



LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 202
La Porte, IN 46350-3400
(219) 326-6808 ext. 2229

Connie Gramarossa
President

Steve Holifield
Vice President

Joe Haney
Member

La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes Wednesday, November 5, 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 **Tommy Kulavik**.

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

Considered the agenda. **President Gramarossa** moved item 11 'a' up the agenda under Old Business as 10 'b.' **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to remove 11 'h.' **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered approval of the October 15, 2025 minutes. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor Mike Rosenbaum read the Claims with Payroll ending 10/17/2025 - \$1,479,615.22 and ending 10/31/2025 - \$1,460,722.25. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve both payrolls. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Auditor Mike Rosenbaum read the Operating Expense Claims - \$2,124,327.44. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve operating claims. **Commissioner Haney** seconded and for the public's edification he has continued to post claims on his social media page, there is a Dropbox link, use a bunch of letters for access to the claims we're voting on minus the redacted names of Jurors. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment

Tommy Kulavik, 1316 Ohio Street, Michigan City, commended the Highway Department for removing four (4) dead deer carcasses along Wozniak Road, drivers often think it's the Indy 500, peace, and love to those animals. Complaint on the Drug-free Partnership of La Porte County, last year Judge Greta Friedman, John Gilmore from Tonn and Blank and Mitch from Porter County who runs the recovery house over there in Valpo, came in front of the Council requesting funds to support a recovery house in Michigan City at Wabash Street and Ann Street. The Council granted them \$750,000; \$400,000 from the Opioid Settlement and \$350,000 from CEDIT money, County Economic Development Income Tax. Mayor Angie said at her Town Hall meeting last week that it is a private matter, it's not a private matter, they plan on coming to the City Council for \$250,000 in Opioid Settlement money, and ask for thousands of dollars in permit fee waivers so over a million dollars and that is not a private matter. People in the neighborhood do not want it, personally he would like to see it developed and not sit as a Greenfield site. We should know what the alternate sites are going to be, too. If it doesn't go through then the County Council should rescind their funds, the Prosecutor should get involved, there should be a start/completion date. Go Wolves! Beat the Slicers! Friday night in the sectional championship game, thank you. **President Gramarossa** suggested he approach the Council about the money for the recovery house in Michigan City.

Bruce Zimmerman, 421 Holly Road, Michigan City, I think you know why I'm here, you need to keep an eye on social media stuff, it's getting pretty deep, posts being made without verifying or talking to people. Beware of AI, I'm sure you all saw the picture of the car on the bridge again, it needs to be dealt with as a community and not individually as a Councilman or Commissioner. Next, he spoke on power outages at Franklin Street Bridge, could someone check with NIPSCO as to why there are so many outages? It cost the County 2-3 hours of pay every time he has to go to the Bridge, reset everything and bring it all back up. Commended the Bridge Tenders for doing an excellent job, they do not make erroneous calls but when there is an issue, they call and we respond. They keep an eye out like never before, makes his life easier and cost the County less money. One incident was a call in the middle of the night, Bridge Tender stating someone banging on the door and screaming, told her to call 911 if it is an emergency, get the police down there and come to find out, it was an officer saying someone called 911 that the bridge had not opened and they were upset. When police

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arrived, there was no one trying to get through on the Franklin Street Bridge, the caller was at the Railroad Bridge up around the corner, around the bend. The Bridge Tender has no control over that yet she was getting the blame. She tells them to call the number on the bridge only to have them tell her that it is *her* job to call, it is *not* her job, she is doing exactly what she is supposed to be doing. The Bridge Tenders are doing a great job and he loves them all. Next, he spoke about the cameras on the Franklin Street Bridge. Used to be able to have them on his phone so he could keep an eye out on it, not sure if this is still possible, completely up to you all. Wanted to talk about money on the bridge, he thinks the total rehab so far has been close to six million dollars to repair the Franklin Street Bridge. He knows there was a large sum of money given to the Double Track, how much was that and where did it come from? **President Gramarossa**, six million dollars from the Highway Department. **Bruce**, that is a lot of money, not saying it is good nor bad but when La Porte County needs something done, that money could have been better spent here, thank you.

Andy Skwiat, 1655 N. Shebel Road, Michigan City, Happy Birthday tomorrow to First Lady Juanita Haney from both Andy and Marley. La Porte County can get a bit political at times and whether it is at a Council or Commissioners' meeting, Juanita always leaves that aside, gives them a hug and talks about real life, we would not reach out to her directly out of respect to one of our three leaders so we hope she has a special day tomorrow, thank you. **President Gramarossa**, Happy Birthday to her. **Commissioner Haney**, he will let her know, thank you.

Department Reports/Comments

Monique Thomas, Human Resources Director, Open Enrollment is finishing up this week, employees have until Friday to enroll by phone, contact her if you need the phone number. If you haven't enrolled for the 2026 year with an American Fidelity Representative, you will not be covered beginning in 2026.

Amanda Lahners, Health Department Director, flu shots are still available for employees, give us a call and we'll arrange for you to get one if you want one, if you are over the age of 65, we do not have the high dose so you will have to go to a pharmacy like Walgreens or CVS to get it. Everyone is invited to look at our new website HEARTSafe LPC, we launched an initiative this year to make La Porte County a HEARTSafe Community, City of La Porte did this a few years ago and we're trying to take this countywide. On the website you can find CPR classes, register an AED, there's a live map showing where the closest AEDs are to you, there are video resources, a tracker showing how close we are to our goal to apply for it, and then it also tells you what it means to be a HEARTSafe community and what it takes to get us there, HEARTSafelpc.com, this is in partnership with Healthcare Foundation of La Porte. Announced office hours at the Michigan City Courthouse will be changing December 1st, Clinic Days will only be Tuesdays and Thursdays, Birth Certificates, Death Certificates and permit renewals will be available on these two days in Michigan City. **President Gramarossa**, the staff will be moved to the La Porte office? **Amanda**, yes, in the Complex where there is plenty of both room and work for them, that will leave us with three (3) Nursing positions available, if anyone is interested. RN positions, LPN positions and part-time Nursing positions are open.

Mike Polan, Building Department, reported Data Migration is almost complete, consolidated two software programs to modernize the department. There were a few delays however the new software is in place and we're getting the rest of the data this week. Employed AI temporarily as an experiment, questions have been answered to the public right there on our website. We've been training it, it is getting better and more efficient, there is even a place for FOIA requests, one example is a permit issued for work or to a certain contractor or address, Diane in your office has used some of the tools on our website. We welcome any feedback; this is still new but he is happy about it. **President Gramarossa** thanked Mike for the hard work implementing this program.

Joe Haney, Commissioner, follow-up from the last meeting, revisited the issue with attorneys doing work on behalf of the Commission without the majority vote of the Commission approving prior to the work or directed by our County Attorney. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** questioned if this item was previously tabled or how was it handled? **Commissioner Haney** motioned to remove the item from the table. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.** **Commissioner Haney** motioned to...how to phrase this gently...our County Attorney was appointed at the beginning of the year, he does an excellent job, as the Board we have a County Attorney to direct all legal matters and to address those, with that thought in mind and given some past history here from the past couple of weeks...**have all work by all County Departments or any legal work needing to be done run through our County Attorney directly and any assignments that need to be made or given out be done by the County Attorney at the direction of majority of the Board.** **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. **President Gramarossa** asked what cases have gone out without the County Attorney's approval. **County Attorney Guy DiMartino**, there's been some matters that he learned about afterwards, regardless, he doesn't think this is a bad thing because at least he'll know what's pending, he can reach out to the Commission if it is something not within his 'wheelhouse,' then he can refer it to another attorney. Most of the time it is litigation so he will do whatever the Board wants or directs him to do. **President Gramarossa** asked again about any cases, she knows existing cases stayed with the previous County Attorney but are there cases where some attorney came in and took over? **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, there have been matters where legal work has been performed that he didn't learn until afterwards, it wasn't inappropriate, but it did not go to him as a point person where he would know what is going on. **President Gramarossa**, it wasn't inappropriate? **Commissioner Holifield**, it should go to you (directed to Attorney DiMartino). **President Gramarossa**, I'm with you, I agree everything needs to go to you but I want to make sure that nothing was done illegally or inappropriately. **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, no, the work was not inappropriate, the work was needed but it did not, you know, sort of like we're trying to develop protocols...**President Gramarossa**,

right. **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, ...the protocol was not followed. **Commissioner Holifield**, I think that's an excellent idea. **Motion carried 3-0.** **Attorney DiMartino**, Department Heads need to understand this so I don't know if you want or need to send out an email to Department Heads directly because sometimes, you know, Department Heads will - **Commissioner Haney**, yeah, please do, we did - this is another reason why I bring it up this week, we had an issue that came up that wasn't ran by you (**Attorney DiMartino**) and - **Attorney DiMartino**, I don't have like an All Department email so I'll just send something to Diane and then she can blast it out if that works. **President Gramarossa**, perfect. **Commissioner Haney**, please do. **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, and of course there are other departments that already have attorneys that work directly for with them so those Department Heads would not be - like the Health Department, they have their own attorney and the Assessor's office uses Brad Adamsky, and things like that so that would not be included. **Commissioner Haney**, right. **Commissioner Holifield**, I think this is just issues that deal with the County Commissioners. **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, yeah.

Requests

None

Old Business

Considered Burn Ban for seven (7) Townships in La Porte County. **Commissioner Holifield**, not sure if the Commissioners have an authority to impose a ban and he believes it should be left up to the Fire Department Chiefs. **Attorney DiMartino**, under the statute, yes, they do but, in the past, there have been people who have punted it up to the Commissioners because they did not want to make the call. **Commissioner Holifield**, the Township Chiefs are out in the field and they know what is going on, if they don't want their constituents burning within the township, they should let everybody know to the Trustee and tell them. **Attorney DiMartino**, they have the authority to do so. **Commissioner Haney** agreed and echoed the comments unless there's something really what happened, well, the first time this happened there was really outstanding issues that had occurred, severe drought conditions that a year or two ago that was pretty much unprecedented here, we're a large County and you can get 2-3 inches in La Crosse and nothing in Michigan City or vice versa some days. It's probably best practice to leave it to the Fire Departments who have full authority unless there's some, you know... **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to repeal the Burn Ban. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Considered Franklin Street Bridge Phase II work. **Charity Glaser**, Highway Superintendent, last meeting bids were opened for Phase II work to be done on the Franklin Street Bridge and there was only one partial bid, Andy Skwiat here is the Project Manager and we went to the Council last month and funding was approved through her budgeted money so Andy is going to give a report. **Andy Skwait**, Marquiss Electric, 203 E. Harrison Street, Michigan City, final number for the complete Phase II Rehabilitation would be \$1,262,000 that was presented at the Council meeting. Of that amount, a little over \$300,000 would be work performed by his firm and retained in-house so the rest of that work would be in accordance with the partial bid that was received and the project documents before that, if you should chose to make that official today and move that along, he has received an official closure permit from the Federal Coast Guard in Ohio with closure dates of January 5th to March 15th. We can let the City of Michigan City get through their holiday festivities; the residents and visitors get to enjoy Washington Park for Christmas. Michigan City had a walk but now it has changed to a drive over planned for the coldest day of the year, February 28th. We could accommodate that schedule if that is your wish; we would prioritize our work. Part of the work requires us to remove the road grating to access the structural beams underneath the road to do some repairs to those beams that are cracked. We can move some of that work up in schedule pending on your decision today whether or not to move forward with the project. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Commissioner Holifield**, the Halyard partial bid will be \$960,000? **Andy**, yes, when we were hired as Project Management, we did get our standard mark-up that was added however we did not mark-up the work we would perform ourselves. **Commissioner Holifield**, so the additional \$300,000 is work you are going to perform that's not covered under the bid. **Andy**, some of that work performed was in the Project Management anyways but that work would have been billed 'open-ended' but we took that 'open-ended' work with the original contract for Project Management and rolled that into one lump sum numbers to actually have a total before the job starts until after the job is over. **Commissioner Holifield**, and that will be \$1,260,000? **Andy**, \$1,262,000. **Commissioner Haney**, while we are talking about the closure portion because normally that needs to go in certain phases, not just because of the weather but for the ease of doing the work, not back tracking, how difficult will it be to shift around that schedule versus what you would normally do for that coldest day of the year. **Andy**, that will be reasonable, we'll just have to watch a window, the walk or drive scheduled in Michigan City is February 28th so we have almost two months to make sure we have the materials there, when we see a window where the weather looks suitable, we'll attack that work and the bridge would be closed that whole time regardless so the closure permit from the Coast Guard would be from the 5th to the 15th regardless of how we phase that work, at times we work inside, at times we are on top of the bridge, and sometimes under the bridge, so a question from me is do you want me to make that a priority to make that happen because it'd possibly be a little inconvenience to the guys however they're thankful for the work, we're thankful for the work so if that's your wishes, we'd be happy to do that. **President Gramarossa**, is this an event that Michigan City has or...? **Andy** replied he does not know if it is a fundraiser or an event but they had reached out to him when they saw the Bridge was up for more rehab, the planning department said they had 'the coldest day of the year' event or 'coldest night of the year' to cross the bridge into Washington Park, they asked what the closure period was, he told them the closure would be during that timeframe of their event and they asked if they could walk it, he told them he would have to get permission from the

