

**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 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 Cunningham.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 AGENDA**

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Koronka with multiple amendments to the agenda: under Old Business, the addition of two items, item no. 1 Return Unused Funds from MCCH Renovation Fund to Rainy Day Fund, and item no. 2 Approve Reversal of ARP Funds for Hwy 35/I-94 Project - \$750,000. Under New Business, the addition to approve replacement position for the La Porte County Prosecutor – Trial Support, the addition to set Council ARP and Reorganizational Meetings. Under Appropriations, Transfers and Requests, the addition of La Porte County Animal Control's request to add a transfer of \$8,000 from Employee Training to Food Account and return \$34,568 to the La Porte County Animal Control Donation Account; under La Porte County Drug Free Partnership, the addition of Opioid Restricted Funds to the list of available funds to select for appropriation; to move La Porte County Building Maintenance's requests for appropriations to the end of the agenda, and to remove the La Porte County Council's request for appropriation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum with the following amendments. Mr. Yagelski seconded the motion.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **Approval of the September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Budget Hearing Continuation Memorandum**

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

### **Approval of the October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Budget Adoption Minutes**

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

### **Approval of the October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Stabosz requested that the item be tabled to allow for additional corrections.

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

### **Approval of the October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Joint Workshop Memorandum**

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no participants for Public Comment.

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

### **Greta Friedman – Superior Court 4 and Problem Solving Court Judge**

Judge Friedman requested permission to spend up to \$600 for a Christmas party for Problem Solving Court, noting that donations usually provided funding for the annual party in the past, with Problem Solving Court to submit receipts for any related purchases if the Council approved.

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

**Matt Reardon – Office of Economic Development**

Matt Reardon of the Office of Economic Development requested a motion of support for two grant opportunities – one for the town of Wanatah, which was directly related to improvements to sanitary facilities for \$500,000 to be matched by the community, and another \$500,000 for Kingsford Heights, which would be used for utility improvements.

- i. Motion of support made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

Mr. Kiel inquired if \$1.5 million in funding that had been previously directed towards the Michigan City Courthouse had actually been appropriated or if it had only received a motion of support. Auditor Chief Deputy Rhonda Graves responded that in 2022, the request for \$1.5 million had received a motion of support without a fund being given, however there was a \$750,000 appropriation approved the following January or February that had been encumbered, but not spent. This was why the money was listed as still being available. Mr. Reardon added that that on August 22<sup>nd</sup> of 2022, the Council appropriated \$750,000 out of Riverboat and \$750,000 out of Economic Development LIT for a total of \$1.5 million, however no ARP funds had been appropriated. Ms. Graves responded that \$750,000 in ARP funding had been earmarked for the I-35/94 project, which Mr. Reardon noted he had not requested.

Council Attorney Guy DiMartino recommended withdrawing the initial motion so the request could be investigated and addressed at the upcoming ARP Funding Workshop on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Neither a formal motion was made to withdraw the original motion, nor did the Council vote to approve or deny the original motion.

**Heather Stevens – La Porte County Clerk**

La Porte County Clerk Heather Stevens appeared electronically via Zoom regarding the moving of funds to pay election workers and polling locations, to which Ms. Graves informed Mrs. Stevens that her item had been placed on the agenda under Appropriations, Transfers and Requests, and would be addressed later in the meeting.

**LIAISON REPORTS**

**Councilman Cunningham:** Mr. Cunningham congratulated newly elected Board of Commissioners member Steve Holifield on winning the election.

**Councilman Yagelski:** Mr. Yagelski waived his liaison report

**Councilman Rosenbaum:** Mr. Rosenbaum waived his liaison report.

**Councilman Mollenhauer:** Mr. Mollenhauer waived his liaison report.

**Councilman Kiel:** Mr. Kiel waived his liaison report.

**Councilman Koronka:** Mr. Koronka waived his liaison report.

**Councilman Novak:** Mr. Novak waived his liaison report.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Stabosz reported that there was no correspondence.

