



**LA PORTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**Joseph Haney
President**

**Connie Gramarossa
Vice President**

**Richard Mrozinski
Member**

**Laporte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. County Complex Room 3 & via Zoom**

President Joe Haney called the meeting to order at 10:11a.m. followed by the Pledge of allegiance led by **Ron Shafer** followed by a moment of silence for **Michelle Bealor**.

Roll Call

Auditor Tim Stabosz called the roll: **President Joe Haney** – Present; **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa** – Present; **Commissioner Rich Mrozinski** Present per Medical Exemption, and Voted via Zoom. **Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.**

Consider Agenda

President Joe Haney asked was there any additions, solutions or corrections to the agenda. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa** motioned a correction to the agenda: **Consideration of Claims under 6b**, a correction to Operating Expenses of \$596,834.63 the amount should be \$207,235.29. **Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Consider Approval of Minutes

President Haney suggested Considered approval of the January 18, 2023 minutes and January 25, 2023 special minutes. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Consideration of Claims

Auditor Tim Stabosz read Claims. Payroll ending 01/20/2023 in the amount of \$1,452,668.44 and Operating Expense Claims as corrected of \$207,235.29. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Public Comment

Reggie Korthas, Environmental Regulatory Specialist, stated she was hired by the county to help the county come into compliance with the federal MS4 permits. There are a number of changes that the state of Indiana has done. She said that dates had changed in July and wanted to supply the county with the updated changes of dates and announcements. She spoke about the requirements of the permit and the timelines. Reggie stated that she wanted to ensure the BOC that at no time has the county ever been out of compliance. Also, she stressed the importance of an impact of being out of compliance could affect your state highway dollars and state revolving loan funds. The next important date is April 1, 2023 and she stated that we had to submit the Storm Water Quality Management Plan updates. Coming into compliance with the permit is something that is always being worked on.

Rodney McCormick, lives in the 1st Ward. He stated he's been living in the 1st Ward since 1978. He says he hope this board, this administration will be more forth coming with information to our community than the last

administration was. He's running for 1st Ward City Councilman and was wondering what's really going on with the city courthouse. Rodney stated the parking is horrible and there's no place to park. The workers are taking up all the parking spaces and there's nowhere for the public to park to do business. He stated that this is unfair to the regular citizens who has to come in and out of that courthouse. He'd would think that someone would have done better design before they went that far. He hopes that there's a plan to alleviate the parking situation and that the plan does not cause a burden to those who visiting the courthouse. There's a lot of rumors, that there are a lot of deficiencies in the design and engineering that went into the renovation and stated we would like to know whether that's true or not. The public has the right to know because there were a lot of boasting and patting themselves on the back. Our last county attorney was not forth coming with the truth on the situation. And he was wondering had anyone went to see what was going on. He stated the workers were working in small spaces with no windows and hopes that someone would get over there to give the public a report about what's going on. Something needs to be done. He thanks the BOC for placing him on boards and open to being placed on other boards coming up. Rodney commented that the BOC has been doing a good work, hopes that they continue to do so, and thanked them.

Department Head Comments/Reports

Sean Fitzpatrick, Director of Facilities detailed updates on the work that's been going on for the past month. He stated that the BOC had in front of them copies of the closed work orders for the month. He stated that his team has been diligent in getting work orders pushed back out of the system as soon as they come in. There's a lot that they we have been working on as far as getting the buildings back up to a standard of repair. As Director of Facilities he feels personally that the buildings up, and the level of repair and the level of cleanliness is what we want to ensure that is consistent across the board. He's put some plans in place to work on that process. Buildings are being assigned to individual maintenance people so that they would be the point person, as far as the go to person when things are going on within certain buildings, so that they would have the heads up on what's going on before it gets to where there could be a major issue, costing the county a lot of money. We are working toward standardizing our operations so that everything is just consistent. Sean thinks this is the best way for us to succeed going forth instead of a cookie cutter process so that things can be done. He stated as far as the work orders, since January of this year, twenty or so days that they have doubled the amount of work orders from last year and previous times. His team is working hard and in regards to what's going on with the flood area, they are not as involved at this time since the process is going to the contractors. Going to put uniform signage with all the buildings. He's looking at whether it's most cost and time efficient to do it in house or farm it out. He working on getting uniform appearance with all of the buildings. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa** commented on the 62 pages of work orders that had been completed, 8 work orders per page, comes out to 496 work orders just since last month, that's impressive and thanked Sean and his team for completing these repairs in a timely manner and thanked Sean for his hard work. Sean replied, that he works as a team and we all put forth the effort. **President Joe Haney** thanked Sean as well, and stated under the new leadership he's seen some improvement, not only in the buildings but in the moral of the individuals, and things are being addressed. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa** went on to comment that Sean has been working with her and the Courthouse Committee, that was assigned to the Michigan City Courthouse to take care any repairs, deficiencies, or complaints in regards to the Michigan City Courthouse. They have been walking through the buildings, speaking with staff, looking at things and trying to figure out what things need to be addressed, completed within warranty, with quality and in a timely manner. The committee is making a checklist as to what needs to be done, the progress, and do intend to keep the public informed. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa** states that **President Joe Haney** has worked out something with the Fifth Third Bank in regards to their parking lot to help accommodate the parking situation at the Michigan City Courthouse and ask for the patience of everyone.

