

MINUTES
La Porte County Council Budget Workshop
October 2, 2023 at 5:32 PM CST

A La Porte County Council Budget Workshop was held on October 2, 2023 at 5:32 PM (central time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex, 809 State St., La Porte, IN 46350.

The following were present: Michael Rosenbaum, Justin Kiel, Mark Yagelski, Randy Novak, Michael Mollenhauer, Earl Cunningham, Adam Koronka

The Council discussed the 2024 budgetary items as advertised in the meeting announcement, including:

- Building maintenance
- Human resources
- MS4
- Treasurer
- Recorder
- Coroner
- Circuit Court
- Community Corrections
- Council
- Assessor
- E911
- EMS
- Health Department
- IT Department
- Public Defender
- Sheriff
- Board of Commissioners
- Public Safety Lit
- Regional Planner/NIRPC
- Economic Development Lit
- 100 Accounts
-

The Workshop was adjourned.

Examined & Approved by the La Porte County Council this 11th day of December, 2023.



Councilman Earl Cunningham



Councilman Justin Kiel



Councilman Adam Koronka



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer

X Randy Novak
Councilman Randy Novak

X Mike Rosenbaum
Councilman Mike Rosenbaum

ABSENT
Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: Timothy Stabosz
Timothy Stabosz, Auditor

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October 2nd, 2023 at 5:32pm CST

A La Porte County Council Budget Workshop was held on October 2nd, 2023 at 5:32 p.m. (central time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex, 809 State St., La Porte, IN 46350.

Councilman Rosenbaum clarified that the workshop was a continuation of the budget hearings that began in July, that the purpose of this workshop was to discuss the final approval of departments' varying accounts, primarily the departments' 100 accounts.

During the workshop, Mr. Rosenbaum noted that accounts that were listed as "no changes" would be given the same budget that was approved in 2023. The following departments' non-Public Safety LIT 100 accounts were approved outright for the same budgets that had been applied in 2023: *Surveyor, Parks & Recreation, Planning & Zoning, Weights & Measures, Juvenile Services Center, Juvenile Probation, Superior 1 Court, Clerk, Election Board, Voter Registration, Soil & Water, Auditor, Prosecutor, IV-D, Highway, Michigan Township Assessor, Pioneer Cemeteries, EMA, Superior 3, Jail, La Porte Courthouse Security, Michigan City Courthouse Security and Adult Probation.*

Building Maintenance

Mr. Rosenbaum explained that for the 10111 account, which maintained a total of \$67,000, that the extra \$10,000 should be paid for by the FMEC, and was not paid by Building Maintenance's salary, and therefore needed to be placed into the base salary. The 10130 would be reduced to \$90,000. 10151 was approved for \$150,158, and 10152 had a requested amount of \$365,564, which was 2023's salaries with the newly added employees, and was subsequently approved. Mr. Rosenbaum noted that there was a correction of a flipping of the 10230 and 10231 accounts that the Council addressed. The Building Maintenance Supervisor salary for \$63,029 was approved. The \$64,985 salary for the HVAC Technician salary was approved, however there was concern regarding as to why the position was listed as a POLE position, which Mr. Rosenbaum explained would need to be explored at a later date.

Human Resources

Mr. Yagelski asked if the Council was going to approve Human Resources' 2024 salary budget for the same allotment as 2023, which Mr. Rosenbaum confirmed that this would be the case until it could be determined if any money was available for raises, and if such raises were approved, this would be done by updating the salary ordinance, which would then be funded.

Mr. Cunningham clarified that Human Resources was budgeted for a Chief Deputy, and that current Interim Director of Human Resources, Monique Thomas, had not yet filled her assistant

position. Mr. Novak corrected that Mrs. Thomas had previously been the assistant, while Mr. Rosenbaum added that Mrs. Thomas had been advised to hire an assistant on a temporary basis, and while the Deputy position was not being paid out as it had not been filled, the previously part-time employee in the office was currently temporarily full-time, and Human Resources did not have a part-time position open.

