



La Porte County
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Steve Holifield
President

Connie Gramarossa
Vice President

Joe Haney
Member

La Porte County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. County Complex Room 3

President Steve Holifield called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mark Parkman.

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

Considered the agenda. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to remove item 9 'a'. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Considered approval of the September 2, 2026 minutes. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Auditor Mike Rosenbaum read the Claims with Payroll ending 9/4/2026 - \$1,556,820.67. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve payroll. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Auditor Mike Rosenbaum read the Operating Expense Claims - \$1,795,510.92. **Commissioner Haney** motioned to approve operating claims. **Commissioner Holifield** seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

President Steve Holifield reminded everyone to be three (3) minutes brief, no derogatory, nasty comments towards anybody.

Public Comment

Goot Logwood, 104 W. Greenlawn Drive, La Porte, lots of talk on social media, 'Timu's Transparency,' what we see on social media is only half the story. Lot of talk about Section 9, what an Administrator is in Section 9 of the PUD Overlay is 'anybody that's going to administer to a development plan,' so when that development plan comes before the County at the point, full public display, whether it's before the Plan Commission, BZA, Commissioners or Council, whoever the administrator is, it'll be fully transparent, it'll be accountable because there will be Public Comment there, nobody's going to be surprised and there are no NDAs. Anybody that's running for office that doesn't realize they shouldn't be running for office. Likewise, Section 10 puts us in the top three (3) Counties in the State at least, if not the number one (1) and protections of water, something that we've needed probably since the '50's and it's finally happening under this administration. It's a beautiful thing and something that should be celebrated, not landblasted with Timu Transparency, thank you.

Angie Henzman, 237 Leo Avenue, Trail Creek, took the opportunity to say how impressed she's been watching the response to the devastation of the storm that came through, all our department heads from EMA, Parks Department, Maintenance and Highway, all the hands that made us get through this, begin the recovery process, your leadership, don't think the Commission gets enough kudos for that and all the employees that worked overtime, those that worked so hard to get business back to normal. FEMA, all those working together to help us recover, all because of our leadership, Department Heads, and our tireless employees. She's been sitting back, watching during this once in a lifetime storm, the devastation our County faced, Lake and Porter Counties are also going through even worse situations than our County. A lot of work has gone on behind the scenes, she wanted to highlight that, thank you.

Department Head Comments

Jeremy Sobecki, Parks Superintendent, still a lot of damage at Bluhm County Park, he met with FEMA/Homeland Security representatives today, working on a plan. Pioneer Days at Creek Ridge next weekend that we're getting ready for then we'll be back at Bluhm Park's Mountain bike, horse and hiking trails. There are still hanging trees in some areas, asking the public to please stay

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out of those areas that have barricades up or caution tape blocking the trails. He did a deeper assessment of the damages at Bluhm Park, walked about four miles of the hiking trails, taking photos of every tree down along the way and he has over 100 photos. That's just the ones on the trails, we'll be able to handle those by cutting them, pushing them out of the way but some trees/big branches are laying in streams that'll have to be removed. We have the DNR Stream Restoration Project coming up, once we get in there, cut the debris on the ground, we'll have a better idea of how many dangerous limbs/branches are hanging overhead, we'll have to get a lift of some sort in there to get those down. Most of the other parks are open, some may have small sections of trails closed off, Red Mill Park has a small section of mountain bike trails closed; Luhr has a couple of small sections of hiking trails that are closed due to dangerous hanging limbs/branches that we don't have the equipment or manpower to take them down. Jeremy then spoke about a 2018 Dodge ¾ ton truck had manifolds issues, took it in for a diagnosis, estimate quoted was \$3,157.78 and **he requested permission to approach the Council for permission to spend and more funding.** Had to buy a battery because when they got the truck back it wouldn't start, that was another \$220.00. The truck has about 115,000 miles on it but it's still a good truck. We're supposed to get our new truck on Friday; Maintenance will get our old truck. **Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 2-0.**

