or questions and the goal is **not** to take water from one area and put it in another but instead have a meeting where the people with the expertise and knowledge can attend for the concerns and questions that will be asked. His other farm is near the Travis Ditch which has been dredged, it is deep and can handle a lot more water than the Kingsbury Creek so there is no comparison. **Attorney Friedman**, Commissioner Mrozinski reached out and asked him to contact the vendor, our professional team and see where we are at on the project. Surveyor Tony Hendricks, as of May 13th, "We went out today and marked out the project. Paint marks where the manholes go and right of way marker lathes for the road right of ways, working around the utilities (gas and fiber) should be within reason to put the storm line down the east side of County Road 75, east side of the north bound paved lane. Staying just away from the gas line. The County Highway will have to pave the lane after its installed. We also have benchmarks along the route and will send those out when I am done checking them for accuracy. I talked with two owners out there and they confirmed the ponding of the county road in two low spots when it rains as being a problem that this line will solve. The most revised set of plans and all other information has been posted on a link off the La Porte County website for anyone to get and review." **President Matias**, the meeting needs to be held before digging begins.

Dawn Milner, Kingsbury Creek, troubled when the workshop was canceled and hopes it will be rescheduled before any materials are purchased. Would like to know the distance between the septic field and the water well to determine any water contamination. Why were there not more options considered? Nothing can be done around Kingsbury Creek due to environmental consideration from April until June, generally throughout the year.

Sherry Banic, 4551 S. 75 W., Surveyor says the project will be on the east side of the road, the Engineer says the west side of the road, no one really knows where the outlet is going to be at this time. A discussion needs to be held to determine the correct place of the outlet, if it is really going into Kingsbury Creek which she does not approve at all. IDEM plans have been reviewed, no one has been notified, no easements, looks like water will flow to private property. You have depended on your professionals, we are confused by the information being given by them, information taken from old sites. How do we know if this is accurate? She handed a letter from Paul Baker, USGS, who responded to her about the stream stat and was told it was discontinued in 1986 due to lack of funding. Kingsbury Creek residents do not trust the professionals, County Employees, that the Commissioners are depending on. In 2008 La Porte County flooded, everyone had water issues not just Meadowview Estates. If she has a flooding issue she would not come to the county for help. More research needs to be done on this before tax dollars are used for the project. Will this be monitored and if so, how often? Conflict of interest if a resident that works for the contractor, lives in the affected subdivision and will be doing the monitoring. Just found out about this 2 months ago. We don't want your water on our private land. **Commissioner Mrozinski**, we will answer all questions during the meeting.

April Daly, 1707 N. 675 W., La Porte, attended a 4-hour BZA meeting the evening prior, should put ourselves in other people's shoes. Focus on current problems and not bring up the past. Do the job you were elected to do. **President Matias**, there was an outside professional hired by the County to collect data for the Meadowview Estates water issue, the only reason why the scheduled workshop did not take place was due to not having all of the information to provide to the citizens that would be asking questions and voicing their concerns. It is in the process of being rescheduled. **April**, 39 North Conservancy District needs to be looked at as well to help with their lack of water issue.

Sean Fagan, via Zoom, Wanatah, compliment and criticism, thanked the Commission and Council for passing the public safety local income tax. Newspaper headlines read Michigan City's Police Chief Dion Campbell states 'violent crimes are on the rise,' it doesn't look good for people wanting to come to our County to either work or live here. Shouldn't be hearing from police chiefs about crime but from Prosecutor John Lake, what is he doing to take down crime. What are the Commissioners going to do about crime? Michigan City will become Gary because no one wants to work here, no one wants to move here, we all suffer.