MS4

The total amount in the 100 account, \$80,950, was approved with a reduction to the Program Supervisor account, which was reduced to \$55,000. The 200 and 300 accounts were approved.

Treasurer

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that there was a step increase for the first deputy at \$48,384, while the two second deputies came out to a combined total of \$91,204. The clerks also needed step increases, however one clerk had moved up to a second deputy, so the budget for the clerks' salaries decreased to \$81,595. The Part-Time budget would be kept at \$15,000 and the Overtime budget at \$12,000 so as to give the Treasurer the best opportunity to complete the cash reconciliation, as it had not yet been completed. The 200 and 300 accounts were approved.

Recorder

The only change was that one of the deputies would be moved to the perpetuation fund.

Coroner

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that there was a request to increase deputies' pay, however the salary ordinance listed the pay as \$25,239, not the \$29,162 that had been requested by the Coroner, so he wanted to sustain the deputies' pay at \$25,239 in account 10113. When Coroner Lynn Swanson explained that one deputy's pay averaged about \$10 per hour amongst 1808 hours worked from January to September, Mr. Rosenbaum emphasized that the deputies' pay could be reconsidered once the Council knew if raises could be afforded.

Circuit Court

Mr. Rosenbaum stated that he was unsure as to why the JDAI Coordinator position was presented with an increased salary, and noted that the Council would approve the budget at the 2023 salary of \$49,132.

Community Corrections

Chief Deputy Auditor Rhonda Graves noted that there were no changes to the 179 account. Mr. Cunningham stated that he had a note for a 15% raise for employees of Community Corrections in 2024, which Mr. Rosenbaum clarified that this was paid for out of Public Safety LIT, and only employees who were eligible for the Public Safety LIT classification would receive this raise. Ms. Graves added that only Community Corrections was taking their 15% raise out of Public Safety

LIT, and other employees who met this classification had their salaries transferred to the Public Safety LIT account. Mr. Kiel asked why this was different for Community Corrections, which Ms. Graves explained that this was for ease of working around Community Corrections' grant funding, so as to avoid touching the other two accounts. Mr. Rosenbaum explained account 9107 was approved for \$654,849, while account 584 would see no change in its budget from 2023.

Mr. Novak informed the room that the entire budget for Community Corrections needed to be approved at this time.

- i. Motion to approve the 9107 and 584 accounts, dated 9/21/2023, as presented made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- ii. All members voted in favor.
- iii. Motion to approve 4909590, in the amount of \$1.3 million, made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- iv. All members voted in favor.

Council

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that there was an error on the salaries that needed to be corrected, however he could not locate the corrected form. Additionally, the Council Attorney's salary needed to be increased to \$28,617, which was an increase of \$6,000 from 2023, and if this was not the case, it would need to be corrected.

Assessor

Mr. Rosenbaum stated that there was a requested increase of \$25,000 for the Professional Services account by the Assessor, which Assessor Mike Schultz clarified was to be used for new change-finder equipment that would be able to detect if structures were built or torn down on properties, which could be used to confirm if residents had proper permits, or could also be utilized following natural disasters that cause damage to properties.

- i. Motion to approve the increase of \$25,000 for Professional Services on the 202015 Reassessment Fund made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Kiel.

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the increase would bring the grant total of the fund up to \$275,000.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

E-911

Regarding E-911's 1222734 account, Mr. Kiel questioned why E-911 had \$75,000 in Unemployment Compensation when in 2023, there was \$0 in expenditures from the account, and questioned why the unemployment would not be coming out of the Commissioners' budget instead. Assistant Director Matt Deckard clarified that E-911 had not used this account for the past two years, and that E-911 would now rather use the funds for overtime pay and was requesting that the funds be transferred to their 101158 account. Mr. Rosenbaum noted that this could be approved at the end of the workshop.

EMS

Mr. Rosenbaum explained that, regarding the overtime budget for EMS, the Council initially wanted to move the funds up to \$205,000, however now instead wanted to approve \$105,000 and vote on additional appropriations in the future Council Meetings, as it had been doing in the past. He added that account 20016, which contained \$618,615, was for the purchase of a Chevy Tahoe and two ambulances, which would be revisited later during Public Safety LIT discussions.

