

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
September 30th, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on September 30th, 2024 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 Randy Novak.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Rosenbaum, followed by a moment of silence for the recently deceased retired state trooper Louis Weber Jr.

ROLL CALL

Auditor Tim Stabosz called the roll: Councilman Cunningham, Councilman Yagelski, Councilman Rosenbaum, Councilman Novak, Councilman Koronka, Councilman Kiel, and Councilman Mollenhauer were all physically present for the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2024 AGENDA

- i. Mr. Koronka motioned to approve with the addition of one item under New Business: item no. 6, Presentation of the LaCrosse Public Library Budget, and under Appropriations, Transfers and Requests, the removal of La Porte County Maintenance's \$49,174 request for appropriation for the Complex Building basement, seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 26TH, 2024 BUDGET HEARING CONTINUATION MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 26TH, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tommy Kulavik – 1316 Ohio St., Michigan City

Mr. Kulavik thanked the Council for considering granting the appropriation of \$4,000 to African American Males of La Porte County that was listed later on the evening’s agenda. Mr. Kulavik additionally read aloud Indiana Code 36-7-9-405 and explained the physical and economical dangers that vacant structures posed to La Porte County, and urged for the maintenance of these vacant structures. Mr. Novak clarified that the 8th Street and Wabash building was not considered as a vacant building at this time.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Mitch Bishop – La Porte County Planner

Mr. Bishop approached the Council to request a motion of support to purchase 4 EV trucks that the county had recently received NIRPC grant funding for. Mr. Bishop clarified that the grant offered the county \$123,000 for the vehicles and a charging station, however the total cost for these items came out to \$213,000. He added that one truck would be given to the Building Commission, one to MS4, and the remaining two trucks would be given to La Porte County Parks, with the charging station to be located at either Redmill County Park or Bluhm County Park. A \$90,000 contribution would be required from the county to pay for what the grant did not cover, however the vehicles would have a \$7,500 tax credit each, so \$30,000 in total would eventually come back to the county as reimbursement.

- i. Motion of support to purchase the vehicles made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Mr. Novak noted that the Council could be approached at the next regular meeting to allow for the appropriation of the additional \$90,000, after the item was properly advertised.

Emilie Levesque – La Porte County Animal Shelter Director

Mrs. Levesque introduced herself as the new Animal Shelter Director for La Porte County.

Judge Thomas Alevizos – La Porte Circuit Court

Judge Alevizos reported to the Council that the Juvenile Services Center had not been able to secure any candidates for the open full-time or on-call nurse positions for 20 months, as the designated salaries for the positions was not sufficient to attract the required candidates. He instead proposed a part-time nurse that could also serve as an on-call whose salary could be on a contractual basis.

Connie Gramarossa – La Porte County Board of Commissioners President

Following the distribution of a list of county credit card purchases by various elected officials, as well all as the posting of non-redacted images of vendors’ checks in the information packet for the evening’s meeting, Mrs. Gramarossa urged the county to tighten their internal controls. She voiced concerns about the vendor’s checking account numbers could be compromised as a result and should be reached out to regarding any potential breaches, and added that La Porte County had been scammed for \$2,995.38 in the past. Mrs. Gramarossa was unsure as to how or why the credit card purchases had been leaked, and clarified that elected officials did not have physical possession of the card to make frivolous purchases as they pleased, noting that the card was not only used for elected officials’ purchases, but also for department heads who did not have access to their own county credit card. Mr. DiMartino explained that credit card purchases were considered public record upon formal request to the Commissioners, which would allow for the redaction of sensitive information before the documents’ release. Auditor Tim Stabosz added that in the past, the Auditor’s Office was okay with department heads having access to a credit card, however these provisions had been tightened due to some department heads’ misspending. He added that department heads needed to be held accountable for their statements and charges, and if department heads wanted to release financial information, that the Commissioners were responsible for training and oversight of internal controls of said department heads.

Steve Eyrick – La Porte County Adult Probation Chief Probation Officer

Approaching the Council on behalf of Judge Greta Friedman, Mr. Eyrick reported that the Drug Free Partnership had agreed to the non-profit status for the previously proposed recovery residence, and a plan for the residence would hopefully be presented at the next Council meeting.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Cunningham: Mr. Cunningham waived his liaison report.