### **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

#### **Ordinance #2024-11 – An Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Prison Autopsy Payment 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 ordinance by title only.
- iv. Motion to approve first reading made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- v. All members voted in favor.
- vi. Motion to suspend the rules and allow for a second reading made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- vii. All members voted in favor.
- viii. Mr. Stabosz read aloud the ordinance by title only for the second reading.
- ix. Motion to approve as read made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- x. All members voted in favor.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Return Unused Funds from MCCH Renovation Fund to Rainy Day Fund**

- i. Motion to revert the unused funds from the Michigan City Courthouse Renovation back to the Rainy Day Fund made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

### **2. Approve Reversal of ARP Funds for Hwy 35/I-94 Project - \$750,000**

Mr. Novak reported that, at this time, the item would be held over without any formal motion from the Council.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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

- a. La Porte County Prosecutor – Victim Advocate
  - b. La Porte County Community Corrections – Field Officer
  - c. La Porte County Highway – Mechanic
  - d. La Porte County Clerk – Deputy Clerk
- i. Motion to approve all items made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
  - ii. All members voted in favor.

### **2. ProPEL US 30 West Transportation Study – Scott Sandstrom**

Scott Sandstrom, Consultant Project Manager for CDM Smith, presented on the alternatives development and screening process for level 3 of the ProPEL transportation study, as well as a study schedule indicating that the study would continue into. Mr. Kiel praised the accuracy of the study, however emphasized that completely eliminating access through a limited access alternative that bypassed the Township of Hanna and S.R. 39 would be reckless to the affected communities, and added that rear-end collisions on the railroad tracks in Hanna were not included in the study. He noted that a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 30 and U.S. 421 might not be met with optimism from residents, and asked Mr. Sandstrom to meet with the Wanatah Town Council, as the project would highly effect the identity of the town if it were approved.

### **3. Adjustment Recommendations – Joie Winski, Treasurer**

Following the State Board of Accounts mandated reconciliation with the county's banks from 2019 to present day, La Porte County Treasurer Joie Winski reported that the county's Bank 1 account was -\$655.27, the Bank 5 account was -\$75,087.43, and the Bank 6 account was a surplus of \$27,699.03, so a total imbalance of -\$48,043.67. She noted that this was a result of accounting errors that likely occurred as a result of the manual reporting style that was used in the past that likely resulted in certain checks and payments being directed to the improper accounts due to them not fitting into any particular category, and clarified that currently the Treasurer's Office was no longer using this manual style of accounting and utilizing LOW's accounting system. Ms. Winski informed the Council that this shortage needed to be funded so 2024's reconciliation could be finalized.

Mr. Yagelski questioned how such large sums of money could be accrued simply by checks and payments not being able to be categorized. Ms. Winski responded that she did not know as to why, however these larger amounts could have added up from checks or payments that simply had not been posted correctly, or they could have been electronic transfers. Mr. Yagelski asked if the elected officials or employees who served during these periods had been questioned about the shortages, to which Ms. Winski noted that these officials would have been written up by the SBOA due to the errors, however she was unsure if any of these officials or employees would remember the source of the shortages, as such a long period of time had passed since the accounting errors had occurred.

Mr. DiMartino recommended making a motion to reach out to the former elected officials and employees to see if they would be willing to give their insight on the postings. Ms. Winski added that the 2019-2022 reconciliations could not be reopened as the SBOA had officially closed them, and the -\$48,043.67 was considered "small change" by the SBOA given the long amount it took the total shortage to accrue in contrast to each annual budget.

- i. Motion to approve the adjustment to the -\$48,043.67 shortage made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- ii. During roll call, 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).

**4. Council ARP Workshop to be Scheduled**

The Council ARP Workshop was scheduled for December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 5pm CST.

**5. Council Reorganization Meeting to be Scheduled**

The Council Reorganization Meeting was scheduled for January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 5pm CST.

