

**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:05 p.m. (central time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex, 809 State St., La Porte, IN 46350.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Mike Rosenbaum.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Yagelski, followed by a moment of silence for the recently deceased Sherry Waters, a former Councilwoman, two-term Auditor, and two-term Treasurer, as well as the recently fallen Mike Keel, who was slain while on duty as a maintenance foreman at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City.

**ROLL CALL**

Auditor Tim Stabosz called the roll: Councilman Cunningham, Councilman Yagelski, Councilman Kiel, Councilman Rosenbaum, Councilman Novak, Councilman Mollenhauer, and Councilman Koronka were all physically present.

**APPROVAL OF APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 AGENDA**

- i. Mr. Kiel motioned to approve the following changes: 1. Move the Highway Department's request from Old Business to New Business as line-item number four, and change their request to a motion of support, and 2. Remove the Coroner's request for a permission to transfer funds from Coroner Autopsy Fund to the Coroner Non-Reverting Fund off the agenda, seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

## APPROVAL OF MARCH 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

#### **Bill Davis – 9757 W. 100 N., Michigan City**

Mr. Davis approached the Council to voice his concerns over decaying and unsafe homes in the La Porte area, noting specifically there were homes surrounding his that posed a physical danger and decreased the property value of his own home; he also provided the Council with photos of such dangerous homes in La Porte. He explained that he had reached out to the Building Commission on multiple occasions, however was eventually told that there was no ordinance that held the Building Commission responsible for addressing unsafe homes in La Porte County. Mr. Davis countered that he had in fact located an ordinance, under Indiana Code's 151st chapter, that highlighted the duty of the Building Commission to address unsafe homes. Mr. Yagelski advised Mr. Davis to first approach the Commissioners with his grievance before approaching the Council, while Mr. Novak added that he had been meeting with the Building Commission regarding addressing unsafe housing, and that they were currently working on finding a solution to remedy these issues.

Mr. Cunningham asked that the photos provided by Mr. Davis be provided in the April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

### DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

#### **Dion Campbell – Juvenile Services Center Executive Director**

Mr. Campbell introduced himself as the new Executive Director of the La Porte County Juvenile Services Center, and informed the Council that they would be invited to a vision casting session. Mr. Campbell also voiced his concerns over the 5% discrepancy in pay between the Juvenile Services Center employees, reiterating that while the employees had all been promised a 15% pay increase, some only received a 10% pay increase as a result of their job classifications. He explained that when the center brought forward their concerns with the discrepancy in pay in November of 2022, they were informed that meetings would be held to determine a solution to the difference in pay, however it was now April of 2023, and no solution had been presented. He asked the Council to offer the Juvenile Services Center a definitive answer or date to when a solution would be found to bridge the gap between the employees' pay. Mr. Kiel explained that he had met with Waggoner Irwin Scheele & Associates for advice, however due to the complex nature of the County's classification system, more research would need to be done before a

solution could be settled on. Mr. Campbell asked if any meeting were had amongst the Council, to which Mr. Mollenhauer explained that the three-person committee assigned to addressing the difference in pay had not yet met, but planned on meeting in the very near future, and emphasized that the County's classification system was stalling the finding of a solution. Mr. Campbell asked if a resolution could be expected soon, to which Mr. Kiel responded that the Council was intending to meet soon to investigate a resolution.

Council Attorney Guy DiMartino explained that the Council could not provide an exact date that a solution would be made; they could only provide the dates of meetings and events where concerns over the difference in pay was being addressed. He emphasized that the job classifications used by the County were mandated by the State of Indiana, and as such, addressing the pay disparities would potentially require the outright reclassification of affected employees, and the Council would need to work within the law to find a reasonable solution to the issue at hand.

**Barb Huston – E-911 Director & Ron Heeg – Sheriff**

Mr. Heeg and Mrs. Huston approached the Council to inform them that they had both incurred bills to reinstate their FortiGate Firewall service, which entailed a three-year contract in the total of \$35,247.80 for the Sheriff's Department and \$35,247.80 for E-911, payment for which was due on either May 4<sup>th</sup> or May 5<sup>th</sup> of 2023. Mrs. Huston noted that she currently had funding in her E-911 User Fees Fund to pay for the fees outright.

