

*LaPorte County Auditor
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**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LAPORTE COUNTY COUNCIL
DECEMBER 29, 2014 AT 6:30 P.M.**

(Please Turn Off All Cell Phones)

The Special Meeting of the La Porte County Council was held on December 29, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. (local time) in the Assembly Room of the La Porte County Government Complex located at 809 State Street, La Porte, Indiana, 46350.

CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order by La Porte County Council President Mark Yagelski at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Yagelski asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilman Cunningham led the Pledge of Allegiance. President Yagelski asked that everyone, except emergency personnel, to please turn off their cell phones at this time.

ROLL CALL

Auditor Winski took the Roll Call. Council Members present were Councilwoman Sosinski, Councilmen Bernacchi, Santana, Cunningham, Garner, and Yagelski. Councilman Mrozinski was absent. A quorum was noted.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 29, 2014 AGENDA

A Motion was made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to approve the Agenda. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dennis Metheny, 6757 W. 450 N., Michigan City.

Mr. Metheny has several comments in regards to tonight's Agenda. Of particular concern was the cost of the Franklin Street Bridge Feasibility Study and who will perform the work, the cost savings of utilizing voting centers and keeping the County Home in the County. Mr. Metheny affirms his support for the local police and sheriff's departments and is wearing a shirt in protest of no one standing up for them and stated "hands down, breathe easy, follow the law and you won't end up in jail."

Clay Turner, Solid Waste District

Mr. Turner took the opportunity to thank Council Members for all of the support they have given Solid Waste District and thanks Councilmen Cunningham and Mrozinski for their guidance and help throughout the years.

Hearing or seeing no other Public Comment it is closed by President Yagelski.

NEW BUSINESS

Prosecutor-Elect John Espar Realignment of Salaries.

Prosecutor-Elect Espar thanks the Council for placing his request on the Agenda tonight. He is requesting a realignment of salaries for the Deputy Prosecutors of the Office. In staffing his Office with new Prosecuting Attorneys he looked at the current salaries proposed for next year. In comparing them with the existing staff it didn't translate well from one administration to the next. The realignment would have to be understandable, fair and acceptable to the County Council, the public and the Deputies.

While reviewing the skills sets and experience that the Deputy Prosecutors were bringing to the job and the Office, it seemed to break into three tiers: (1) Prosecutors who bring a highly-developed skill set, experience, proven ability and are handling the most complex and serious offenses charged; (2) Deputy Prosecutors who may be assigned to major felony court calls, but do not have the proven skills and experiences that the Tier 1 Deputies have or have less trial experience or non-jury trial assignments within the office and (3) Prosecutors who are joining the Office with limited or no experience. Those different levels should be compensated differently.

Upon completion of the Tiers Prosecutor-Elect Espar had to determine what the compensation would be within the three tiers since the Elected Prosecutor's salary is set by State law. The Chief Deputy Prosecutor is compensated at 75% of the Elected Prosecutor's Salary. Building on that formula, he calculated what is 75% of the Chief Deputy's Salary and figured that would be reasonable for Tier 1; Tier 2 would be 75% of Tier 1; and Tier 3 would be 75% of Tier 2. The tier structure fits very well within the range of the current compensation from the high to low.

Attorney Espar is seeking the County Council's approval of the three Tier System. There will be no extra monies needed as this formulation is within the Budget. In fact, it is \$1,959.78 less than the monies allocated. This is a system that is fair and acceptable to the Deputies.

At this time President Yagelski would like to reopen the 2015 Budgets. A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski. Motion carried 6-0.

Hearing or seeing no Public Comment on the 2015 Budget, Public Comment is closed.

President Yagelski stated the salary alignment in the Prosecutor's Office is for the Chief Deputies/Deputies and not the clerical staff. A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi to approve Tier 1, 2 and 3 at the Prosecutor-Elect's recommendation. The Motion is seconded by Councilman Cunningham.

Councilwoman Sosinski stated she is not prepared to vote because she thought this was going to be brought up in January. Being the liaison with Human Resources the normal course of events should have been this should have gone in front of the HR Committee, information received, and then presented to the Council. This is normal procedure.

Councilman Cunningham questions Mr. Espar if he has any legal obligation to keep any of the Former Prosecutors, Chief Deputies or Deputies and if they are aware of the proposed salary structure.

