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**Minutes
LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
May 28, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the LaPorte County Council was held on May 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 6:00 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Koronka who also asked for a moment of prayer for the New Prairie baseball team.

ROLL CALL - Auditor Michael Rosenbaum called the roll and noted all are present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Remove LaPorte County Community Corrections Ordinance

Remove Animal Shelter request to hire 2 part time staff members

Remove Drainage

County highway

Under Sheriff, the public safety

Technology come from the 403 account.

APPROVAL OF April 28, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Mollenhauer.

A few corrections were noted and the minutes will be amended and held until next month.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Holifield, Commissioner: Met with County Highway and watched a demonstration of the trucks.

George Callas, Toronado Dr, LaPorte: 3 months ago he gave the Council a paper, but not one of them answered him. Mr. Sabie needs a new vehicle. Perhaps he should trade with someone in county government. New EMS building being designed but no dollar amount has been given. Mr. Holifield answered by telling Mr. Callas that the Commission has only advertised for RFQ's (request for qualifications). No job has been granted to anyone as of yet.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Merika Beatty – LaPorte County Community Corrections: Community Corrections need to modify one of their vehicles to include a safety partition/screen for protection when transporting offenders. She would like to use funds from the Commissary Account.

Councilman Mollenhauer asked her to speak with the Sheriff. The garage may do it for free.

Treasurer Dan Barenie – The County collected a little over \$90,000,000 in taxes. The construction in front of the building hindered the collection somewhat. The final day of payments, they had a glitch with online payments. All affected payments have been made and he will work on removing late penalties. Only additional problem is that every day software goes down in the afternoon.

He has a new employee –advertised as a first deputy, Comot VI, description is a Comot VI. Mr. Yagelski said that's not true, the Council voted on a Comot 5. Mr. Koronka said it was sent to the personnel committee. He suggests that he goes back to HR to get an answer from the personnel committee and/or HR.

Councilman Mollenhauer received a complaint from a taxpayer saying that staff had a pizza party during the collection, which was refuted, stating that the office was open and efficient during the collection period.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Mollenhauer – Attended the EMA meeting & the LaPorte County Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony in Michigan City at the FOP.

Commented on the recent passing of Clayton Jordan, a 32 year merit deputy and an 18 year process server. Sent his condolences to the family.

Councilman Kiel – Spoke with his liaison contacts, attended the SBOA exit audit and spoke at the Brookings Institute in Washington DC on matters relating to local government in the Chicago region.

Councilman Novak- Attended the FMEC meeting, 911 board meeting, RDC meeting that was held just prior to this meeting, insurance meeting and Building Committee meeting. He also was invited along with a few other people to attend a private meeting with Governor Braun regarding HB 1 and how it's working. The Governor stated that there was a disconnect between the governor and the legislators. Mr. Novak requested that the LaPorte County legislators be invited to attend a meeting to discuss recent legislation. President Koronka will asked them for the next meeting.

Councilman Pressel – The personnel committee asked some departments to create a flow chart so that the committee can help them to restructure and possible save money. Met with FMEC, building maintenance committee is looking at a new software program to keep them on track, and the building commission will have a public hearing on solar ordinance.

Councilman Yagelski – Building committee helped get some new employees for janitorial but as far as maintenance, it's hard to get good qualified people. Making good progress. Committee has made good steps in getting things under control.

Councilman Kessler – Attended a couple of Animal Shelter meetings. The vet clinic is getting ready to open up again, which will save the shelter a lot money in doing the spays and neuters in house. Rachel and her team are doing a great job.

Councilman Koronka – Attended 2 RDC meetings. Had a discussion with Director Beatty of Community Corrections on how the GPS devices are funded. Is hoping to meet with the Judges in the next weeks.

CORRESPONDENCE

Auditor Rosenbaum discussed a letter from State Representative Earl L. Harris, jr., concerning the Northwest Indiana Professional Sports Development Commission. The Council has one appointment to the commission. Add to the next agenda.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

REMOVED

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

NEW BUSINESS

- LaPorte County Building Maintenance Angie Davis, Interim Director

Permission to hire maintenance position.

- LaPorte County Animal Shelter Permission to hire 2 – 3 part time Vet Techs @ \$17 **REMOVED**

- LaPorte County Health Department Permission to hire Project Manager for county wide HEARTSafe initiative.

- LaPorte County Soil and Water Permission to hire Education Coordinator for La Porte County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Council heard the above 3 items together.

A motion was made to approve all three items together by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Yagelski.

A discussion took place. Mr. Novak stated that the Maintenance request went through the Building Maintenance Committee and was approved and the Health Department request is through a grant. There is a clear understanding that when the grant is completed, the position goes away. It is a specific position.

Mr. Kiel asked if two of the positions are to replace vacant positions.

Mr. Yagelski stated that there are two new part time positions to help maintenance with the new software and I pads.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

LaPorte County HR Director

Health Department

Recommendation of Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) position
Project Specialist position, fully funded by HFL
Classification of Vital Registrar from COMOT III to IV

A motion to approve was made 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								0

REMOVED (Removed for further clarification)

Drainage Board Recommendation for current Admin Asst. in Surveyor dept. be laterally Moved to Drainage Board, position to be overseen by Board Chair

Councilman Randy Novak

Discussion on "New Employee" health insurance contributions

At the end the last meeting, I brought up an attempt to save money in the future on employee health benefits. Any employee hired after a certain date, the health insurance premium would be 80/20 instead of the current 85/15. No current employees would be affected by this. Based on 589 employees we could save a substantial amount of money. This would affect future employees only. At some point we need to change the direction we're going so that we can give raises and do other things.

A motion to raise insurance premiums for new employees hired on and after July 1, 2025 was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Yagelski.

Mr. Yagelski stated that we should be gearing up to get ourselves to 80/20 collectively considering rising costs.

Mr. Kiel said he still is concerned who this would affect/hurt. In the long term this is a short term fix. He also expressed concern that the other councilmembers are not involved in the decisions that are made in these meetings. Nobody shares information with them. He asked who appoints the members of these committees.

A discussion on Council and Commissioner roles took place.

Frustration was expressed over the secrecy surrounding meetings and the difficulty for council members to stay informed about insurance issues. A suggestion was made for a joint workshop with commissioners to address these concerns, while it was pointed out that the council has not had decision-making authority in these matters for many years. The intertwined responsibilities of the council and commissioners regarding fiscal decisions were highlighted.

Mr. Novak said the members are appointed by the President. Most of these decisions are made by the Board of Commissioners and there probably needs to be a joint workshop on this.

Mr. Novak stated that this is his idea as a long term fix. Let's find a solution if not this, come up with an idea.

Mr. Koronka asked Attorney Biege to review the state statute on appointments. Who appoints?

The motion passed 7 – 0 after a continuing discussion.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

Council President Adam Koronka

Review of Attorney Biege's letter to the council on emergency repairs.

OLD BUSINESS

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

Community Crossing Matches

\$1,699,407.48

Mitch Bishop, LaPorte County Planner

Request to appropriate \$1,699,407.48

And permission to spend

For matching Community Crossing Grant

Supported by Council 6/11/2024

LIT Economic Development

1112.30120.00200.0208

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

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

LaPorte County Highway Department (Tabled from April Meeting)

Motion to remove LaPorte County Highway Department request from the table was made by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Yagelski.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

Requesting additional appropriation

\$537,022.45

From Local Roads & Streets for

Purchase of new Hydro-Excavator Truck

1169.41006.00000.0207

A discussion took place with Highway Director Glaser concerning purchasing new vs. used. Mr. Yagelski made the statement that used trucks are purchased all the time.

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

Mr. Mollenhauer asked if there were any reconditioned trucks available.

Mr. Kiel asked what the monthly amount we receive in LRS is?

Auditor Rosenbaum answered with \$118,000 per month. Used for highway needs.

Director Glaser said the only department that can use the LRS funds is the highway dept. Roads are not included.

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

LaPorte County E 911

Permission to transfer \$1,569.06 for Pulse Point Maintenance Contract

From: 1000.20021.00000.077 (Office Supplies)

To: 1000.30007.00000.0177 (Maintenance Contracts)

Motion to approve from 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								0

LaPorte County EMS (Motion of Support - Held Over)

Requesting an additional appropriation of \$1,226,459.50

\$1,226,459.50

For the Installment Styker Agreement for replacement
Of Expired Equipment

To be allocated as follows:

Year One: \$145,000.00

Year Two: \$181,250.00

Year Three through Six: \$292,619.06 annually Approval of EMS Equipment Financing

A discussion took place on financing a \$1,226,459.50 appropriation for new EMS equipment. Brian Beach, assistant director of EMS, provided details on the financing options, including interest rates (7%) and payment schedules.

The auditor advised against a full upfront payment due to current cash balances, leading to a motion for a one-time payment after July 1st, which was seconded and approved by the conference room participants. Payment is not made until we take delivery.