Councilman Yagelski: Mr. Yagelski waived his liaison report.

Councilman Rosenbaum: Mr. Rosenbaum waived his liaison report.

Councilman Novak: Mr. Novak informed the room that October was Fire Prevention Month.

Councilman Koronka: Mr. Koronka informed the room that October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Councilman Kiel: Mr. Kiel waived his liaison report.

Councilman Mollenhauer: Mr. Mollenhauer waived his liaison report.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Auditor reported no correspondence.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

1. Ordinance Number 2024-9 – Ordinance Establishing Ivy Tech Internship Fund
 - i. Motion to read by title only made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - ii. All members voted in favor.
 - iii. Mr. Stabosz read aloud the first reading by title only.
 - iv. Motion to suspend the rules for a second reading made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - v. All members voted in favor.
 - vi. Mr. Stabosz read aloud the second reading by title only.
 - vii. Motion to approve Ordinance Number 2024-9 as read made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - viii. All members voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Board of Commissioners
 - a. Change Board Secretary to COMOT VI retroactive to August 26th, 2024

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

2. Information Technology

a. Change IT Network Administrator to Unclassified Exempt and update pay to match the E-911 Network Administrator retroactive to August 26th, 2024.

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

3. Community Corrections

a. Change Counselor Position to Case Management Coordinator for 2024

- i. Motion of support made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Community Corrections Director Mericka Beaty clarified that she had thought that the request had been approved the month prior and had already hired for the position on September 16th. She requested that the hired employee's pay be retroactive to the date that they were hired.

- i. Motion of support to approve the retroactive pay for the employee back to their starting date made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

ii. No formal vote was taken on the motion of support.

4. Amendment #3 to Salary Ordinance 2023-01

The item was moved later in the agenda to be discussed with Amendment #4 to the Salary Ordinance 2023-01.

5. Requests that were tabled at the last meeting

- i. Motion to remove items a, b, and c from the table made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

- ii. All members voted in favor.
 - a. Approval of the following position updates for 2025:
 - i. Human Resources – Monique Thomas
 - 1. Change Part-Time HR Administrative Assistant to Full Time at COMOT V
Human Resources Director Monique Thomas clarified that the position was supposed to be advertised as receiving COMOT IV pay.
 - a. Motion to deny made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
 - b. During roll call, four members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Kiel) and three members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, and Mr. Mollenhauer). The item was denied.
 - 2. Change HR Assistant to Unclassified with recommended base salary
 - a. Motion to approve and to be made effective in 2025 made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - b. All members voted in favor.
 - b. Adult Probation – Steve Eyrick
 - i. Change Administrative Assistant from COMOT V to COMOT VI
 - 1. Motion to approve and to be made effective in 2025 made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
 - 2. All members voted in favor.
- c. Approval of the following position updates for 2024 and 2025:
 - i. Health Department – Amanda Lahners
 - 1. Director of Nursing (Unclassified/Exempt)
 - a. Motion to approve and to be made effective immediately made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
 - b. All members voted in favor.

2. Health Education Specialists/School Liaison (Non-Exempt)

- a. Motion to approve and to be made effective immediately made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- b. All members voted in favor.

3. Nursing Supervisor (Non-Exempt)

- a. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- b. All members voted in favor.

6. Discuss budget changes for 2025

a. Health Department – Director’s Salary

- i. Motion to approve a salary of \$77,000 to be made effective immediately made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

b. Superior Court #3 – Psychological Evaluations in the amount of \$6,000

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

c. Prosecutor – Fund 2501 Health Insurance

Ms. Graves explained that the Prosecutor wanted to increase the budget of fund 2501 by \$694 from 2024 to accommodate increased health insurance costs, making the proposed budget in the account \$23,804 for 2025.

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

d. Circuit Court and Superior Court #1 – Stipend for Certified Court Reporters

Ms. Graves clarified that the current stipend for certified stenographers in La Porte County was \$1,500, and the requested increase was to \$5,000 per stenographer. Judge Alevizos explained that the \$1,500 stipend was established 30 years prior, and had not been updated since. He added that he intended to not request a \$3,500 increase per stenographer, but had initially requested that the stipend be brought *up to* \$3,500.

- i. Motion to approve a \$4,000 stipend for the Circuit Court and Superior Court #1 Stenographers immediately, and for 2025, made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - ii. All members voted in favor.
- e. Juvenile Probation and Juvenile Services Center – Request to consider eliminating a Juvenile Services Center Caseworker position (1000.176), in exchange for a Juvenile Probation Officer position to be added to the Probation Department (1000.154)

Judge Alevizos clarified that he wanted to convert a Juvenile Services Center staff position that would perform probation officer duties as well as their current intake services. He noted that Juvenile Probation Administrative Staff funds could be utilized to supplement the position's pay as it increased in the future, perhaps as early as its third year. He noted that supervisors' pay in the Juvenile Probation department could potentially increase because of the requirement to oversee an additional employee.

- i. Motion to eliminate a Juvenile Services Center Case Worker position and transfer the position to Juvenile Probation made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
 - ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).
- f. Highway Department – Health Insurance Funds

Ms. Graves reported that the Highway Department would be accommodating for a 4% increase in health insurance costs for 2025 by increasing their 201 account budget to \$97,760, their 202 account budget to \$760,240, and their 2204 account budget to \$85,904.

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

g. Assessor's Office – 2015 Reassessment Budget was missing the line for Dues when presented. This would be account 30009 for \$1,800; the same amount as the 2024 Budget.

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Kiel and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

ii. All members voted in favor.

h. Community Corrections – Updates to all Budgets

Mrs. Beaty reported that the Assistant Director at Community Corrections, who had worked at Community Corrections for 22 years and served the county for 27 years, was still not being paid a similar salary to that of the Juvenile Services Center Assistant Director. The proposed salary would be \$66,314, funds for which would come from Project Income.

i. Motion to approve to set the Community Corrections Assistant Director's salary to be congruent to that of the Juvenile Services Center Assistant Director as an unclassified position made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Cunningham. An effective date was not designated.

ii. All members voted in favor.

i. Group Health – General Fund 1000

Ms. Graves clarified that the item on the table was in regards to La Porte County Financial Advisor Karl Cender's recommendation to increase the 143 Group Health Budget. Mr. Cender reported that the recommended low-end of the budget was forecasted at \$12,028,000, while a high-end recommendation was estimated at upwards of \$14,000,000. Mr. Kiel questioned if budgeting \$12 million would exceed what was available in the Group Health Fund. General Insurance Services President Craig Menne explained that the renewal date from the stop loss was moved to accommodate more time to budget and to allow for more time for open enrollment. As to date, 504 employees were on the health plan. He added that the \$12 million projection was a net number that accounted for the possibility of large medical claims. Mr. Menne additionally explained that the \$125,000 that was designated for NorthShore could be stricken from the budget, as this fee would not need to be budgeted for in 2025. He stated that the \$340,000 from Anthem was voluntary, so the net to the budget should be zero.

Mr. DiMartino questioned if employee-only paid contributions should be secured in their own fund for bookkeeping purposes. Ms. Graves answered that fund 4700, by law, was for self-insured programs only.

Mrs. Gramarossa reported that one common problem with budgeting for Group Health was the bouncing of money from Bank 5 and Bank 6, while Mr. Cender stated that he felt that bank to bank transfers from the account were being made without requests for transfers coming before the Council for approval, and the county had been utilizing these methods for a number of years. Mr. Kiel questioned if these transfers could result in discrepancies, which Mr. Cender affirmed, noting that final bank reconciliations were being waited on to determine this. Mr. Menne noted that if the county opted to budget a low \$9.5 million for Group Health, there shouldn't be any issue if enrollment stayed as it currently was. Mr. DiMartino added that an increase of about 50 more health plan participants in 2024 caused budgeting issues with Group Health, to which Mr. Menne recommended incorporating a "per employee per year" amount into the budgeting process and utilizing a monthly report to track any of these increases.

Mr. Novak recommended establishing one person whose sole job was to oversee the health insurance, and all funds involved with it. Mr. Stabosz noted that the Auditor's Office had been working towards this, with primary difficulties being the timeliness of information received, and added that he would be meeting with the County Attorney about the topic of overseeing the health insurance. Mr. Kiel stated that he would like to see more inclusion of elected officials in the health insurance budgeting and committee process. He questioned if the Council increased the amount of money for the Group Health Fund budget, if employees' premium and contributions would change. Mr. Menne noted that because the county was self-funded, there was no premium, so the COBRA equivalent was used regardless of any budgetary increases or decreases.