Prosecutor-Elect Espar stated he does not; however he has kept a number of them and all are aware of the salary tier structure.

Auditor Winski stated when this question came up in regards to the Tier system, she checked with Human Resources, Irwin, Waggoner and Scheele and the State Board of Accounts and Mr. Espar can pick all of his own Deputies as a special-other classification and by law he is allowed to do so. He is allowed to hire his own staff. The Council does not have jurisdiction in this, the Prosecutor does.

Councilwoman Sosinski stated that is not her question or problem, it is the protocol. The Motion carried 5-1, with Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

GIS Classification

Councilwoman Sosinski stated the GIS position was reevaluated. The GIS position has evolved and has done work for many County Departments. The job scope has changed and has been reevaluated by the Committee.

Barb Mossman HR Director stated the Job Evaluation Committee met on that position and there was some difficulty evaluating this position; however did reclassify out as a PAT III. The consensus of the Job Evaluation Committee was to ask the Council to reconsider funding the GIS Coordinator Position and having that position be reappointed because the position runs the Department.

Councilwoman Sosinski would like after the first of the year to revisit the scope of that particular position and how it is governed and this may not be an Auditor position; however it does not sound like the Council wants it to evolve back to a Commissioner position. The employee needs to work unobstructed. It was obvious that the job duties that this person is doing are in warrant of a reevaluation.

President Yagelski stated the problem of the original position it was used to get rid of an employee and the Commissioners decided to take on four or five additional positions under their Budget. If there is a way to have a joint committee, such as is done with Human Resources that cannot be ruled solely by the Commissioners he has no problem with that.

Councilwoman Sosinski made a Motion to make the GIS Position a PAT III, the Motion is seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 6-0.

Discussion of Salary Increases of Employees

President Yagelski stated that a lot of County employees worked the Holidays to finish the Tax Settlement. Upon completion of the Settlement the General Fund is \$1.9 Million in the black.

In an effort to be proactive, Auditor Winski used \$2.2 Million CAGIT Funds to supplement the health insurance, OASDI so that the General Fund was not burdened. There is \$1.9 Million left in the Fund and CAGIT Funds do not have to be paid back.

Councilwoman Sosinski asks if CAGIT monies will be used in the 2015 Budget for OASDI, health insurance, etc.

Auditor Winski stated no.

Councilwoman Sosinski made a Motion for a 2% raise for all full-time employees and elected officials and is seconded by Councilman Bernacchi.

Councilman Cunningham stated that even though it sounds good we are close to being even, the truth of the matter is that we are one-half year behind the 8-ball again.

Auditor Winski took the roll call: Ayes: Councilwoman Sosinski, Councilmen Yagelski and Bernacchi. Nays: Councilmen Cunningham, Garner and Santana. Motion fails.

Councilwoman Sosinski made another Motion to effective with the first payroll in July 2015, a 3% payroll raise for all Elected Officials, their Deputies and Full-Time Employees. The Motion is seconded by Councilman Santana.

Auditor Winski took the roll call: Nays: Councilman Cunningham and Garner. Ayes: Councilwoman Sosinski, Councilmen Santana, Yagelski and Bernacchi. Motion carried 4-2.

Councilman Yagelski stated there are an array of people who need to be looked at including part-time and full-time issues along with salaries that are paid through grants.

Councilwoman Sosinski will get together with Auditor Winski and put together a comprehensive list of employees.

Councilman Santana wants to make it clear that the reason they are waiting until July 1 to give out the raise is that the County should be in a much better financial situation.

Councilman Cunningham stated that County employees are treated well with sick, holiday and the benefit package that is afforded to them. The actual average salary of a County Employee is \$31,000 less overtime.

A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Cunningham to close the 2015 Budget. The Motion carried 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Sheriff's Settlement.

Attorney Biege stated the Sheriff's case was not settled it was won. Sheriff Mollenhauer sued the County a few years ago after the County Council adjusted the salary contract at \$125,000. In 2012 the County Council cut the Sheriff's salary down to \$89,000 the differential was the Sheriff received tax warrant fees. He argued the Salary Contract should continue at \$125,000 in perpetuity and did not agree with the County Council decision and sued the County. A ruling was recently received and the County won.

President Yagelski and Councilman Garner state the amount he was to be paid is reflected in the prior year's Minutes.

Councilman Cunningham asks Attorney Biege is he is familiar with the settlement of the Commissioner's intern and misuse of their credit card.

Attorney Biege is not familiar with the case.

Councilman Cunningham made a Motion to receive an update from the County Attorney on the status of the Commissioner's credit card misuse by an intern. The Motion is seconded by Councilman Garner. Motion carried 6-0.

Councilman Garner questions the amount of money that was charged on the Commissioner's credit card without their knowledge.

Auditor Winski will get that amount for the Council at the next Meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Ordinance No. 2014-12 Creating Non-Reverting Water Lab Fund

A Motion is made by Councilman Santana and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to read by title only. Motion carried 6-0.

Auditor Winski reads by title only: *Ordinance No. 2014-12 of the La Porte County Council Creating a Non-Reverting La Porte County Health Department Water Laboratory Fund.* This non-reverting fund will save using General Fund monies.

A Motion is made by Councilwoman Sosinski and seconded by Councilman Bernacchi. Motion carried 6-0.

Ordinance No. 2014-12A Declaration Ordinance of Emergency Repair

Attorney Biege stated he does not agree with the process that was undergone in the past, but the appropriation needs to be advertised. Whether the bridge repair is an emergency under the statute could be disputed.

President Yagelski stated he disagrees that this was a true emergency as the road was already closed down. Attorney Biege agrees. Attorney Biege stated no action is needed now as they will wait until the bid amounts come in and at that time money can be appropriated.

President Yagelski stated everything is in place for this repair to continue, the Council stated the maximum amount to be expended and the Commissioners approved this as an emergency.

Highway Engineer Yacullo agrees. The Commissioners will approve the contract after the bids are received and reviewed.

APPROPRIATIONS, TRANSFERS, REQUESTS

La Porte County Human Resources

Requesting Permission to Transfer

(1000-10111-000-0162) to (1000-31001-000-0162)

for Drug Testing

\$3,500.00

A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Cunningham to approve. Motion carries. 6-0.

La Porte County IT and Adult Probation

Requesting Permission to Spend

Adult User Fees (2102)

for Three Computers

\$3,164.97

IT Director Darlene Hale stated these are replacement computers and one is for a Judge. Ms. Hale would like to add two printers and a scanner. A Motion is made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Cunningham to approve. Motion carried 6-0.

La Porte County Cooperative Extension

Requesting Permission to Transfer

1000-30002-000-133 (\$6,142) and 1000-30018-000-133 (\$1,434)

for Copier

\$7,576.00

A Motion was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Cunningham. Motion carried 6-0.

La Porte County Animal Control

Requesting Permission to Spend

Spay/Neuter (1106)

for Vehicle Purchase

Up to

\$25,000

Animal Control Director Jane Bernard stated that at the Animal Control Advisory Board Meeting it was discussed that in spring a new vehicle purchase would need to be looked at. The vehicle has over 110,000 miles and items are needed to be repaired.

A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Garner to approve. Councilman Santana questions if there is a specific vehicle and dealer they have in mind. Director Bernard stated they have worked with Sauer's in the past and they have been good and fair. They are focusing on a GMC vehicle. Motion carried 6-0.

La Porte County Circuit Court

Requesting Permission to Spend

Adult Probation User Fees (2102)

for New or Used Refrigerator

\$500.00

A Motion was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilman Santana to approve. Motion carried 6-0.

La Porte County Assessor

Requesting Permission to Spend

Sales Disclosure (1131)

for I-Pads

\$1,300.00

Assessor Mike Schultz stated the I-Pads they purchased over the summer are working out well. One of the I-Pads being requested will be utilized at the Michigan Township Office. They have worked with the GIS Coordinator to ensure accurate field work. They are used as a camera and when a photo is taken it can be sent directly to that parcel. A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Garner to approve. The Motion carried 6-0.

Assessor Schultz stated the Budget process was completed and La Porte is 1 of 25 Counties who have received their 1782 Notice. La Porte County has something to be proud of between the Auditor, Assessor and Treasurer all working together, La Porte has gone from dead last to the top tier.

Using in-house employees to do the reassessment has saved the taxpayers of La Porte a lot of money.

La Porte County IT and Courthouse Security

Requesting an Additional Appropriation

CCD (1138)

for Courthouse Security/IT

Not to Exceed

\$18,000.00

This request is for the system that 'fried' and is no longer working. A Motion was made by Councilman Santana and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to approve. Motion carried 6-0.

La Porte County 911

Requesting Permission to Spend

911-Surcharge (1222)

for Airbus 911 Phone System

\$420,069.00

Director John Dudek stated this is for the new 911 phone system as the current system is outdated, is not supported further and no parts are available for breakdown. The last update was six years ago. This new system would last for a five-year ownership, including maintenance. There will be no other costs involved. There is \$1.4 Million currently in the Surcharge Account. A Motion was made Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to approve. Motion carried 6-0.

La Porte County Maintenance Department

Requesting an Additional Appropriation

CCD (1138), Win-Tax (4220) OR Riverboat (1191)

for New Vehicle

\$47,305

Auditor Winski tells the Council that Director Cooley is not in attendance tonight. President Yagelski stated the attitude of older vehicles in the County being fixed is poor. Councilman Santana made a Motion to hold this item to a later date if necessary and seconded by Councilman Sosinski. Motion carried 6-0.

La Porte County Highway Engineer

Requesting an Additional Appropriation

Major Moves (1172), Win-Tax (4220) OR Riverboat (1191)

for Intersection Improvement Johnson Rd/CR 500W

\$220,000

Highway Engineer Yacullo stated this project was approved by NIRPC and INDOT to make the safety improvements to the intersection at Johnson Rd/CR 500W. There have been situations wherein vehicles coming from C.R. 250N have a hard time seeing and reacting timely to vehicles travelling on Johnson Road. This project would correct that, it would realign 500W with Johnson Road and shift C.R. 250N slightly south so there is some separation from Johnson Road.

Councilman Santana asked if studies were done in regards to accidents.

Engineer Yacullo stated he can obtain that information for a three-year period if so desired by the Council. There was a fatality, but he was not sure if it was attributable to the geometry of the intersection

itself. He believed there have been a lot of near-misses there. The County did approve a consultant to do the design on the project and it was stopped because of the presence of the pipeline project.

Councilman Garner uses that intersection quite a bit and stated sometime there is confusion there, but he never felt uncomfortable or unsafe there.

President Yagelski stated the Council was not included on any major plans, there is no accident data and this is the first time they are hearing about.

Councilman Santana asks how the \$220,000 will be matched and used.

Engineer Yacullo stated this is a local match, so it will be 20% of the project. \$1.1 Million would cover the design fees, inspection fees, etc.

Councilman Bernacchi asks if any of the Council Members received a design of this project to look at or review.

Engineer Yacullo stated he did not.

Councilman Santana made a Motion to Table this until there is further information available. The Motion to Table is seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski. Motion carried 6-0.

President Yagelski stated that the last time the Council asked for information in regards to the replacement of signs in the County. Is there a company coming in to replace signs, is there a schedule, what is the completion date, and can any of the old signs be bought?

Engineer Yacullo stated the purpose of the project was to upgrade the signs. If an old sign is removed because it does not contain a retro-reflective value for safety, there is little or no value to that particular sign.

President Yagelski stated that is not necessarily true. He asks if the entire County is being done immediately, is there an engineering group doing this, will the signs be scrapped, and can the posts be reused.

Engineer Yacullo stated the project is set up to do a complete inventory of the County and find out what signs need to be replaced. The remainder of the project would be to hire a contractor to install the signs. The completion date will be fall into winter 2015. If the posts are still sturdy and in the proper location, the post can be reused. The County can take any materials and reutilize them as needed.

Requesting an Additional Appropriation
CCD (1138), Win-Tax (4220) OR Riverboat (1191)
for Environmental Monitoring and Reporting at Rolling Prairie LUST Site \$34,364.00

Councilman Garner asks if this is the one that has been sitting dormant for 12 years.

President Yagelski asked for this to be placed back on the Agenda because there still is not a final sign-off of the property being cleaned up, even though wells were showing clean. The site needs to be cleared and cleaned up. If this is not done, the County is still liable and even though he wants this off the tax rolls and sell it.

Councilman Santana questions if this amount will get the County to that point where no more monies will be used.

Engineer Yacullo believed so as he had a positive meeting with the state official. This contract will be set up for quarterly testing and analysis of the samples and then the monitoring report sent into the State. There is an outside chance that if everything looks good after the first test, there could be approval and a 'clean bill of health,' but if there is any question as to the results being seen, they could ask for follow through and carry out with a full year of sampling and testing.

A Motion is made by Councilman Santana and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to approve. The Motion carried 6-0 to pay out of Win-Tax.

La Porte County Highway Department

Requesting an Additional Appropriation

Major Bridge and/or Major Bridge Investment (1171/2803)

for Feasibility Study for Replacement of Franklin Street Lift Bridge \$1,000,000.00

President Yagelski steps down as President and asks Councilman Bernacchi to take over the Meeting.

The Franklin Street Lift Bridge is one of two bridges in the County which are considered a 'Select Bridge.' There is \$1.7 Million and approximately \$6.5 Million in the Major Bridge Funds to be used exclusively for these two bridges, and that money will continue to grow. The other Select Bridge is on Fail Road.

Mr. Yagelski and others have gone down to the State and met with INDOT, the Highway State Corps of Engineers and unfortunately got nowhere. Because of the designation of a 'select bridge' the County is on its own in regards to money. If this was a handicapped accessibility issue, it would be addressed right away. Currently if someone complains about that bridge there is nothing than can be done because of the select status designation. The Franklin Street Bridge will hit a 100-year milestone and the County has been doing band-aid fixes and the fixes work for only so long. The State could come and close the Bridge down just as they did at the Cline Avenue Bridge. Superintendent Young was called 7 times last year because the Franklin Street Bridge would not close. After a certain point in the time the Bridge is no longer useful and a study needs to be conducted now.

The Bridge is over a navigable waterway and it would have to be opened up by a crane if the boats have to go through, that is the law. Currently the Bridge has been closed down for a month and a half for repairs and there have been so many complaints because they could not get down to Washington Park to view the festival of lights. If the Bridge is not usable for recreational purposes this summer what will happen? President Yagelski has met with the former Mayor, the current Mayor and City Council Members as well as the La Porte County Commissioners have gone down State in regards to the Bridge. There could be a steady group of engineers Lecher, DLZ and Structurepoint working collaboratively.

What Mr. Yagelski is asking for is to get the money out of the Fund and use it for the study before the State takes it away because the fund continues to grow.

Highway Superintendent Bob Young agreed that the Bridge has been band-aided for years and did what they felt was needed, but the fact is the Bridge is 100 years old. He feels Mr. Yagelski is on the right track in gathering together a team of Consultants. People have been called out in the middle of the night to unlock the computers, cameras shut off, and the Bridge Tenders cannot see in the dark to open the Bridge.

Mr. Yagelski stated the Bridge Tender quarters are not adequate, have a narrow walkway, the bathroom is downstairs, the viewable area is upstairs and it is not very functional. The Franklin Street Bridge it was originally built with a trolley car going down the middle with a lane on each side, now everyone thinks it is four lanes and it is not. The Study will involve meetings with businesses, the public to review the design and how to proceed. The actual figure is not \$1.0 Million, it is \$938,000.

Councilman Garner asks how long the study for is.

Mr. Yagelski stated Lochner will be the leader of the engineering group because of their experience and will do 40% of the work with Structurepoint and DLZ assisting. There is not a firm schedule and the \$938,000 is an estimate. As they work with the County Engineer and the engineering partners a schedule will be firmed up, but looking at approximately a year or year and half.

Councilman Bernacchi asks what the plan as far as total bridge replacement is or is what the study is for repair, replacement and determination of what type of bridge to put in.

This would be a feasibility study from do nothing and keep putting band aids on it to a high-level structure that will be high because of it being a navigable waterway with a minimum of a 45-foot clearance. What is the best way to move forward using state and federal funding?

President Yagelski stated the historical value could be comprised of the wrought iron on the outside, the lift mechanism? The bridge itself is a structure beam with grating over the top and there is nothing of any value. Parts from the Bridge and use it on the new structure and the County has to think out of the box because the State is not. There are only three draw bridges in Indiana, two in East Chicago and one in La Porte County.

Councilman Cunningham questions the time frame if it is approved tonight or next month is that going to have any bearing on the study timeframe?

