



# 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' Reorganization Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 3, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. County Complex Room 3 & via Zoom**

**Auditor Tim Stabosz** called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rodney McCormick.

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

**Auditor Tim Stabosz** asked for a nomination for President of the Board of Commissioners. **Commissioner Rich Mrozinski** motioned to keep the same officers as last year. **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa** seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioners Gramarossa and Mrozinski - Aye, Commissioner Haney - Nay. Auditor Stabosz handed the meeting over to Board President Gramarossa.

Considered the agenda. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve the agenda. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered approval of the December 20, 2023 minutes. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Auditor Tim Stabosz** read the Claims with Payroll ending 12/29/2023 - \$1,499,834.57. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve payroll. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0. **Auditor Stabosz** read the Operating Expense Claims - \$850,258.31. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve the claims. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

### **Considered Appointments of Department Heads and Professional Advisors:**

**Insurance Agencies of Record** - **Commissioner Haney** motioned to appoint Michiana Insurance and General Insurance. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Financial Advisors** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Cender & Company. **Commissioner Haney** seconded by adding Baker Tilly as well. **Auditor Stabosz**, we use Baker Tilly for the GAAP financial statements. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded the adding of Baker Tilly. Motion carried 3-0.

**Attorney** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned for L. Scott Pejic. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Animal Shelter Director** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Eric Hayes. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Building Department Director** - **Commissioner Haney** motioned to appoint Michael Polan. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Community Corrections Director** - **Commissioner Haney** motioned to appoint Mericka Beaty. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Engineer** - **Commissioner Haney** motioned to appoint Jerry 'Jay' Sullivan. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Highway Superintendent** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Charity Glaser. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Director of Planning and Regulatory Affairs** - **Commissioner Haney** motioned to appoint Mitch Bishop. **Commissioner Mrozinski** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Office of Community and Economic Development** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint MCR (Matt Reardon). **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**EMA Director** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Rob Sabie. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

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**EMS Director** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Andrew McGuire. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0. President Gramarossa, should there be discussion on this appointment? Commissioner Haney seconded it, however, would like to see what we have scheduled turns out before any decisions are made at this point.

**E-911 Director** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Barb Huston. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Museum Curator** - Commissioner Haney motioned to appoint Danielle Adams. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Parks Superintendent** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Jeremy Sobecki. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Hazmat Director** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Jeff Hamilton. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Director of Facilities** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Sean Fitzpatrick. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Veterans Service Officer** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Eduardo Lozano. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Mrozinski thanked outgoing VSO Joe Golec for his five years on the job for the County assisting our Veterans.

**Weights and Measures Inspector** - Commissioner Haney motioned to appoint Dakota Euler. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

#### **Considered Boards and Appointments:**

**La Porte County Public Library Board** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to retain Corey Campbell and Bonnie Snider. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Alcohol Beverage Commission** - Commissioner Haney motioned to appoint Ron Schafer. Died for lack of a second. Commissioner Haney motioned to appoint Rodney McCormick. Died for lack of a second. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Jon Nebelung. Died for lack of a second. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded Rodney McCormick. Motion carried 2-0. Commissioners Mrozinski and Haney - Aye. No vote from President Gramarossa.

**Animal Control Board** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to keep the current Members. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Record shows Dr. Patrick Dorroh, Dr. Lisa Polazzi, LuAnn Troxel and Rich Mrozinski as members appointed by this Commission.

**Board of Construction Review** - President Gramarossa stepped down to nominate Marcella Kunstek. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Board of Health** has been restructured according to the State. Commissioner Haney motioned to reappoint Dr. Patrick Dorroh. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to reappoint Dr. Georgette Manning-Cox. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Board of Zoning Appeal** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Ernie Schmidt. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Community Corrections Advisory Board** - Commissioner Haney motioned to appoint Robert Vaughn Galloway, Rodney McCormick and Dan Nowaczyk. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0. \*\*\*Need one more appointment, possibly at our next meeting.