Ms. Graves explained that the departments had made and presented their budgets based on Group Health, and with the numbers provided, appropriating \$7,535,000 from the General Fund would bring the Group Health Fund up to \$9.5 million. The numbers were not exact, however, as they were based off of the previous year's numbers.

- i. Motion to approve \$7,535,000 from the General Fund to budget for Group Health Fund made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.
- iii. Motion to separate Life Insurance Premiums from account 4700 into its own account for bookkeeping purposes made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Kiel.

iv. All members voted in favor.

j. Group Health Fund 4700

Mr. Koronka clarified that the published requirement for Community Corrections was \$7,485,058, while 2024's total adopted budget was \$6,528,155. Ms. Graves noted that with the changes on the table, the proposed budget for salaries at Community Corrections was \$7,500,260.

i. Motion to approve amounts as presented made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

ii. All members voted in favor.

7. Discuss 2025 Budget to Advertise

Mr. Kiel confirmed with Ms. Graves that the county's advertised total revenues were \$52.3 million, while the advertised total expenses was listed at \$56.4 million, which Ms. Graves noted would change with the evening's approvals. She noted that these numbers did not factor in raises for employees. Mr. Kiel questioned if the Council was voting to adopt at what they wanted the exact number for the budget to be, or the advertised budget, which would be slightly higher. He asked if the levy allocations and miscellaneous revenues would be enough to cover expenses in each of the levy funds. Ms. Graves responded that the only concerning funds were the County Health Fund, as it had a budget decrease but retained the same levy as 2024 because the county had not yet heard back from the DLGF as to whether or not it should be adjusted, and the 2015 Reassessment Fund, which would be left with an operating budget of \$207,000 by the end of 2025 – which would not pose any issues if their levy were to decrease.

Ms. Graves noted that if the Council thought that this was unsustainable, then funding could be shuffled from the General Fund for redistribution. Mr. Novak responded that item no. 7 would be held over until later in the meeting to revisit discussion.

8. Interlocal Agreement with Regional Sewer District

i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

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

9. **Reminder that ARP Funds need to be obligated by December 31st, 2024. The US Code of Federal Regulations defines “obligation” as “an order placed for property and services, or a cost incurred by December 31st, 2024”. Interagency agreements and MOUs also count as an obligation.**

Mr. Novak noted that item no. 9 would be held over until the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Consider approval of Council President’s authorization to hire replacement positions for:**

- a. La Porte County Clerk – Deputy Clerk Positions
- b. La Porte County Prosecutor – Trial Support Position
- c. La Porte County Highway – Administrative Specialist
- d. La Porte County Health Department – Public Health Clerk
- e. La Porte County Community Corrections – Case Manager Coordinator and Field Officer
- f. La Porte County Building Maintenance – Full Time Janitor

- i. Motion to approve all items made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

2. **Solid Waste District – Clay Turner, Executive Director**

- a. **Presentation of 2025 Budget**

No comments were made on the presentation of the budget.

- b. **Public Hearing**

Steve Holifield – 6782 E. 100 S., Mill Creek

Mr. Holifield asked the Council if recycling services could be made optional to La Porte County taxpayers, citing that neither he nor his neighbors would elect to use the service if made optional.

Public comment closed after there were no further questions from the public.

Mr. Novak noted that the item would go onto the upcoming October Regular Meeting Agenda for adoption.

3. **Request to consider increasing Verbatim Stipend for Certified Court Reporters 2024 – Circuit Court and Superior Court #1**

Item no. 3 had been addressed earlier in the meeting, and thus was stricken from New Business discussion.

4. Amendments #3 and #4 to Salary Ordinance 2023-01

Mr. DiMartino noted that the amendment would reflect what was approved during the current meeting. Ms. Graves added that there was not currently a list of all of the salaries that had received amendments thus far.

- i. Motion to table made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Kiel). The item would be held over until the next meeting.