- i. Motion to approve the scheduled dates for the Council ARP Workshop and Council Reorganization Meeting made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

**APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, AND REQUESTS**

**La Porte County Election Board**

Requesting Transfers from General Fund (1000.0131) Board Members (10136) to the following:

Meals for Precinct Boards (30044)	\$3,500	
Polling Places (30119)	\$4,500	\$9,000

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

**La Porte County Community Corrections**

Requesting a Transfer from LIT Public Safety (1170) Lease Agreements (30093) to Field Officer Pay (10201.00590) \$1,291.44

Requesting Transfers from LIT Public Safety (1170) Lease Agreements (30093) to Field Officer (10201.00584)	\$617.73	
Residential Officer (10202.00584)	\$916.86	
Coordinator of Services (10207.00584)	\$2,215.78	\$3,750.37

- i. Motion to approve both items 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 (111.0161) Mileage (30018) to Office Supplies (20001) \$500

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

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Highway**

Requesting a Transfer from LIT Economic Development Highway Budget (1112.00200) Other Supplies (20021.00200) to Equipment (41007.00200) \$134,677.00

Requesting Permission to Spend from the LIT Economic Development Budget of the Highway Department (1112.0200) for:  
Capital Purchase – Equipment \$169,587.00

Requesting Transfers from LIT Economic Development Highway Budget (1112.00200) Other Supplies (20021.00200) to Equipment (41007.00200) \$282,045.04  
Other Services & Charges (30120.00200) to Equipment (41007.00200) \$644,871.96

Requesting Permission to Spend from the LIT Economic Development Budget of the Highway Department (1112.0200) for:  
Capital Purchase – Equipment \$926,917.00

- i. Motion to approve all transfers and requests for permission to spend made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

Requesting a Transfer from LIT Economic Development Highway Budget (1112.0200) Other Supplies (20021.00200) to Other Services & Charges (30120.00200) \$104,900.00

Requesting Permission to Spend from the LIT Economic Development Budget of the Highway Department (1112.0200) for:  
Other Services & Charges – Concrete Approaches and I Beam Repairs \$104,900.00

- i. Motion to approve both the transfer and the request for permission to spend made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Planner/La Porte County Highway Department**

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:  
Grant Match \$32,000

La Porte County Planner Mitch Bishop explained that the grant would pay for a scope change in the Lincoln Trail Project that would reroute the trail due to its current route crossing over a large ravine and various wetlands, which would be costly to follow through with. The local match would be \$32,000.



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

**La Porte County Parks Department/La Porte County Planner**

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Grant Match – Department of Energy Reimbursable Grant \$78,820

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- 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 Voter Registration**

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund (1000.0132) Office Supplies (20001) to Part-Time Employees (10130) \$1,500

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

**La Porte County Circuit Court**

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund (1000.0148) Bailiff (10175) to Professional Services (30135) \$3,000

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

La Porte County Circuit Court Judge Thomas Alevizos informed the room that the Circuit Court had placed an additional request for appropriation for the payment of translators and psychological exams on October 30<sup>th</sup>, along with a few transfers to pay them, however these items did not appear to be placed on the evening's agenda. Mr. Novak responded that the Council would make sure to address the items at the December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting. Mr. Kiel noted that there might not be enough time to advertise the request, to which Mr. Novak

responded that an additional meeting might need to be scheduled to approve it and to tie-up the remaining ARP funds.

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund (111.0148) Legal Intern (10135) to Professional Services (30135) to pay for Court Reporting Service \$2,475

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

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:  
JDAI Payroll Increase \$3,337

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Kiel 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).

#### **Pioneer Cemetery**

Requesting Transfers from Pioneer Cemetery Fund (2300) Painting and Painting Supplies (20043) to:

OASDI (11007)	\$45.78	
Medicare (11009)	\$1.47	\$47.25

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

#### **La Porte County Animal Shelter**

Requesting Transfers from Animal Shelter Donation Fund (4100.0531) to:

Supplies – Other Supplies	\$5,000
Services & Charges – In-House Equipment Repairs	\$600
Services & Charges – Other Services & Charges	\$13,000

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

Requesting Additional Appropriations from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (123) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Supplies – Office Supplies	\$568
Services & Charges – Repair/Maintenance to Supplies	\$1,000

Services & Charges – Employee Education and Training	\$8,000	
Supplies – Food	\$2,000	
Supplies – Uniforms	\$1,000	
Services & Charges – Vet & Hospital	\$22,000	\$34,568

- i. Motion to approve the total of \$34,568 out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded 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).

Personal Services – Department Head	\$6,800	
Personal Services – Chief Deputies	\$700	
Personal Services – Part-Time	\$7,500	
Personal Services – Shelter Officer	\$7,400	
Services & Charges – Repair to Vehicle	\$3,000	\$25,400

- i. Motion to approve the \$25,400 out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Mollenhauer.
- 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 Sheriff**

Requesting a Transfer from General Fund (1000.00105) Patrolman (10126) to Incentive Pay (10234) for:

Incentive Pay Appropriation in LIT PS has been used in full. The department is requesting more Funds to use for Incentive Pay for 30 deputies \$15,600.00

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

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from reimbursable CHIRP Grant (8258) for:

Personal Services – Payroll \$136,654.13

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

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Supplies – Food \$120,000.00

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Rosenbaum.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Requesting an Appropriation from Misdemeanant Fund (1175) for:

Services & Charges – Sink, counter, and electric \$12,631.88

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

#### **La Porte County Jail**

Requesting a Reduction of Budget from LIT Public Safety 1170 for:

The funds are needed in the Courthouse Security budget to cover payroll due to a change in employees (employee moved from Jail to Courthouse Security) (\$5,162)

#### **La Porte County Courthouse Security**

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Public Safety for:

Personal Services – Payroll \$5,162

- i. Motion to approve the \$5,162 transfer from the La Porte County Jail to La Porte County Courthouse Security made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Koronka.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

#### **La Porte County Coroner**

Requesting Appropriations from Coroner Autopsy Fund (4076) for:

Services & Charges – Prison Autopsies to be paid as money is received from the state \$30,000

Services & Charges – Appropriation of received EFT \$5,000

Mr. DiMartino informed the Council that the purpose of establishing the account was to allow the Coroner a “float” of funding due to the 90-day turnaround in paying her autopsy vendor. He noted that the money would be put in a non-reverting fund, and the Coroner would simply need to give the Counsel a quarterly report on her spending of the money. Mr. Novak confirmed with Ms. Graves and Ms. Swanson that the Coroner only needed a \$15,000 appropriation for Prison Autopsies and \$5,000 for the EFT, for a grand total of \$20,000.

- i. Motion to approve the \$15,000 request for appropriation and the additional \$5,000 request made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. 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. Cunningham and Mr. Yagelski).

Requesting an Appropriation from Coroner Non-Reverting Fund (2053) for:  
Capital Purchase – Television for Trainings

\$400

Mr. Yagelski questioned why the Coroner could not utilize the television and training center that located on the floor of her department.

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

#### **La Porte County Prosecutor**

Requesting Appropriation from County User Fee Fund (2500) to be deposited and Appropriated into IV-D Incentive Fund (8897) for:

Personal Services – To correct bonus given in error

\$1,766.67

When La Porte County Prosecutor Sean Fagan informed the Council that the request was to make up for a shortage, Mr. Cunningham inquired if an employee who had received a bonus might have received too much of one. Mr. Fagan explained that the original bonus in question had been returned to the State of Indiana following an audit – not because the employee in question did not deserve the bonus – but due to an accounting error with the state that had not been disclosed to the Prosecutor. Mr. Fagan emphasized that the employee fully deserved their bonus and that this request was to ensure that they received it.

- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- ii. Five 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).

Requesting an Appropriation from County User Fee Fund (2500) to be deposited and Appropriated into Pre-Trial Diversion and Deferral Fund (2501) for:

Capital Purchase – Radar Signs for La Porte City Police Department

\$16,492.00

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

Requesting Appropriations of Reimbursement EFT for Adult Protective Services Fund (8137) for:

Personal Services – Salary	\$22,385.38	
Personal Services – OASDI	\$1,330.56	
Personal Services – Medicare	\$311.17	
Personal Services – PERF	\$2,507.18	
Personal Services – Health	\$3,705.38	
Services & Charges – Other Services & Charges	\$2,315.25	
Services & Charges – Training	\$11,668.84	
Supplies – Other Supplies	\$1,187.95	\$45,411.71

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

**La Porte County Adult Probation**

Requesting an Appropriation from Adult Protection Supplemental Fund (2102) for:

Personal Services – Salary amount missing from the budget last year, noticed after budget was advertised \$10,000

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

Mr. DiMartino noted that no changes would need to be made to the Salary Ordinance for this Request.

La Porte County Adult Probation's Chief Adult Probation Officer Stephen Eyrick informed the Council that he would be having a retreat for his department in January, and formally requested permission to spend no more than \$1,000 in User Fees funding to spend on food for the attendees, which he had since gotten permission from the Board of Commissions to do.

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

**La Porte County Drug Free Partnership**

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – Drug Program \$750,000

- i. Motion to approve \$400,000 out of Opioid Restricted and \$350,000 out of LIT Economic Development (1112) made by Mr. Rosenbaum and seconded by Mr. Koronka.

Mr. Cunningham requested that, is a plaque were to be installed on the building, that it indicate that the facility was paid for by the citizens of La Porte County, not by the seven Council Members.

- ii. Mr. Rosenbaum and Mr. Koronka amended their motion to include Mr. Cunningham's request.
- iii. All members voted in favor.

**La Porte County Purdue Extension Office**

Requesting an Additional Appropriating from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – Labor & Material for Gate \$5,000

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) 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 Juvenile Services Center**

Requesting an Additional Appropriating from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Capital Purchase – Up to three transportation vehicles \$120,000

Mr. Novak confirmed with Mr. DiMartino and the Council that no notice of this request had been received, nor did the Juvenile Services Center submit any information about additional bids as had been requested. As a result, Mr. Novak informed the room that the Council would not be moving on the item as there was no indication that the request had been appropriately bid out.

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

**La Porte County Board of Commissioners**

Requesting an Additional Appropriating from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – Veteran Services Officer \$1,774.29

Personal Services – Part-Time Veteran Services Officer \$3,168.00

- i. Motion to approve both items out of LIT Economic Development (1112) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel.

- ii. During roll call, 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).

Personal Services – Worker’s Compensation	\$459,548.00	\$464,490.29
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Mr. Koronka informed the room that the Worker’s Compensation Account (31007) was a \$0 line item, while the Liability Accident Insurance Premium Account (30067) was funding at \$1,663,000. Mr. DiMartino added that he was never sure as to why worker’s compensation was clustered into the liability account, which Mr. Novak responded was at the requests of the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Kiel requested that Mr. DiMartino and the Auditor investigate why this was so.

- i. Motion to approve out of ARP (8950) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel.
- 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 Building Maintenance**

Requesting an Additional Appropriating from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Services & Charges – Water/Sewage Utility Bills	\$13,000.00
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- i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) 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).

Services & Charges – Gym Floor	\$132,350.00
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La Porte County Building Maintenance’s Director of Facilities Sheryl Lestinsky reported that the Juvenile Services Center’s current gym floor was carpet, and the center had been requesting an updated welded floor. She explained that while she received quotes for cheaper materials, the quote that she was presenting was for the material that the center preferred. Mr. Koronka recommended holding back on the item and re-approaching the vendors to get the same base flooring quote with the specific striping parameters that the center was requesting but instead of purchasing an expensive basketball wood-grain surface, to instead consider other vinyl surfacing options.



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

Services & Charges – Waterproofing Courthouse Basement \$48,390.30

- i. Motion to approve out LIT Economic Development (1112) 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)

Services & Charges – Koorsen Fire & Security Invoices \$9,650.79

- i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) 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)

Services & Charges – Generator Rental \$110,908.00

La Porte County Project Management's Project Manager Andy Skwiat noted that there was not an exact date slated for the arrival of the permanent generator that would replace the rental, however the expected date would be sometime in upcoming February. Mrs. Lestinsky reported that the cost of renting the current generator cost roughly \$172,000 from last March up to upcoming January or February.

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) 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).

Services & Charges – Courthouse Water Heater Replacement, Copper Lines, etc. \$16,900.63

- i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) 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).

Services & Charges – Juvenile Services Roof \$308,505.05

Mrs. Lestinsky informed the Council that the roof was leaking, while Mr. DiMartino informed them that because J& B West was the vendor, if it was approved, they would need to pay a 50% down payment for materials up front. Mr. Kiel noted that, with the amount of money that the county was putting into the center that perhaps La Porte County should consider partnering with another county for juvenile services, as there was not much of a return coming from La Porte's center.

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) with a 50% down payment for materials 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).

Services & Charges – Museum Elevator \$150,000

Mrs. Lestinsky informed the Council that the elevator in question was the one service elevator for people that the museum had, and the repair was needed because all of the controls in the elevator car were obsolete, and parts for repair could no longer be sourced. She noted that OTIS, the vendor, also required a 50% down payment for the cost of materials.

- i. Motion to approve out of LIT Economic Development (1112) with a 50% down payment for materials 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)

Services & Charges – Complex Boiler Room Sprinkler Repair \$31,500.00

- i. Motion to approve out of Riverboat (1191) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. 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. Cunningham and Mr. Yagelski)

Services & Charges – Miscellaneous Outstanding Bills \$188,500.00

Mrs. Lestinsky informed the Council that the request had been reduced from \$188,500 to \$186,278.06. Mr. Skwiat confirmed that these bills were for work from his two firms.

Mr. Yagelski clarified that most of these bills were for the repair of water damage, and the bill was held back to see if the insurance company would be willing to pay for them. Mr. Kiel asked for the full out-of-pocket amount that the county had paid for the 2022 Complex Building flood, which Mr. DiMartino believed was roughly \$6-\$8 million, with the insurance company paying about \$8 million.

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

Mr. Skwiat took a moment to inform the Council that the State Fire Marshall was now requiring an annual test of the county's generators located specifically in the county jail, which would cost \$,155.30 per year.

Mr. Rosenbaum departed the meeting at the timestamp of 2:50:19.

**La Porte County Auditor**

*(On behalf of the Circuit Court)*

Requesting Additional Appropriations for reimbursable grant Upstream CIP Grant 24/25 (8227) for:

Supplies	\$1,200.00
Services & Charges	\$23,400.00

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

*(On behalf of Superior Court #2)*

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

Services & Charges – Jury Fees	\$7,000.00
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- i. Motion to approve made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.
- ii. All members voted in favor.

Requesting an Additional Appropriation from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – Employer Portion of Group Health Insurance	\$825,097.25
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Personal Services – Employer Portion of Retirees Health Insurance	\$18,000.00
Personal Services – Medicare	\$2,450.00
Personal Services – OASDI	\$6,700.00
Personal Services – PERF	\$163,090.33

Mr. Novak questioned why items like Medicare and perf were not budgeted for, and why benefits for new employees were not brought before the Council following their hiring. Ms. Graves responded that even though the item was on the last month's agenda, Payroll looked more closely at the numbers, and then gave the Auditor an updated and reduced amount. Mr. Kiel asked if this had been corrected for the 2025 budget or if it would run short, to which Ms. Graves responded that she believed it would run up short, as nothing had been changed in the Commissioners' budget to address it. Noting that there had been a hiring freeze in the past, Mr. Novak questioned when the hiring of extra employees had been approved.

Ms. Graves explained that a few of these accounts historically became negative as a result of past offices having used money from the General Fund without the Council's approval to make corrections. Mr. Kiel questioned if the 2022 pay raises, coupled with a lack of calculating PERF or other withholdings, could have contributed to this expense. Ms. Graves responded that nobody had been watching the PERF changes following the pay raises as it was centralized within the Commissioners' budget, and had never thoroughly been tracked as a result. Mr. Kiel questioned why the Commissioners oversaw these accounts if they did not monitor the funds, which Ms. Graves added that Payroll wouldn't be able to monitor them either, as they did not oversee the budgeting process.