**Convention and Visitors Bureau** - President Gramarossa stepped down and motioned to appoint Mike Seitz and Diane Gonzales. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Haney - Nay.

**Drainage Board** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Joe Cuson. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Economic Development Commission** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to retain the same Board. President Gramarossa stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**E-911 Advisory Board** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to retain the same Board. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Fair Management & Events Corporation** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to reappoint President Gramarossa to the Board. President Gramarossa stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

**Pioneer Cemetery Commission** - Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to reappoint Sue Webster. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Plan Commission** - Commissioner Haney motioned to appoint John Watson. Commissioner Mrozinski seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Property Tax Assessment & Board of Appeals** - Commissioner Haney motioned to appoint Ken Purze. Died for lack of seconded. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to appoint Lisa Moore. Commissioner Haney reminded the Board Ken Purze is the only Level 3 Assessor on the Board. President Gramarossa, only a Level 2 is needed, and Matt Bernacchi is a Level 2. Auditor Tim Stabosz respectfully asked to comment on nominee Lisa Moore, she has a dual Homestead or had a Homestead incorrectly on a property and his office had to take it away therefore he respectfully asked to consider that on her appointment, he would oppose it. President Gramarossa questioned whether Auditor Stabosz researches all the appointments made by the Commissioners. Auditor

Stabosz was not even aware that Lisa Moore was going to be nominated, the Homestead issue was recent, and it would be inappropriate for someone who cheated the County to be on that Board. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Lisa Moore. **President Gramarossa**, since the Auditor has made allegations, maybe we should come back later for this appointment so this resident can speak for herself. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Matt Bernacchi and Amy Blind. **President Gramarossa** stepped down and seconded. Motion carried 2-1. **Commissioner Haney - Nay.**

**Public Defender Board** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Nate Loucks. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Redevelopment Commission** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to reappoint Mark Parkman, Tom Fath, Scott Cooley and Rich Mrozinski to the RDC Board. **Commissioner Haney** seconded Mark Parkman, Tom Fath and Scott Cooley. **President Gramarossa** stepped down and seconded the four reappointments, including **Commissioner Mrozinski**. Motion carried 2-0. **Attorney Pejic** pointed out Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member Rhonda Spence's seat is up as well. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to include Rhonda Spence in his motion. **President Gramarossa** stepped down and seconded. **Commissioner Haney - Nay.** Motion carried 2-1.

**Regional Bus Authority** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Rodney McCormick. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Regional Sewer & Water District** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to appoint Marcella Kunstek. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

#### **Considered Liaison Appointments:**

**Animal Control Board** - **Commissioner Haney** motioned for **Commissioner Mrozinski**. **Commissioner Mrozinski** Seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Community Corrections** - **Commissioner Gramarossa** nominated **Commissioner Haney**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Drainage Board** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**E-911 Board** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated himself. **Commissioner Gramarossa** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Fair Board** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated himself. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0. **Fairgrounds Management & Events Corporation** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Gramarossa** seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

**Highway Department** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Job Evaluation** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Juvenile Service Center** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Haney**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Kankakee River Basin & Yellow River Basin Development Commission** - **Commissioners Mrozinski** and **Haney** nominated **Commissioner Mrozinski**. **Commissioner Gramarossa** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Museum** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated himself. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Northwest Indiana Regional Plan Commission (NIRPC)** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Gramarossa** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Pioneer Cemetery Commission** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Plan Commission** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Haney**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Redevelopment Commission** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated himself. **Commissioner Gramarossa** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Regional Sewer District** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Haney**. **Commissioner Haney** politely declined. **Commissioner Gramarossa** nominated **Commissioner Mrozinski**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Right-to-Know** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated himself. **Commissioner Gramarossa** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Solid Waste Management District Board** - All three Commissioners are appointed to the Board.