Commissioner Joe Haney, announced the State has hired multiple crews to clean up after the storm on August 11th, picking up tree limbs, debris, from the road side. If you're in an unincorporated area of the County, he encouraged any and all debris be taken to the right-of-way to be picked up, about ten (10) feet from the road, this should be picked up within the next ten (10) days. Go to the County website, call the Highway Department, to report the debris at the right-of-way for pickup. Let's wrap up this cleaning and recovery to say we're done, say about ten (10) days from now. **Reported** on a NIRPC meeting he attended, One Region, which brings community leaders, private businesses, and elected officials across Northwest Indiana together, hosted a luncheon held earlier today. Great event; agenda focused on Industrial Strength for Northwest Indiana as well as National Security. We live in an amazing area here in Northwest Indiana with Lake, Porter and La Porte Counties, there are 10,000 Industrial Zoned acres between the three (3) counties that are ready for development or redevelopment, right now. As we look at National Security issues to get ship building back together, chip manufacturing, biotech industries, quantum computing areas, these are the routes of the future. National Security related, not depending on other countries for our manufacturing capabilities which we've seen this supply separation so it was a great event to see the public, private entities coming together to drive a vision of moving forward to bring good, high-paying jobs here as well as the ancillary benefit of helping to provide National Security considerations, right here in the Midwest, we've got the workforce, land, transportation grids from rail, water and highway. If we can bring that here, that would be amazing development. We could keep our families here, working/living here, instead of chasing tech jobs in California or manufacturing jobs in Texas.

Commissioner Steve Holifield, attended a FEMA/DHS meeting today with Charity at the Highway, any department that has not gone online for that, contact EMA Director Rob Sabie, get all your documents turned in, we don't want to miss out on this, there's a lot of funds out there and you should know the County coffers are pretty slim. If anyone needs assistance, call 1-800-621-3362 FEMA line, you will be directed to where if you need help from volunteers, if you've got tree branches, if you're elderly or disabled and cannot get the items to the road, they can put you in touch with someone that can help you. Contact Rob Sabie's office, Cody Lemon in EMA, he's helping with that, disasterassistance.gov is another one that will help you and of course, 211.org. County Highway Department, go on their website and fill the form out.

Requests

None

Old Business

Discussion on Pool Vehicles. **President Holifield**, we kept these vehicles thinking it would be a simple concept, it's not, seems like everybody wants to use them but then how is the maintenance paid for and by whom? Gas, tire repairs, general upkeep of the vehicles. We'll have to come up with stricter set of rules or my opinion is get rid of them, they have low mileage, late model and then just pay mileage to the department. **Commissioner Haney** doesn't have an issue with reimbursement for mileage, at least coming from his private side sector point of view, the Council has taken a view that it's cheaper to have vehicles than to pay mileage when maybe on paper it is, but when looking at the day-to-day issues and the items brought up, he thinks the Council needs to...maybe we could put this in a form of a motion, have something drawn up about pool cars versus mileage, he's fine with whichever way it goes, there needs to be a budget for the pool cars for gas and general maintenance, Commissioners do not have this in their budget.

Commissioner Haney motioned to ask the Council to add a fund in the Commissioners' budget for mileage or reimbursement to care for the pool vehicles. Commissioner Holifield seconded for discussion. Currently one of the vehicles has two flat tires. **Commissioner Haney**, maybe we should get rid of the least desirable, there are three (3), right, and liquidate one of those, use the money for a seed fund for maintenance/fuel. **Motion carried 2-0 for the first motion. Commissioner Haney motioned to liquidate the third pool vehicle.** Asked if there were any trade-ins currently with any department. **Commissioner Holifield** will talk to the Sheriff's Garage, ask them to assess the vehicles. **Attorney DiMartino**, if you want seed money, you will have to sell them. **Commissioner Haney amended his motion to say look into liquidating the vehicle through whatever means is most practical. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 2-0.**

Considered final plat for Park Place Phase 8, Mark Parkman, 4052 S. 1100 W., Westville, Commissioners should have the drawings. Commissioner Haney motioned to approve. Commissioner Holifield seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

President Holifield, our HR Director and staff have been doing a wonderful job of scheduling Food Trucks at both the Hiler back parking lot and Michigan City Courthouse parking lot, Thursday, September 17, in La Porte and Friday, September 18, in Michigan City, hours of 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Will be open to the public, citizens and county employees. Extended lunch hour if needed for employees. A few of the trucks are Rico Suave, Moe's Mediterranean, Cajun Creole Cuisine and three (3) other trucks.

A celebratory logo for America's 250th anniversary. The word "America" is written in a blue script font at the top. Below it, the number "250" is rendered in a large, bold font where the digits are filled with the American flag's stars and stripes. Two American flags are positioned on either side of the "250". At the bottom, a blue banner contains the text "Years of Freedom" in white script, and below that, the years "1776 * 2026" are displayed in red. The entire design is decorated with red, white, and blue stars and stylized fireworks.

DATE 10-7-2026

Auditor

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