- i. Motion to approve the spending of \$35,247.80 out of E-911 User Fees to pay for a three-year contract with FortiGate for firewall service made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members voted in favor.
- iii. Motion of support for the Sheriff's Department to spend \$35,247.80 (not-to-exceed) made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Novak.

Mr. Yagelski asked why the firewall service had not been budgeted for and required appropriation, to which IT Director Darlene Hale explained that the service was a three-year service, and could not be contracted for on an annual basis, and additionally, the FortiNet device that came with the contract had the potential to extend its end-of-life to four years (one additional year past the three-year contract), relative to whether FortiGate would decide to consider the technology to be outdated.

Mr. Cunningham proposed spending \$12,000 out of the Sheriff's Commissary Fund every year for the three-year contract, which Mr. Mollenhauer stated that he would not vote for, and noted that he would keep his original motion.

- iv. During roll call, five members voted in favor (Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not in favor (Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Yagelski).

**Lynn Swanson – Coroner**

Ms. Swanson approached the Council to share the current statistics of the Coroner's year-to-date investigations. She informed them that 89 deaths were investigated in 2023, up from 82 in 2022. She clarified that drug overdoses had decreased, specifically stating that 8 overdoses had been investigated so far in 2023, down from 12 in 2022. Suicides were currently the same, with 22 currently investigated in 2023 and 22 investigated in 2022. For her final statistic, Ms. Swanson noted that 1 motor vehicle accident had been investigated in 2023, which was down from 3 in 2022.

Ms. Swanson reported that Parafluorofentanyl and Xylozene had been seen in increased illegal drug usage across the state, and were now being included in lab tests, however neither of these drugs had yet been found in La Porte County's lab results in the Coroner's investigations.

Ms. Swanson also noted that the Governor would potentially be signing a bill that, if approved, would require the Coroner of a decedent's residential county to give permission to have another county perform autopsies if said decedent died in a county outside of their residence. She explained that this would save La Porte County money, noting that the La Porte County Coroner owed the St. Joseph Coroner about \$18,000 in 2022, and this would now allow her to decide which out-of-county decedents could be autopsied by other counties. She added that the Governor also planned on removing the additional pay requirement for Coroners who were licensed physicians, adding that in the past, licensed physicians were legally required to be paid 1.5 times the compensation of non-physician Coroners, even though they performed the same work and tasks.

For her final note, Ms. Swanson informed the Council that she had acquired two new deputies in the Coroner's office, one of which had finished their classes and testing, with the other still needing one week of training. This would bring the Coroner's staff up to 7 people – 3 people short of the 10 persons she was looking to have staffed in the department.

**Robert Sabie – EMA Interim Director**

Mr. Sabie reported that EMA's Mitigation Plan would be brought up in the upcoming Commissioner's Meeting for approval, which if approved, when then go before the State of Indiana, followed by FEMA, for their subsequent approval. Following said approval, La Porte County would then be compliant with the Mitigation Plan, and any communities that adopted the plan would be eligible to receive FEMA related funding in the event of particular disasters.

Mr. Sabie also reported that EMA did a damage assessment following the March 31<sup>st</sup> thunderstorms, noting that damage in La Porte County roughly began in the West Union Mills area, going outward to toward 950 East and 75 South. He noted that while a few barns had taken storm damage and that the Highway Department had removed about 40 trees from roads, La Porte County was lucky to have incurred as little damage as it did compared to other counties, as the March 31<sup>st</sup> storms were reported to bring the fourth largest tornado outbreak in recorded Indiana history. Mr. Sabie added that EMA had provided support for firefighters during two woods & field fires, as well as one structure fire in Pleasant Township.

For his final report, Mr. Sabie explained that EMA was working on a county-wide mock disaster program, with a table-top meeting scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup>. He clarified that the mock disaster in question would be a full-scale exercise of a train derailment, with the exercise scheduled to take place on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

#### **Heather Stevens – Clerk**

Mrs. Stevens informed the Council that the proposed \$50 across-the-board pay increase for election workers had been approved by the Election Board, with the requirement that the workers must partake in mandatory election training. She added that the number of election workers had also been greatly reduced by combining precinct voting locations.