**Weights and Measures** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Workforce Development** - **Commissioner Mrozinski** nominated **Commissioner Gramarossa**. **Commissioner Gramarossa** declined. **Commissioner Gramarossa** nominated **Commissioner Haney**. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**Designation of Publication** - Legal Notice/Commission Meeting Agendas/Public Notices. **Commissioner Mrozinski** motioned to approve La Porte County Herald Dispatch and Regional News. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

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### Public Comment

**Commissioner Mrozinski** read into the record the Policy to Encourage Effective and Efficient Use of Public Comment. Stated not required by law to have a Public Comment on the agenda but it is done as a service. \*\*\***Policy attached to Minutes.** **Attorney Pejic**, Board of Commissioners have always had and encouraged Public Comment. When looking at the past year, we would like to have civil discourse, respectful discourse and show decorum in our meetings. Pursuant to the Open Door Law, the Public has a right to observe and record the County doing business, that is the Public's absolute right, but with respect to Public Comment, there is no right to do that, but it is offered. To conduct business for the County at meetings in the future, should personal attacks or personal motives be commented upon, he will ask that the meeting move on from Public Comment or entertain a recess, he is not an elected official however he is hired by the Board, the meetings are to conduct County business and that is what we will do. **Commissioner Haney**, Indiana State Statute does not require us to have Public Comment, he believes the people have a right to a redress of government and if Public Comment is not allowed then that is not a representative of a constitutional republic. It is crucial to our form of government.

**Rodney McCormick**, 617 Union Street, Michigan City, thanked the Board for the appointments and he will attend every meeting.

**Tommy Kulavik**, 1316 Ohio Street, Michigan City, via Zoom, commented on Commissioner Mrozinski's disclaimer on Public Comment. Solid Waste will be outsourcing their Recycling pick-ups from Elkhart.

**Sheila Matias**, 1400 Lake Shore Drive, Michigan City, here to correct the record from our last meeting. When you are a Public Official, people can say things about you, and you learn to deal with it, but as a private citizen, the rules change. You do not have to listen to lies and your family name is thrown in the mud. At the last meeting, a long discussion was held over insurance with an amount of \$650,000, her name was linked with Sheriff John Boyd. It was insinuated that they both carried the County's health insurance 10-months too long, after they left the office. This is a fabrication, a bold face lie. Monique Thomas, Interim Human Resources Director, made a call to her in December of 2022 notifying her of the County insurance ending December 31, 2022. On January 3, 2023, Sheila received a follow-up letter from HR stating County insurance ended on December 31, 2022. The letter was copied to the County Payroll Department. Copies of the letter were distributed to the Commission. John Boyd and Sheila Matias' names were stated at the last meeting as receiving Health Insurance throughout the 2023 year, as if they were still on the County's insurance. **President Gramarossa** apologized for their names being mentioned. **Sheila Matias**, Monique Thomas has been doing the job of two employees since April 2021, two years of one person doing two peoples work, during her term as Commissioner she thought 2 full time and one part time employees in that office was not enough for that department while managing 850 employees, including seasonal employees. The department is down one full-time employee and that is not fair. Every employer in La Porte County would be delighted to have Monique Thomas, someone with her skills, has a good education with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree, and she is highly experienced. She has integrity. Sheila encouraged the Commission to reexamine how the Human Resources Director position was changed to not only being under the Commission but the Council as well, ten individuals oversee the position now. The Human Resources Director should only answer to the Commission, the Executive Board.

### Department Reports/Comments

**Randy Novak**, Councilman, a Resolution will be on the Council's agenda opposing the reduction in staffing at the Coast Guard Station in Michigan City. Plans are to make it only part-time, mainly staffed on weekends. That location has more responses to drownings than other places along the Great Lakes. As a retired Michigan City Fire Fighter, drownings do not look at charts to see when people are on duty or not, he would appreciate the Commission to look at the Resolution and support it, possibly drawing up a Resolution on behalf of the Commissioners for the next meeting. **Commissioner Haney**, spoke to both representatives in Senator Braun's office and Representative Rudy Yakym's office, the U.S. Coast Guard is moving to part-time positions at several different locations around the Great Lakes due to staffing issues, they do not have the manpower currently to fill all positions. **Randy Novak**, the closes response time will be St. Joe or Milwaukee, which is a two-hour response time if someone is drowning and with that timeframe, that just means body recovery.