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Commissioners.’ **Attorney Guy DiMartino** asked why no one from Michigan City was here attending the meeting for the request, you know we’ve had issues with Michigan City with other projects, how come someone from Michigan City is not here? **Andy**, he does not know why they are not here but he did tell them he would ask permission for their walk during the closure time. He told the Planning Department he would ask while attending the meeting today. **Attorney Guy DiMartino**, understands **Andy** can accommodate them on this date but they should be here to explain it, it is the Commissioners’ call but someone from Michigan City should be requesting the walk during the closure of the Franklin Street Bridge. **Commissioner Holifield** asked if this is done every year. **Andy**, he has never heard of this before. **Commissioner Holifield**, he can think of better things to do on the coldest day of the year. **President Gramarossa**, recommended tabling the issue until someone from Michigan City can come here. **Attorney DiMartino**, there is no need to table because **Andy** is requesting to move forward with the project. You can determine later if you need to change the date to accommodate Michigan City or not. **Commissioner Holifield**, worst case scenario if it doesn’t fit in your schedule weatherwise or anything else, they just won’t be able to do it. **Andy**, no different than when the boats are there, we know our role, he would never let anyone cross the bridge, open it for a boat, nothing with your property without your permission. **President Gramarossa**, we need to give Michigan City the opportunity to come to us at a later date, we can approve your request today. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve Phase II Rehab of the Franklin Street Bridge in Michigan City. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

New Business

Considered opening Highway bids for material for 2026, **Charity Glaser**, Highway Superintendent. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** opened all bids that were timely submitted. Bids were given to Highway Superintendent Glaser for review then return at the end of our meeting with her recommendations. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered 2026 contract between Purdue Extension and La Porte County. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** reviewed and recommends the contract for year 2026. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered Resolution for Commissioners’ Sale. **Commissioner Holifield**, tax sale was conducted last month, there are still several properties on the list that did not sell and have been on the list for several years, he spoke to the Auditor, Deputy Auditor, Treasurer and Assessor, he believes we should move forward with a Commissioners’ Sale to get the properties back on the tax rolls. Questions have come in to his office about ‘unbuildable’ parcels in areas like Hudson Lake, Saugany Lake, if you cannot build on them, no one’s paying taxes on them, if a property owner next to them wants to purchase them but they’re not going to pay ten times what the value is because they’ve gone on the tax sale so many times, this might be the way to get them back on the tax rolls and benefit the Community. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Commissioner Holifield** asked **Attorney DiMartino** if the Resolution needs to be read by title only. **Attorney DiMartino**, the Resolution is incomplete, suggested having this on the record and we can revisit it once we have the list of properties. **Auditor Mike Rosenbaum** reported a tentative date of the Commissioners Sale as March 18th. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** read into the record, “A Resolution establishing the intent to conduct a Commissioners’ Sale to sell Tax Sale Certificates for properties that are severely delinquent in payment of Property Taxes.” Motion carried 3-0. ***Resolution 2025-8 *** No vote needed right now however one was conducted.

Considered Plan Commission’s recommendation for **Parkman Plat, 5000 800 South Minor Subdivision**. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered Plan Commission’s recommendation for **Chupp Plat, Pivotal Acres Subdivision**. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Considered Resolution adopting La Porte County Housing Analysis & Action Agenda. **Matt Reardon**, Unity Foundation received a grant to do a Housing Study in 2021 and partnered with the La Porte County Office of Community and Economic Development. In 2019, the La Porte County Convention & Visitor’s Bureau joined the Unity Foundation in spearheading this task which prompted the Vibrant Communities of La Porte County to gather input from nearly 1,000 residents throughout our County. **Maggi Spartz**, outgoing Unity Foundation President & CEO, and incoming President & CEO **Jeri Pat Gabbert**, Maggi stated the mission of the Unity Foundation is to strengthen La Porte County now and forever, and has been for the past 30 years. Often, they partner with City, County, State and Federal Governments because no one entity can do it all. It is important to pass this Resolution today, in order for developers to use the information in the 100-page document it must first be formally approved. Maggi introduced **Beth Shrader** who gave a presentation on the 2025 Housing Analysis & Action Agenda. **President Gramarossa** thanked Maggi Spartz for everything she has done for our cities, our County as well as with County Planner **Mitch Bishop**. Beth’s presentation will be on the County’s website. **Commissioner Holifield** motioned to read by title only. **Commissioner Haney** seconded. **Attorney Guy DiMartino** read into the record “Resolution of the La Porte County Commissioners adopting the La Porte County Housing Analysis & Action Agenda.” Motion carried 3-0. ***Resolution 2025-9