Mrs. Stevens thanked Mr. Koronka, the Clerk's Office liaison, for assisting with a few of her employees' tax withholding concerns, and noted her frustration with the Auditor's verbiage in his email correspondence with said employees. Mr. Koronka clarified that most of the issues regarding the County Employees' tax withholdings stemmed from misunderstandings of tax filing laws and how they relate to W-4s. Mr. Rosenbaum noted that he would like to see the creation of a policy that, on an annual basis and preferably around the time that employees select their health insurance plans, requires employees to review their tax withholding information to see if any changes needed to be made. He also noted that the federal government recently changed its withholding tables to avoid giving out large refunds to taxpayers. He pressed the importance of addressing any discrepancies with payroll as soon as possible, and when Mrs. Stevens noted that a few of her full-time employees had zero federal taxes withheld, he clarified that Human Resources and Payroll should not be depended upon for tax advice, however if an employee noticed that no federal taxes were being out of their paycheck, they need to reach out to Payroll to increase the withholding so they may avoid paying large sums of taxes.

#### **Tim Stabosz - Auditor**

Auditor Tim Stabosz explained that the Auditor's Office had gone above and beyond to assist La Porte County employees with their tax filing concerns, adding that the employees of the Auditor's Office and Payroll were not tax advisors. Mr. Stabosz noted that he had been met with off-putting responses from certain employees when he asked them tax-related questions

during the process of trying to answer their concerns about their tax withholding. He thanked his Chief Tax Deputy for looking through the full IRS tax tables for two employees when neither the Auditor's Office nor Payroll were required to assist employees with their withholding information, and added that employees were responsible to ensure that their withholding was correct themselves, or were responsible for hiring their own tax advisors to do so. Mr. Stabosz pressed that the Auditor's Office and Payroll could not offer legal advice on employees' tax withholdings, however noted that if employees wanted the greatest amount of taxes withheld, they should file their withholdings with zero exemptions, and should also file as single even if they were married.

#### **Christen Zabel – Voter Registration**

When Mrs. Zabel approached the Council to voice her frustrations about the Auditor's email correspondence regarding employee tax withholding concerns, Mr. Rosenbaum noted that he would speak with her in person to prevent her concerns from becoming personal with the Auditor, in addition to protecting her privacy and tax information.

#### **Sean Fagan – Prosecutor**

Mr. Fagan introduced himself as the new La Porte County Prosecutor.

### **LIAISON REPORTS**

**Councilman Mollenhauer:** Mr. Mollenhauer reported that he attended the Sheriff's Merit Commission Board Meeting, the Job Evaluation Committee Meeting, and the Solid Waste District Board Meeting. He also attended a presentation where \$10,000 was dispersed to each of La Porte County's 16 volunteer fire departments.

**Councilman Koronka:** Mr. Koronka also attended the presentation of the disbursement of funds to La Porte County's volunteer fire departments, and additionally attended a Purdue Extension Office event, as well as spoke with the entirety of the Building Maintenance staff. Mr. Koronka also met with Chris Havens and Paul Vicari of the La Porte County Soil and Water Conservation District, and advised visiting their website; [laporteswcd.org/shop](http://laporteswcd.org/shop), to access their fundraising and public services offerings.

**Councilman Novak:** Mr. Novak noted that the bathroom project at the La Porte County Fairgrounds had begun, with concrete to hopefully be poured the following week. He added that the La Porte City fireworks event would be held at the Fairgrounds this year, as a joint venture between the City of La Porte and the FMEC, on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Novak also reported that the desperately needed upgrades to the E-911 Center were complete and looked fantastic. Mr. Novak also attended a Redevelopment Commission Meeting, a Complex Flood Meeting, and the presentation of the disbursement of funding to La Porte County's volunteer fire departments. He additionally attended the South County Community Coalition Meeting

regarding the new Department of Corrections Facility that was going to be built in Westville. For his final statement, Mr. Novak noted that things were going well at the Purdue Extension.

**Councilman Kiel:** Mr. Kiel explained that he had been focusing on understanding how the County's funds were being balanced, and noted that while he did find clarification in his research, there was still plenty more to look into regarding the County's finances. He explained that he checked in with his liaisons, and that the Treasurer was now collecting payments for Spring 2023 property taxes, payments for which would be due on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. He attended meetings with four local government units, including the NIRPC Full Commission Meeting, whose federally mandated NWI 250 Plus Action Plan was now up for public comment through May 5<sup>th</sup>. He reminded department heads and public officials that if they were on a committee created by a statute or if they were appointed by another governing body or its presiding officer, they were subject to the Open Door Law, which required that said committees needed to post notice of meetings and notify media outlets that have requested notice of said meetings, in addition to keeping minutes and following all other provisions of Indiana Code 5-14-1.5