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

President Sheila Matias read into the record a letter from Woodlands & Water Real Estate, Inc. on the sale of the County Home. **Attorney Shaw Friedman**, it is important for the public to understand the county followed the law for the sale of the County Home, the new owners have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the building since buying it over 2 years ago and that justifies the asking price. "Like you and other elected officials who work hard at following the law and providing good honest county government I have frankly had it up to here with keyboard warriors like Mr. Slabaugh going online and making accusations about my ethics or anyone else here without a shred of proof to back it up. This is the same Mr. Slabaugh who was just sent a cease-and-desist letter by the Building Trades' attorney this past week. In a post this afternoon on 'Our Tax Dollars and How They're Wasted,' Mr. Slabaugh not only accused me of defrauding taxpayers by billing for political work such as writing for Howey Politics - absolutely untrue - he accused me without a shred of proof of quote 'trying to defraud taxpayers with his buddy's run-down warehouse' - again, completely false and outrageous..." **Auditor Stabosz**, "Point of order, your honor, point of order, what does this have to do with the Commission meeting? This is settling a personal score by the County Attorney." **Attorney Friedman**, this is a Department Head Report. **Auditor Stabosz**, this is not relevant to a Commission meeting. **Discussion** held between the Auditor and County Attorney. **President Matias** informed Auditor Stabosz he has not been recognized. She asked that references to a citizen be left out. **Attorney Friedman**, this was posted on 'Our Tax Dollars and How They're Wasted,' the problem is that when someone posts online, without the facts to back it up, it is false and misaligns not only the elected officials but his office. He suggested an open challenge to anyone that believes wrongdoing is going on to contact the Prosecutor's office, take the evidence and under oath tell the Grand Jury what you believe is going on. "Talk is cheap but when you're dealing with reputations and questioning integrity, you better have something to back it up." **President Matias** apologized to Mr. Slabaugh for his name being mentioned during the meeting. *****Letter attached to minutes**

Tony Rodriguez, OCED, working aggressively with the Office of Community and Rural Affairs on broadband in the county. **President Matias**, be sure this information is on our website for the public.

Jeremy Sobecki, Parks Dept, Bluhm County Park will soon have new playground equipment. This was funded by the Healthcare Foundation and is special, it is an all-inclusive playground with ramps and accessible for wheel chairs. A new restroom and new paving for the parking lot should all be completed by July. August 13th is scheduled for a ribbon cutting ceremony. Sebert property has all the boundary signs installed, highway department went in and put a culvert in, eventually there will be a gravel parking lot. July is Parks and Recreation month; the goal is to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony at this location too. His department is still in need of seasonal help. Must be at least 18 years of age, pay starts at \$13 an hour, and please apply if you would like to work in the Parks Department.

Requests

Considered motion of support for DNR Project at Bluhm Park. **Jeremy Sobecki**, Director, he was contacted by the DNR on projects pertaining to wetlands and stream mitigation. There is an area at Bluhm Park that would fit this project, about 45 acres of low-quality farmland. This would be a DNR project, they would purchase the land, do all the work then give the 45 acres to Bluhm Park as a restored wetland area with an overlook from the trails. Park Board agreed to the project and this is in the planning stages only right now. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to support the project. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

ORIGINAL

Considered permission to pay sick days to Charmain Kalk is who retiring from the Parks Dept. She has been a county employee since 1997 and with the Parks Department the last 4 years. **Jeremy Sobecki**, Director, most of the payout is covered but he may have to go to the Council for a small portion of it. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve both the payout and to approach the Council for additional appropriations if needed. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to approach the Council regarding purchase of 3 power load cot systems. **Andrew McGuire**, EMS Director, total of 11 ambulances currently, 4 of the 11 have a power load system which is a power load cot with the ability to power load into the ambulance on a track system, the weight capacity is about 800 pounds. Two employees would not be able to lift that amount without the power load system. Three of the 11 cots are power cots without the power load and 4 are manual cots with no power. In the next 2-3 years the 4 manual cots will be traded in but the 3 power cots, which will be used the next 4-6 years, he is requesting to convert to the power load system. This is the industry's standard. Total cost for the 3 power load cots is \$73,570. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Commissioner Haney, Department Heads may still have comments to be made.

Auditor Tim Stabosz, reported on the reissuance of the tax bills. Certified Net Assessed Values have been approved by the DLGF, budget orders have been received, now in the process of tax abstracts then the need for the tax rate chart to be advertised 3 times over two weeks. The goal is to send the new tax bills out by early June. In regards to billings, he reminded the Commission one of the key items in Indiana Code for his duties or powers as Auditor is to 'examine the terms of a contract, terms of paying a claim.' County Administrator, per I.C. 36-2-2-14, if the Commission would like to make Mr. Friedman the County Administrator, then he would pay the claims that involve being an administrator if appointed by the Executives. "The executive may appoint a county administrator to be the administrative head of the county under the supervision of the executive and to hold office at the pleasure of the executive. You may assign any office, position, or duties under your control to the administrator, and by resolution withdraw any of the powers. Under the supervision of the executive and with express authorization by resolution, the administrator may do these various lists of duties that they put there, those duties are not listed in Mr. Friedman's contract. I'm not **allowed** to pay those items, I don't - you're not allowed to pay those items, I think it's inappropriate to pay those items, your powers are your powers and if you want to subrogate them to him, he's supposed to represent you on law and that's fine and it's in your...it's in the contract that he is a policy advisor. I understand that there's a lot of cross over between a respected attorney advising on law and how policy crosses over but when phone calls are made to department heads and at least, I have at least 2 department heads telling me that...I've received at least two reports of department heads of inappropriate meddling and even intimidation where items should not be billed, I'm dealing with what I'm dealing with, as far as following what the State Board of Accounts has said, the State Board of Accounts was very explicit with regard to the Franklin Street Bridge that that was a 1.5 million no-bid contract and if it's a \$150,000 or more it has to go out for bid and you can't follow that State Board of Accounts when you want to then what credibility does an attorney have when he advises not to follow the laws like he did with the Franklin Street Bridge or to follow it when it suits him."