5. Consider approval of County Health Insurance Rates for 2025 - Monique Thomas – Human Resources Director

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

**6. LaCrosse Public Library – Tiffany Atkinson, Director
Budget Adoption**

Mrs. Atkinson confirmed that the proposed 2025 budget for the LaCross Public Library was \$150,340, as well as a lease rental payment of \$51,500, which in total was over budget by \$13,829. She clarified that the total budget that had been designated for 2024 was \$180,781 altogether.

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

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, AND REQUESTS

La Porte County Small Animal Shelter

Requesting a Transfer from Animal Shelter Donations Services & Charges (4100.301.20) to
Supplies (4100.20021) \$736.99

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

La Porte County Highway

Requesting a Transfer from Major Bridge Other Services & Charges (1171.30120.0215) to Major Bridge Group Health (1171.11019.0215) \$25,000

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

La Porte County Clerk

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund Maintenance Contracts (30007) to General Fund Office Supplies (20001) \$2,500.00

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

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund Rental Equipment (30008) to General Fund Office Supplies (20001) \$500.00

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

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund 1000.0101 Election Supplies (20022) to Printing O/T Office Supplies (30005) \$3,690.19

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

Requesting an Appropriation from Clerk's Perpetuation Fund (1119) for:
Other Services & Charges – Bolt Invoice \$11,000.00

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

La Porte County Community Corrections

Requesting a Transfer from Community Correction Grant Fund 9107 Field Officer (10201) to Drug Testing (20062) \$5,000.00

Requesting a Transfer from Community Correction Grant Fund 9107 Field Officer (10201) to Office Supplies (20001) \$95.55

Requesting a Transfer from Community Correction Grant Fund 9107 OASDI (11007) to Office Supplies (20001) \$3,442.45

Requesting a Transfer from Community Correction Grant Fund 9107 OASDI (11007) to Travel (30003) \$2,511.14

Requesting a Transfer from Community Correction Grant Fund 9107 PERF (11017) to Travel (30003) \$2,488.86

Requesting a Transfer from Community Correction Grant Fund 9107 PERF (11017) to Professional Services (30135) \$7,646.26

Requesting a Transfer from Community Correction Grant Fund 9107 Medicare (11017) to Professional Services (30135) \$1,392.36

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

- ii. All members voted in favor.

Requesting Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety (1170) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:
Services & Charges – Drug Testing \$55,000.00

- i. Motion to approve \$29,000 out of Opioid Unrestricted (1238), with Community Corrections to return to the Council if they need further appropriation made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Rosenbaum Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Yagelski).

La Porte County Election Board

Requesting an Appropriation from Reimbursable Grant – 2024 HAVA Grant (8235) for:

Supplies – Election Supplies \$19,320.52

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

La Porte County Sheriff

Requesting a Transfer from Asset Forfeiture Fund (4003) Other Services & Charges (30120) to Capital Purchases (40112) for:

Capital Purchase – Dome Cameras in Jail & Civil Division \$27,970

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

La Porte County MS4

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund 1000.0161 Mileage (30018) to Employee Education & Training (30027) \$484

Requesting an Appropriation from MS4 Bond Fund (4022) for:

Return of Deposits \$25,413

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

La Porte County EMS

Requesting an Appropriation from EMS Donation Fund (4103) for:

Supplies \$4,000

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

Requesting an Appropriation from EMS Public Outreach Fund (4114) for:
Supplies \$2,000

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

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety (1170) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:
Capital Purchase – Tablet/Docking Station Replacement in Ambulances \$53,000

- i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8950) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. Four members voted in favor (Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and three members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, and Mr. Rosenbaum).

La Porte County Adult Probation

Requesting an Appropriation from Adult Probation Supplemental Fund (2102) for:
Capital Purchase – Laptops 2,007.00
Supplies – Computer Software 719.82 \$2726.82

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

La Porte County Prosecutor

Requesting Appropriations from County Fee Fund (2500) to be deposited and appropriated into Prosecutor Pretrial Diversion & Deferral Fund (2501) for:

Services & Charges – Purchasing LEO Equipment and Assisting Dunebrook \$15,000
Supplies – Uniforms \$5,000
Capital Purchase – Law Enforcement Equipment \$15,000

- i. Motion to approve all 3 items made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel and Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Michigan City Courthouse Renovation Fund (4260) for:

Capital Purchase – Airphone System and Fire Door Installation **\$20,000**

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. Two members voted in favor (Mr. Koronka and Mr. Mollenhauer) and five members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, and Mr. Kiel). The motion did not pass.