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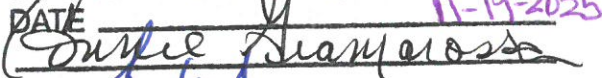
Considered Proxy appointments to Plan Commission for two Board Members. **Commissioner Holifield**, two Board members on the Plan Commission need to have proxies for a vote on the Solar Ordinance update. Spoke to Attorney DiMartino earlier today, a commissioner must be a proxy for the Commissioner on the Plan Commission Board. **President Gramarossa stepped down and motioned to appoint Commissioner Joe Haney as Proxy on the Plan Commission for Commissioner Steve Holifield. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 3-0.** The other Proxy appointment will be done at our next meeting.

Considered opening bids for first floor bathrooms/Assessor's breakroom in the Hiler Building. **Reed Smith**, Assistant Facilities Director, was present while **Attorney Guy DiMartino** opened the bids. Five were submitted: Larson-Danielson, Gibson Lewis LLC, NewTech, BluSky, and Tiles in Style dba Taza Construction. **Commissioner Haney motioned to show all bids were timely received. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 3-0.** Bids were given to Assistant Facilities Director Reed Smith who will bring them back to our next meeting with a recommendation.

Highway Superintendent Charity Glaser returned with the opened Annual Bid Material for 2026 for Crushed Limestone, Bituminous Patching/Rap Materials, Blast Furnace Crashed Slag, Ice Sand, Gravel, Dirt & Top Soil, No-Lead, Diesel, E-85, Signs, Signs Posts, Culvert pipes and Guardrails. ***Attached to minutes

Commissioner Haney motioned to adjourn at 11:21 a.m. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
COUNTY OF LA PORTE, INDIANA

DATE 11-19-2025




ATTEST: _____ Auditor

LA PORTE COUNTY, INDIANA

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LAPORTE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

1805 W 5th Street

LaPorte, IN 46350

Telephone: (219) 362-2051 Fax: (219) 362-4221

November 6, 2025

RE: LaPorte County Highway Annual Material Bid Recommendations for 2026

Class 1 - Crushed Limestone

Two Bidders:

US Aggregates Inc.

South Lake Stone

Class 2 – Bituminous Patching / Rap Materials

Two Bidders:

Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc.

Central Paving Inc.

Class 3 – Blast Furnace Crushed Slag

One Bidder:

Beemsterboer Aggregates

Class 4 – Ice Sand, Gravel, Dirt & Top Soil

No Bidders

Class 5 – No-lead, Diesel and E-85

One Bidder:

Triple J-Mar Petroleum, Inc.

Class 6 – Signs and Sign Posts

One Bidder:

Michael Todd Industrial Supply

Class 7 – Culvert Pipe and Guardrail

Two Bidders:

Debco Metal Culverts

St Regis Culvert, Inc

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LAPORTE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

1805 W 5th Street

LaPorte, IN 46350

Telephone: (219) 362-2051 Fax : (219) 362-4221

November 6, 2025

RE: LaPorte County Highway Annual Material Bid Recommendations for 2026

Class 1 - Crushed Limestone

Two Bidders:

US Aggregates Inc.

South Lake Stone

We will accept both bids.

Class 2 – Bituminous Patching / Rap Materials

Two Bidders:

Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc.

Central Paving Inc.

We will accept both bids.

Class 3 – Blast Furnace Crushed Slag

One Bidder:

Beemsterboer Aggregates

We will accept the bid.

Class 4 – Ice Sand, Gravel, Dirt & Top Soil

No Bidders

Class 5 – No-lead, Diesel and E-85

One Bidder:

Triple J-Mar Petroleum, Inc.

We will accept the bid.

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Class 6 – Signs and Sign Posts

One Bidder:

Michael Todd Industrial Supply

We will accept the bid.

Class 7 – Culvert Pipe and Guardrail

Two Bidders:

Debco Metal Culverts

St Regis Culvert, Inc.

We will accept both bids.

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