



**LA PORTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Connie Gramarossa
President

Richard Mrozinski
Vice President

Joseph Haney
Member

**La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 15, 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.

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

Considered the agenda. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to add to the agenda: 1.) Consider** Contract with INDOT for reimbursement of road restoration for a detoured route within La Porte County, and **2.) Consider** motion urging both Plan Commission and MS4 to table any consideration of proposed Sable Estates Subdivision for disputed parcel at Schultz Road & 400 West until pending litigation is resolved. **Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered approval of the November 1, 2023 minutes. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Auditor Tim Stabosz read the Claims with Payroll ending 10/27/2023 - \$1,481,649.31 and Operating Expense Claims - \$4,728,015.61. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve payroll. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Haney motioned to approve the claims. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.** **President Gramarossa** questioned whether 3 bills for a vendor for work done in September was included in the claims amount. **Auditor Stabosz**, he knows additional appropriations is on the Council's agenda for these invoices. **President Gramarossa**, asked Assistant Gonzales for the amount that one of the invoices was broken down into 3 smaller ones. **Assistant Gonzales**, \$502,020.22. **Auditor Stabosz**, we have to add items 5 days before and would recommend if any invoices pertain to the complex project, then authorize expedites of those invoices and they can be paid prior to the next meeting. **President Gramarossa**, email received from the Deputy Auditor stating they would be added in to the claims at this meeting. **Auditor Stabosz**, does not believe they were added to these claims.

Public Comment

Tim Shortt, Marine Corp League/Toys for Tots, boxes are now available for Toys for Tots at approximately 170 locations throughout our County. Last year about 14,000 toys were collected and he looks forward to collecting more than that amount this year. Last pick up date will be December 18th. Partnered with Salvation Army, toys will be merged then distributed to those in need for a great Christmas. Also reported on the Devil Dogs, a social group of the Marine Corp, they donate money to a children's hospital in the host city they happen to be in and this year it was Oklahoma City. A check in the amount of \$74,000 was presented to the Oklahoma City's children's hospital. One floor can buy equipment they need plus take care of the children and their families that are in the hospital. Tim will have a report in February for the Commissioners on Toys for Tots collections.

Department Reports/Comments

Steve Eyrick, Adult Probation, on behalf of the La Porte offices that suffered during the flood in December 2022. Just moved back in the offices August 24th, a great job was done to restore the department. Since moving back in they have not had maintenance back in with a broom, mop or vacuum. There is dirt on the floor. He listed dates that maintenance was contacted, requesting cleaning for their offices. Several elected officials have reached out to the Director of Facilities to ensure Adult Probation was on the regular cleaning schedule. Stains on the floor, dirt throughout the halls, a dead bug in the waiting area and clumps of hair/dust, like tumbleweeds out west. Why is his office not getting cleaned? They've

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been back in their offices 84 days and it has not been cleaned. **President Gramarossa**, she visited the offices with Facilities' Director Sean Fitzpatrick, she asked Steve if he had stated he bought a vacuum for his office. **Steve Eyrick**, he bought a dust mop, Swiffer and a vacuum. Discussion took place, Steve said his staff works for all five courts in the County and there is no additional time to clean the offices, especially when the other offices are getting cleaned by Housekeeping/Maintenance Department. **Commissioner Haney motioned to have Building Maintenance Department clean Adult Probation offices. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded so the meeting can move forward. Motion carried 2-0. President Gramarossa did not vote.**

Matt Reardon, Office of Economic Development, reported that Broadband process continues with the internet providers. Grant money does not come directly to the County but to the providers. Redevelopment Commission and the Office of Economic Development will meet soon to discuss the plans/goals for the 2024 year.

Commissioner Joe Haney, updated the Commission on Broadband, he attended several meetings and high-speed internet was discussed. The main issue he heard was how do people take the high-speed internet 'test' if there is no access to the internet, he announced there is now an 800 number being set up to call and complete the survey, should be available around the first of the year.

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski, gave a 'shout-out' to Planner Mitch Bishop who landed a million dollar grant with Community Crossings and should get full credit for his efforts.

Requests

Considered sick days pay for Laura Depyssler who is leaving the County after 22 ½ years, **Rich Stalbrink**, Superior Court 2. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Solar Lighting to be installed on the North and South side of Johnson Road at the driveway entrance to the Center Township Fire Department. Center Township Trustee Lisa Pierzakowski informed the Commission that the fire department would pay for the signs and any cost of installation however there may be a need with the actual installation. Depending on the size of the poles would determine if the highway department is able to assist or not. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Old Business

Considered recommendation for material bids for the 2024-year, **Charity Glaser**, Interim Highway Superintendent. Seven classes were bid out:

Class 1 - Crushed Limestone: US Aggregates and South Lake Stone - Both bids accepted;

Class 2 - Bituminous Patching/Rap Materials: Rieth-Riley, Central Paving and Milestone - All 3 bids accepted;