La Porte County Coroner

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

Supplies – Office Supplies **\$300**

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

La Porte County IT Department

Requesting an Appropriation from Reimbursable Ivy Tech Intern Fund (TBA) for:

Personal Services – Salary for Intern **\$6,000**

Personal Services – Payroll Deductions **\$500**

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

La Porte County Health Department

Requesting an Appropriation from Reimbursable Grant Beach Monitoring/Notification (8232)

for:

Services & Charges **\$10,815**

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

Requesting an Appropriation from Reimbursable Grant Emergency Preparedness 24/25 (8231)

for:

Services & Charges **\$25,000**

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

La Porte County Auditor

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – Employer Portion of Group Health Insurance \$690,000.00

Ms. Graves noted that the charges as presented resulted from the Commissioners not increasing the fund’s budget when Group Health Insurance premiums increased by 8% the year prior. Mr. Novak added that the addition of 50 new plan participants contributed to this as well.

- i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8950) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Rosenbaum).

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Jury Pay Fund (2506) for:

Services & Charges – Jury Fees \$15,000.00

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

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from General (1000) or Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – Correction of Overtime for Sheriff’s Department \$3,680.90

- i. Motion to approve out of the General Fund (1000) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Three members voted in favor (Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Cunningham) and four members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Novak, and Mr. Koronka). The motion did not pass.
- iii. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Mollenhauer and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- iv. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Yagelski).

- ii. All members voted in favor.

Requesting an Appropriation from Communicable Disease Fund (2704) for:

Supplies – Food Items \$500

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

Requesting an Appropriation from Health Department Fund (4116) for:

Supplies – Candy \$200

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

La Porte County E-911

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety (1170) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – Maintenance Contract \$95,638

- i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8950) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Rosenbaum.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski and Mr. Cunningham).

La Porte County Superior Court #3

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – Psychological Evaluations \$6,000

- i. Motion to approve out of WinTax (4220) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Five members voted in favor (Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and two members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Yagelski).

African American Males of La Porte County

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges \$4,000

Mr. Novak explained that the request needed to be brought to the Commissioners before the Council could vote on the item.

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

La Porte County Circuit Court

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from General Fund (1000) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – Court Reporter Verbatim Stipend \$3,500

- i. Motion to approve out of WinTax (4220) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).

La Porte County Commissioners

Requesting an Additional Appropriation form General Fund (1000) or Riverboat (1191) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – Salary Adjustment for Board Secretary \$1,534.25

Mr. Novak clarified that this was retroactive pay following the Commissioners' Secretary's pay increase retroactive to August 26th, 2024.

- i. Motion to approve out of WinTax (4220) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Requesting Additional Appropriations from Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – Postage \$50,000

Services & Charges – Legal Fees \$50,000

Services & Charges – Professional Consulting Services	\$20,000
Services & Charges – Professional Services	\$10,000

Mr. Novak questioned if the Election Board’s postage was paid for out of the Clerk’s fund. Commission President Connie Gramarossa noted that in the past, when the Assessor, Treasurer, and Clerk did mass mailings, the mailings were followed up with the submission of a receipt for the cost of the postage that would allow for the Board of Commissioners postage fund to be replenished into the General Fund, however these funds were not coming back from the General Fund into the Postage account. She recommended setting the postage into its own account for bookkeeping and transfer purposes, and added that seven days’ worth of absentee voting postage alone had amounted to a large sum of \$2,801.20, at only the beginning of the election, when the Commissioners had a monthly budget of roughly \$13,000 for postage.

- i. Motion to approve all four items out of ARP (8950) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).

La Porte County Building Maintenance

Requesting Additional Appropriations from Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – Trash Removal	\$13,400
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Director of Facilities Sheryl Lestinsky explained that trash removal costs had increased, as well as costs to remove contaminated waste from the county’s on-site dumpsters. Mr. Yagelski advised locking the waste receptacles after the county’s operating hours to cut back on costs to remove contaminated waste. Mrs. Lestinsky confirmed that there were no cameras around the dumpsters to monitor if the public was using them illegally.

- i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8950) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel and Mr. Mollenhauer) and neither a favorable nor unfavorable vote could be visually or audibly detected from Mr. Cunningham.

