Michael Rosenbaum, CPA
LaPorte County Auditor
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MINUTES
LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
October 27th, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the LaPorte County Council was held on October 27th, 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

President Adam Koronka called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Koronka asked Councilman Yagelski to lead the pledge.

ROLL CALL - The roll was called by Auditor Michael Rosenbaum who noted a quorum was present.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
Present	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
Absent								0

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The following amendments/corrections were made to the agenda on a motion by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilman Yagelski. Motion passed 6 – 0.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	X	6
NAY							0

Under old business:
Move Treasurer to new hires.
Correct Building Maintenance to reflect only 1 janitor hire.
Remove LaPorte County Highway.
Remove LaPorte County FMEC request.
LaPorte County Council remove WAIR request.

APPROVAL OF September 22nd, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes were approved as printed by Councilman Mollenauer and supported by Councilman Pressel.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was given by Bruce Zimmerman, who expressed his dedication and expertise in managing the Franklin Street Bridge.

Tim Stabosz, a former county auditor, who discussed county tax issues and apologized for a previous The LaPorte County Council meeting began with agenda modifications, including moving the misstatement about Councilman Yagelski's voting record.

Randy Novak, a former council member, expressed appreciation for the county employees and the council's collaborative spirit. He clarified the role of the council in funding contracts and emphasized the importance of working together to improve the county.

Haney, a commissioner, addressed the financial responsibilities of the council and the need for proper budgeting and approval processes.

Ella Bilderback, the recorder, highlighted the prevalence of property fraud and the importance of fraud alerts to protect property owners.

Rosenbaum and Barenie shared the success of a tax sale initiative that collected over $2 million in delinquent property taxes, emphasizing the collaborative effort between the treasurer's and auditor's offices.

Solid Waste District discussed changes to their operations following a recent fire at their yard cleanup site, including limiting material acceptance and implementing new rules for composting. The district also explored the possibility of reopening a successful program in Westville near the prison, with potential support from Michigan City.

2026 Budget and Revenue Challenges

The County Council discussed the 2026 budget, with a motion to revert to 2025 numbers for most accounts except for salary increases, overtime, and contractual services. The proposed budget includes a 4% increase in the property tax levy, which is expected to generate about $1.4 million in additional revenue. However, the council was informed that this may not be sufficient to cover all planned expenses, potentially creating a $4-5 million deficit. The council

also considered implementing a 10% across-the-board budget cut, but concerns were raised about the feasibility and impact of such cuts, particularly on essential services and staff.

2025 Budget and Bridge Project

The council discussed and approved a budget that reverted back to 2025, maintaining 2025 levels for most items except contracted services and overtime, which will remain at 2025 levels. They also approved a motion of support for up to $1.262 million for the Franklin Street Bridge project in Michigan City, which will involve repairing cracked I-beams, structural repairs, and safety improvements. The project is expected to begin after January 5th and be completed by March 15th, with funding to come from the Major Bridge and Kuhn Bridge accounts as money becomes available.

County Department Hiring Requests

The meeting focused on hiring requests across various county departments. LaPorte County Building Maintenance Director requested permission to hire a full-time housekeeper to maintain the current staffing level of 8 total employees.

The County Auditor Mike Rosenbaum sought approval to hire a full-time tax sale clerk, explaining plans to cross-train staff and potentially reduce future positions.

The Highway Department requested a full-time clerk receptionist to replace a departing employee, emphasizing the position's critical role in managing complaints and daily activities. The Clerk of the Circuit Court, Heather Stevens, requested a replacement for a criminal desk employee, highlighting the importance of maintaining specific expertise in criminal case handling. The Treasurer, Dan Barenie, sought to replace a bookkeeper to maintain a trained staff capable of handling complex tax-related inquiries.

The meeting focused on staffing challenges in the Treasurer's Office, where LaPorte explained they are falling behind on reconciliations and following up on AFCS due to understaffing.

The council approved funding for six positions across departments, including a new Treasurer's Office staff member, while declining to fill one clerk position.

The council also approved various financial requests including $48 for Pioneer Cemetery, $10,000 for psychiatric services, $6,200 for the Recorder's Office shortfall, $995 for vehicle inspection, $120,000 for inmate food, and $500,000 for maintenance expenses. The conversation ended with a discussion about NIPSCO utility bills and the need for better tracking of expenditures to avoid late payments.

Budget Decisions and Future Planning

The meeting focused on budget-related decisions and potential further discussions. LaPorte moved to include a contract in the 2026 budget, which was approved. The group discussed transferring funds and approved several requests. They also considered holding another meeting to finalize the budget, with LaPorte confirming they would check if a recess meeting could be called without the 48-hour notice. The possibility of a unanimous vote being required for any changes was mentioned. The conversation ended with LaPorte announcing a recess until Thursday at 5 p.m., pending verification.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Kessler
None
Councilman Kiel
None
Councilman Koronka
Spent 3 hours in the Treasurer's office last week.
Councilman Mollenauer
None
Councilman Pressel
None
Councilman Yagelski
We will be 3 million short next year on the bridge next year. Congratulations to the maintenance department – they're getting the work done. Except for 1 janitor position maintenance is fully staffed.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

Approval of Solid Waste Budget

Motion to accept was made by Councilman Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Mollenauer. Motion passed 6 – 0.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

Approval of Hanna Township Budget

Motion to accept was made by Councilman Kiel and seconded by Councilman Kessler. Motion passed 6 – 0.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

Approval of County Budget

The council discussed and approved a budget that reverted back to 2025, maintaining 2025 levels for most items except contracted services, 100 accounts and overtime, which will remain at 2025 levels. The meeting focused on budget-related decisions and potential further discussions.

A motion to accept the budget with changes as noted (no contractual increases funded, no overtime funded and no 100 accounts)with the levy remaining the same, was made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Mollenauer. The vote was as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE			x	x	x	resigned	x	4
NAY	x	x						2

A recess of this meeting was discussed so that the council may discuss holding another meeting to finalize the budget on Thursday, October 30th with Attorney Biege confirming they would check if a recess meeting could be called without the 48-hour notice. The possibility of a unanimous vote being required for any changes was mentioned. The conversation ended with LaPorte announcing a recess until Thursday at 5 p.m., pending verification.

Mr. Kiel asked when they would be able to receive a revised budget. Mr. Rosenbaum said maybe by Friday and also stated that in January we would need to make corrections.

LaPorte County Highway Assistant Superintendent, Andrew Simmermeyer, and Project Manager, Andy Skwiat, attending to discuss the Franklin Street Bridge project. Requesting permission to spend/ appropriated from Cum Bridge (1135) and Major Bridge (1171) for the project. The amount requested, not to exceed $1.2 million to be taken from 2025 and 2026 budgets.

They also approved a motion of support for up to $1.262 million for the Franklin Street Bridge project in Michigan City, which will involve repairing cracked I-beams, structural repairs, and safety improvements. The project is expected to begin after January 5th and be completed by March 15th, with funding to come from the Major Bridge and Cum Bridge accounts as money becomes available.

The request was approved on a motion by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Kessler. The vote was as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

Permission to Hire

>LaPorte County Building Maintenance director, Angela Davis, requesting permission to hire 1 full time janitor position.

Motion to approve made by Councilman Mollenauer and supported by Councilman Pressel. Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

>LaPorte County Auditor, Mike Rosenbaum, requesting permission to hire full time tax sale clerk.

Motion to approve made by Councilman Mollenauer and supported by Councilman Pressel. Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

>LaPorte County Highway Superintendent, Charity Glaser, requests permission to hire full time clerk/receptionist.

Motion to approve made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Kessler. Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

>LaPorte County HR Director, Monique Thomas, requesting permission to hire assistant HR position.

Motion to approve made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Mollenauer. Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

>LaPorte County Clerk of the Circuit Court, Heather Stevens, requests permission to hire replacement

Motion to approve made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilman Mollenauer. Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

>LaPorte County Treasurer, Dan Barenie, requests permission to hire a bookkeeper.

An initial motion was made to deny by Councilman Yagelski was made but died for a lack of a second.

Motion to approve made by Councilman Mollenauer and supported by Councilman Kessler. Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x		resigned		4
NAY					x		x	2

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

The council also approved various financial requests including $48 for Pioneer Cemetery, $10,000 for psychiatric services, $6,200 for the Recorder's Office shortfall, $995 for vehicle inspection, $120,000 for inmate food, and $500,000 for maintenance expenses. The conversation ended with a discussion about NIPSCO utility bills and the need for better tracking of expenditures to avoid late payments.

Superior Court 4 $10,000.00
Magistrate John Link requested a motion of support
At the September Council meeting for psychiatric
Services. Motion was approved. Now asking for the
Additional Appropriation.

4220 Win Tax
1191 Riverboat

Motion to approve from Riverboat (1191) made by Councilman Mollenauer and supported by Councilman Pressel. Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned		5
NAY							x	1

LaPorte County Recorder $6,200.00
Recorder Ella Bilderback is requesting an additional
Appropriation to cover the shortage in her payroll
Account resulting from the retrirement of staff member.
1000.10113.00000.0104

4220 Win Tax
1191 Riverboat

Motion to approve from Riverboat (1191) was made by Councilman Kiel and supported by Councilman Kessler.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned		5
NAY							x	1

LaPorte County Sheriff
Sheriff Ron Heeg requesting permission $995.00
To spend/appropriate $995 for vehicle inspection
From 1208.20020.000.0567 to 1208.30120.000.0567

Motion to appropriate was made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilman Yagelski.

