



**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, November 2, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. County Complex Room 3 & via Zoom**

President Sheila Matias called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.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 Haney motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered approval of the October 19, 2022 minutes. Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski made a correction on the Speaker's name for the Veteran's Day program, should be Todd Rokita, not Todd Young, **Commissioner Mrozinski**, the contract with Marquiss Electric and WJE for the Franklin Street Bridge will be included as an attachment pursuant to I.C. 5-22-10-5, 'purchasing agent may make a special purchase when there exists a unique opportunity to obtain supplies or services at a substantial savings' and also I.C. 5-22-10-9 which says that 'purchase of the required supplies or services under another purchasing method would seriously impair the functioning of the using agency.' Both the Council and Commission have unanimously found this to be the case with the next rounds of repairs/upgrading to the Franklin Street Bridge and that both Commission and Council hold harmless the County Auditor from any claim made by any reviewing agency regarding the use of the Special Purchase statute. **He then motioned to add the correction plus to be sure the statement is attached to the minutes. Commissioner Haney** acknowledged the Marquiss Electric contract but did not have the wording on the I.C. included in his packet. Stated he would not vote for something he did not have in front of him. **President Matias stepped down and seconded the motion by Commissioner Mrozinski. Commissioner Joe Haney - Nay. Motion carried 2-1.**

Auditor Tim Stabosz read the Claims with Payroll ending 10/21/2022 - \$1,268,861.18 and Operating Expense Claims - \$1,561,781.50. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Public Comment

Connie Gramarossa, Councilwoman, distributed paperwork to the Commission. Page 49 of the County Employee handbook covering on-the-job political activity.

Tim Stabosz, Auditor, commented on President Matias and the mute buttons at the July 20th meeting. **President Matias** apologized to Tim for misspeaking.

Rodney McCormick, 617 Union Street, Michigan City, thanked Nathan Patrick, Brett Kelly, Beecil Minley, Stasi Benning, Tommy Kulavik, Mike Jones, Robert McCormick, Jose Jenkins, Shana McCormick, age 12, Quentavious McCormick, age 13, Kenny Fly, Heather Oakes, Michael Lark, Dennis Nixon, Mrs. Lewis, her 10 grandkids and many others for their support in honoring Juneteenth and the county accepted it as a holiday.

ORIGINAL

Rick Kentaft, 324 Bach Street, La Porte, addressed the subject of corruption and criminal activity in our county. Read from the Grand Jury report, zero indictments and 8 No Bills. Stated both Auditor Tim Stabosz and Commissioner Joe Haney owed the tax payers, the Commission, and the County Attorney an apology. Seven months for the Grand Jury to hear evidence and there was none. Waste of tax payers' money.

Derald Borton, 800 State Road 212, Michigan City, tired of two individuals attacking Commissioners Matias and Mrozinski and County Attorney Shaw Friedman.

Spencer England, 516 E Street, La Porte, racism exists and will never get rid of it. It is not right but it does need to be dealt with right away. Believes corruption exists in our county and with our County Attorney.

April Daly, 1707 N. 675 W. La Porte, lying, demeaning of women and racism continues and needs to be addressed. Disturbing that Tim Stabosz harassed her at a meeting while she was exiting the room. Stated she filed a police report. **Tim** said there were other people around and he did not harass her.

Earl Cunningham, 6311 W. Shiva Drive, Michigan City, apologized to Connie for what she is going through, to Rodney for being threatened by a candidate, he said he did not make negative comments about John and Mary Lake. He apologized for any misconstrued comments related to a cross-burning incident from 29 ½ years ago. Normally a special prosecutor is called for a Grand Jury investigation. He appreciated the President apologizing to the Auditor about the mute buttons comment and ended with a waste of tax payers' money for the big timer that was used a few times during public comments.

Amanda, Connie's niece, lives in Michigan City, supports her Aunt Connie Gramarossa. Two Commissioners are joined at the hip.

Dr. Jeff Miller, 3693 W. Pawnee Drive, La Porte, does not care for the antics by either political party. He was sent a flyer that was on display in the Complex building.

Barb Huston, November 11th at the Veteran's Day Ceremony in La Porte, a patriotic quilt made by Barb, Reathel Noveroske and Judy Grott will be given to one veteran attending the ceremony. It is their way of thanking veterans for their service to our country.

Department Reports/Department Head Comments

Nicole Messacar, MS4, City of La Porte and the County MS4 jointly held a training session for 37 contractors on plan review, why erosion control plans are important, and how to inspect for erosion controls and it went very well. A Stop Work Order has been paced on the D&M site since April. She has issued a few fines according to Article 26 in the Joint Zoning Ordinance. She has requested information from Mr. Miller and has not received answers back yet.