**Tim Stabosz**, Auditor, pointed out his Payroll Department does not have authorization or ability to remove people from Health Insurance. His office is not making any accusations of any wrongdoings by two former high profiled public officials but the fact of the matter is high profiled public officials were left on the insurance through October and we have a letter by former Commissioner Matias, that was just turned over to us, that says she was removed from the insurance as of December 31, 2022, and she was not removed, his office does not have the authority to remove anyone from the insurance, his office may have been copied on the letter however, the payroll department is not authorized to remove people, the Human Resources Department was created 15-20 years ago to put people on the Health Insurance and take people off. **President Gramarossa** questioned Auditor Stabosz if he understood that Sheila Matias spoke as a private citizen, requesting her name be kept out of the meetings. She said it was the Auditor who stated the names at the meeting of the former public officials, she apologized to Sheila for her name being mentioned. **Auditor Stabosz**, this is not what this subject is about, he is sorry that got brought into it but the notion that certain high profiled elected officials were not even removed is indicative of an issue.

Requests

Considered road closures during annual Tour de La Porte August 24, 2024, La Porte YMCA. Commissioner Mrozinski motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Commissioner Rich Mrozinski motioned to adjourn at 11:53 a.m. Commissioner Joe Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA  
DATE 1-17-2024

*Donnie Haney*

*Rich Mrozinski*

Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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**POLICY TO ENCOURAGE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC  
COMMENT/INPUT TO AID LA PORTE COUNTY COMMISSION**

In accordance with the Indiana Open Door Law (I.C. 5-14-1.5 et seq.) all regular and special meetings of the Board of County Commissioners will be open to the public. Notice and agendas will be provided by the required forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting to the press, posted outside our meeting room as well as posted on the county's website.

Because this Board strongly believes in hearing the views of citizens residing in La Porte County and organizations located here, we seek to adopt a policy to encourage effective and efficient use of public comment and input to aid us in our decision-making on various topics.

The following guidelines will assist the Commission in hearing public comment while conducting effective meetings:

1. "Public Comment" will be listed on the agenda not only be at the beginning of every meeting but will also be received before the Board votes on a given resolution or ordinance that appears on the agenda.
2. Each person must give his/her name and address when addressing the Board.
3. As a routine matter, Public Comment will be confined to three (3) minutes per person, however the Presiding Officer may at his/her discretion permit a longer time period for a given comment if he/she believes it is in the 'public interest' for the normal time period to be extended.
4. All statements shall be directed to the Presiding Officer; no person may address or question Board members individually.
5. The Presiding Officer may prohibit comments which are deemed frivolous, repetitive, or harassing. The Presiding Officer may interrupt, warn or terminate a person's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene or irrelevant and may request any individual to leave the meeting when that person behaves in a manner that is disruptive to the orderly conduct of the meeting.
6. No person may present orally or discuss at any meeting of the Board any charges or complaints against individual employees of the county, department heads, professional advisors or elected officials without first presenting such charges or complaints to the Board, through the Presiding Officer, in writing, signed and verified by the group or person making the charge or complaint.
7. Remarks by any persons addressing the Board which reflect adversely upon the character and motives of any other person or group are out of order. Also, attacks in the form of inferences, insinuations and innuendoes against the character or motives of any person are out of order.

As a board, we believe strongly that we as elected officials, our department heads, professional advisors and employees are all servants of the voting public and that we benefit by a wide range of views and input as we deliberate and consider important issues confronting our county. The guidelines above are designed to enhance orderly and efficient receipt of public comment, while at the same time ensuring a level of civility and decorum appropriate for a properly conducted business meeting of the Board.

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