Commissioner Haney, covered the Woodlands & Wates Real Estate letter. Gave them a 'shout-out' for doing more in this letter than the previous Commission did for the actual sale of the County Home. The second part of the letter makes a lot of sense as far as them responding to why they have it listed for the amount of \$895,000. The first half of the letter though is curious as if they would have 'first hand facts' of the sale itself. "I could be wrong but I don't believe Woodlands & Waters had anything to do with the auction of the County Home that happened previously by the County so they're stating some things here as almost coming from first hand facts they would know about it, obviously it would have to be second or third hand at this point coming from them so its important to put this letter from them into context that while the second half is obviously something that they can attest to since they're part of that and on it for the work that's been done since then, this first half here is you know, really doesn't have too much more credence than anything else that the so-called keyboard warriors our County Attorney refers to would have either in that point so...thank you." **Attorney Friedman**, suggested respectfully if Commissioner Haney has evidence to back up any wrong doing on the sale of the county home then take it to the Grand Jury who is meeting downstairs to hear any wrong doing on conflict of interest, fraud or corruption. **Commissioner Haney** asked Attorney Friedman if he solicited the letter from Woodlands & Waters. **Attorney Friedman**, yes, interested in finding facts rather than creating inferences and innuendos on the sale of the home.

Considered permission for travel to Nashville for annual NADCP conference July 25-28, 2022. **Jeff Thorne**, Superior Court 3 Judge, not present however **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve after speaking with him on the travel request. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to approach the Council for \$195,000 for Bridge 37. **Jay Sullivan**, Engineer, informed Commissioner Haney he had 2 quotes for the repairs. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** **Jay** added the laterals for the Meadowview Project have been removed from the plans.

Old Business

Considered 2nd/Final reading on Jake Brakes Ordinance. Public comments were heard at this time. **Jody Slabaugh**, 2402 N. SR 39, La Porte, a good location for a jake brake sign would be 39 North just before Severs Road. **Mark Sherrick**, 0442 E. US Highway 20, La Porte, does mechanical repairs on vehicles at his location a quarter mile west of Fail Road. Supports the ordinance and would like to see it enforced all along Highway 20 from State Road 39 all the way down. Jake Brakes are made for hills. Lived at this address for 34 years, the truck traffic has increased and happy to see a DOT officer has been added to the County. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0. ***Ordinance 2022-3**

Considered approving contract for salary study to be performed by Wagner Irwin Scheele, contingent on appropriation by County Council for Human Resources. **Monique Thomas**, HR via Zoom, met with Councilmen Mark Yagelski and Earl Cunningham plus a representative from the firm, only item changed was language stating not to exceed \$20,000 for this study. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered bid recommendations for 12 new vehicles, **John Boyd**, Sheriff, one bid came in from La Porte Chrysler for the purchase of a 2022 Dodge Charger, requested support to approach the Council for funding. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** Specifications were not met on the other vehicles. Ford and Chevrolet do meet the specs however vehicles won't go into production until fall time. Will have to rebid and repeat the process.