*(On behalf of departments using payroll in LIT Public Safety Fund 1170)*

Requesting Appropriations from LIT Economic Development (1112) or Riverboat (1191) or Opioid Unrestricted (1238) or WinTax (4220) or ARP (8950) for:

Personal Services – OASDI	\$8,861.69
Personal Services – Medicare	\$2,068.68
Personal Services – PERF	\$18,074.43

- i. Motion to approve all items out of LIT Economic Development (1112) made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Kiel.

Ms. Graves explained that for departments that utilized the LIT Public Safety Fund to provide benefits for their employees, their numbers could be very dynamic if their employees were to transfer to other departments that did not utilize these funds. This didn't change the budget LIT Public Safety, however it was still required to be paid. She noted that she had reached out to the departments who would use these funds in 2025 to ask them to keep track of these changes for bookkeeping purposes.

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

Larry Levendowski of La Porte County Project Management approached the Council to report on a water loss in the jail that originated from a 3-foot long length of pipe in the building's original heat line that had rusted through and failed. The leak occurred on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor for several hours and continued down to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor booking area as repairs were being attempted, with additional damage to ceiling tiles but not any electrical work. Mr. Levendowski reported that two of the gate lines – which are used to shut down the system for repairs – had failed during the process and would need to be replaced. This would require a complete shutoff of the jail's heating system in order to complete the repair.

- i. Motion to prompt the Council President to present the Board of Commissioners with a Declaration of Emergency to begin repairs upon the La Porte County Jail's heat line made by Mr. Yagelski and seconded by Mr. Cunningham.

Mr. Kiel requested that the motion be amended to include a clause that the Council be kept informed of the state of ongoing repairs for the project. Mr. Skwiat informed the Council that he would be compliant with the request, pending the Commissioners' approval of the declaration.

- ii. All members voted in favor.

#### **COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS**

Regarding the hacking of the Zoom screen earlier during the meeting, Mr. Yagelski apologized to anyone who had witnessed any explicit images, and informed the room that the incident was being investigated.

Mr. Koronka read aloud a message from La Crosse Volunteer Fire Department Chief Aaron Rust that thanked the Council for their support.

Mr. Cunningham thanked the Council and county employees for their prayers during his wife's recent hospitalization.

Mr. Kiel, noting the Council's transition of heavily utilizing ARP funds to using LIT Economic Development funds instead, warned about the unsustainability of relying on LIT Economic Development monies when the Council was spending them more quickly than the funds could replenish, especially when many of the county's other funds were dwindling as well. He advised taking any action – such as creating a committee, scheduling a special meeting, or hiring a consulting – to start researching how the county could proceed with creating or managing a more secure source of funding. Noting that the recent string of large appropriations were approved primarily for budgeting deadline purposes, Mr. Novak advised beginning to scrutinize the budgeting process starting in 2025, and once more questioned why benefits for new employees were not being addressed more dynamically. Mr. Stabosz directed the Council to encourage the Highway Department to utilize their Major Moves funding to offset the funding they had been pulling from LIT Economic Development.

Mr. Cunningham stated that when he first joined the Council more than a decade earlier, departments did not return to the Council at the beginning of any given new year to request additional appropriation.

Mr. Yagelski noted that with recent action from the State of Indiana that reduced funding to county governments, pursuing local taxing alternatives – such as the wheel tax – could offset the losses that were caused by the state’s recent property tax cuts. Mr. Novak emphasized that these actions by the state forced the hands of county government by making them compensate for budgeting constraints caused by the property tax cuts, making local government look more like antagonists for trying to enact alternative taxes to compensate for budget losses.

Mr. Mollenhauer wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and concurred with Mr. Kiel on the idea of hiring a consultant to assist the Council with the budgeting process.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

- i. Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Koronka and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.
- ii. Five 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).

**Examined & Approved by the La Porte County Council this 27<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman Earl Cunningham

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Councilman Adam Koronka

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Councilman Justin Kiel

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Councilman Mike Mollenhauer

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Councilman Randy Novak

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Councilman Michael Rosenbaum

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Councilman Mark Yagelski

\_\_\_\_\_  
Timothy J. Stabosz

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Timothy Stabosz, Auditor