

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
November 27th, 2023

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on November 27th, at 6:00 p.m. (central time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex, 809 State Street, 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. Rosenbaum.

ROLL CALL

Chief Deputy Auditor Rhonda Graves called the roll: Councilman Cunningham, Councilman Novak, Councilman Kiel, Councilman Rosenbaum, Councilman Mollenhauer, Councilman Koronka, and Councilman Yagelski were all physically present for the meeting. (Auditor Tim Stabosz was present electronically via Zoom.)

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 27TH, 2023 AGENDA

- i. Mr. Rosenbaum noted the following changes to the agenda: under Old Business, the employee classification request be listed as item no. 1, and item no. 2 would be for the \$1.7 million appropriation for the La Porte County Annex building. Under Appropriations, Transfers and Requests, the first item under La Porte County Clerk would be removed. Under La Porte County Auditor's Office on the top of page 3, \$500 would be reversed out of the 30027 account (Educational Instruction & Training fund) and redirected into the 20001 account (Office Supplies), along with a \$500 transfer from the 20001 account (Office Supplies) to the 40122 account (Lease Bond Payment); Mr. Rosenbaum noted that this would not need to be advertised, as it was a book-keeping transfer. He added that on page 4, the total sum for the Bonus

Correction of \$36,710.43 and the \$1,000 Employee Bonus should be amended to add up to \$37,710.43.

- ii. Motion to approve as amended made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Mr. Kiel noted that he would like to add an amendment to the motion to address the 1782 Notice that the county received. When Mr. Novak recommended discussing the notice at the December 11th meeting, Mr. Kiel noted that he would prefer to address it at the current meeting due to time constraints, as a few of the items would need time to be implemented.

- iii. Motion to include discussion on the 1782 Notice made by Mr. Kiel; the motion died for a lack of a second.
- iv. All members voted in favor of the agenda as originally amended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Budget Public Hearing Minutes – October 19th, 2023

Mr. Novak explained that a reversal in the Rainy Day fund was made the month prior for \$1.7 million for the renovation of the Complex building, and another \$580,000 reversal had been made for claims. The \$1.7 million was reappropriated, however the \$580,000 did not seem to have been appropriated. He noted that this needed to be investigated in case action needed to be taken at the next meeting to ensure that this appropriation was completed correctly.

Mr. Rosenbaum added that the \$580,000 was originally for an estimated bill, and when the exact bill had been received, he thought that the bill had been covered with the original \$2.3 million appropriation, or likewise, that the bill was paid for by the insurance company when it gave the county more money, thusly the county would need to investigate the matter further to reaffirm where the funds may have been directed from.

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

2. Regular County Council Meeting Minutes – October 30th, 2023

- iii. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- iv. All members voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

There were no department head reports.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Mollenhauer: Mr. Mollenhauer waived his liaison report.

Councilman Koronka: Mr. Koronka spoke with the Coroner's Office, attended a Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, and the Purdue Extension Board meeting. He additionally spoke with MS4 regarding an item that was on the current agenda, and noted that MS4 was monitoring the services provided to them by contractors to ensure that its funds were being managed and spent appropriately.

Councilman Novak: Mr. Novak attended the Fairgrounds Comprehensive Planning meeting and the EMA Communications District meeting in regards to the Verizon cell service outage that occurred on the lakefront. He additionally attended the Broadband meeting with the state's Director of Broadband, the Winter Operations meeting at the Healthcare Foundation, the Redevelopment Commission meeting, the Ag Association Annual meeting, the FMEC meeting, the Alexander Chemical groundbreaking ceremony, and the Executive Session meeting with the Purdue Extension Board. Mr. Novak added that the fifth floor of the Complex Building was expected to be finished in February, with the fourth and third floors to finish completion in the months following the fifth floor's repair.

Councilman Kiel: Mr. Kiel attended the Kingsbury Town Council meeting, the Alexander Chemical groundbreaking ceremony, the elected officials' reception held by the Michigan City Chamber, and spoke with several of his liaisons. He additionally studied the 1782 Notice, as well as the budget and its reductions.

Councilman Yagelski: Mr. Yagelski informed the room that purchasing computers on Black Friday was an exception to the standard bidding process that the county utilized.