Health Department

Mr. Rosenbaum stated that the Health Department would be receiving grant money from the State of Indiana, and that they had been putting together matching amounts to cover their expenses, and noted that the Local Health Service Fund (1161) had a listed number of \$1,356,548, which was expected but not confirmed, which Health Department Administrator Amanda Lahners noted that she had received verbal confirmation on this amount.

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

IT

Regarding account 10111, Department Head, Mr. Rosenbaum recommended \$77,033, as \$5,000 might be coming from the FMEC to additionally bolster the salary. He explained that when the Council looked into what was designated for System Technicians, the \$186,988 was what was advertised in the salary ordinance, however \$189,022 had been presented to them, although none of the employees in question had anticipated step increases. Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Koronka advised keeping the 2023 salary of \$186,922, however no formal motion was made. Mr. Yagelski would later inform the Council that IT employees were to receive a step increase after three years of working for the county, to which Mr. Rosenbaum responded that the Council would find out what the correct number should be.

Public Defender

Mr. Rosenbaum stated that his documentation recommended that the Public Defender's 180 account be set to \$617,806. He asked if the 30135 account should be approved at \$1.4 million or the \$617,806, while Mr. Kiel asked if the Public Defender's Office had asked for pay increases for the public defenders, which Mr. Novak and Mr. Rosenbaum confirmed that they had, however they had also requested medical insurance earlier that year, which was now not happening the same way as it was requested. Mr. Novak questioned if the Public Defender 180 was coming out of their Public Defender account. Council Attorney Guy DiMartino explained that, as the county left it the year prior, each public defender would receive an \$800 stipend per month under their contract, as an effort to offset the cost of insurance, and he concluded that the numbers presented were likely what the Public Defender's Office came back with once the Council approved the stipend. Mr. Novak asked if the Public Defender's request was coming out of the county's funds or the Public Defender's funds. Mr. DiMartino clarified that the Council would be reimbursed by up to 50%, which Mr. Rosenbaum added would be \$496,000, plus another \$35,000, and a small amount of \$2,206 per a state mandate, so his note regarding \$617,806 must be the reimbursement that the county would be receiving, and that the budget would be approved.

Sheriff

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the Council had been asked to increase the toll allowance under account 20015, which had already been approved, and if there was interest in increasing this, a motion would be required. He believed the current toll allowance to be \$300. Mr. Mollenhauer reported that after speaking to Sheriff Ron Heeg and Major Patrick Cicero, the Sheriff's Department mechanics would be given a raise in addition to a 10% pay increase the prior year. With the request having been put on hold, he explained that Mr. Heeg was hoping that a 5% pay increase or a \$2,500 tool stipend for each of the four mechanics could be approved. Mr. Mollenhauer clarified that the current tool stipend was \$300. Mr. Yagelski stated that he would rather see a list of what the mechanics needed and have the county pay for the tools, while Mr. Rosenbaum noted that he would rather offer a \$1,000 stipend and increase it appropriately in later years.

- i. Motion to approve a \$2,500 stipend for each of the four Sheriff's Department mechanics made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

Mr. Yagelski also stated that, if the stipend was approved, other departments may want to request stipends for tools as well, while Mr. Kiel added that, though the stipend wasn't unwarranted, when the county was not considering raises for all employees, some departments may find the stipend unfair. Mr. Kiel proposed offering a stipend lower than \$2,500, and then revisiting the allotment at a later date once the county was more aware of its financial situation.

- ii. Motion to amend and approve a \$1,000 stipend for each of the four Sheriff's Department mechanics, with the amount of the stipend to be reevaluated at a later date, made by Mr. Mollenhauer. When Mr. Cunningham did not second the motion, Mr. Kiel overtook Mr. Cunningham's second.
- iii. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Rosenbaum explained that the approval of the motion would now bring the Sheriff's Uniforms account to a grand total of \$6,300.

