



# LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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(219) 326-6808 ext. 2229

**Connie Gramarossa**  
President

**Richard Mrozinski**  
Vice President

**Joseph Haney**  
Member

## **La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes** **Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. County Complex Room 3 & via Zoom**

**President Connie Gramarossa** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Steve Holifield. Commissioner Mrozinski asked for a moment of silence for the victims of the wildfires in Hawaii.

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

**Considered the agenda. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to move item 'k' up to the top of New Business. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motin carried 3-0.**

**Considered approval of the July 19, 2023 minutes. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motin carried 3-0.**

**Auditor Tim Stabosz** read the Claims with Payroll ending 8/4/2023 - \$1,480,807.46 and Operating Expense Claims - \$6,680,397.54. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. President Gramarossa** reported the amount is due to the pay outs to the Township Trustees. On April 6, 2023, a check was received from the insurance carriers in the amount of \$16,986.08 for a 2020 Ford Escape vehicle, this vehicle was involved in an accident while President Gramarossa was driving. KB Kustoms repaired the vehicle and the invoice was for \$18,614.63. This invoice has not been paid yet due to requiring 2 Commissioners' signatures. There is a \$1,000 deductible. The difference between the repair invoice and the amount paid from the insurance is \$1,628.55. **Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

### **Public Comment**

**Steve Holifield**, 6782 E. 100 S., Mill Creek, questions on the Franklin Street Bridge. Are we looking at the infrastructure bill? He was reminded that this is not question/answer time. The bickering and constant fighting between each other needs to end. We all may not get along however you were elected to do a job. He doesn't get along with his Township Trustee but as a board member they have a job to do, and they do it. September 28<sup>th</sup> there is a meeting with the State Senate on a workshop for local government reform. He plans on speaking at the workshop. Do your job on behalf of the taxpayers please.

**John Stamos**, 218 Chickadee Trail, Michiana Shores, a lack of a noise ordinance brought him to the meeting tonight. Spoke to Commissioner Mrozinski earlier in the day, greatly appreciated it. Assured the County is working on it. In the unincorporated area of Michiana Shores, a house was recently built which included a \$50,000 outdoor sound system. It's a problem for year-round residents.

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**Rodney McCormick**, 617 Union Street, Michigan City, setting the record straight, he never said he received an email from Connie Gramarossa or any elected official. Next, he brought up a personnel issue, this was after he saw the disturbing email. Discipline, according to the county policy, there are five steps leading up to termination. He knows of two individuals that were terminated without a chance to correct their behavior or tone. Why are evaluations done without allowing the employees to look at or sign them? This is nothing against the new secretary. I listen when I come to these meetings. When a job comes open, why isn't it posted? Why wasn't the secretary's job posted? I don't understand. Monique Thomas is still 'interim' Human Resources Director. Spent \$15,000 for a company to find a director to 'unseat' that position. He went back to the email, basically it said the County Elected Officials are practicing racism, to a degree. Being portrayed as bigots. He has heard that touching someone is an automatic termination. We know that is not true, there was an incident at the highway department. Thanked the Commission for allowing him to speak. He feels like part of the family here and if any of the Commission would like to speak to him after the meeting, it doesn't have to be in public, but he would appreciate an answer as to why an incident happened the way it did.

**Debra Fly-Nelson**, Michigan City, noticed she is one of the items on the agenda. Since she will not be allowed to speak on the issue, she will do it now under Public Comment. Disappointed in the whole process, believes she is being removed or terminated from her position as secretary based solely on her not being trained properly. Focus is on a budget, according to her job description it was *not* in her job description. 'The confidential secretary to the Board of Commissions compiles data and collects information for special reports and projects and assists with annual budget preparation.' Assist, not present or prepare. She stated she was put in a tough situation as secretary. Under county policy, she was never given a performance evaluation. She was reminded this is public comment, not a time to cast aspersions and limit it to three minutes.

#### Department Reports/Comments

**Heather Stevens**, Clerk, several meetings have been held in the Complex in the evening and the door has been locked.

**Reggie Korthals**, item audit has come back. In the MS4 storm water permit as its issued under the Clean Water Act, there are five minimum control measures that need to be met for compliance in the permit, unfortunately the County was unable to meet most of them. The process now is 30 days (September 15) to develop a plan. It is sent to IDEM for approval, but it's not actually permit compliance, once approved then the County works to create a Storm Water Quality Management plan, Water Quality Characterization, Illicit Discharge (inaudible) of all inspections.

**Ela Bilderback**, Recorder, reported on cleaning the vault with her records. Four antique chairs need to be moved, the museum has a few already. She will find a new home for them. A project for the old books to protect them.

**Commissioner Rich Mrozinski**, toured the Complex, saw the work being done. It is unfortunate that the project was delayed for 4-5 weeks but it is now coming along.

#### Old Business

None

#### New Business

**Considered** ratifying Commission President's removal of Debra Fly-Nelson as Commission Administrative Assistant and Approving re-hire/reappointment of Former Commissioners' Administrative Assistant Diane Gonzales. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. President Gramarossa stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-0. Commissioner Haney recused himself.**

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**Considered** permission for La Porte County Solid Waste District to use County Fairgrounds to host a Tire Amnesty Event on September 16, 2023 - Clay Turner, Executive Director. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** permission for Ela Bilderback and Chief Deputy Angie Rose to attend conference October 2-4, 2023, in Davenport, Iowa. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** permission to approach the Council for additional appropriations due to budget shortfalls - Sean Fitzpatrick, Director of Facilities. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** permission to approach the Council for additional appropriations for part-time assistant and for repairs/equipment - Dakota Euler, Weights and Measures. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** Bridge 214 Bridge Replacement contract with SJCA Engineers - Mitch Bishop, Planner. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** Bridge 7 Bridge Replacement contract with HWC Engineers - Mitch Bishop, Planner. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** permission to approach the Council to spend from Non-Reverting Fund for remote starts on transport vehicles - Lynn Swanson, Corner. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** Council's recommendation of Paul Vicari as MS4 Coordinator, Chris Havens as MS4 Administrator, and Mike Polan as MS4 Program Supervisor/Enforcement Officer. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. President Gramarossa stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** seeking Council funding for renewed contract with Butler, Fairman & Seufert for IDEM/EPA compliance issues for MS4 program. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** adopting MS4 Advisory Board and appointing a member. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Commissioner Connie Gramarossa as a member. President Gramarossa stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay. Reggie Korthals, in 2006 when the permits were issued, the MS4s identified in La Porte County were the County, the City of La Porte, Town of Long Beach, Town of Trail Creek, and the City of Michigan City all came together and had one co-permit with the State of Indiana. In 2021, when the new general administrative permits came out, each entity decided to do their own, so they are no longer partnering unless they develop a Memorandum of Understanding. Commissioner Haney apologized, he misheard the designated board therefore he withdrew his 'Nay' vote and motion carried 3-0.**

**Considered** Commissioners' appointment to EMA Board and Hazmat Board. **Commissioner Joe Haney motioned to appoint himself, Joe Haney, on both boards. Died for lack of second. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint himself, Rich Mrozinski, on both boards. President Gramarossa stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Joe Haney - Nay.**

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**Commissioner Mrozinski** stated Broadband is a hot subject right now in our County. A meeting will take place in this room, the County Complex, on Friday at 1:00 p.m. and everyone is invited to attend.

**Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to adjourn at 6:38 p.m. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA  
DATE 9-6-2023

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
*[Handwritten Signature]*  
*WBY*

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ Auditor  
LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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