**Councilman Yagelski:** Mr. Yagelski waived his liaison report.

**Councilman Cunningham:** Mr. Cunningham waived his liaison report.

**Councilman Rosenbaum:** Mr. Rosenbaum explained that a Redevelopment Commission meeting would take place the upcoming Wednesday, and noted that he had missed the previous meeting. He visited with the Purdue Extension, and noted that Sewer & Water would like to have a workshop with the Council to share information on their current projects, and would be approaching the Council at the next meeting to ask for appropriations for the projects. Regarding FMEC affairs, Mr. Rosenbaum noted that solar light fixtures had been installed at the Fairgrounds entrance, as well as other key locations. He added that he also visited the updated E-911 Center, stating that the upgrades that were made were state-of-the-art. Mr. Rosenbaum also reported that he met with the South County Community Coalition regarding the new Department of Corrections Facility, and that he had been looking into La Porte County's fund balances as well.

### CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

## ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

### **1. Declaratory Resolution – Vanair ERA**

Paul Vincent, Director of the Center for Economic Development, Planning, and Governmental Affairs, approached the Council to inform them that Vanair was requesting the resolution as a first step toward receiving a tax abatement, an abatement which would allow them to make building and manufacturing improvements in the total of \$8.3 million. He added that Vanair was advised by the Council Attorney to set up an economic revitalization area, and an advertised public meeting at the next Council Meeting would follow if the request was given a motion of support.

- i. Motion to read by title only made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.
- iii. Mr. Stabosz read aloud the resolution by title only.
- iv. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- v. All members voted in favor.
- vi. Motion to establish a public hearing for Vanair's Declaratory Resolution ERA made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Novak.
- vii. All members voted in favor.

## OLD BUSINESS

### **1. Public Defenders' Health Insurance**

Mr. DiMartino explained that he had investigated the concerns regarding contracted public defenders receiving County health insurance, and upon speaking with Chief Public Defender Craig Braje, advised adding \$800.00 per month in payment to each of the public defenders' contractual pay, as that was what was allotted for in the budget. He added that Mr. Braje would need to amend public defenders' contracts to allow for this. Mr. Kiel asked what the county would need to do about the premiums that La Porte County had already been paying for, to which Mr. DiMartino explained that the county would just need to absorb the cost.

- i. Motion to approve, with the addition that Mr. Braje amend the public defenders' contracts with a \$800 per month allocation and a 60-day provision period for



public defenders to obtain health insurance privately made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Novak.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Rosenbaum advised making a motion to amend the agenda to add a request for a motion of support for \$3 million to go to the Complex Building's repair.

- i. Motion to amend the agenda and give a motion of support to appropriate \$3 million (not-to-exceed) out of the Emergency Reserve Fund and/or ARP (8950/8951) to pre-fund projects that were still being reviewed by the insurance company for the Complex Building's repair made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Novak clarified that the item would be added to the next Council Meeting's agenda.

**1. Consider approval of Council President's authorization to hire replacement positions for:**

- a. La Porte County Highway Department – Equipment Operator
  - b. La Porte County Prosecutor – Receptionist/Data Entry
  - c. La Porte County 4-H Extension Office – Marketing & Communications and Secretary
- i. Motion to approve items a, b, and c made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Kiel.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**2. La Porte County Small Animal Shelter – Requesting Motion of Support for Truck Repair**

- i. Motion of support in the full amount of \$7,500 made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**3. Schedule Budget Hearings – Suggested dates of July 24<sup>th</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup>**

Mr. Cunningham advised the Council to schedule department heads that were located within the Complex Building in the afternoons during the budget hearings since they were

more localized to the meeting room, and could be strategically scheduled to fill in gaps of time during said meetings.

- i. Motion to schedule the budget hearings at 9:00am on July 24<sup>th</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup>, and one extra day on July 26<sup>th</sup> if budget hearings ran over schedule made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**4. La Porte County Highway – Requesting Permission to Spend from Highway Appropriation in LIT (1112) for Equipment and Trucks, not-to-exceed \$1,300,000.**

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the funding being requested needed to be appropriated so only a motion of support could be made at this time, however Mr. Novak added that \$5 million in LIT went into the Highway Department’s budget every year, and so if the money was being taken from those funds, the Council would need to vote for permission to spend. Chief Deputy Auditor Rhonda Graves clarified that the funds could be authorized out of LIT, however the Highway Department would need to return to the Council at the next meeting if they wanted funds taken out of LRS. Mr. DiMartino asked if there would be a better use for the LIT funding in the future if it was not going to be used for this request, noting that only about \$3 million of the previous year’s \$5 million LIT allotment was utilized. Highway Department Superintendent Allen Stevens informed the Council that he would prefer the funds be taken out of LRS, as LIT was usually utilized to pay for chipseal, oil, stone, and paving funds, and emphasized that he had an aggressive chipseal program scheduled for 2023 that he wanted to direct LIT funds towards. He added that he would return to the Council to request an appropriation for LRS funding to pay for part of the Highway Department’s stone purchase.

- i. Motion to approve permission to spend \$1.3 million (not-to-exceed) out of the Highway Department’s budgeted LIT (1112) funds made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, AND REQUESTS**

**La Porte County Drug Free Partnership**

Requesting Permission to Spend from County Drug Free Community Fund (1148) for:

Distribution of the funds collected between April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023      \$59,737.70

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Adult Probation**

Requesting Permission to Spend from Probation User Fee Account #2102-41007-000-334 for:  
Purchase of New Equipment – computers, laptop, printer, software, and mixer \$7,630

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Circuit Court**

Requesting Permission to Spend from Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Account  
#2503-30135-000-273 for:  
New Laptop and Software

\$1,382.02

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Community Corrections**

Requesting Permission to Spend from County Correction Fund Misdemeanant Account  
#1175.02028.000.0591 for:  
New Washers and Dryers

\$12,835.63

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Coroner**

Requesting Permission to Spend from Coroner Non-Reverting Fund (2053) for:  
Hotel Rooms for Coroner's Conference not-to-exceed \$1,000

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**Redevelopment Commission**

Requesting Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat  
(1191) or Wintax (4220) or ARP (8951) for:  
KIP Rail Connectivity CSX Park Connection

\$525,000

- i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8951) made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

Separately, Redevelopment Commission Coordinator Matt Reardon informed the Council that the RDC would be approaching them to request support in the form of \$600,000 in front-funding to pay for repairs on the wooden trestle bridge in Kingsbury. Mr. Reardon noted that the Redevelopment Commission planned to pay back any front-funding that was loaned to them once they in turn received funding from the READI Grant.

- i. Motion of support made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Auditor**

Requesting Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety (1170) for:

Raises that were approved during Budget Hearings for POLE Positions \$933,305.22

Mr. Cunningham noted that the request should be for a permission to transfer funds as the money had already been appropriated, and proposed that the Council Attorney prepare an ordinance to allow for the regular transfer of funds to pay the POLE positions salaries so the Council would not need to address it every quarter of the year. Mr. Rosenbaum explained that the item was only going to be brought before the Council in 2023, as it was not budgeted for during previous budget hearings, and once it was addressed in future budget hearings, it would no longer need to go before the Council. Mr. Stabosz noted that he was wary of transferring the funds from LIT Public Safety, as it had strict spending requirements that the General Fund did not have. He added that, year-to-date, all of the POLE positions had been paid from the General Fund. Mr. DiMartino recommended making a motion to transfer or appropriate, relative to what the State Board of Accounts required. Chief Deputy Auditor Rhonda Graves indicated that nothing had been appropriated and that department heads had been paying the difference out of General, which Mr. Novak stated that the purpose of the motion was to replenish the funds that had been taken out of General to pay POLE positions. Mr. Rosenbaum added that the POLE position employees could also be paid out of LIT Public Safety instead of splitting their salaries from both General and LIT Public Safety, until the difference could be made equal again, and then the item could be revisited again at the next Council Meeting. Mr. Kiel confirmed with Mr. DiMartino that, in the future, the Council would pay POLE positions by using funding from both Public Safety LIT and General once it was budgeted, which Mr. DiMartino affirmed.