Amanda Lahners, Health Department requested permission to approach the counsel on purchasing new AED units. She stated the ones that they have are past their life span and needing to be replaced. She states she wants to approach the counsel on this and possibly for permission to purchase some additional units. **President Joe Haney** asked her would this be a straight purchase and she stated yes and that they have the monies for the purchase. The cost of the purchase at most would be \$70,000, if they decide to go with the number of units

being requested. **President Joe Haney** stated that he did not see any reason to advertise, it just needed to be sent over to the counsel. **Commissioner Rich Mrozinski motioned** to approve to go to the counsel for purchase. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Allen Stevens, Highway Superintendent stated he had met with our truck vendor. Expected delivery within the next two months. Due to supply chain problems and shortages the vendor told him that if they had any intentions on buying new trucks in the future their order needed to be taken care within the quarter of this year in order to receive delivery in the next two years. There is a light time between order and delivery, needed to get order in sooner than later. The second thing Allen wanted to mention was that due to some personnel vacancies within the county, he stated there was a vacancy on the US 30 Coalition. He would like to request appointment to that position due to the nature of how it would relate to the county road system and our county highway garage in Hanah. Allen stated he would like to make a suggestion to that. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned** to appoint Allen as appointee for the US Coalition position. **President Joe Haney seconded. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski opposed. Motion carried 2-1.**

President Joe Haney reiterated with Allen on the ordering and purchasing of the trucks. Allen stated that if they took action now the delivery would take place in 2025. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned** for Allen Stevens to move forward to the counsel to see if they have any intentions on the purchase of trucks this year. **Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

President Joe Haney made an update on the parking at the Fifth Third Bank and would like to thank them. He stated the county is working things through with them for lease, providing insurance and keeping the lot plowed. There will be designated sports assigned.

Requests

None at this time.

Old Business

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski motioned to remove PTABOA off the table. **Motioned stayed** on the table due to no second. **Motion carried 2-1.**

New Business

Considered approval of the insurance policy renewal for the property insurance for the Fairgrounds real properties with Michiana Insurance. John Jones spoke on the costs and increase within the policy coverage due to inflation rates. R. Jones left a hard copy to be filed. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Board of Finance Investment policy which will supersede any previous investment policy and applies to all financial assets of the County. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Consider County Highway Addendum modifications. **Allen Stevens, Highway Superintendent** stated that some legal changes needed to be reviewed by the attorney. He said there were only a couple of small changes in the county personnel policy because of the nature of the job. This is because of the callouts for emergency snow removal and various things. There were a lot of vague language in the county highway addendum as it pertains to official policy and the expectations as it referred to coming in. Allen asked for the Commission on their review to approve these policy changes. **President Joe Haney** said they looked pretty sound to him. He then asked Attorney Jones what was his decision on this and the attorney stated he had not been provided information of changes and would like to review before making any suggestions or decisions. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve pending legal review. President Joe Haney seconded. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski opposed. Motion carried 2-1.**

Consider bid opening from community Crossing Grant/Paving Project for CR 400 south between Hupp Road and CR 650 W. **Mitch Bishop, County Planner** stated that **Tim Stabosz, Auditor** should have received two bids. One bid was from Milestone and the other one from Rieth and Riley. They were given in sealed envelopes to **Debra Fly-Nelson, Executive Assistant, Board of Commissioners** which in turn given in sealed envelopes to Attorney Jones for review and then turned over to **Mitch Bishop. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski motioned to approve bids were timely received. Commissioner Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Consider permission from **Mitch Bishop, County Planner to approach the Council.** He stated it was the local match portion. He has applied for the funds and part of the application requirement is that a signed letter of commitment has to be completed. This is just more of a formality seeking permission to approach the counsel this month. **Commissioner Rich Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Consider Union Mills Sidewalk Project Right of Way Services contract with VS Engineering. **Mitch Bishop, County Planner** stated this was the second phase of project. The project will include adding a mile of sidewalks along Hamilton Street and Water Street which will connect to the pedestrian bridge over Mill Creek, it's a park there. The second phase of this project is over 80% funded through federal highway. In that, this is going to commence in physical 2024, which would be June/July of this year. The Right of Way Services will consist of appraisal reviews, appraisal services by the VS Engineer. They got a contract for \$89,490 and there also is additional requisition monies as part of their grant. There are nine parcels, we have to buy little slivers of property, not quite enough right of way in certain areas and that's up to \$100,000. And it's all part of this contract. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

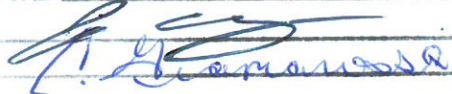
Consider contract with Cender Dalton for ARP related matters for the Auditor's office. **Tim Stabosz, Auditor** stated that the county has been using this firm for the last several years for compliance with the federal government is very important. He asked had the attorney had a chance to review the contract. **Attorney Jones** stated he had looked at the contract and stated his office would like to continue with the firm. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve. Commissioner Rich Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Consider request to pay sick time for retiring employee. **Andrew McGuire, EMS Director** clarified that he was not retiring. **Vance Mercado, EMT** is retiring from EMS after 20 years of service. He went on to say that Vance was very knowledgeable and a compassionate EMT. Andrew said he enjoyed very much working with him for many years. Vance will be greatly missed and hard to replace. Andrew stated he do have the funds available within their budget to pay for this. President Joe Haney asked Andrew to give Vance thanks from the Board of Commissioners for his years of service. **Commissioner Rich Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Adjournment

Commissioner Connie Gramarossa motioned to adjourned at 10:47 a.m. Commissioner Rich seconded. Motioned carried 3-0.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 2-16-23



Connie Gramarossa

ATTEST: 

Auditor
LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL