



LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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La Porte, IN 46350-3400
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Connie Gramarossa
President

Steve Holifield
Vice President

Joe Haney
Member

La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes Wednesday, October 1, 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 **Shawna Sapp**.

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

Considered the agenda. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to add under New Business 11 'g' - Consider Ordinance Establishing the County Community Corrections Marketplace. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered approval of the September 17, 2025 minutes. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor **Mike Rosenbaum** read the Claims with Payroll ending 9/19/2025 - \$1,514,384.89. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve payroll. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor **Mike Rosenbaum** read the Operating Expense Claims - \$2,289,765.07. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve operating claims. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment

Andy Skwiat, La Porte County Project Management, learned over the weekend of communication between his business and Facilities Director **Angie Davis**, he took responsibility, apologized for any wrong doing and an apology was made to Ms. Davis.

Department Reports/Comments

Monique Thomas, Human Resources Director, today Anthem went live for Employee health insurance, open enrollment is approaching and if anyone needs an i.d. card, please contact her office. January 1, 2026, Equitable will be live as the County's Dental and Vision provider for health insurance.

Angie Davis, Facilities Director, reported on current projects. Showers in the Jail, S2 is being worked on with completion date of the 4th, S3, S6 and S7 are finished. The Museum elevator is closer to being done, another bad board was discovered, a replacement is to be shipped out and received hopefully by the 8th. She was made aware of the sprinkler and fire panel not talking to each other when an inspection was done on the elevator so a company is working on that right now. At the Courthouse with the compressors, two are complete, two scheduled for repairs next week with completion pending on the weather. The heater in the Sheriff's office should be done by mid-late October. As for the Hiler Building, the scope for the first-floor bathrooms and Assessor's breakroom should be in hand today so we can get that out for bid, hopefully will have bids in here by November 5th for opening and start the project. As for Community Corrections, the air handler is up and running, air ducts are being cleaned, air scrubbers are in place, the walls are being wiped down and as soon as this building is done, they will move on to Juvenile Service Center building. **Angie** thanked **Andy Skwiat**.

Jeremy Sobecki, Parks Department Director, the entrance to Creek Ridge Park is being paved tomorrow so the park will be closed during that time, difficult getting in and around the equipment. Thanked the Highway Department for their assistance. Pioneer Days drew in just under 2,000 people over two days at Creek Ridge, thanked all volunteers and everyone who helped. More events in the next few months, please check the website. Program crew is working on good, affordable, mostly free, events. In December the live reindeer event will be back with Santa, members from the Symphony Orchestra will be playing so look for the events on our website.

ORIGINAL

Matt Reardon, Office of Economic Development, a few years ago a Housing Study was done by the Unity Foundation with matching funds from Economic Development, the study showed more housing is needed in our County, price points of housing, in various locations, life cycle housing for older and younger people, people that only want to rent or to live in town. The data report will be on our website, a notice to brokers, property owners, and real estate developers that it contains good information. Back in February, the Commission authorized Economic Development to seek a grant from our good friends at the USDA. La Porte County was awarded projects specifically inside Kingsbury Industrial Park in the amount of a bit over \$20,000 to be matched by the Redevelopment Commission for a loan within the park. The importance of this is that it opens the door for more opportunities with the USDA.

Mike Rosenbaum, Auditor, the 2024 financial statements were audited and completed in a timely fashion this year before September 30th, they have been uploaded in Gateway and certified by the Federal Government as well. The 2026 audit, the Council's last meeting, Monday night on the 29th, final numbers are being put together and form 3 should be uploaded on Monday. A public hearing has been set for Thursday, the 16th of October, at 5:00 p.m. for Solid Waste's budget, the County's budget for 2026 and a local income tax modification to add EMS at a 0.2% rate. On the 27th, items mentioned above should all be adopted.

Steve Holifield, Commissioner, updated the public on the fire at Solid Waste site on Zigler Road, currently the fire is officially out as of yesterday afternoon, he has a list of people to thank from the City of La Porte, the County, Contractors, and others, the list is a page and a half long. He will be on the radio station tomorrow at 8:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. giving an update on how everything went, our County Department Heads, our Staff, the City of La Porte, Mayor Tom Dermody and Steve were on the phone several times throughout the days, La Porte City Fire Chief Andy Snyder was wonderful. As a member of the Solid Waste Board, this will not happen again. The buildings are being cleaned, Community Corrections and Juvenile Service Center, air conditioners are back on.

Requests

Considered signs installed at Sharp and Webster Cemetery, Pioneer Cemetery Commission. **Commissioner Steve Holifield** is liaison to the Pioneer Cemetery Commission, these two cemeteries are very small, if you did not know where they were located, you would not see them from the street or road therefore the signs would benefit anyone looking for these cemeteries. **Commissioner Holifield motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Old Business

Considered County Attorney DiMartino drafting a Vendor Form. **Attorney DiMartino**, this is a standard contract to be used in the Facilities Department, the vendor's information will be filled out on the form, this will incorporate the actual estimate or bid, making sure all vendors have a copy of their certificate of insurance on file plus certification that they've not been disbarred by the State from doing government work, the estimates or proposals attached with this form will be uploaded to Gateway benefitting our audits. **Auditor Mike Rosenbaum**, we will keep copies of the contracts digitally after uploading them to Gateway, all contracts signed this year have been uploaded and thanks to Diane Gonzales, we've received a significant amount of them. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered proposed settlement in Fagan v. La Porte County Board of Commissioners. **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, as you recall, in 2024 we entered an agreement in the email exchange information with Sean Fagan, the Board and John Lake are a party to this as well, one of the issues that developed between the parties was the cost of taking the old information out so a dispute developed but has since been resolved, Mr. Lake will be getting his portion of emails and the settlement is confidential and it remains confidential since 2024. **Commissioner Holifield motioned to approve. Commissioner Haney seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

New Business

Parks Department/DNR presentation on wetland and stream restoration project at Bluhm County Park, **Jeremy Sobecki**, Parks Director. Power Point presentation attached to minutes. La Porte Native Josh Long and JoAnne Cummings, both with DNR as Mitigation Project Managers, were in attendance for the presentation. The project is a 43-acre parcel that was purchased by DNR for a Mitigation Program, asked him where it might be used in our County, near any of our Parks, Mark Parkman, resident of La Porte County, had property with a wetland, a stream, on it. It is going to be a great project. **Josh Long**, DNR, we will be doing stream and wetland restoration at Bluhm County Park. **Jeremy Sobecki**, it may not be pretty at first but the end result will be great.

Considered contract for office space for Veterans' service, **Shawna Sapp**, Vet Center Director. Readjustment Counseling for veterans or service members who have experienced some sort of trauma or adverse during their time in the service, how they're dealing with it today, how it affects their everyday life, we're here to help them adjust. It is an absolute honor to be here; La Porte is the second largest County in our 'catchment' area of 13 counties. Communications have now brought us to this point. Shawna handed out folders with a brochure on their program. They offer bereavement counseling to Gold Star Families and veterans who've died in combat or died by suicide. Family counseling, couples counseling, and individual counseling is offered. We strive to bring healing to the Veteran community. Process for this program starts in South Bend at the Vet Center, assessments are made. Shawna does the intakes herself, meeting everyone that asks for assistance from the program. Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m., services will be offered at the 555 Michigan Avenue, 2nd floor, La Porte location. Will Funston will be the Readjustment Counselor. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 3-0.**

ORIGINAL

Considered M. A. Dilts Agreement, **Ron Heeg**, Sheriff. Annual consulting agreement for Sheriff's Department pension plan. Attorney DiMartino has reviewed and recommends approval. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered settlement in the matter of *Gates v. La Porte County Sheriff*. Attorney DiMartino, Civil Rights matter filed in 2022 and handled by outside counsel. It went to mediation with an outcome of a tentative agreement pending Commissioners' approval for \$38,125. Sheriff was present at the mediation along with counsel plus a member of your body was kept in the loop during the process. Recommended accepting the settlement and close the case. **Sheriff Ron Heeg** was present during the mediation and recommended the case be settled. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered outside work contract for Surveyor. Attorney DiMartino, this contract was put together because we need an independent contractor who's a licensed Surveyor doing work for the Surveyor's office, it's a standard contract and ends December 31, 2025. Surveyor Matwyshyn can approach the Commission again next year to enter a new contract for 2026. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded and clarified the contract is for John T. Saylor. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Ordinance for GIS Board. Attorney DiMartino was asked to put together an ordinance for an Advisory Board for GIS with seven members. The purpose of the Advisory Board is for input for GIS services. There are a number of departments within the County that actually use GIS so once the Board gets together, they're going to determine how that department will be funded and what percentage of their money is going into that fund. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to suspend the rules. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** **Commissioner Holifield** motioned for first reading by Title Only. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** Attorney Guy DiMartino, 'Ordinance 2025-4, An Ordinance of the La Porte County Board of Commissioners Establishing an Advisory Board for the County GIS Department.' **Commissioner Holifield** motioned for second reading by Title Only. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** Attorney Guy DiMartino, 'Ordinance 2025-4, An Ordinance of the La Porte County Board of Commissioners Establishing an Advisory Board for the County GIS Department.' **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**
***Ordinance 2025-4

Considered Ordinance establishing the County Community Corrections Marketplace. Attorney Guy DiMartino, in 2025 the Commissioners established a Commissary Fund. Under the statutory language in our statutes, commissary fund is only prescribed for the Sheriff's Department. Community Corrections has their own commissary department where goods are purchased and sold, in order to comply with mandates for the state, it was recommended to change the name 'commissary funds' to 'marketplace.' Still the same thing, just changed the wording for the fund or account. Recommended first reading only for now. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned for first reading by Title Only. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** Attorney Guy DiMartino, 'Ordinance 2025-5, An Ordinance Establishing the County Community Corrections Marketplace.' ***Ordinance 2025-5.


President Gramarossa reported prior to the meeting; she received an email stating 'The EMA Director and The Chairman of the La Porte County Fire Chiefs Association at the request of several township fire chiefs, are requiring that La Porte County Commissioners impose a temporary Burn Ban for the following townships: Cass, Clinton, Dewey, Hanna, New Durham, Noble, Prairie. The Ban will last for 14 days until our next Commissioners' meeting where it will be reevaluated. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Commissioner Steve Holifield announced October is Domestic Violence month, he requested/motioned the Facilities Director to display purple lights on the La Porte Courthouse during the Month of October. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Commissioner Holifield motioned to adjourn at 10:45 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 10-15-2025



ATTEST: _____

Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

ORIGINAL

Bluhm County Park Stream and Wetland Restoration

LaPorte County Parks & DNR INSWMP Partnership



Josh Long
Project Manager
Indiana Stream and Wetland Mitigation Program
Division of Land Acquisition



DIVISION OF
LAND ACQUISITION

Project Background

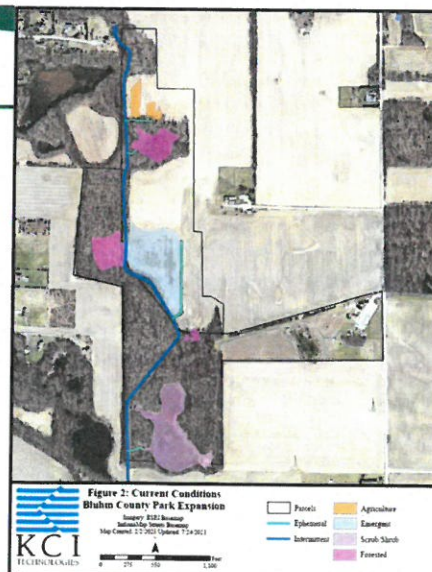
- INSWMP purchased additional 43 acres adjacent to Bluhm County Park
- Stream and wetland restoration



DIVISION OF
LAND ACQUISITION

Overall Project

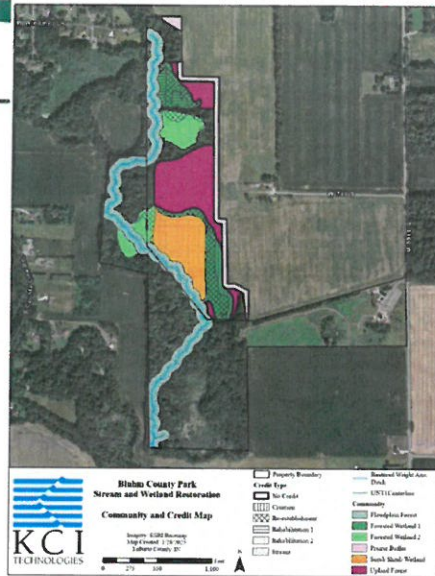
- Existing stream
 - Heavily channelized
 - Relatively flat stream gradient



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Overall Project

- Proposed stream
 - Natural stream alignment
 - Improved stream gradient
- Tree removal required
 - Limited to the light blue areas
- Native tree plantings
 - > 10 native species of trees and shrubs
 - Replacement at 4-5 times amount removed

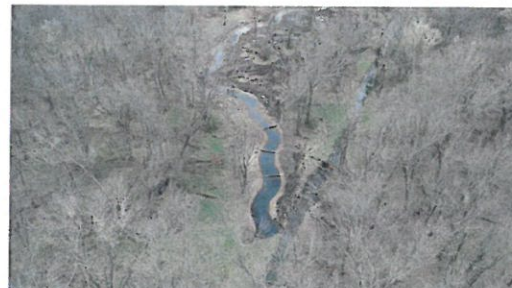


Tree Removal

- Tree removal minimized to the least extent
- Trees and native seed mix planted after construction
- Facilitate stream restoration and meandering



Examples of stream restoration



Construction photos of Wisconsin stream restoration project (KCI Technologies)

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Examples of stream restoration

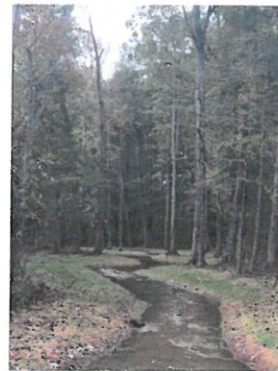


7 months post-construction (KCI Technologies)

Examples of stream restoration

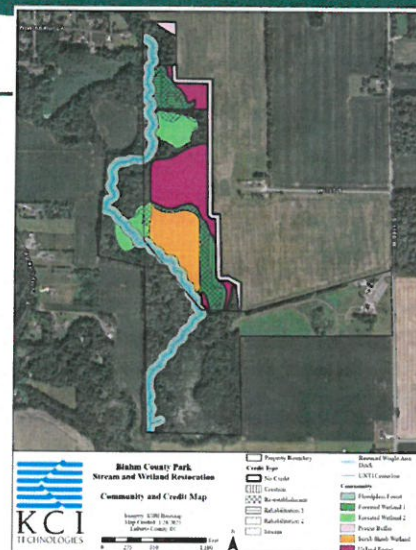


Construction of new stream channel in Tennessee (KCI Technologies)



Post-construction (KCI Technologies)

Questions?



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