



LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
April 28, 2025
Meeting Minutes

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Regular Meeting of the LaPorte County Council to be held on April 28th, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. CT in the Assembly Room of the LaPorte County Government Complex, 809 State Street, LaPorte, IN 46350.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Adam Koronka at 6:01 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Jim Pressel III led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL - Roll call was taken by Auditor Michael Rosenbaum, who noted that all members were present.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Present	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	v
Absent								0	

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Brett Kessler made a motion to amend the agenda as follows:

Page 2 – add Public Hearing

Add permission to hire for Treasurer – 2 positions

Remove County Planner and Purdue Extension

Motion to amend passed on a 7- 0 vote.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Present	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	v
Absent								0	

APPROVAL OF March 24, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Present	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Absent								0	

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Steve Holifield addressed the council regarding significant budget cuts, suggesting that the council consider not filling positions due to retirements to save on salaries and benefits.

Marie Wiltfong and Gina Kloot, both long-term county employees, requested a review of the step increase policy, arguing that it unfairly affects employees who have dedicated many years to the county without receiving raises. They emphasized the need for recognition of their contributions and the potential impact on their retirement.

Tim Stabosz, former auditor, stepped to the podium to discuss several concerns. He also wondered why the auditor will not allow him access to the auditor's vault.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Juvenile Services Center Update

Dion Campbell, the director for the Juvenile Services Center is currently serving 34 youth, with specific numbers in different programs, as reported. The center will host the Michigan City Youth Leadership Academy on June 12th, featuring Magistrate Stallworth and possibly Judge Havens. Additionally, it was acknowledged that team members will be graduating from the Purdue Northwest Leadership Institute.

LaPorte County Surveyor

John Matwyshyn, the county surveyor, approached the council to request funding for a cell phone and service, citing a lack of dedicated communication tools for his department. The total cost is estimated at \$1,000 for the phone and \$100 monthly for service, to be drawn from the perpetuation fund. Council members expressed concerns about ensuring proper communication with the commissioners and following the correct approval procedures.

Park Department

Details about an upcoming public input meeting for the Hunt Lake property on May 20th at New Prairie High School were shared by a conference room participant.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Kessler – no report

Councilman Yagelski – Maintenance subcommittee met and is following through with preventive maintenance.

Councilman Mollenhauer – attended Planning Meeting on Solar; Animal Shelter; Sheriff's Merit Board Meeting; Solid Waste Board Meeting; Met with EMA director.

LIAISON REPORTS (continued)

Councilman Kiel – spoke with liaison assignments. Sent email on Senate Bills to council.

Councilman Novak – attended FMEC meeting; Met with building maintenance committee; met with E911; met with Extension Office. Suggested council hires Baker Tilly for help in explaining legislation. He asked President Koronka to extend the invitation to speak before the Council to all LaPorte County Legislators.

A motion was made by Mr. Novak to reach out to Baker Tilly to help us understand SB1. The motion was supported by Mr. Kiel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

Councilman Kessler – attended Animal Shelter meeting.

Councilman Koronka – will talk late in meeting about his items. He invited Senator Bohacek and State Rep Pressel to speak at next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Emergency Repair Declaration and Discussion

The emergency repair situation regarding the Hiler building was discussed, highlighting the necessity of immediate action due to sewage issues. Concerns were raised about the lack of competitive bidding for the emergency work, with Mr. Kiel suggesting the need for multiple preferred vendors in future situations.

A motion was made by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski to approve the Declaration of Emergency Repair. Motion passed 6-1.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X		X	X	X	X	X	6	✓
Nay		X						1	

Economic Revitalization Area Proposal for Kingsbury Project

The Kingsbury Biogas Project was discussed, which aims to establish an economic revitalization area in Kingsbury. The project involves an investment exceeding \$70 million and the creation of 11 full-time jobs, with a targeted timeline for construction from May 2025 to September 2026. The council is being asked to approve a personal property tax abatement for 10 years. A public hearing for Resolution 2025-3B was facilitated, which was approved after a motion by Mr. Novak and a second by Mr. Yagelski.

