



LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Connie Gramarossa
President

Steve Holifield
Vice President

Joseph Haney
Member

La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes Wednesday, July 2, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. County Complex Room 3

President Connie Gramarossa called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by **Steve Eyrick**.

Auditor Mike Rosenbaum called the roll: **President Connie Gramarossa** - Present; **Vice President Steve Holifield** - Present and **Member Joe Haney** - Present. Quorum present therefore meeting commenced.

Considered the agenda. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to amend the agenda by removing two items, 10 'a' and 10 'b' then add under Old Business 'Discussion of claims being posted online.' **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered approval of the June 18, 2025 minutes. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor Mike Rosenbaum read the Claims with Payroll ending 6/27/2025 - \$1,519,177.71. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve payroll. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor Mike Rosenbaum read the Operating Expense Claims - \$5,138,393.08. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve operating claims. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment

None

Department Reports/Comments

Angie Davis, Interim Facilities Director, updated on issues with the a/c in the La Porte Courthouse. Waiting on the Museum Elevator's fixtures, no reasons on the wait. A crew is ready once they arrive. Also waiting on a few components for the Michigan City Courthouse compressors and the chiller. **Commissioner Haney**, do you have an update on the water that leaked in at the Michigan City Courthouse in the vestibule area? **Angie Davis**, I do not, it did not leak during the last rainstorm, we did not have the water like we did from the previous rain. As soon as she gets information, she will provide it to the Commission.

Monique Thomas, HR Director, thanked the three Commissioners for supporting the Food Truck Event last month. Reported there were 24 new hires for the month of June.

Paul Vicari, MS4, thanked the Commissioners for approving the contract to begin the grubbing around the former County Home, a prairie marsh now, currently a restoration project. Distributed photos to the Commission of the hidden treasure behind the shrubbery that was all invasive species. Matched approved dollars through the MS4 with another \$2,400 in cigarette tax money through SWCD. The total project will now be paid for through our grant, thank you for that, and the vision for that project is to stand as a county example of our water quality overlay work in addition to our thinking in terms of these properties. The value of the adjacent property will increase. We are leaving all the high-quality trees and taking out all the invasive species. For the county that means lower maintenance. Second item, requested permission to attend a Purdue Storm Water Drainage Conference next week. This will give me seven (7) PDH credits for my certification. **Commissioner Holifield**, what is the long-term plan out there, walking path and possibly homes built? **Paul Vicari**, currently doing a biological inventory of that site and collecting baseline information, if we show the work on that site from the planning through the restoration work we are doing, it'll present more grant making opportunities for things like the trails, the overlooks, so we can really create a destination out of that, thank you.

ORIGINAL

Amanda Lahners, Health Department Director, reported the online payment system is up and operating, both Birth and Death Certificates can now be done online, Genealogy searches, Temporary Food Vendors, we've had several Fair vendors take advantage of it as well as Pool and Tattoo Parlors, all can be done online.

Requests

Considered travel permission to New York City for APPA Summer Training Institute August 24-27, **Steve Eyrick**, Adult Probation Director, American Probation and Parole Association hold two conferences a year, this is the summer conference and will be held in New York. Possibly three staff members will be attending and will receive continuing education to maintain their license as a Probation Officer. Total travel expense will be covered by probation user fees. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 3-0.** **Steve Eyrick**, two retreats will be held this year, one in July and one in October, **requested permission to purchase food for both events**, this too, will be paid from probation user fees. Council has approved, just need permission from the Commissioners. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered travel permission for two employees to Phoenix for Biennial HEARTSafe Cardiac Arrest Survival Summit, December 2-6, **Amanda Lahners**, Health Dept. Summit happens every two years, we are hiring a Project Specialist to lead the way for La Porte County in becoming a heart-safe community and this is an important conference for that position. No additional funds needed. **Commissioner Holifield motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered 2 sick days pay for retiring employee in the Clerk's office, **Heather Stevens**, Clerk. **President Gramarossa**, all requirements have been met for this request. **Commissioner Holifield motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded for discussion.** It is my understanding that there was a termination that also occurred in regards to this which would then not make the sick pay or the pay for two sick days eligible, I know there's consternation there, I think we probably...it'd be better to table this until we can figure out exactly, I think, exactly what happened with the situation. **President Gramarossa**, our attorney can give us some clarity on this. **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, this was referred to Mr. Friedman, he's handling it but right now there's a motion and a seconded as to whether to pay, if that motion passes, then that motion passes unless Mr. Haney's motion to table is voted on. You (Commissioner Haney) did make a motion, right? **Commissioner Haney**, I apologize, I'll make a motion to table. **President Gramarossa**, we already have a motion on the table. **Attorney DiMartino**, correct, but he's moving to amend that motion and asking that it be tabled. **Commissioner Holifield**, question I have is in the email chain, first the Clerk congratulated her for a great job and everything else and then all of a sudden boom, she wanted to fire her. **Attorney DiMartino**, I guess what I'm concerned about is discussing this because of potential, if there is, litigation because there is something going on there is my understanding. **President Gramarossa**, currently we have a motion on the table to pay this out. **Attorney DiMartino**, and then you have Mr. Haney's motion to amend so that would have to be.... **President Gramarossa**, would someone like to second his (Commissioner Haney) motion to amend? **Motion to amend dies for lack of a seconded. On the original first motion to pay the two (2) sick days out, vote called: Commissioner Holifield - Aye, Commissioner Gramarossa - Aye, and Commissioner Haney - Nay due to not enough information to make an informed decision right now. Motion carried 2-1.**

Considered claims posted to the website. **Commissioner Haney**, after discussion with various folks and I haven't had a chance to catch up with our Auditor yet but the Board had voted back in January, if I remember correctly, to not publish our claims in the newspapers to save money and obviously I believe the intent of the Board to not share that information with the public but rather to do cost-cutting measures because we were going to post it online, we're now in July and we haven't had those posted yet so is there something that when there was a motion passed to direct our IT Director to get those posted online before this next meeting, is there anything that we can do as a Board to facilitate getting these claims posted online and obviously what was motioned to have the claims put online has been a couple of times now, said that we just redact the juror names and the rest gets put online. **President Gramarossa**, I believe that the problem is, this is discussion; correct? The problem is we need to go through our Secretary, you (Commissioner Haney) had designated the IT Director and our Assistant, the reality is it needs to go through the Secretary because when purchase orders are made, whether it's decided if it's legally bounded and those are the right ones to be paid goes to the Auditor's office, there needs to be involvement by the Auditor, he is our Secretary as well. Would you (Auditor Rosenbaum) weigh in on this? **Auditor Mike Rosenbaum**, I have no problem trying to find a format that works but we have not had a proper discussion and it wasn't until after the meeting that there was mention of the jurors, which was a concern beforehand so there's no true guidance and discussion on it, to bring it up in public rather than when I'm here every day and you (Commissioner Haney) show up 10 minutes every day, you don't make a phone call, send an email and then you bring it out in the public like this, I think it's unprofessional and I'd be more than happy to work this out but this is the information that comes out of the financial system which I'm the one who is responsible for that, the problem I had with it before is you asked two people who are not responsible for that information to release it and also the format, there's some complications with it. Claims are done in groups, it's not just one long list where we can just print one report so groups would have to be combined and put in an order for people to see, not everything you see on the Commissioners' listings is necessary, we do not need check numbers, dates are okay and names of vendors but not jurors' names, the amount and fund it is being paid out of is okay, not a problem however gathering that information is a bit more of a problem. Once we have a discussion, I can contact the software company to help create that list but until we have a discussion I don't know where to work with it. I welcome the discussion outside of this meeting. **Commissioner Haney**, you've been sitting here all through these meetings since

the beginning of the year. **Auditor Rosenbaum**, yes but you haven't addressed me on it. **Commissioner Haney**, I'm curious, coming in to this year it was never a problem to have a list of claims to be published in the newspaper, how is it any different from sending that information, which was easily done by your predecessors, sending that information to the newspapers versus just posting it online, I'm not sure that there's...I'm trying to figure out the disconnect there, you talk about how difficult it is to come up with this information, it was never difficult in the past to come up with to get to the newspapers so why is it difficult now? **Auditor Mike Rosenbaum**, it would be nice if the predecessor would have shared information but that did not happen on how anything was done, many things disappeared so if you want to go into that discussion, I'll be happy to go into it but not here again in public. **Commissioner Haney**, no, again you're coming up with some things that I didn't mean this as an attack, I just thought this would be an easy thing to say, you know, I'll happily get the Auditor but your Chief Deputy is the former two-term Auditor in that office, she never had any issue getting those claims put together. **President Gramarossa**, can we take this offline? Would it be alright to take this offline; you can have a discussion...we need to move this meeting forward. **Commissioner Haney**, I agree with that, I didn't mean it as an attack but you instantly shot back at me and spouting some various things that either aren't true or just flat-out lies so it's not appropriate...**Auditor Rosenbaum**, watch out when you talk about...**Attorney DiMartino**, hold on, that's enough, gentlemen, can we move on now? We got our points out. **President Gramarossa**, moving on. **Attorney DiMartino**, is it alright if we move on? **Commissioner Haney**, just real quick, just from a base standpoint, how do we, without getting into any of the past, how do we make sure we get these claims, we are now six months behind on getting claims out to the public, how do we, how do they know what we are voting on every day. **President Gramarossa**, when you're here go down to the Auditor's office and get that straightened out. **Commissioner Haney** asked Auditor Rosenbaum if he would be willing to have that discussion. **President Gramarossa**, he's (Auditor Rosenbaum) here all the time. **Commissioner Haney**, so am I. **Auditor Rosenbaum**, I'm willing to have that discussion, I'm going to recommend that we do it tomorrow if that's okay with you? **Commissioner Haney**, yes, that's fine.