Councilman Cunningham: Mr. Cunningham met with Congressman Frank Mrvan, and had discussions regarding the Franklin Street Bridge and its federal involvement. To reduce any misinterpretation from individual liaisons' communication, Mr. Cunningham recommended that that Council prepare a generic statement – in which all seven members could agree - to present to all department heads regarding reducing General Fund spending wherever possible.

Councilman Rosenbaum: Mr. Rosenbaum attended several meetings, spoke with several liaisons, and had discussions on the 1782 Notice.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Rosenbaum explained that Circuit Court Judge Thomas Alevizos had previously reached out to the Council regarding the reclassification of the Circuit Court's JDAI Coordinator. Honorable Judge Alevizos then approached the Council to inform them that the request had originally been made in February of 2023, and had since been tabled and remained unaddressed. Judge Alevizos clarified that the request was on the agenda for the evening's meeting.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution No. 2023-11 – Confirmatory Resolution for Co-Alliance Cooperative Economic Revitalization Area

Matt Reardon of the Office of Economic Development explained that the 5-year tax abatement for the Co-Alliance Cooperative project was for the development located at 3551 W. 800 S. in Union Mills. The project would retain two jobs and create one more job in the process. Mr. Reardon explained that \$3.3 million would be invested into La Porte County by Co-Alliance Cooperative, and the company would be required to pay a proposed fee of \$15,865.

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the floor was open for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Carr – 1902 N. Whisper Crossing, LaPorte

Mr. Carr commented that he would prefer that Co-Alliance Cooperative hire local contractors to help with their project.

- i. Motion to read by title only made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.
- iii. Auditor Chief Deputy Rhonda Graves read aloud the resolution by title only.
- iv. Motion to adopt the resolution as read made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- v. All members voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Employee Reclassification Request – Honorable Judge Thomas J. Alevizos

- i. Motion to remove the item off the table made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members voted in favor.
- iii. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Judge Alevizos informed the Council that given the unique nature of the JDAI coordinator's duties, including accommodating occasional weekend events, performing extensive public outreach that involved working with La Porte County youth, and a notable amount of experience required to fill the role, he was seeking to reclassify the position, which would bring a pay increase in the amount of roughly \$2,300 for the position annually. He noted that the continuous success of the position often brought more funds into the courts, and provided programming to the community that helped redirect potentially troubled youths from entering the court system.

Mr. Kiel explained that the Council's delayed decision on Judge Alevizos' request was a direct result of the Council's consideration to ensure that the Job Evaluation Committee received proper training before making any reclassification decisions. When Mr. Kiel advised adding the Job Evaluation Committee's training to the motion, Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the cost of training the committee would be acquired separately from the motion.

- iv. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).

2. Discussion on \$1.7 million appropriation for Annex (County Complex Flood)

Mr. Rosenbaum clarified that in June, the \$1.7 million appropriation was approved and items were categorized, while in August, this had been done again with categorized with full account numbers and names following an ordinance to address issues with the fund. The month prior, the funds were reversed, but in August, the funds had already been classified and some individuals argued were budgeted, however it was technically the Council's intent to lock in numbers when the projects went out to bid. When the items did eventually go out to bid, all of those numbers should have been removed, and the additional \$2.3 million and \$1.7 million that followed should have been enough for the \$4 million to cover everything, and there should not have been any restrictions at the time since properly bid numbers had been provided. He asked if a motion could be made to remove the restrictions and direct the funds to the General Fund since the bidding process had happened. Mr. Novak asked if the item would need to be readvertised and reappropriated, to which Mr. DiMartino noted that it could be addressed at the December 11th, 2023 meeting. When Mr. Rosenbaum asked if the \$2.3 million appropriation needed to be addressed at this meeting, Mr. Cunningham recommended that the item be added as a precaution, as it could easily be removed from the agenda if it truly did not need to be addressed.

NEW BUSINESS

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

La Porte Treasurer's Office – Full Time Clerk COMOT III

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

2. Motions of Support – LPA Financial Commitment Letter for the 2029 INDOT Group 3 Open Call for:

- a. Bridge #46 for the future budgeting of the 20% match of the total project costs \$2,773,208 (match amount is \$554,642).
 - b. Bridge #189 for the future budgeting of the 20% match of the total project costs of \$2,267,610.75 (match amount is \$453,522.15).
- i. Motion of support made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka

Mr. Cunningham warned that the cost of repairing the bridges would increase in 2029 (the time that the projects would commence) due to rising inflation and cost of materials, and the total 20% commitment that the county agreed on in 2023 might not be enough funding to cover the repair costs six years in the future.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