- i. Motion to either transfer or appropriate the \$933,305.22 from LIT Public Safety (1170) made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Sheriff's Department**

Requesting Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety (1170) or Riverboat (1191) or Wintax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Sheriff's Merit Overtime

\$60,000

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Sheriff's Department**

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Opioid Restricted Funds (1237) for:

TruNarc Drug Test Equipment

\$36,004

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Commissioners**

Requesting Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety (1170) or Riverboat (1191) or Wintax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Sirens

\$72,000

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Commissioner Joe Haney explained to the Council that 5 sirens were currently down, and to fully replace a single siren in its entirety, the cost would run roughly \$42,000 to \$43,000. He proposed taking the proposed funds that were to be directed to the siren study and instead directing them toward the cost to repair the 5 downed sirens, as well as having the siren study done in 2024, as the Council might be unsure how much they could offer in appropriation for the sirens' repairs anyway. Mr. Novak noted that, without the study being done, the Council would be unsure as to whether the 5 sirens needed to be fully replaced at all, and recommended that a full report on the condition of La Porte County's sirens be performed. Mr. Kiel asked why the quote for the study was so high when La Porte County only has 52 sirens and the timeframe for the reporting would only run for four weeks, meaning that only 2 sirens would be studied per day. Commissioner Gramarossa explained that there was an overlap between some of the sirens' ranges, and once they were analyzed, it could be determined which sirens could be moved to serve higher concentrations of La Porte County residents. She emphasized the importance of the sirens if cell phones would lose signals and not relay storm warnings.

Mr. Yagelski noted that the sirens' upkeep was previously not under the jurisdiction of the County, and that they had been originally established and upkept by their respective townships, which also explained some of the physical locations of the sirens.

Mr. Kiel estimated that it would cost roughly \$1,400 to study each siren, which he thought was excessive when the Council knew that some of these sirens were working and not in a state of disrepair. He asked if Marquiss was the only company that had been approached regarding a quote to study the sirens, to which Mrs. Gramarossa explained that Marquiss was the preferred contractor from American Signal, the provider of the county's sirens. Mr. Novak added that a portion of the bill was to pay American Signal, and the remaining portion of the bill would be paying the selected electrical contractor. Mr. Kiel noted that he would prefer to see more estimates from different contractors for the cost of the study. Mr. Novak asked what other contractors would be available to perform the study, to which Interim Director of EMA Robert Sabie explained that only one other service was available in the area, which was Federal Signal, however La Porte County specifically utilized American Signal equipment and technology.

Mrs. Gramarossa proposed establishing a committee to discuss the selection of the vendor for the siren study. Mr. Novak stated that he would prefer that the Council make a definitive decision on whether to go through with the study and the repair of the sirens, as storm season was nearing.

- ii. Mr. Novak withdrew his original motion.
- iii. Motion to move the item to review by a committee made by Mr. Kiel and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- iv. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Koronka) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Novak, Mr. Mollenhauer).

Mr. Kiel, Mr. Novak, and Mr. Koronka all volunteered to be a part of the committee. When Mr. Rosenbaum asked when a solution would be found, Mr. Kiel noted that the committee would meet within a week to find a solution and present it at the next Council Meeting.

#### COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Novak asked the room to keep Treasurer Joie Winski and her husband in their thoughts and prayers, and additionally commended Jack Arnett for his 42 years of working with Pop Warner, as well as his son Derrick Arnett, who also worked diligently with Pop Warner.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- i. Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**Examined & Approved by the La Porte County Council this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2023.**

  
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Councilman Earl Cunningham

  
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Councilman Adam Koronka

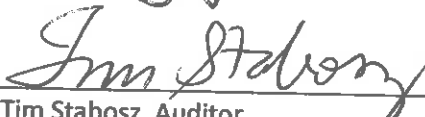
  
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Councilman Justin Kiel

  
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Councilman Mike Mollenhauer

  
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Councilman Randy Novak

  
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Councilman Mike Rosenbaum

  
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Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Stabosz, Auditor



**Rally Homes, LLC, (Rasheed Ally) 524 N Shebel Road, Michigan City, Parcel ID 460534400005000046  
Burned out since at least 2017, sold to new owner in 2022; Photo posted on Beacon.**



**Ricky & Rhonda Deutscher Trustees, 9565 W 100 N, Michigan City, Parcel ID 460528400001000046  
(abandoned since at least 2010, roof collapsed in 2021)**





**Patricia Wroblewski et al, 9985 W 100 N, Michigan City, Parcel ID 460528300018000046**



**James R & Karen Wroblewski, W 100 N, Michigan City, Parcel ID 460533200015000046**



**Richard S Schlene, 277 N US 421 Michigan City, Parcel ID 460533300018000046**