Considered recommendation of Nicole Messacar for the MS4 Director's position. **Monique Thomas**, HR, four candidates applied for the position, one accepted another position, of the 3 remaining one was internal and 2 external applicants. Interviews were given to all three and Nicole was the best fit for the position. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered opening bids for E911 project updating consoles, furniture and carpet. **Barb Huston**, E911 Director and **Matt Deckard**, E911 Assistant Director, were present for the opening of one bid timely received by Xybix Systems, Inc. **County Attorney Shaw Friedman**, a total of \$411,159.90 was quoted for 10 workstations, cost includes specified materials, freight, installation labor and taxes. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

New Business

Considered 2022 contract between La Porte County Agricultural Association (County Fair) and La Porte County Sheriff's Dept to provide Special Deputies during fair week. **John Boyd**, Sheriff, same contract as previous years just changes in dates and times. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered 2022 contract between La Porte County Agricultural Association (County Fair) and La Porte County EMS to provide Special Detail during fair week. **Andrew McGuire**, EMS Director, revised contract with changes to dates and times. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered authorization for EMS to participate in national purchasing cooperative to assist in ambulance procurement per I.C. 36-1-7 and I.C. 5-22-4-7. **Andrew McGuire**, EMS Director, facing issues of delayed times in availability of ambulances. Years 2023 and 2024 are booked for orders and part of 2025. If an ambulance is ordered right now you may not see it until mid or late 2025. Hard to manage a fleet with these delays. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

ORIGINAL

Considered Memorandum of Understanding between Franciscan/Beacon Hospital and La Porte County for mutual aid in the event of an emergency. **Rob Sabie**, Interim Director. **Attorney Friedman**, reviewed and recommend approval. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve the MOU. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Foster Care Agreement for the Jane Bernard Animal Adoption Center. **Eric Hayes**, Director, spoke to Commissioner Mrozinski. **Commissioner Mrozinski**, the agreement has been reviewed and will be a win-win for the shelter. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered La Porte County Historical Society Board of Director's recommendation of Danielle Adams for interim Museum Director. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Haney, Happy 21st wedding anniversary to his wife. Attended various meetings: a very moving Law Enforcement ceremony for National Police Officer's week; National EMS appreciation week; South County Community Coalition meeting where Prairie Township residents voiced concerns about Ozinga; Fairgrounds had a successful recycling collection program this past weekend for Solid Waste. A meeting also took place for a bike trail in South County. He closed by giving thoughts from Mark Twain, "Each of you, for himself or herself, by himself or herself, and on his or her own responsibility, must speak. It is a solemn and weighty responsibility and not lightly to be flung aside at the bullying of pulpit, press, government or politician. Each must decide for himself or herself alone what is right and what is wrong, which course is patriotic and which isn't. You cannot shirk this and be a man, to decide it against your convictions is to be an unqualified and inexcusable traitor. It is traitorous both against yourself and your country. Let men label you as they may, if you alone of all the nation decide one way, and that way be the right way by your convictions of the right, you have done your duty by yourself and by your country, hold up your head for you have nothing to be ashamed of. It doesn't matter what the press says, it doesn't matter what the politicians or the mob say, doesn't matter if the whole country decides that something is wrong if something is right. Republics are founded on one principal above all else, the requirement that we stand up for what we believe in no matter the odds or the consequences. When the mob and the press and the whole world tell you to move your job is to plant yourself like a tree beside the river of truth and tell the whole world no, you move."

Commissioner Mrozinski, after 15 plus years ground breaking took place for the EMS Base/Highway Garage on the east side of the county in Rolling Prairie. Sewer project going to Loves' travel shop is moving forward in Coolspring Township at US 421 and 300 N. Code Enforcement is in the works again. Mike Polan, Building Commissioner, has put some ideas together on the county level. A forum was held about Double Tracking with Mike Nolan. Video was shown of the construction already being done on 11th Street in Michigan City. Congratulated Bert Cook, La Porte, on a new business, Tubekraft, that has located in La Porte on South Fail Road and will employ 15 people at \$25 an hour. The fraud ordinance that recently passed was brought up while he attended the LEAP meeting. The tax issue cost the City of La Porte \$50 million dollars in assessed value and a \$30 million dollar loss. While attending a meeting in Portage a discussion was held about La Porte County and issues going on here. We are working hard to bring businesses to our county. County Fair will take place July 9-16, 176th year. A meeting in Indianapolis had a 'tip of the day,' "It may be true that no County Commissioner is a prophet in his own land however being a martyr remains a possibility."

Commissioner Matias, travels around the region and hears concerns about our county. Being involved in economic development for a long time, often businesses will do research on potential locations. We do not want our county known for corruption and negativity. We need to focus on the positive that our county has to offer. Serves on the NIRPC board, Broadband was a recent topic, how did our county become 'broadband ready' and tips were requested from other counties. Now for La Porte County Works! Alexandria Moulding Company is a leading moulding manufacturer and distributor of wood and wood composite mouldings in North America and the world. Their Midwest location sits at 4747 W. State Road 2, La Porte, Indiana. The Alexandria Moulding Company has been in operation for 72 years and is privately owned and operated by third-generation family members. Alexandria Moulding Company has manufacturing facilities on both the east and west coast that provide Alexandria Moulding Midwest with primed finger jointed mouldings in pine and poplar, light density fiberboard (MDF) and solid wood moulding such as poplar oak, and pine. The company has five domestic Mega Centers that control its manufacturing and distribution requirements. They include: Alexandria East is in Alexandria, Ontario; Alexandria West in Moxee, Washington; Alexandria Midwest here in La Porte, Indiana;

ORIGINAL

Royal Woodworking in Bradford, Ontario and Alexandria North East in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Alexandria Moulding Midwest was established in La Porte in April 2005. It was locally known as the House of Fara before it was purchased by Alexandria Moulding. Alexandria Midwest serves the Midwest market of Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Northern Missouri. Alexandria Moulding Midwest currently employees 173 people with an average wage of \$18.00 per hour. The company also offers medical, dental, and vision insurance and life insurance. If you would like to work in a family-oriented business that is both rewarding and challenging and is outright fun for employees, submit your resume today on their website.

President Sheila Matias adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 6-1-2022 Sheila Matias

[Signature]

ATTEST: _____
Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL



Woodlands & Waters Real Estate, INC.



3606 South 925 East Walkerton, IN 46574

phone: (219) 716-3202

Email: wwre1950@gmail.com

Web: www.woodlandsandwaters.com

16 May, 2022

To the LaPorte County Commissioners, LaPorte County Attorney, and all others to whom this may concern;

Recently, I have received telephone calls, some texts as well as personal comments from various residents of LaPorte County concerning the fact that my company and I have the former LaPorte County Home listed for sale.

It seems there are some folks who believe they are somehow being taken advantage of by the previously held public auction of the former LaPorte County Home. This was exactly that: a PUBLIC AUCTION. According to County regulations, it was duly processed and advertised, as all county auctions must be.

I have explained to the few that called, they too could have gone to the auction and bid if they had wanted to, but they don't seem to want to hear that. To the best of my current knowledge the winning bidder was the only person to attend the auction. No one else was there to bid. When the auctioneer asked for the opening bid amount, the buyer bid. Since winning that bid for the late 1800's built structure, the current owner has brought in numerous work crews and equipment, completely stripped the interior of the 22,000 square foot building, 33,000 square feet if you add in the basement, the structural integrity of the building, the plumbing, electrical and all mechanicals are now fully exposed. The owner was able to thoroughly evaluate the entire building and land for any future next level possibilities. In addition to all of the countless dumpsters that removed debris from the building, it was cleaned and organized. All of this was done at considerable expense to the owner.

The winning bidder then brought in a certified Architectural and Engineering firm to help bring forward the concept for the new building "The LaPorte County Ag & Event Center". This location is perfect, situated directly across from the LaPorte County Fairgrounds and all of its 4H and agriculturally related events. This is a very unique and ambitious concept for all types of events: weddings, seminars, and more. This is inclusive of a magnificent bridal suite and 22 additional hotel type rooms, restaurants, bars and outdoor venues. The list of possibilities goes on and on.

There now exists a full set of construction blueprints including structural, electrical and all mechanical at an additional cost of approximately \$150,000. The plans are ready for anyone (potential buyer) to send to Indiana State authorities for commercial approval. Construction could conceivably start in 30 days or so, pending approval by the state.

ORIGINAL

In summary, the current owner has invested a great amount of money over and above his initial auction price for the property, and has certainly gone above and beyond to provide the greatest opportunity for success for the next owner. LaPorte County citizens should be thrilled at the prospects that exist, considering the projected demolition estimates could have exceeded \$1 million. After careful consideration of all aspects of the land and the building, I listed the property for \$895,000.

I hope this explanation offers insight to those who feel that there has somehow been underhanded deeds at play here, that the reality is quite the contrary. The potential benefit to the residents of LaPorte County should be viewed with gratitude that someone had the insight and savvy to take on this project vs. what could have been a very costly expense to the county to demolish a building at the end of its useful life. We should all be grateful he was there to make that opening and only bid.

Respectfully,

Larry Nickell, Managing Broker/Co-Owner
Woodlands & Waters Real Estate, Inc.

ORIGINAL