



**MEETING MINUTES
LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
JANUARY 27, 2025**

The January 27th, 2025 regular council meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by President Adam Koronka who asked Councilman Brett Kessler to lead the pledge of allegiance.

Roll call was taken by Auditor Mike Rosenbaum. All members were present with Councilman Mark Yagelski participating via Zoom.

The meeting commenced with the approval of the agenda. Brett Kessler made a motion to amend the agenda as follows:

Under new business:

#4 – scratch maintenance and add janitor

#5 – permission to hire archive specialist for the recorder's office

#6 – permission to hire 1st deputy position for the treasurer's office

#7 – update all funding, resolutions and ordinances

#8 – permission to advertise for an IT assistant director

#9 – because of inaccurate data from the previous auditor, the council opted to remove the salary ordinance from the agenda.

Also amend under the Coroner – add \$325 for training and lodging;

And under Probation, add not to exceed \$7,000 for laptops for Superior Court 2, Superior Court 4 Magistrate and Circuit Court.

The approval of the agenda was on a 7 – 0 vote.

Nominations for the council attorney were made, with Christopher Willoughby and Doug Biege being put forward. The council acknowledged the qualifications of all applicants who had participated in the interview process and thanked them for participating in the process.

Councilman Mike Mollenauer nominated Chris Willoughby.

Councilman Randy Novak nominated Doug Biege. The vote was as follows:

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Biege	X				X	X	X	4	v
Willoughby		X	X	X				3	

The November, 2024 and December, 2024 meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Councilman Novak and seconded by Councilman Kessler.

The January 6, 2025 minutes were approved on a motion by Councilman Kiel who offered an amendment – Ron Schafer’s name is spelled with one f and no “e” after “a”. The motion was supported by Councilman Novak.

Public Comment

Commissioner Steve Holifield:

Legislative matters were a significant focus, with discussions surrounding 14 bills that could impact local governance and finances. Key topics included proposals to freeze or reduce property taxes and eliminate newspaper postings for meeting minutes. House Bill 1233, which proposes the elimination of townships, was highlighted as a critical issue that could lead to cost savings but also present challenges. Other bills discussed included those allowing pooling for insurance to reduce costs and the potential introduction of a wheel tax for infrastructure funding, reflecting the pressures local government faces in maintaining services amid legislative changes.

Ralph Malecki of Wanatah also spoke to Senate Bill 1233.

Department Heads

Lynn Swanson, the LaPorte County Coroner, provided a report on the office’s activities for 2024, detailing 321 calls and emphasizing the ongoing concern regarding fentanyl in overdose cases.

Liaison Reports

Randy Novak spoke on a proposed Heart Safe community program aimed at enhancing health initiatives.

Justin Kiel said he should be able to make all NIRPC meetings.

Adam Koronka reviewed issues with the flood damage in the County Complex.

Mike Mollenauer attended the Solid Waste meeting.

New Business

Personnel-related approvals included hiring a full time replacement for a full-time janitor and filling an archivist position in the Recorder's office as well as a 1st deputy position for the treasurer’s office. The council discussed the need for appropriations for non-tax-based funds, emphasizing the importance of adhering to state statutes. Permission to start the process and hire was approved on a 7 – 0 vote.

Juvenile Service's Director Campbell requested the hiring of a part-time nurse for the juvenile services center, proposing a pay rate of \$48 per hour due to difficulties in filling a full-time position. *The council agreed to hold this request for further consideration and additional information.*

The meeting also covered adjustments to County per diem and mileage rates, with a proposal to increase the daily meal allowance from \$35 to \$50. The council agreed to the \$50 being categorized by \$12.50 for breakfast; 12.50 for lunch; and \$25.00 for dinner. The mileage rate stayed the same at \$60 per mile. The motion was made by Randy Novak and supported by Mark Yagelski. Vote was 7 – 0.

Old Business

- The amendment of the salary ordinance was removed from the agenda at this time.
- A new calendar of the LaPorte County Council meetings was presented.
- A motion of support for the Auditor's office for desk, chairs and supplies from the DLGF Ineligible Homestead Date Base funds was tabled until the next meeting for clarification on appropriation and permission to spend.
- Additionally, a motion was made to create an insurance coordinator position within the auditor's office, highlighting the need for better oversight of insurance management. A motion was made that the position be created at a COMOT V by Randy Novak and supported by Jimmy Pressel. The vote was as follows:

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye		Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	6	✓
	Nay						1	

Vehicle Purchase Bids Discussion

After a motion to table a decision until the next meeting was approved, the discussion moved to the submission of bids for three vehicles intended for the juvenile services center. The group clarified that these bids must be presented to the commissioners rather than the council. There was some confusion regarding the process, as previous communications had not made this clear.

Appropriations, Transfers and Requests

LaPorte County Community Corrections

Requesting transfers within Community Corrections Grant 9107.

Motion to approve made by Randy Novak and seconded by Mike Mollenauer.

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	7	✓

LaPorte County Commissioners

Additional Appropriation – Wrongful death Settlement (Thurman)

From 1191.20200.0143.00272 Riverboat (Balance as of 12/31/24: \$1,032,981.67)
\$430,787.94

Motion to approve made by Randy Novak and seconded by Mike Mollenauer.

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	7	✓

LaPorte County Coroner

Requesting Permission to Spend

From 2053.30027.000.0973 Coroner Non-Reverting Fund
 Not to exceed \$450 for Training Text Books
 Motion of support was made by Randy Novak

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	7	√

LaPorte County Probation

Requesting Permission to Spend

From 2102.41007.000.0334 Probation User Fees

Not to exceed \$7,000 for the purchase of a laptop for Circuit Court

Motion made by Mark Yagelski and seconded by Randy Novak.

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	7	√

Requesting Permission to Appropriate Budget

From 2701.30120.000.0728 Problem Solving Court

\$29,376.34

Motion of **support** by Randy Novak and seconded by Jimmy Pressel.

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	7	√

LaPorte County E911

Requesting Permission to Spend

From 1170.30120.00177.0227 LIT Public Safety

\$84,069 for Annual Vesta phone service agreement

A discussion took place. It was determined that it was not put into the budget so it will have to be advertised. It was suggested that E 911 look into their budget and see if they can pay from their budget and if necessary, come back to next month's meeting and make the request after advertising.

LaPorte County Sheriff

Requesting Permission to Spend

Misdemeanor Account

\$3,523.50 for dishwasher repair

Motion made by Brett Kessler and supported by Mike Mollenauer.

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	7	√

- Agenda was adjusted to hear the request below: Motion made by Brett Kessler and supported by Mike Mollenauer.

Permission to spend for jail kitchen ovens \$24,095.

Motion made by Mark Yagelski and supported by Mike Mollenauer.

Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	7	✓

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Justin Kiel commented on the Capital Improvement Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mike Mollenauer and seconded by Randy Novak. All supported.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 27th day of January, 2025.



Councilman President Adam Koronka



Councilman Justin Kiel



Councilman Randy Novak



Councilman Brett Kessler



Councilman Mike Mollenauer



Councilman Jimmy Pressel



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Michael Rosenbaum, La Porte County Auditor