Old Business Removed

New Business

Considered Proclamation recognizing Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week. **Steve Eyrick**, Adult Probation Direction, read into the record the Proclamation. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0. ***Attached to minutes

Considered La Porte County Public Library appointment replacing a resignation. Let the record show this appointment will be replacing Corey Campbell who resigned due to a conflict with his job. **Commissioner Holifield** nominated **Derald Borton**. **Commissioner Haney** nominated **Todd Reinert**. **Auditor Mike Rosenbaum** called the vote: **Commissioner Connie Gramarossa - Derald Borton; Commissioner Steve Holifield - Derald Borton and Commissioner Joe Haney - Todd Reinert**. **Derald Borton** won the nomination with a 2-1 vote to replace Corey Campbell on the La Porte Public Library Board.

Considered Ordinance regulating disclosure/use of Public Records for Commercial Purposes. **Attorney DiMartino**, over the last several months we have been inundated with public access or public records requests, not from individuals seeking information which is clearly discoverable under it but from commercial entities just seeking us to do their work in tabulating/formulating lists and providing them information where they can solicit customers. In order to curtail this, if we have an ordinance where we're able to inquire whether it's a customer this is for commercial purposes solely and if we're mistaken and it's not, we're asking them to sign an affidavit saying what they are requesting is not for commercial purpose, then we will provide the information because every time one of these comes in, the office has to stop what they're doing, search, figure out, tabulate everything, put it all together and then send it to my office for a cursory review which then uses our time and resources. That is the intent of the Ordinance, not to curtail average individuals looking for purchase orders, claims, records from the jail, nothing along those lines. Basically, they could be competitive companies hoping to get business from the county through bidding the work. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to read by Title only. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0. **Attorney DiMartino** read the title: Ordinance #2025-3, an Ordinance of the County of La Porte, Indiana, regulating the disclosure and use of public records for commercial purposes and protecting certain lists from disclosure under the Indiana access to public records act (IC 5-14-3). ***First Reading

Considered discussion on Animal Shelter. **President Gramarossa**, we've had Director Rachel Delaney start a few months ago and has been doing a fabulous job, the center was a mess when she came in, both Darlene Hale and Diane Gonzales assisted her with paperwork and financials. Rachel did a great job; she has served us very well. Rachel turned in her resignation with July 11th being her last day. I would like to appoint an interim to start on July 14th. Brooke Kegebein has been working as the assistant to Rachel and I would like to have a motion to appoint her as the Interim until a Director is hired. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded but with the change in starting date should be the 12th due to the Small Animal Shelter operates 24/7. Motion carried 3-0. **President Gramarossa** thanked Rachel Delaney for doing a great job at the shelter.

Commissioner Holifield motioned to adjourn at 10:34 a.m. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA
DATE 7-16-2025

ATTEST: _____

Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services is an essential part of the justice system; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals uphold the law with dignity, while recognizing the right of the public to be safe-guarded from criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals are responsible for supervising adult and juvenile offenders in the community; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals are trained professionals who provide services and referrals for offenders; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals work in partnership with community agencies and groups; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals promote prevention, intervention and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals provide services, support, and protection for victims; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals advocate community and restorative justice; and

WHEREAS, probation and pretrial services professionals are a true Force for Positive Change in their communities, and;

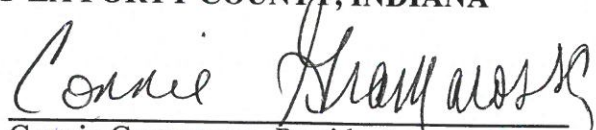
Now, Therefore, be it Resolved that the Board of Commissioners of La Porte County, State of Indiana, do hereby proclaim July 20-26, 2025 as:

Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week


and encourage all citizens to honor these probation and pretrial services professionals and to recognize their achievements.

All of which is resolved this 2nd day of July, 2025

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LA PORTY COUNTY, INDIANA


Connie Gramarossa, President


Steve Holifield, Vice President


Joe Haney, Member

ORIGINAL