Vote is as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	X	6
NAY								0

Sheriff Ron Heeg requestion an additional appropriation $120,000.00
$120,000.00 for inmate food

Motion to approve from LIT Public Safety (1170) was made by Councilman Kiel and supported by Councilman Pressel.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned		5
NAY							x	1

$40,000.00 for garage maintenance $40,000.00

1170 LIT Public Safety
1191 Riverboat

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned		5
NAY							x	1

Motion was approved from LIT Public Safety (1170) by Councilman Mollenhauer and supported by Councilman Kessler.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned		5
NAY							x	1

LaPorte County Maintenance $500,000.00

Requesting an additional appropriation
For Building Repairs ($23,000.00)
Water ($46,000.00)
Trash ($10,722.00)
NIPSCo ($415,000.00)

1191 Riverboat
1112 LIT Economic Development

Motion to approve from LIT Economic Development (1112) was made by Councilman Kiel and supported by Councilman Kessler.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned		5
NAY							x	1

LaPorte County Community Corrections
Merika Beatty, Director, requesting permission to close out
Horizon Bank Accounts #920 (balance $210.23) &
#572 (balance $29,193.75) and transfer balance to Project Income
Accounty #619.

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

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								

Laporte County E 911 $30,000.00

Matt Deckard, Assistant Director, E 911
Requesting an additional appropriation for
Additional IT items.
From:
1170 LIT Public Safety
1191 Riverboat

Motion to approve from Riverboat (1191) was made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilman Mollenauer.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned		5
NAY							x	1

LaPorte County Surveyor
John Matwyshyn, Surveyor, requesting permission
To spend/appropriate fund 1202
Surveyor's Corner Perpetuation Fund
$13,500 for John Saylor's contract

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Kiel and supported by Councilman Kessler.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x		x	resigned		4
NAY				x			x	2

LaPorte County Pioneer Cemetery
Sue Webster, Pioneer Cemetery, requesting a transfer
Of $48.56
From 2300.11007.00000.0260 to 2300.32034.00000.0260

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

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

LaPorte County Prosecutor
Sean Fagan, requesting a transfer
From fund #2500 to #2501.20021.000.0343
In the amount of $25,000 for "Law enforcement subscription services and equipment for LaPorte County based agencies."

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

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

LaPorte County Park and Rec
Jeremy Sobecki, Park Superintendent, permission to spend
$1,000 from 1179.05321.00000.0259 (Donations) for their
Reindeer/Santa event

Motion to approve was made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilman Pressel.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

LaPorte County Juvenile Probation $1,000.00
Requesting permission to spend/appropriate $500 from
2511.02061.000.0321 to 2511.20021.000.0321
And
$500 from 2511.02061.000.0321 to 2511.30120.000.0321

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

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	x	x	x	x	resigned	x	6
NAY								0

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

None at this time.

MEETING RECESS

The meeting was recessed at 8:12 p.m. by President Koronka. The meeting will reconvene at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 30th, 2025.

The meeting was reconvened at 5:00 p.m. on October 30, 2025 by President Koronka.

Auditor Michael Rosenbaum called the roll and noted the following were present:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
Present	x		x	x	x	resigned		4
Absent		x					x	2

A quorum was noted present.

On a motion by Councilman Mollenauer and supported by Councilman Pressel a vote to rescind the earlier motion to adopt the 2026 budget.

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	absent	x	x	x	resigned	absent	4
NAY								0

Councilman Mollenauer made a motion to approve the 2026 budget as submitted to the DLGF on October 6th, 2025. Councilman Pressel supported the motion. Motion passed. The vote was as follows:

	Brett Kessler	Justin Kiel	Adam Koronka	Mike Mollenauer	Jimmy Pressel	Randy Novak	Mark Yagelski	Total
AYE	x	absent	x	x	x	resigned	absent	4
NAY								0

Meeting was adjourned at 5:04 on a motion made by Councilman Mollenauer and supported by Councilman Pressel.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 27th day of Ocotber, 2025.

Councilman President Adam Koronka

Councilman Justin Kiel

Councilwoman Jennifer Heath

Councilman Brett Kessler

Councilman Mike Mollenhauer

Councilman Jimmy Pressel

Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST:

Michael Rosenbaum, CPA, LaPorte County Auditor