Class 3 - Blast Furnace Crushed Slag - No bids;

Class 4 - Gravel, Dirt, Top Soil Sand: Area Excavating - One bid, accepted;

Class 5 - No-Lead, Diesel and E-85: Triple J-Mar - One bid, accepted;

Class 6 - Signs and Sign Posts: Michael Todd Industrial Supply - One bid, rejected due to high cost compared to this year;

Class 7 - Culvert Pipe and Guardrail: Debeco Metal Culverts - One bid, accepted. **Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve the recommendations. Commissioner Haney seconded with a friendly amendment to give preference to the lowest bids when possible. Motion carried 3-0. President Gramarossa**, will the Class with the rejected bid be readvertised? **Charity** replied yes, in the spring with the paving bids.

New Business

Considered Worker's Compensation renewal - John Jones, Michiana Insurance, December 7th is the renewal date for Worker's Compensation, this year there are two competitive proposals: Bitco, our current provider and Key Risk, a Berkley Company, rated as an A+ carrier. Although both companies are great, Key Risk's proposal premium is 39% lower than the Bitco proposal. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0. ***Bitco ends 12-31-2023**

Considered an Ordinance for approved Plan Commission rezoning in Springfield Township. **Tom Cowen**, Zaremba Group out of Cleveland, Ohio. Developer requesting a rezone for a very small portion of land for a Dollar General on Highway 20. Less than half an acre, not big enough for a Dollar General however it will be combined with what has been rezoned about two years ago, one and a half acre which will give the developer two acres for the store. Two years ago,

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Dollar General had intended to build a 9,100 square foot store but there were several delays that included INDOT work in that area and the seller had to do infrastructure work on a sanitary line. The delays caused Dollar General to say they'd come back later and the deal was halted. This year they returned, the store will now be a 12,480 square foot Dollar General Market Store with fresh food, produce and more frozen food. The delay was good for the customer.

Commissioner Haney motioned to approve on First Reading. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Roll call: Commissioner Haney - Aye, Commissioner Gramarossa - Aye, Commissioner Mrozinski - Aye. There were no remonstrators. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to suspend the rules. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Roll call: Commissioner Gramarossa - Aye, Commissioner Mrozinski - Aye, Commissioner Haney - Aye. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve the rezone on Second Reading. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Roll call: Commissioner Gramarossa - Aye, Commissioner Haney - Aye, Commissioner Mrozinski - Aye. *Ordinance 2023-2**

Considered Holiday/Vacation Pay for employees, Dion Campbell, JSC Director. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Juvenile Service Center only.

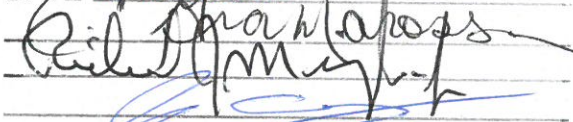
Considered Insurance Renewal for employees, Craig Menne, President of General Insurance. County maintains a partially self-funded plan, meaning the County is really the primary insurance company, excess coverage is purchased and currently Berkley is the provider. RFPs were received for both administrator and stop-loss. The initial renewal came in with a 14 1/2 % increase but was worked down to 8.5%. Recommendation is UMR as the Administrator and Berkley as the Stop-Loss carrier with the 8.5% increase. There were 2 other proposals: Symetra at 13.5% increase and Anthem at a 22.6% increase. Underwriting considerations included: Overall covered employees increased from 508 in 2022 to 550 in 2023, an increase of 8.3%; Inpatient Utilization increased 24.7% from the prior year; Emergency Room visits increased 8.4% from prior year and Cancer represents 50% of all high-cost claims. Commissioner Haney motioned to approve the recommendations. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered Contract with INDOT for reimbursement of road restoration for a detoured route within La Porte County. Charity Glaser, Interim Highway Department Superintendent, Highway 6 was closed for a bridge project about five months, the unofficial detour was 550 East and 1000 South, there was a lot of traffic on the roads. INDOT agreed to help offset the cost of repairs to the roads. Spot paving was done on 1000 South and 550 East was paved from the landmark to 1000 South. The cost was \$202,997.13 and INDOT is offering reimbursement at \$146,886.65 leaving \$56,000 on the Highway Department. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered the ongoing MS4 and Plan Commission case with D&M's proposed Sable Estates Subdivision, requesting MS4 to table any further action until the current litigation outcome is known and authorize our attorney to gather information and share with the Board of Commissioners at the next meeting December 6th. Attorney Scott Pejic, this is an MS4 permit application for property known as Sable Estates which is on D&M property on 400 West. The motion is to direct MS4 to **not accept or reject the application but to allow further attorney review because there is litigation pending concerning the same area in Porter Superior Court so he needs two weeks to look into it for further review. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski motioned to adjourn at 6:33 p.m. Commissioner Joe Haney seconded. Motion carried.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 12-6-2023



ATTEST: _____
Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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