Services & Charges – Fire Protection	\$285,000
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Mrs. Lestinsky clarified that the current fire panel was over 25 years old and not up to code, resulting in a recent write-up from the state. The appropriation would pay for a new fire panel, hardware, and wiring that was required to get the building up to date.

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

La Porte County Council

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Cumulative Bridge (1135) for:

Services & Charges – Design Work for Franklin Street Bridge \$407,535.66

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and one member voted not-in-favor (Mr. Cunningham).

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – La Porte County Volunteer Fire Departments \$480,000.00

Mr. Cunningham clarified that the item was to pay for \$15,000 bonuses to each of the 16 volunteer fire departments for 2025 and for 2026, as ARP funding needed to be appropriated toward the item before the end of 2024.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. During roll call, four members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, and Mr. Mollenhauer) and three members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, and Mr. Kiel).

La Porte County Sheriff

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety (1170) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – Pension Fund \$355,966

- i. Motion to approve \$160,000 out of Riverboat (1191) and \$100,000 out of WinTax (4220), with the remaining balance to be revisited during the October Regular Council Meeting made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. Six members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, Mr. Novak, Mr. Koronka, and Mr. Kiel) and one member abstained (Mr. Mollenhauer).

7. Discuss 2025 Budget to Advertise (Revisited from Old Business)

Ms. Graves recommended advertising everything that was approved, which did not include raises at this time. Mr. Yagelski confirmed with Ms. Graves that departments used to budget for their own pay raises which the Council would approve after-the-fact, and noted that he would rather see raises approached in the same manner that the Council had done in the past. Ms. Graves stated that the raise system may have changed following the last large pay increase for county employees.

- i. Motion to approve the budget as approved up to the current date made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

Mr. Rosenbaum noted that he would like to see a change in the levy for the Pioneer Cemetery Fund, as it was receiving a large amount of money, and would experience a surplus going into 2025. He requested that the motion be formally changed to allow for \$20,000 from the account, taking it from \$70,000 to \$50,000, to be directed to the General Fund.

- ii. Motion to amend to include Mr. Rosenbaum's \$20,000 transfer from the Cemetery Fund to the General Fund made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- iii. All members voted in favor.

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Yagelski informed the room that with major upcoming changes with Indiana State Legislature, there would be notable financial challenges presented that would serve as a detriment to La Porte County, and if the county did not use all of the tools at its disposal to combat these changes, it could lose out on opportunities such as the gas and wheel tax. Mr. Novak elaborated that the State of Indiana intended to reduce property taxes, however the result was that county government would need to make local changes to offset, that would seemingly vilify local government.

Separately, Mr. Kiel explained that he had been seeking access to LOW so he could perform research on how to approach the budget, however his request had been stagnated when he was requesting remote access to the program, despite many other county employees being given remote access to the program. Mr. DiMartino questioned if this was because Mr. Kiel was

an elected official, to which Mr. Kiel debated that the read-only access that he was requesting could not change any of the documentation in the program. Mr. DiMartino noted that, if the Commissioners approved the request, Mr. Kiel could receive clearance for read-only access to LOW, however requests like these were unusual and had been turbulent in the past. Mr. Rosenbaum stated that he felt as though the motion was not appropriate for the Council to make of the Commissioners.

- i. Motion to move the Council request that the Commissioners grant permission for read-only remote access to LOW for Council Members made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. During roll call four members voted in favor (Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Koronka, Mr. Kiel and Mr. Mollenhauer) and three members voted not-in-favor (Mr. Yagelski, Mr. Rosenbaum, and Mr. Novak).

ADJOURNMENT

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

Examined & Approved by the La Porte County Council this 28th day of October, 2024.



Councilman Earl Cunningham



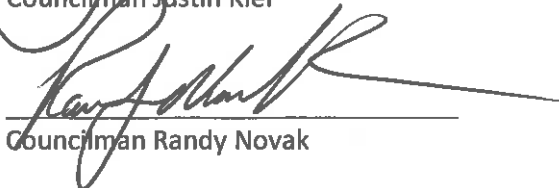
Councilman Adam Koronka



Councilman Justin Kiel



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer



Councilman Randy Novak



Councilman Mike Rosenbaum



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Timothy Stabosz Auditor