3. Homeward Bound Villages – Request for support in the amount of \$345,000. Total costs: \$1,349,677.

Mr. Rosenbaum explained that this particular item did not require a motion of support and was strictly for information purposes. Sandy Keller of Homeward Bound Villages explained that the non-profit would be reapproaching the La Porte and Michigan City Councils in January of 2024 regarding acquiring matching appropriation for the co-op housing project that was designated for 316 Karwick Road. She explained that the reason that Homeward Bound Villages would be approaching the Council at a later date, despite the Council's support for the project earlier in the year, was so that the non-profit could work with what they hoped would be a more transparent approval process which she believed would happen as a result of a change in elected officials in 2024. Mrs. Keller added that the plans for the co-op housing development had been reviewed by the city on multiple occasions, and was compliant with city code enforcement.

Mr. Novak asked Council Attorney Guy DiMartino if he (Mr. Novak) had a conflict of interest with the request, as he helped Homeward Bound Villages in acquiring the Karwick Road property, and did additional work with other non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity. Mr. DiMartino stated that he did not see any conflict of interest.

The item concluded without any action or votes taken.

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, AND REQUESTS

La Porte County MS4

Requesting an Account Transfer from 1000.10130.000.0161 (Part Time Employees) to
1000.30125.000.0161 (Professional Services) \$8,400.00

Requesting an Account Transfer from 1000.10195.000.0161 (Program Supervisor) to
1000.30135.000.0161 (Professional Services) \$4,910.11

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

Mr. Koronka noted that following MS4's reconstruction earlier in 2023, there was concern regarding a few bills from vendors, namely that MS4 was not receiving the cost of service for what the vendors in question were billed for. He clarified that the transfers presented were to partially cover some of the outstanding invoices, and he was unsure if the Council should go forth with paying them immediately.

MS4's Christopher Havens clarified that this request of transfer closed out the account with the consulting firm. Mr. Cunningham asked if MS4 was satisfied with the documentation from the vendors, which Mr. Havens answered that he was not satisfied with the administrative invoicing portion of it, and had not yet reviewed the documentation that the county was given as far as the work completed by the vendors in question. Mr. Koronka noted that he had passed these documents on to Mr. DiMartino and Mr. Rosenbaum for review, and advised tabling the item until it could be investigated further. Mr. DiMartino instead advised funding the request, but directing the Commissioners to not pay the bill until the concerns regarding the quality of work were sorted out, as it was not the Council's duty to dispute billings unless they were advised to do so.

- ii. Motion to amend original motion to approve the fund transfers, followed by review of the invoices by MS4, the Commissioners, and legal counsel, made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- iii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte Superior Court No. 1

Requesting an Account Transfer from 1000.30007.000.0149 (Maintenance Contracts) to
1000.20048.000.0149 (Bailiff Supplies) \$200

Requesting an Account Transfer from 1000.30007.000.0149 (Maintenance Contracts) to
1000.20001.000.0149 (Office Supplies) \$300

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

La Porte County Community Corrections

Requesting Account Transfers from the following accounts to 9106.20001.000.0584 (Office Supplies) to purchase books for participants and office supplies:

9106.10201.000.0584 (Field Officer)	\$6,000	
9106.10202.000.0584 (Residential Officer)	\$6,000	
9106.10207.000.0584 (Coord of Services)	\$3,000	
9106.11007.000.0584 (OASDI Withheld)	\$8,000	\$23,000

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

Requesting an Account Transfer from 9106.11019.000.0584 (Employee Health Insurance) to 9106.301.35.000.0584 (Professional Services) for:

GPS Devices	\$35,000
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- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski).

La Porte County Auditor's Office

Requesting a Fund to Fund Transfer from Riverboat (1191) to Rainy Day Fund (1186) for:

October Riverboat Admissions Tax (50% of \$359,500.82)	\$179,750.41
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- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Requesting a Transfer from Educational Instruction & Training (30027) to Office Supplies (20001) for:

Bookkeeping/Reversal of Incorrect Transfer	\$500
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Requesting a Transfer from Office Supplies (20001) to Lease Bond Payment (40122) for:

Bookkeeping/Correction of Transfer	\$500
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- i. Motion to approve both transfers made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Hazmat

Requesting Additional Appropriation in Local Emergency Planning & Right to Know Fund (1152) for:

Miscellaneous Claims \$25,000

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the request was to be appropriated for use in the Emergency Planning & Right to Know Fund, and had not been appropriated in the past as it had needed to be. Mr. Cunningham questioned if the State Board of Accounts had truly not recognized this error in the 25 years that this account had been active, which Ms. Graves confirmed and added that the request was to ensure that the account was not negative before the end of the year. Mr. Novak stated that he would like to withdraw his original motion to approve the item, however there was no original motion or second that was made that could be amended.

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

[Editor's Note: Later in the evening, Mr. Cunningham requested to remove the item from the table so it could be re-addressed by the Council.]

- iii. Motion to un-table the item made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- iv. All members voted in favor.

Ms. Graves informed the Council that Hazmat's 20200 was currently at negative \$6,758.87.

- v. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- vi. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski).

La Porte County Juvenile Probation Department

Requesting An Additional Appropriation in Juvenile Probation User Fees Fund (2511) for:

Miscellaneous Claims 20200 \$4,000

Ms. Graves clarified that the 20200 Miscellaneous Claims accounts on the agenda were created sometime in the past 30 years, and instead of funding being diverted into more specific accounts such as 200, 300, and 400 hundred accounts, these 20200 accounts were occasionally used for purchasing. She added that she was unsure as to why these 20200 accounts were used or why they were created in the first place. She noted that these 20200 accounts would be eliminated in 2024 to ensure compliance with the State Board of Accounts regulations, and the Juvenile Probation Department would then need to continue using the designated 200, 300, and 400 accounts for specific purchasing needs. Mr. Novak asked why this account had not been seen during budget hearings, which Ms. Graves explained that the Council did not see these accounts because they had not been budgeted for, and the departments with these accounts would use them without requesting the Council's approval to spend from them.

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

[Editor's Note: Later in the evening, Mr. Cunningham requested to remove the item from the table so it could be re-addressed by the Council.]

- iii. Motion to un-table the item made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Novak.
- iv. All members voted in favor.

Ms. Graves clarified that Juvenile Probation's 20200 account were at a negative \$1,513.89.

- v. Motion to approve the \$4,000 transfer made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- vi. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski).

La Porte County Health Department

Requesting Additional Appropriation in Communicable Disease (2704) for:

Miscellaneous Claims \$15,000

Mr. Novak asked if any of the 20200 accounts that were on the agenda were to correct the balances of other funds, which Ms. Graves clarified that some of these, such as the Animal Shelter's request, could be to correct other funds; however some of the requests might not be to correct a negative.

Health Department Administrator Amanda Lahners explained that the Communicable Disease account was a non-reverting fund used for supplies and vaccines, and the Health Department previously spent out of this account unaware that it needed to receive permission to appropriate the spending. Mr. Novak asked if the requested \$15,000 was to bring the account back up to balance, which Ms. Lahners answered that this request would balance the Communicable Disease account through the end of the year. Mr. Kiel asked if the account was currently negative, to which Ms. Lahners explained that the Health Department had funds sitting in the cash account with payment coming out of the Miscellaneous Claims 20200 account within the Communicable Disease account.

- i. Motion to table made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Three members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Koronka) and four members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, and Mr. Mollenhauer). The motion to table the item failed.

Ms. Graves informed the Council that the Health Department's Miscellaneous Claims 20200 account was negative in the amount of \$10,172.52 due to the fund never being appropriated, and noted that the other 20200 accounts that had been tabled also likely had negative balances. She added that if the Health Department's request was approved and the funds did not get spent, they would remain in the account, as the Communicable Disease account was non-reverting.

- iii. Motion to approve made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- iv. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Cunningham).

Requesting Additional Appropriation in Indiana Health Department Trust Fund (1206) for:
Miscellaneous Claims \$15,000

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Cunningham).

Requesting Additional Appropriation in Local Health Maintenance Fund (9167) for:

OASDI 1107	\$2,000
Medicare 11009	\$400

PERF 11017	\$5,000	
Employee Health Insurance	\$11,000	\$18,400

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

Mr. Kiel asked if the shortages in the listed accounts were fixed in the 2024 budget so they would not encounter another shortfall, to which Ms. Lahners explained that this particular account would be dissolved in 2024, and would be replaced by the Health First Indiana Fund, and added that the Health First Indiana Fund would have enough coverage to pay the OASDI, Medicare, and PERF funds.

- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Cunningham).

Requesting an Appropriation in County Health Department Fund (1159) for:		
Employee Health Insurance 11019		\$40,000

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Cunningham).

La Porte County Small Animal Shelter

Requesting an Appropriation in Animal Shelter Donation Fund (4100) for:		
Miscellaneous Claims 20200		\$143,333.25

Mr. Novak clarified that the money in the donation account, which was primarily spent on veterinary care, had already been spent but had never been officially appropriated, and approving this request would ensure that the account was balanced for the year's end.

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

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:		
Miscellaneous Claims 20200		\$14,000.00

- i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Cunningham).

La Porte County Coroner

Requesting an Appropriation in Coroner Non-Reverting Fund (2053) for:

Miscellaneous Claims 20200 – Deputy Training & Travel	\$2,150	
Miscellaneous Claims 20200 – Equipment	\$5,200	\$7,350

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

Requesting Additional Appropriations from Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Toxicology 30031	\$3,000	
X-Ray, Lab & Morgue 30032	\$9,000	\$12,000

- i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Cunningham).

La Porte County Sheriff’s Office

Requesting Motion of Support for:

2023/2024 Patrol Vehicles and Equipment 20016	not-to-exceed \$685,000
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- i. Motion of support for the vehicles to be purchased using Public Safety LIT funding, with the consideration of the used vehicles to come before the council, made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Six member voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).

Requesting an Appropriation in Misdemeanant Fund (1175) for:

Miscellaneous Claims 20200 (Laundry Machine and Repair to Dishwasher)	\$22,500
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- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Council

Requesting Additional Appropriation from ARP (8950/8951) for:

Bonus 11901 Correction	\$36,710.43	
Employee Bonus 11901	\$1,000.00	\$37,710.43

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Cunningham).

La Porte County Courts

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Jury Pay Fund Correction (3506)	\$79,736.34	
Future Jury Fees	\$20,263.66	\$100,000.00

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

Mr. Novak asked whose budget the jury pay jurisdiction would be under in 2024, which Ms. Graves clarified that it would not be placed under any department’s budget, as it had not been allocated towards a particular department for 2024. She added that it would need to be appropriated for 2024, and 2025’s Jury Pay Fund could be budgeted during the 2024 budget hearings.

- ii. Four members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka) and three members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Mollenhauer). The motion passed.

La Porte County Regional Sewer Board

Requesting Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Hudson/Saugany Lake Projects	\$1,500,000
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- i. Motion to table made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Board of Commissioners

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Unemployment Compensation Account 10158		not-to-exceed \$26,000.00
Secretary Payroll 10117	\$2,804.60	
Part Time Payroll 10130	\$3,439.00	\$6,243.60
Legal Fees 30020		\$120,000.00
Educational Instructional Training 30027		\$10,000.00
OASDI 11007	\$199,274.02	
Medicare 11009	\$47,334.62	
PERF 11017	\$424,145.65	\$670,754.29
Liability Insurance Correction Fund (4701)		\$534,674.35

Ms. Graves explained that she believed the OASDI, Medicare, PERF, and Liability Insurance Correction Fund to be negative, while the Legal Fees had an extremely limited amount of funding left, and added that the Secretary Payroll and Part Time Payroll would run negative before the year's end if it was not funded. Board of Commissioners President Connie Gramarossa added that the Educational Instructional Training account would also run negative following a conference that was scheduled the next day. Mrs. Gramarossa clarified that the reason the Secretary Payroll account had a shortfall was a result of the county re-hiring the previous secretary, who happened to be approved for a higher salary than the secretary that preceded her, due to her increased duties and experience.

Mr. Koronka added that the legal fees account had incurred increased costs due to the county's attorneys services being required during the litigation process with the insurance company during the Complex Building flood renovation. Mr. Kiel questioned how \$240,000 had originally been appropriated for the Legal Fees account, however now \$120,000 in appropriations were being requested just one month before the end of the year. Mr. DiMartino noted that he still had a few bills to submit which he would try to do before the year's end.

- i. Motion to approve not-to-exceed \$26,000 for Unemployment Compensation, \$6,243.60 for Part-Time and Secretary Payroll, \$120,000 for Legal Fees, \$10,000 for Educational Instructional Training, and \$670,754.29 for OASDI, Medicare, and PERF

out of Riverboat (1191) and the remaining \$534,674.35 for the Liability Insurance Correction Fund out of WinTax (4220) made by Mr. Kiel and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

- ii. Four members voted in favor (Mr. Kiel, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and three members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum). The motion passed.

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Demolition of House in Michigan City next to EMS Building \$29,800.00

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.

When Ms. Graves stated that the Auditor's Office did not receive a bill for the request, Mrs. Gramarossa clarified that a bill had been submitted, however it had been rejected by the Auditor with the instruction that the item needed to be approved by the Council first. When Mr. Yagelski asked if the payment of the claim could be expedited, Auditor Tim Stabosz appeared electronically via Zoom to explain that it could not be expedited, as the Commissioners needed to approve the payment of the claim at their own meeting before a check could be issued, to which Mr. Yagelski noted that the Commissioners had already approved the claim. Mr. Stabosz debated that there was a difference between the Commissioners approving items as departments heads on a purchase order that was submitted to the Auditor's Office, and approving a claims docket, which could only be paid following the docket's approval at a Commission meeting.

- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Kiel, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Rainy Day (1186) or Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950/8951) for:

Annex Construction \$1,000,000.00

- i. Motion to approve out of Rainy Day (1186) made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

Mrs. Gramarossa explained that \$722,627.88 was owed for work done from October to September, and that the reason the claim had been backed up was because only three of the five claims originally submitted to the Auditor were able to be paid, as they were appropriated

from specific accounts. The two remaining items had not been listed in these specific accounts. Mr. Kiel asked if this was for work that was outside of the previously approved Rainy Day fund appropriation, which Mrs. Gramarossa stated that the items were bid out and returned with higher rates than the previously received quotes. Mr. Kiel argued that the only portion of the work that was bid out was the work that was funded with Rainy Day funds, which were public works funds.

Mr. DiMartino noted that items such as flooring were reimbursable expenses because the county would pay for the item, and receive reimbursement in the future, so some of the funding was pending. When Mr. Kiel asked once more if the work had been bid out, Mr. DiMartino noted that this work was not part of the plumbing, HVAC or hot water piping, and thus these projects were not put out for bid.

- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Kiel).

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Cunningham noted that, with the Council approving \$2.3 million in additional appropriations, he felt that it was important that the council address the department heads collectively with a generic statement to try and reduce spending within their departments. Mr. Rosenbaum subsequently issued a statement, asking department heads to spend minimally and appropriately, purchase only necessities, and stay within their budget until the current budgeting concerns could be resolved – to the best of their abilities.

Mr. Yagelski asked if Mr. Stabosz's second bill for his attorney had been paid regarding his ongoing case with the former Commission Attorney. Mr. Stabosz clarified that a bill for \$9,610 and a bill for \$10,800 had been paid, however a pending bill of \$2,870 had been denied payment by the Commissioners and the Council. When Mr. Yagelski asked if Mr. Stabosz had additional bills coming in from his court appeal, Mr. Stabosz stated that with the pending \$2,870, as well as additional accumulating bills, La Porte County might be sued to cover the charges to ensure that he was treated fairly. Mr. DiMartino stated that if Mr. Stabosz planned on suing the county, that he would represent La Porte County for nothing. Mr. Yagelski asked if the two checks that were paid were strictly for the billings dispute case, or if they were being directed towards the appeal, which Mr. Stabosz answered that these payments would go directly to the billings dispute case. Mr. Yagelski stated that he felt as though this billing practice set a bad example of how La Porte County selected which bills it was going to pay.

Mr. Novak noted that a prominent figure in Michigan City, John Sheets, had passed away, and asked viewers to keep his family and loved ones in their thoughts and prayers.

Mr. Koronka noted that he would be reviewing the 1782 Notice with his liaisons so he could be prepared for its review in December.

Mr. Mollenhauer complimented the Maintenance Department, and all other parties involved, for their work in setting up the county's holiday decorations and lights.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Examined & Approved by the La Porte County Council this 22nd day of January 2024.



Councilman Earl Cunningham



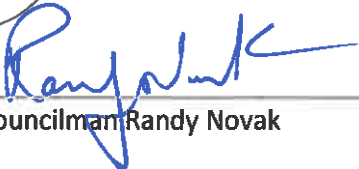
Councilman Adam Koronka



Councilman Justin Kiel



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer




Councilman Randy Novak



Councilman Mike Rosenbaum



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Timothy Stabosz, Auditor