Board of Commissioners

Mr. Novak noted that in the Commissioners' budget, there was a mandated increase in Mental Health, as well as an increased request for postage, as 2024 was a Presidential Election year. Mr. Novak additionally reported that liability claims came in at \$2,229,517.54. Ms. Graves reported that the numbers that she received from Michiana Insurance were \$2,088,414 for Non-Self-Insured, and \$570,250 for Self-Insured, which Mr. Novak stated did not line up with his total of \$2,229,527.54. Ms. Graves noted that the two totals would need to be distributed into separate accounts, however they could be combined once they were integrated into the Commissioners' 4701 fund. Mr. DiMartino asked if these budgets were for claims paid on the county's SIRs, and noted that if the Council was unsure whether they were or weren't, it would be difficult to determine which account the funds needed to be placed in. Mr. Kiel voiced concerns that if the Commissioners' budget was inaccurate, it could create another large deficit further down the line. Ms. Graves noted that the totals for Non-Self-Insured and Self-Insured claims were only projections, and that the numbers could potentially change.

Mr. Rosenbaum recommended the following changes in allotment for the Board of Commissioners' budget:

10117: for the Commissioners' COMOT V Secretary salary to be set at \$47,435.

10130: Extra Hire/Part-Time Seasonal: to be set at \$21,492.

Curators: to be set at \$84,340.

Postage: To be set at \$95,000, with the opportunity to approach the Council and request additional appropriation for postage at a later date.

30072: La Porte County Mental Health to be set at \$777,011; per Indiana State mandate.

30068: Non-Self-Insured Claims at \$2,088,414.

30067: Self-Insured Premiums to be set at \$570,250.

- i. Motion to approve the budget with Mr. Rosenbaum's listed changes, in addition to emphasizing that the Commissioners' Secretary was budgeted for a COMOT V position, adding 10% to OASI, Medicare and Retirement withholdings, and strongly encouraging the Commissioners to reach out to the Council before the next morning

to address any concerns regarding the budget approval made by Mr. Kiel and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

Public Safety LIT (1170)

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the only change he wanted to make was adding \$5,000 to Incentive Pay 10234, which would bring that particular account up to \$83,000. Public Safety LIT, as a whole, would have \$6,896,474 in funding.

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

Regional Planner/NIRPC (218)

- i. Motion to approve \$95,000 made by Mr. Kiel and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Economic Development LIT

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that the Salary for the Highway Superintendent was \$4,999, which was separate from MVH funds. \$682,000 was for the tax lien exempt bond payments, \$220,000 was set aside for economic development, and \$5 million was designated for the highway budget.

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

Mr. Kiel asked Ms. Graves if there were any budget lines from Public Safety LIT that could have been duplicated anywhere else in the budget, to which Ms. Graves explained there were duplicates that were a result of departments not being aware as to whether or not the budgets could be funded out of Public Safety LIT, namely, if not entirely so, by EMS. Mr. Kiel asked Ms. Graves if she would be comfortable deciding where the duplicated budgets needed to be directed, and then removing the duplicated lines, which Ms. Graves noted she felt confident doing so as long as the Council approved it.

- i. Motion to give the Auditor's Office permission to make technical corrections to remove duplicated budget requests, so long as the Auditor's Office reports on the

changes made, and the Council retains its right to ultimate authorization over the outcome of the budget made by Mr. Kiel and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Rosenbaum requested that the Auditor's Office begin providing a running tally, in the form of a dollar amount, of the 100 accounts, so that the Council may know how to budget for the accounts in the present and future.

100 Accounts

- i. Motion to approve all of the 100 accounts at the 2023 levels, with step increases, Public Safety LIT, and the minor adjustments made over the course of the evening's workshop to be applied, with the exception that the Council could make minor corrections before the deadline of the budget's full approval, made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Novak.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

- i. Motion to recess the budget hearings made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Novak.

Mr. Kiel asked Ms. Graves if she would be able to advertise the changes made the following day to avoid the need to schedule an additional meeting. Ms. Graves stated that she would try, and if more time was needed, she would reach out to the Council so that they may schedule another meeting if necessary.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

Examined & Approved by the La Porte County Council this 30th day of October, 2023.

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