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LaPorte County Auditor
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**LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 27, 2026**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Regular Meeting of the LaPorte County Council was held on Wednesday, May 27th, 2026.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Adam Koronka.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Koronka led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and asked that all remain standing for a moment of silence for Mrs. Rita Layton and a moment of prayer for Deputy Jon Samuelson.

ROLL CALL - Auditor Michael Rosenbaum

	Heath	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X	X	On Teams	X	X	X	X	7
Nay								0

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Kessler asked that the agenda be amended to include:

Health Department – fill a vacant position

Prosecutor – fill a vacant Victim Advocate position

Add Motion to Support EMS overtime - \$200,000

The agenda was approved by a 7 – 0 vote on a motion made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilwoman Heath.

APPROVAL OF April 27th, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes were approved on a motion made by Councilman Pressel and supported by Councilwoman Heath. Vote was 7 – 0.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

- County Auditor Mike Rosenbaum reported the state declared supplemental local income tax distributions increasing county receipts by approximately \$2.6 million and allocating amounts to reserves, certified shares, public safety LIT, and economic development. He reviewed new/clarified state rules (Community Corrections Trust Fund effective July; restrictions on building/construction fee uses), announced municipal adviser contracts posted to Gateway with website posting forthcoming, recommended a municipal unit task force for combined 2028 rates, and opened the 2027 budget season with department heads instructed to submit budget requests and Form 144 by June 15 and three-year capital asset plans. Tax dates noted: tax sale moved to October 13 and tax settlement set for June 9. He urged departments to verify vendor pricing for software increases.

- LaPorte County Coroner Swanson reported 17 suicides and five overdose deaths year-to-date, ongoing participation in an overdose and suicide fatality team despite funding constraints, and a critical staffing shortage in his office (three deputies plus coroner on patrol) with hiring timelines pushed to August or later due to delayed certification classes.

- Emergency Management Director Rob Saby summarized training and responses including damage-assessment training, tabletop exercises, support to Sheriff's and hazmat responses, and monitoring localized flooding near the Yellow River and English Lake. He reported the county emergency operations plan is overdue for its 4–5 year update. The discussion focused on widespread siren reliability problems: automatic activation depends on NWS polygon alerts so some sirens failed to auto-activate and 911 had to trigger them manually; the county has heterogeneous equipment (about 30 Federal Signal heads with American Signal controls), parts and battery chargers are difficult to source, individual siren repairs cost thousands, and the maintenance budget (~\$24,000) is nearly exhausted. Saby proposed indoor alternatives (Midland weather radios at ~\$40–\$45) and plans to apply for an upcoming state/FEMA weather-radio grant; he also proposed suspending Saturday winter tests to reduce battery damage. Justin Kiel suggested publicizing weather radios and Rave enrollment and posting a list of inoperable sirens; Saby agreed to publish the list with IT. Councilman Mollenhauer volunteered to serve on a reconstituted siren committee.

- Deputy Prosecutor Sean Fagan reported positive child-support metrics through April and announced a conviction for dealing causing death with sentencing in mid-July.

LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Mollenhauer: On May 13 he attended an Open House for the Lab Corp grand opening; attended the EMA meeting and would like to serve as a volunteer on the Siren committee. He attended the Police Memorial ceremony and congratulated Mike Kellems and state officials on their efforts and work to get Highway 12 designated as the "Jim Kautz Memorial Highway". He also attended the Solid Waste interviews for a new director and the Veterans Memorial Service at Fox Park. Thanked all for the moment of prayer for Officer Jon Samuelson and visited him at the hospital in South Bend.

Councilwoman Heath: HR is revising job descriptions but still needs inputs; the health department will fill an environmental health specialist vacancy and promote internally for a retiring supervisor;

Councilman Pressel: Planning will present a draft land-use map June 3; maintenance is coordinating HVAC/LG work with Ameresco pending a clarified HVAC scope;

highway crews responded to storms; and commissioners toured the Salvation Army in Michigan City prior to considering an opioid-fund request.

Councilman Yagelski: Asked that the President form an ad hoc committee for the printer savings program.

Councilman Kessler: Thanked the County Highway for all the work they did during the recent storms. Johnson Road project starting very soon. Attended the RDC meeting.

Councilman Koronka: Took a tour of the Salvation Army in anticipation of tonight's meeting.

Councilman Kiel: No updates but he plans to talk with his departments in anticipation of the 2027 budget.

CORRESPONDENCE

Auditor Rosenbaum stated that the following correspondence was received:

Letter from Salvation Army requesting Opioid Funds

LaPorte County Jail Inspection Report

Any other minor correspondence was sent individually.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Ordinance 2026-05 – Amendment to Salary Ordinance 2025-12 and Amended Salary Ordinance 2026-01.
37 employees received longevity increases.

Councilman Kiel asked that the \$33,302 for the Treasurer's office be removed unless there is pending litigation.

A motion to approve was made by Councilman Kiel with the amendment that the \$33,304 (stated above) be struck and supported by Councilman Yagelski.

Councilman Kessler asked why we are removing it if there is no pending litigation and the need to bring this back to next meeting. Councilman Kiel would like to hear more information on this subject. Motion passed 6 – 1 as follows:

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

OLD BUSINESS

Councilwoman Heath made a motion to remove from the table the request for the restructuring of EMS ranks separation and position. The motion was supported by Councilman Kessler. Motion passed 7-0.

Director Eric Fenstermaker took the floor to explain the request. Councilmember received a spreadsheet that was reworked from the original request. No additional appropriations would be needed for this year. This would also help with overtime this year.

A motion to accept the proposal was made by Councilwoman Heath and supported by Councilman Kessler. Motion passed 7 – 0.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Creation of Donation Fund for USA 250th Anniversary – Commissioner Haney asking for funds to pay for decorations - Flags and bunting. Donations have been received.

Motion to create a donation fund was made by Councilwoman Heath and supported by Councilman Yagelski and Councilman Mollenhauer. Motion passed 7 – 0.

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

Budget Hearing Dates: July 20, 21 and 22 (if needed)

Councilman Kessler made a motion to accept the budget dates and it was supported by Councilwoman Heath. Motion passed 7-0.

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

Permission to Hire

LaPorte County Health Director, Amanda Lahners requesting an EHS position be filled; Prosecutor Sean Fagan requested a Victim Advocate position be filled;

LaPorte County Clerk, Heather Stevens requesting permission to hire replacement for COMOT IV, Deputy Clerk, Superior 4.

Motion was made to approve by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilwoman Heath. Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County Park Superintendent, Jeremy Sobecki, requests permission to hire replacement for a maintenance worker.

Motion was made to approve by Councilman Pressel and supported by Councilwoman Heath. Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County Health Director, Amanda Lahners requesting a food supervisor. Motion to accept was made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilwoman Heath. Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County Prosecutor Sean Fagan requested a Victim Advocate position be filled. Motion was made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Kessler. Motion passed 7-0.

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

APPROPRIATIONS - ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

The LaPorte County Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is requesting permission to spend \$5,000 for \$5,000.00
 Their newly launched low-barrier drop-in center addressing interconnected
 Challenges of homelessness, mental illness, and opioid /substance use
 Disorder in LaPorte County.
 1237.20200.00000.1017 Opioid Restricted Funds

A motion to grant the \$5,000 was made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Kessler. Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County Circuit Court, Judge Julianne Havens

\$175,000.00

Additional appropriation for funding assistance to
 Upgrade Circuit Court Courtroom's audio and
 Visual equipment

1191 Riverboat
 4220 Win Tax
 1112 LIT Economic Development
 2101 User Fees

A motion of support was made by Councilman Kessler from Riverboat (1191) and not to exceed \$150,000. It was supported by Councilman Pressel. Motion passed 6-1.

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

LaPorte County Planner, Mitch Bishop

Requesting \$10,300 (not to exceed) for consulting fees
to bring the County into
ADA & Title VI Compliance

\$10,300.00

1191 Riverboat
4220 Win Tax
1112 LIT Economic Development

A motion of support was made by Councilwoman Heath who asked that it be funded from LIT Economic Development (1112) and supported by Councilman Mollenhauer. Motion passed 6-1.

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

LaPorte County Auditor, Michael Rosenbaum

\$10,000.00

Additional appropriation for USA 250th Anniversary Fund
Not to exceed \$10,000

1191 Riverboat
4220 Win Tax

Auditor Rosenbaum asked the council to approve not to exceed \$6,000 after speaking with Commissioner Haney. A motion of support was made by Councilman Kessler for the amount not to exceed \$6,000 from Riverboat. The motion was supported by Councilwoman Heath. Councilman Kiel asked that the fund be appropriated immediately.

	Heath	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye								
Nay							X	

The fund was then appropriated to spend up to \$13,000.

The motion to accept was made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilwoman Heath. Motion passed 6-1.

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

Requesting an additional appropriation for back pay to
Treasurer's former 1st deputy (MC) to COMOT IV

\$33,302.00

1000 General Fund
1191 Riverboat
4220 Win Tax

Auditor Rosenbaum said the council could vote on this but he can't fund it unless it is in the salary ordinance.

A motion to table was made by Councilman Kiel and supported by Councilman Mollenhauer and Pressel. Motion passed 7-0. Motion was tabled.

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

EMS – motion of support for overtime
Director Fenstermaker explained the need for overtime.

\$200,000.00

Motion of support was made by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilwoman Heath.

Motion passed by 7-0. This will be advertised as permission to spend on the June agenda.

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

TRANSFERS/PERMISSION TO SPEND-APPROPRIATE

LaPorte County Drug Free Partnership, Director Micki Webb

\$59,876.81

Requesting permission to spend/draw down
The Drug Free Community Fund (1148)

A brief description was given by Director Webb.

A motion of support was made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilwoman Heath . Motion passed 7-0.

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

Pioneer Cemetery

Sue Webster, of the Pioneer Cemetery, requesting transfer of
\$1,000 from
2300.20043.00000.0250 to 2300.32046.00000.0250

\$1,000.00

Transferring from paint account to maintenance account.

A motion of support was made by Councilwoman Heath and supported by Councilman Kessler . Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County Prosecutor, Sean Fagan

Permission to transfer and spend from
2500.000.00000.0000 to 2501.20021.000.0343
For: \$5,000 to Stepping Stone
\$10,000 to Dunebrook
\$10,000 to Family Advocates

\$25,000.00

A motion of support was made by Councilman Mollenhauer and supported by Councilman Yagelski. Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County Adult Probation Chief Officer, Steve Eyrick

Permission to spend \$1,600.00
For a laptop computer from
2102.41007.000.0334 (Probation User Fees)

\$1,600.00

A motion of support was made by Councilman Yagelski and supported by Councilman Pressel. Motion passed 7-0.

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

Permission to spend \$2,100
For a laptop computer for general use

\$2,100.00

2102.41007.000.0334 (Probation User Fees)

A motion of support was made by Councilman Pressel and supported by Councilman Kessler . Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County Auditor, Michael Rosenbaum

Permission to transfer quarterly Riverboat Funds
Into the Rainy Day Fund

\$165,926.13

A motion of support was made by Councilwoman Heath and supported by Councilman Kessler . Motion passed 7-0.

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

LaPorte County FMEC

Permission to spend/appropriate \$200,000
From LIT Economic Development 1112

\$200,000.00

Judge Stalbrink appeared to speak in favor of the appropriation.

Councilman Kiel asked that a financial statement be provided to the Council.

A motion of support was made by Councilman Mollenhauer and supported by Councilman Pressel . Motion passed 5-1 with 1 abstention.

	Heath	Kessler	Kiel	Koronka	Mollenhauer	Pressel	Yagelski	Total
Aye	X		X	X	X	X		5
Nay							X	1
Abstained		X						1

COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Councilwoman Heath asked for continued prayers for Deputy Samuelson.

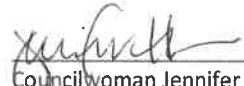
ADJOURNMENT

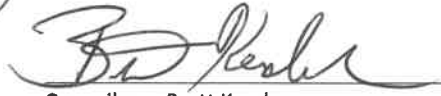
The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m. on a motion by Councilman Kessler and supported by Councilwoman Heath.
Motion passed 7-0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 22ND day of JUNE, 2026.


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, La Porte County Auditor