Larry Butcher, EMA Director, currently in the application process for the Hazard Mitigation Grant, we're 'on task.' There are several entities that are involved in the process, information comes from GIS, Hazmat, input from the Commissioners, Townships and Towns in our County. All meet in one room. **County Attorney Shaw Friedman** confirmed that notification was received that Director Butcher is on time with the Hazard Mitigation Grant application. **Commissioner Haney**, has been in constant contact with Senator Braun's office and La Porte County is not currently eligible for any of the FEMA grants that fall under this Disaster Mitigation Grant plan and hasn't been since May, we're only one of two counties in our region according to the FEMA map. **Director Butcher**, this is a \$28,000 grant and his office paid a vendor to do the work for the application, Burke Engineering. Two 4-hour meetings will be conducted. **Commissioner Haney**, City of La Porte is missing out on a grant due to our timeline on this application. **President Matias** read into the record a letter from Christopher Burke Engineering. **Director Butcher**, this is a grant done every 5-years. Input is needed to complete this process from several departments and towns.

County Attorney Shaw Friedman, stated, "Eighteen months ago, not long after this crusade to vilify myself and other county officials began, the longest serving official in county government, Councilman Mark Yagelski, called on the instigators to stop. He knew the damage these falsehoods and paranoid conspiracy theories were doing to citizens' faith and trust in county government and to tarnish the previously solid reputation of this county to outsiders. Yet it continued, unsubstantiated claims of corruption, fraud, conflict of interest and intimidation well into 2022 so that a grand jury was

finally convened to sift through all of it. That grand jury apparently spent months reviewing whatever was brought to them. I personally am not surprised by the ‘no bills’ delivered and we can all be gratified that the people of this county have now spoken through these six citizens who served on the grand jury. The time has come to end the baseless insistence that certain appointed or elected public officials have impure or corrupt motives. This has cast an unfair shadow not just among those of us who were targets of these accusations but among so many others serving diligently in county government. There are any number of big, important issues facing us as a county and we all owe a debt of gratitude to these six grand jurors who have removed the black eye unfairly given to county government, who have given us a clean bill of health and have allowed us to move on and I’d ask that this be made part of the record.”

Tim Stabosz, Auditor, commented on the outcome of the grand jury, “the people of La Porte County have **not** spoken, a grand jury was seated for political purposes to create an impression that there was an investigation going on, politically timed when it was created, politically timed when it’s work ended so that the impression can be given that there is no corruption in La Porte County.” He heard numerous reports from department heads and county employees that people would not testify before the grand jury because they were afraid and with John Lake overseeing the investigation while he is allied with County Attorney Shaw Friedman. The grand jury was a sham, the public is insulted, and employees have lost faith and confidence, especially in President Matias who sent out an email to all users that ‘all is clear.’ The ‘all clear’ is not there, there is terror, intimidation, and corruption in La Porte County and Attorney Friedman is at the center of it because he is an influence peddler. The prosecutor overseeing the grand jury is biased and allied with the County Attorney, he should have recused himself and a special prosecutor appointed, John Lake should know better and it’s a stain on him and a stain on the county.

Requests

Considered pay for sick days to Kristine Kittle, Adult Probation, who is retiring, after 31 years of service to the County. **Bob Schuster**, Assistant Director. No additional funds are needed. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered permission to approach the Council for \$5,100 in funds for surveys on 3 county cemeteries, Miriam Benedict, Webster, and Sharp cemeteries. **Sue Webster**, Pioneer Cemetery Commission Treasurer. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Old Business

None

New Business

Considered opening 2023 annual material bids for Highway Department, **Duane Werner**, Superintendent. **Attorney Shaw Friedman** opened the timely and date stamped bids.

Class 5 - No-lead, Diesel and E-85 - Two Bidders: Triple J-Mar Petroleum, Inc. and PetroChoice/Rackham Service.

Class 2 - Bituminous Patching/Rap Materials - Two Bidders: Rieth-Riley Construction Co, Inc. and Central Paving Inc.

Class 1 - Crushed Limestone - Two Bidders: US Aggregates, Inc. and South Lake Stone

Class 7 - Culvert Pipe and Guardrail - Two Bidders: Debco Metal Culverts and St. Regis Culvert, Inc.

Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve all timely received bids, hand them over to Duane Werner for review then his recommendation to Commissioners will be at the next meeting. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered Agreement between EMA and FEMA regarding Integrated Public Alert and Warning System/Open Platform for Emergency Networks, **Rob Sabie**, Asst. Director, La Porte County EMA. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Remote Work Policy similar to that adopted in other counties, **Monique Thomas**, Interim H.R. Director. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered updated personnel policy for E-911, **Barb Huston**, Director. This is an addendum to the current policy with changes made to Hiring/Training, page 8 and the dress code, on page 11, was updated as well. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

ORIGINAL

Commissioner Comments

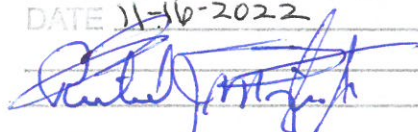
Commissioner Haney, visited offices, attended meetings, Trunk or Treat at the Animal Shelter was fun, Trick or Treat event at the Museum was a great event and attended a Mental Health Summit in Indianapolis. All three branches of our state government were in attendance which was nice. Mental health issue and substance abuse were a few of the topics discussed. Closed with 'light will always vanquish the darkness and justice over a long enough timeline will always triumph over injustice. It's the periods in between that try our commitment and our fortitude. It's the spirit inside us and our commitment to betterment of ourselves and others that will carry the day. The path to get there while seemingly relatively simple is going to be both simple and difficult, it is to simply stand up and state in no certain terms, no.'

Commissioner Mrozinski, on October 25th met with Healthy Communities on the smoke-free air policy. Conversations were held on cigarette sales to minors and smoking in the workplace. As of this morning the EMS Base/County Highway Garage in Rolling Prairie is still progressing, waiting on electric to be connected. Sewer/water extension at Highway 421 and 300 North in Michigan City, part of the Love's project, is also moving forward as well as the project at I-94/Highway 35/Highway 20 area. KIP will soon see a hook-up from the north end from the Canadian National Railroad down to the Travis Ditch then on the other side of the ditch will be JBC Rail to the Travis Ditch with a bridge over the ditch. Once that is done, possibly we will see two Class-1 railroads in the park. Roads out there will be discussed as well. Reminded everyone of Veteran's Day November 11th at 10:30 a.m. at the Civic Auditorium in La Porte with speaker Todd Rokita, Attorney General. Coffee and donuts at 9-9:30 a.m. downstairs for the veterans with a free lunch following the program at VFW Post 1130 on McClung Road in La Porte. On Saturday at the Museum will be a dedication for both the USS Indiana and USS Indianapolis at 2:00 p.m. then on November 19th will be a ceremony for the latest La Porte County Veteran's Recognition Medal here in this room at 10:00 a.m. The medals were originally presented to veterans returning home from WWI in La Porte County. 4-H Poultry Club will have their annual chicken noodle dinner at the fairgrounds this Saturday from 4-7 p.m. Broadband is still moving along in the county. The Office of Community and Economic Development with Tony Rodriguez, Matt Reardon, Mike Seitz, and Bailey McGrath do a great job. Expansion and Retention program is great for our county as well.

Commissioner Matias, La Porte County Works! **Co-Alliance** has two locations in our county, one in Union Mills and one in Rolling Prairie, a modern partnership that organized in the 1920s and was formally established in 2002. The first half of the 20th century saw the development and early success of local farmer owned county cooperatives. By 1960, there was a co-op in every county in Indiana working to serve farmers. Since then, cooperatives have consolidated, and Co-Alliance is the result of the merger of five cooperatives. Co-Alliance is one of the largest, most successful agribusiness and energy marketing and supply cooperatives in the Midwest. They combine industry expertise, high quality products in energy, agronomy, grain marketing, swine/animal nutrition to their customers, both members and nonmembers. The co-op is a service-oriented company owned and operated by people who live in the community, and have a vested interest in supporting those they serve. Being active in the communities and giving back is part of their mission. Co-Alliance is divided into 8 Districts with a representative from each district serving on the governing body, the Board of Directors. The purpose of the Board of Directors is to evaluate the overall direction and strategy of the cooperative business, which has core divisions of Agronomy, Energy, Grain and Swine and Animal Nutrition. The directors are elected by the shareholders to 4- year terms by the shareholders in their district. Their headquarters are in Indianapolis with 80 locations across Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. If you are interested in full time, part-time or seasonal employment and their info will be on our county website. Reminded everyone to support our 4-H at the chicken noodle dinner at the fairgrounds. FMEC continues to meet and make improvements at the fair. Get out and vote on November 8th. Remember to honor our veterans on Veterans' Day.

President Sheila Matias adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 11-16-2022



ATTEST: _____ Auditor
LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL