



*Laporte County Auditor
Joie Winski
555 Michigan Avenue, Suite 205
Laporte, IN 46350-3490*

**MINUTES
LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
April 28, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Mark Yagelski.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Yagelski asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and asked the high school students in the audience to lead the pledge. President Yagelski then had a brief conversation with the students.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Auditor Winski. A quorum was noted present.
Present: Matt Bernacchi, Earl Cunningham, Rich Mrozinski, Jeff Santana, Lois Sosinski, Mark Yagelski
Absent: Terry Garner

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 28, 2014 AGENDA

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mrs. Sosinski. Motion carried 6-0.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 24TH, 2014 AND SPECIAL MEETING OF APRIL 7, 2014

The minutes were approved on a motion made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Santana.
Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steven Grott, 4304 N 400 E, Rolling Prairie, IN, commented on the November 25th, 2013 meeting and Am Vets and New Carlisle Christmas Parade.

Mr. Mrozinski commented on Mr. Grott's comments.

Thomas Bruce of Michigan City commented on the Laporte County Veteran's Court and PTSD. He also requested that the County look into the care and treatment of Veteran's in Laporte County and the State of Indiana.

Mr. Mrozinski commented on PTSD and the treatment and asked that the County Attorney look into a Resolution on this matter and encouraged State Legislators to look into this.

Jim Stemmler, 2944 Summit Valley Drive, LaPorte, IN, President and mentor of the LaPorte County Veteran's Court, spoke about the Veteran's Court and in support of PTSD.

Randy Novak, 7000 W 125 N, LaPorte, IN, spoke on the 400 N and Johnson Road project and thanked the Auditor, Treasurer and Assessor for their hard work in getting the tax bills to a normal cycle. He also commented on the new Animal Shelter and what a great facility this is.

Mike Schultz, County Assessor, reported that the tax bills are now on time. He received a press release today from the DLGF that this is the first time since 2001 that all 92 Indiana Counties have on time billing (2013 pay 2014).

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

The Sheriff also asked for permission to pay from the Commissary Fund a floral bill from Kaber Flowers for flowers that were sent to the family of Retired Captain Gary Cooper who passed away last month.

A motion was made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Santana to pay the \$110 invoice. Motion passed 6-0.

Sheriff Mike Mollenauer spoke on the Jail Inspection. The Sheriff passed out the inspection report from the Department of Correction. The report stated the inspection was satisfactory. A discussion took place. Mr. Yagelski asked how many beds the jail currently has. The Sheriff answered that they have 368 beds and also "boats" to accommodate extras. Their census fluctuates between 340 and 376 inmates.

Mr. Mrozinski thanked the Sheriff for information given at last month's meeting on the Department's cars. A discussion too place on the painting and unpainting of the cars from 2 colors to one.

The Sheriff also commented that 17 cars were purchased last year but not all were marked 2 – 3 cars were detective cars. The discussion on painting continued with Mr. Mrozinski stating that the County is now seeing a \$51,000 savings to the county for the repainting and commented that the savings is good for all.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Santana thanked Amy Bluhm from EMA for keeping him informed and the upcoming events that EMA will be involved in. The Siren Tests will take place the first Saturday of the month. He also noted that Jerry Cooley will be put on next month's agenda for permission to move one part time person to full time.

No report at this time from **Mr. Cunningham**.

Mrs. Sosinski addressed the concern over the advertisement of the Human Resources assistant. The original notice to County Employees contained information that was not contained in the public notice. She stated that the position was reclassified in 2010 to a PAT II (\$32,442) from a Comot V (\$33,268) by the previous Human Resource Director to more accurately reflect the duties. Mr. Yagelski commented that he appreciates the rebidding of the position.

Mr. Bernacchi congratulated the Auditor, Assessor and Treasurer along with their employees on the incredible job they did getting the County back on a normal tax billing cycle.

Mr. Mrozinski reported on GLEDC's annual report (2013), the Rolling Prairie Business Association Meeting, the Farmer's Fest that will be held September 12th and 13th, Soldier's Memorial Park Brick's Dedication on June 7th, NIRPC, the Small Animal Shelter, the EDCMC & GLEDC Investor's Reception, the first official Veteran's Court, the State VFW Policeman of the Year – Al Ott, the County Home and requested the Council receive a copy of the Audit done on the Council on Aging.