A motion to pay the \$145,000 tonight with an option to pay it off in full first of next year subject to attorney review by Mr. Novak.

Discussion took place and Mr. Koronka asked for a revised motion or if this should be held over until next month.

A motion to table by Mr. Yagelski but did not go forward for lack of second. Mr. Yagelski withdrew his motion to table.

Mr. Beach informed the council no payment is due until delivery. Delivery is expected later this year.

Mr. Koronka asked for another motion.

Mr. Kessler made a motion for a one time payment in full after July 1st, from LIT Public Safety (1170) and seconded by Mr. Novak.

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

LaPorte County Sheriff

\$125,000.00

- Additional appropriation of \$125,000 for jail overtime.

A discussion took place concerning the medical care at the jail and the question was asked if anyone providing care for the inmates would offer dialysis inhouse? How many years has the sheriff come before the Council to ask for additional overtime?

The sheriff said his administration has done a good job in reducing overtime and the council agreed.

Motion to approve by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kiel from 1170 LIT Public Safety.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

- Permission to spend, not to exceed, \$445,000 from asset forfeiture for technology and equipment.
4003.20200.00000.0398

\$445,000.00

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

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

LaPorte County Prosecutor

\$30,000.00

Permission to appropriate from user fees
To be used toward Law Enforcement Equipment
and Supplies
2500.20200.000.0327 to
2501.20021.000.0343

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

Mr. Yagelski explained that these funds are controlled by the prosecutor who has discretion over the use of the funds. The Council only approves the use.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

LaPorte County Animal Shelter

Permission to transfer \$5,800.00 from
1000.30105.00000.0156 (Vet & Hospital) to
1000.20039.00000.0156 (food) \$5,800.00

Mr. Novak made the motion to approve and supported by Mr. Pressel and Mr. Mollenhauer.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

LaPorte County Juvenile Probation

Permission to transfer the following:

From: 2511.02061.00000.0321 (Receipts) to
2511.20021.00000.0321 (Office Supplies) \$700.00

From: 2511.02061.00000.0321 (Receipts) to
2511.30120.00000.0321 (Services & other charges) \$300.00

Motion to approve by Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

Councilmember	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Novak	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

LaPorte County Emergency Management

Requesting motion of support to purchase vehicle

From:
1170.00000.00000.0000

Mr. Sabie explained why he needs a new truck. One of the biggest reasons in because he needs to haul a trailer and his current truck is not heavy enough for hauling all the equipment he has. He submitted bids for the trucks.

Mr. Mollenhauer suggested that the council give his current truck to E911. Mr. Novak suggested that we check with Enterprise. Mr. Novak said he would check with Enterprise.

Request will be held over until the June meeting.

LaPorte County Auditor

\$5,000.00

Permission to Appropriate

Real Estate Endorsement Fund

For shared printer in Real Estate Office

1181.0000.00000.0000 to

1181.41003.00000.0588

Motion to approve \$1,600.00 by Mr. Novak and supported by Mr. Kessler.

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

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Kiel made a request that the financial report be sent out earlier.

Mr. Novak clarified that during the April meeting, Mr. Yagelski and he made a comment about the prosecutor and not the judges regarding user fees from the Community Corrections.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn from Mr. Novak and seconded by Mr. Yagelski.

Meeting ended at 8:12 p.m.

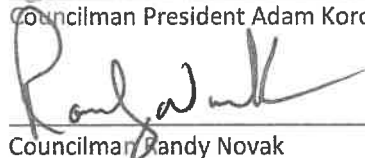
EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 28th day of May, 2025.



Councilman President Adam Koronka



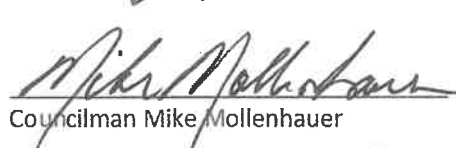
Councilman Justin Kiel



Councilman Randy Novak



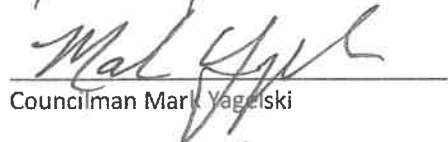
Councilman Brett Kessler



Councilman Mike Mollenhauer



Councilman Jimmy Pressel



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Michael Rosenbaum, CPA, LaPorte County Auditor

Meeting is televised on Access LaPorte County (ALCO) Online and on Channel 97