A motion to open the Public Hearing was made by Mr. Kiel and supported by Mr. Novak. A 7 – 0 vote was recorded to open the public hearing.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

LAPORTE COUNTY COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS MERICKA BEATTY, DIRECTOR

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE 2005-10: ORDINANCE FOR LAPORTE COUNTY COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS COMMISSARY TO DISBURSE AND PURCHASE

A discussion took place and the matter was referred to Attorney Biege for amendment. It will be on the May agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Discussions

The council also discussed scheduling budget hearings for July 14th, 15th & 16th, 2025, and addressed hiring permissions for several vacant positions in the clerk's office, juvenile probation, and the treasurer's office. The importance of filling these critical roles was emphasized by the council.

Permission to Hire

Permission to start the process to hire 2 positions within the Superior Court 4 clerk's office.

Permission to hire a Juvenile Probation Officer – Ms. Debra Ackerman, Assistant Chief Deputy.

Permission to hire two positions in the Treasurer's Office.

A motion to accept all hires was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kessler. A voice vote was taken and was unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

LaPorte County Auditor

Permission to appropriate funds from the Auditor's Ineligible Deductions Fund 1216 \$80,000

Approval of support to spend/appropriate funds from the Auditor's Ineligible Deduction fund \$80,000**
1216.20200.00000.0352 (\$20,000 supplies)
(\$60,000 salaries)

Motion to support by Mr. Novak & supported by Mr. Kessler.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

Requesting Additional Appropriations for

DEFC Contract from 2024

\$39,678.82

From: 4220.30065.000.0102 Win Tax#

1191.30065.000.0102 Riverboat ***

1000.30065.000.0102 General Fund

*** Take from Riverboat

Motion to support was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kiel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	v
Nay									

Community Crossing Matches

\$1,699,407.48

Mitch Bishop, LaPorte County Planner

Request to appropriate \$1,699,407.48

And permission to spend

REMOVED

For matching Community Crossing Grant

Approved by Council 6/11/2024

1176.50002.000.0200 MVH Highway

FMEC

Request for Additional Appropriation

\$150,000.00

For Fairgrounds Improvements

Electrical wiring & additional repairs

Possible Funds:

1191 - Riverboat

1112 - LIT Economic Development#

Motion to approve by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kessler.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	v
Nay									

E 911 (Tabled)

Requesting an Additional Appropriation

\$49,545.00

For a new vehicle

Possible Funds:

1170 LIT Public Safety

1112 LIT Economic Development

Left on the table.

LaPorte County Clerk of the Circuit Court

\$26,221.21

County Election Board

Requesting an Additional Appropriation

LaPorte County Clerk – Election Supplies

1119 Riverboat

1000 General

1112 LIT Economic Development

Or

LaPorte County Clerk continued

Transfer from budget

1000.20025.00000.0131 Gas, Fuel & Oil \$250

1000.30002.00000.0131 Postage \$400

1000.30003.00000.0131 Travel \$7,000

1000.30005.00000.0131 Printing O/T Office \$15,000

1000.30027.00000.0131 Emp Education & Training \$3,500 (Total \$26,250.00)

An additional appropriation of \$26,221.21 was requested to address unexpected costs associated with election-related expenses, which the council approved after discussion.

Motion to approve out of Riverboat by Mr. Mollenhauer and supported by Mr. Kiel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	√
Nay							X	1	

LaPorte County EMS

Requesting an additional appropriation

From LIT Public Safety

\$75,000.00

For overtime

1170.10140.00140.0227

Motion to approve by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	√
Nay							X	1	

Permission to spend from Public Outreach

4114.20021.00000.0813

\$10,000.00

Motion to approve by Mr. Yagelski and supported by Mr. Kessler.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

Permission to spend from Donation

4103.20021.00000.0581

\$2,500.00

Motion to approve by Mr. Yagelski and supported by Mr. Kessler.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

Jane Bernard Animal Shelter

Requesting permission to appropriate

\$35,000.00

Fund 4100 – Animal Shelter Donations into

4100.30120.00000.0531 (other services and charges)

For:

- Able Paper & Janitorial Supply – Invoice #045278 – Total: \$763.48
- Spin Techs, Inc. – Invoice #27114, 27201 & 27303 – Total: \$944.44
- Kabelin – Invoice #496432, 502149, 500077, 502318 – Total: \$754.47
- Marquiss Electric - Security Cameras – Total: \$26,000.00 (**Safety Concern**)
- Uniforms – Total: \$1,000.00
- Animal Control Training – 4 individuals at \$500/each – Total: \$2,000.00

Motion to approve by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kessler.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	✓
Nay							X	1	

LaPorte County Circuit Court

Requesting permission to appropriate

Fund 2503/Domestic Relations \$50,000.00 into

2503.30135.00000.0273 \$50,000.00

Motion to approve by Mr. Yagelski and supported by Mr. Mollenhauer and Kessler.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

LaPorte County Drug Free Partnership

Micki Webb, Program Director

Seeking an Appropriation from the County

\$59,176.00

Drug Free Community Fund (1148) for:

Distribution of Funds to Other Entities

1148.30120.000.0331

Motion to approve by Mr. Yagelski and supported by Mr. Kessler & Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

LaPorte County Parks Department

Jeremy Sobecki, Director

Requesting transfer from 1179.00000.00000.00000

\$64,574.32

Non-reverting Operating Fund

To 1178.00000.00000.0000 Non-Reverting Capital

Purpose is to reduce balance by \$50,000 as stated

In Ordinance 2009-2 section II number 4

Motion to approve by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Pressel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

Permission to spend \$15,598.46 for
1178.20030.000.0259

\$15,598.46

Motion to approve both by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kiel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

LaPorte County Community Corrections

Mericka Beatty, Director

Seeking an additional appropriation for lease

\$255,713.00

Agreements, food for training they are hosting

1170.30120.000.0227

Motion to approve by Mr. Mollenhauer and supported by Mr. Kiel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye		X	X	X	X	X		5	✓
Nay	X						X	2	

Permission to spend and permission to provide
food for the Indiana Department of Corrections
training they are hosting
1170.30120.000.0227

**\$250.00

Motion to approve by Mr. Kessler and supported by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

Required Kitchen renovations
1170.41106.000.0227

**\$20,000.00

Concerns were expressed regarding the kitchen's poor condition, noting that it does not meet state standards and requires significant upgrades. The kitchen currently serves 98 residents who rely on microwaves for meal preparation, which is inefficient. Plans were mentioned to add a warmer and a dishwasher to enhance food distribution and sanitation. Clarification was sought on the renovation's requirements and costs.

Motion passed 6 – 1.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	✓
Nay							X	1	

LaPorte County Planner

Seeking an Additional Appropriation for
Matching Funds for the Lincoln Trail.

\$90,000.00

1191 Riverboat

4220 Win Tax

1112 Economic Development

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Kiel from LIT Economic Development and supported by Mr. Novak.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye		X		X	X	X		4	✓
Nay	X		X				X	3	

LaPorte County Highway Department

Requesting additional appropriation

**\$800,000.00

From Local Roads & Streets for

Purchase of new Hydro-Excavator Truck &

A new forestry bucket truck

1169.41006.00000.0207

A motion to table the Hydro-Excavator truck was made by Mr. Yagelski and supported by Mr. Novak.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

The need for a new forestry bucket truck and hydro excavator was outlined, emphasizing their importance for ongoing tree maintenance and storm sewer cleaning. The council raised concerns about the financial implications of these purchases, particularly the impact on the Local Road and Street (LRS) fund. It was confirmed that LRS funding is stable, while there was hesitation expressed about depleting the fund's balance.