Mr. Yagelski told the Council that they will be voting on a \$3,000,000 appropriation from the CEDIT Fund for the repair of county roads tonight and considering the severe winter weather this year and the many roads that are in need of work, may have to increase that amount at a later date.

NEW BUSINESS

H.W. Lochner Update of Franklin Street Bridge: County Engineer, Mike Yacullo discussed plans for the repair of the bridge. The plans are 95% complete at this time. He is looking to co-op with the City of Michigan City on some of the repairs and upgrades such as lighting as well as new funding sources. He hopes to have bids let in late summer and to begin repairs in the fall. Mr. Yagelski reminded Mr. Yacullo that no changes in lighting can be made on the bridge.

Sheriff's Office Computer System Upgrade Update: A workshop was held prior to the meeting on this subject and the Sheriff will be at the May meeting to discuss this.

OLD BUSINESS

Attorney Biege reported that the Council needs to make a motion to proceed with the donation to PNC with the entire amount being appropriated this year but paid in subsequent years as the Council desires. A discussion took place on the scaling down of the original plans due to the combining of PNC and the Purdue Calumet Campus. Mr. Cunningham asked Attorney Biege to contact PNC and see if the new building is still being built and if it will contain a gymnasium.

A motion was made by Mr. Cunningham and seconded by Mr. Mrozinski to allocate \$25,000 from the Win Tax Fund to be paid to Purdue North Central over the next five (5) years - \$5,000 per year. The motion passed 6-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

None

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

Laporte County Clerk's Office

Requesting Permission to Hire One (1) Full Time COMOT IV
For Tax Sales, Bookkeeper, and Judgements
(already in Budget)

Motion made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Bernacchi to allow Clerk Spevak to hire one full time COMOT IV employee for tax sales, bookkeeping and Judgements. Motion passed 6-0.

Laporte County Home

Permission to Hire Full Time Aide Position
(already in Budget)

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220)
For Environment Mitigation and Monitoring Contract

\$22,500.00

Mr. Yacullo: This request is for a 3 year monitoring study of certain species as strongly suggested by IDEM connected with Bridge #14 over Wolf Creek on 400 N. Weaver Boos has been contracted for this project.

A motion was made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Mr. Bernacchi to appropriate not to exceed \$22,500 from the Cumulative Bridge Fund for the monitoring of species at Wolf Creek and 400 N. Motion passed 6-0.

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220)
For Countywide Sidewalk Improvement Contract

\$100,000.00

Mitch Bishop, County Planner, approached the Council concerning an INDOT grant that the County will be applying for that will address the ADA compliance with regard to sidewalks in the County specifically Hanna, Union Mills and Rolling Prairie. Mr. Bishop is requesting a commitment letter for matching funds. Mr. Yagelski stated that we cannot commit funds for future years. Mr. Biege stated that the money can be allocated this year but if not spent in this year, the money will return to the General Fund.

Mr. Mrozinski made a motion in support of the commitment letter to INDOT for matching funds not to exceed \$100,000 which will be allocated by December 31, 2014 if and when the grant is accepted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bernacchi and passed 6-0. *Auditor's Note: no money was appropriated at this time.

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
Riverboat (1191) or Win Tax (4220)
For CR 950 West Reconstruction Project

\$326,100.00

Mr. Yacullo addressed the Council concerning the rebuilding of CR 950 W at Cleveland Ave. This is in a TIF area. This is a Federal Grant through NLRPC and this is our portion of the matching funds. A discussion followed.

Mr. Biege suggested this request be tabled so the Auditor can investigate the use of TIF funds for this project.

A motion to table was made by Mr. Bernacchi and supported by Mr. Mrozinski and passed 6-0.

Mr. Yagelski questioned Mr. Yacullo on the property that was the old highway department in Rolling Prairie and the water issue there. Has this been resolved? Mr. Yacullo: All the contaminated material has not been removed and project was stopped. Mr. Yagelski: IDEM is looking for a conclusion letter. A discussion took place and Mr. Yagelski suggested the Commissioner's Attorney look into this matter and get it resolved.

Council Comments

Next meeting will be May 27th, 2014. The meeting will be held at the Purdue Extension Office and will be a workshop with the Commissioner's. The workshop is scheduled for 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Mrozinski addressed the students in the audience on the financial situation in the County. He commented on the General Fund being negative \$19,000,000.

Mr. Cunningham asked that the record from a meeting or two ago be corrected to reflect his accurate comment that he wanted white Sheriff's cars. He stated that he doesn't care if the cars are pink, he just wanted one color and agrees with Mr. Mrozinski that a savings of \$20,000 is a significant on-going savings to the County.

He also reflected on the February meeting when Mr. Biege was questioned on the use of Misdemeanant Funds. He said that Mrs. Sosinski's exact quote was: "If it's something we can get away with or not, or testing the State Board of Accounts, it's against my morals and principles and that's why I cast a nay vote." After Mr. Biege said he would research the use, she said, "Then you're going to skirt around the rules?" and laughter could be heard. Mr. Cunningham feels that was an insult to the remainder of Council who voted in favor of using the Misdemeanant Funds. Secondly, he stated that the Council was told they could not use the Recorder's Fee Fund for operating costs and thus far the County has saved over \$360,000+ over the last 2 years using this fund. He also complimented the majority of the Council for finding ways to reduce spending over the last 7 years. Government has a tendency to overspend because they have had more money in the past, but it's not like that anymore.

Mrs. Sosinski answered that she does not apologize for following the rules and "I think the students will find that out that it's not what the penalty is, we are supposed to follow what State Board of Accounts I.C Codes dictate us to do. Whether there's penalty or no penalty, sometimes this Council likes to use that depending upon which way they want the vote to fly. I didn't do it in jest and I stand by that today. I do accounting and that for a living. I'm sorry, it's similar to a Councilperson collecting unemployment, that it's only wrong when they are caught and that's not how I operate my business. So that's my last comment for the night." She thanked Mr. Yagelski for letting her speak.

Mr. Cunningham responded in light of Mrs. Sosinski's rebuttal, the Sheriff in a previous budget was spending money out of the Sheriff's uniform account for personal clothing. Mrs. Sosinski did not have a serious objection to that, and her husband, the Chief Deputy, rushed to the microphone to tell us it was illegal to cut that account. Subsequently, this council, the majority of us, said we are going to it and see if it's illegal, obviously it wasn't and we have not had to replenish that \$15,000. Since 2013, the Sheriff has spent \$230,000 out the Commissary Account - \$11,000 of the was for a tractor for the Range, \$3,600 donation to the Worthy Women; \$2,500 to Dunebrook; I also see some bills in here for OnStar and Serious Radio, which are things that are not necessities when you're \$20,000,000 in debt, so I don't apologize either.

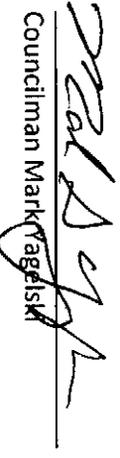
President Yagelski asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Sosinski and seconded by Mr. Santana. Motion passed 6-0.

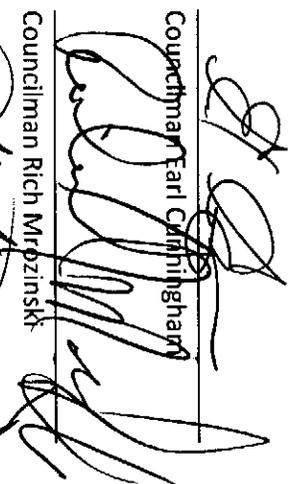
EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL, dated this 27th day of May, 2014.

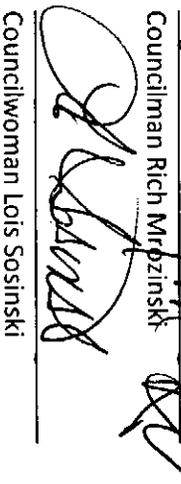

Councilman Matt Bernacchi

ABSENT
Councilman Terry Garner

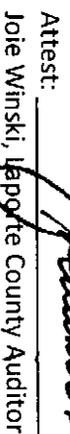

Councilman Jeff Santana


Councilman Mark Yagelski


Councilman Earl Cunningham


Councilman Rich Mirzinski


Councilwoman Lois Sosinski

Attest: 
Joie Winski, Laporte County Auditor