A motion to approve the purchase for \$359,426.00 for the forestry bucket truck was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kessler to be paid out of LIT Economic Development budget.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

LaPorte County Highway

Permission to spend from LIT for equipment
1112.41007.00200.0208

**\$500,000.00

Motion to approve \$359,426.00 from LIT Economic Development (1112) by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kiel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

LaPorte County Juvenile Services Center

**\$132,000.00

Dion Campbell, Director
Requesting an additional appropriation
For a new gym floor
*1170 LIT Public Safety
1112 LIT Economic Development
1191 Riverboat

Motion to approve out of 1170 – LIT Public Safety was made by Mr. Mollenhauer and supported by Mr. Novak.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye		X		X	X	X		4	√
Nay	X		X				X	3	

Motion by Mr. Novak, supported by Mr. Kiel to institute the scoring process to include 4 members of the Council.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

LaPorte County Engineer

Jay Sullivan, LaPorte County Engineer
Request permission to spend \$154,000.00
From Cumulative Bridge Fund to make
Up difference from quote in 2019 for
Construction for Bridge #97

\$154,000.00

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	√
Nay									

LaPorte County Commissioners

Requesting additional appropriation
For Unemployment Compensation
1000.000.000.0000

\$20,000.00

Motion to approve from the unappropriated general fund was made by Mr. Kiel and supported by Mr. Kessler.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	✓
Nay							X	1	

LaPorte County Prosecutor

Requesting permission to appropriate \$21,000.00
From fund 2500 to be appropriated to:
2500.20200.000.0327

\$21,000.00

Permission to transfer \$21,000 from
Fund 2500 to 2501 as follows:
2501.10130.000.0343 (\$10,000.00) part time salary
2501.11007.000.0343 (\$800.00) OASDI
2501.11009.000.0343 (\$200.00) Medicare

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

2501.20021.000.0343 (\$10,000.00) Law Enforcement
Equipment and Supplies

Motion to table made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

LaPorte County EMS

Requesting an additional appropriation of \$1,226,459.50
For the Installment Styker Agreement for replacement
Of Expired Equipment
To be allocated as follows:

\$1,226,459.50

Year One: \$145,000.00

Year Two: \$181,250.00

Year Three through Six: \$292,619.06 annually

Mr. Kiel made a motion to support and seconded by Mr. Kessler with the stipulation that Mr. Fenstermaker contact the council and commission attorneys for advice on the financing.

LaPorte County EMS con't

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	✓
Nay							X	1	

Requesting an additional appropriation for Loose
Equipment for Monitor Installation in 12 Ambulances
1170.000.00000.0000

****\$20,000.00**

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Kiel and supported by Mr. Kessler and Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	✓
Nay							X	1	

A discussion on a Health Dept/EMS was discussed.

Motion to approve Grant Application was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kessler and Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7	✓
Nay									

LaPorte County Haz Mat

****\$48,000.00**

Requesting an additional appropriation for
A new chemical detection device
FROM RIVERBOAT (1191) OR WIN TAX (4220)

Motion to approve from Win Tax (4220) was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kiel.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total	
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	✓
Nay							X	1	

****Not to exceed**

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

A discussion was begun by Mr. Novak on amending the health insurance premiums for new employees.
The discussion was held over until the May meeting.

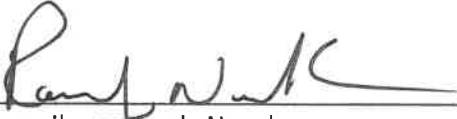
President Koronka began a discussion to consider purchasing ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 28TH day of May, 2025.


Councilman President Adam Koronka


Councilman Justin Kiel



Councilman Randy Novak


Councilman Brett Kessler


Councilman Mike Mollenhauer


Councilman Jimmy Pressel


Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 
Michael Rosenbaum, La Porte County Auditor