A Motion is made by Councilman Cunningham and seconded by Councilman Santana to table until the January Meeting when the new Council Members will be in place. The Motion carried 5-0, with President Yagelski abstaining. This is tabled until the January 2015 Meeting.

President Yagelski returns back to his seat on the Council and stated the next item can be placed on the Agenda without advertising is because there is a hiring freeze and he did not want to allow this to go through without the Council's approval. There is a truck driver that will be leaving the area and relocating and Superintendent Young would like to start the hiring process now to fill the full-time position.

A Motion is made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski and Councilman Cunningham. Motion carried 6-0.

Councilman Cunningham made a Motion to revisit the Commissioner's Economic Development Budget for 2015, which is seconded by Councilman Bernacchi. Motion carried 6-0.

Councilman Cunningham stated he believes at Budget Hearing the Office of Economic Development was budgeted for \$150,000 which equals \$37,500 for the first quarter. He questions Auditor Winski if there is a balance in that fund as of today.

Auditor Winski stated there is approximately \$36,000 in the Fund as of today.

Councilman Cunningham stated \$150,000 is coming out of the Riverboat Fund to pay for the Office of Economic Development. There are 7 employees listed with SEH for the month of December and the bill was \$28,844, 2 people were billing at \$78.60, 1 at \$82.45, 1 at \$96.00, 1 at \$106, 1 at \$150 and 1 at \$180 per hour. He believed the Auditor's paperwork will substantiate that SEH has received \$232,000 for 2014. There has been excessive spending and a shake-up in that Department.

Auditor Winski did not have the figures right off the top of her head, but that could be right.

Councilman Cunningham stated the Council is in favor of Economic Development, but over \$232,000 was spent and how many jobs were created and how many reports were received. With the \$36,000 balance Councilman Cunningham made a Motion to reduce the Budget of the Office Economic Development from \$150,000 to \$114,000.

Councilwoman Sosinski asks if the Budget Hearings were just closed do they have to be reopened again and why wasn't this brought up during the Hearing? She appreciated his input, but this could have been dealt with during the Budget process and she is asking about the appropriateness of this now.

Attorney Biege stated from a procedural standpoint the Budget Hearings can be reopened, but he is not clear on Councilman Cunningham's Motion.

Auditor Winski stated the Office of Economic Development is not a County Department and is funded from Riverboat. It is not the Commissioners or Council and it is its own entity.

Councilman Cunningham says the money is being transferred to Riverboat whether it is done at one time or each quarter is kind of a moot point.

Attorney Biege stated it is, however anytime money is spent out of Riverboat an Ordinance must be done. A lump sum distribution would be more appropriate and the Council can make future decisions as to how they want to spend it.

Attorney Friedman approaches the Council and stated having gone through the Budget sessions with the Department Head, there were questions asked during the hearings, so the Council should understand the concern the Commissioners have now. There was ample time to question the Commissioners, Matt Reardon and now at the 11th hour to change is questionable. The Office of Economic Development is willing to regularly report to the Council on the status, progress and updates of economic development activities. There may be a change on how it is staffed or contracted and it is concerning the Council wants to reduce funding now.

Councilman Cunningham asks if any status reporting was done this year.

Attorney Friedman stated there was a Commissioners Economic Development Group that met quarterly, the Redevelopment meets, if it is the Council's preference to hear from the Economic Development Advisor on a monthly basis, then that will be the recommendation.

Councilman Cunningham stated his position is simple. He does not want to spend way more money than they have, which was done this year. When you compare the hourly rates to what County employee makes, it does not make sense. What jobs did Economic Development create this year?

Attorney Friedman stated Helena Chemical is a good example and one that is specifically credited by the owners with action and activity by the Office Economic Development.

Councilman Cunningham stated that La Porte County was not Helena Chemical's first choice, it was their third and how many jobs were created?

Attorney Friedman says there was a state press release in Indiana Business where they specifically credited the Office of Economic Development with helping land them here. There may have been 40 or 50 jobs created. The Office is actively involved with a specific consultant with KIP and also involved with the TIF Districts at 30 North and I/94 and 421. The Office needs to be a collaborative effort between the Commissioners and the Council.

Councilman Cunningham stated the magic word is collaborative and the majority of the Council does not feel there has been a great deal of collaboration. Councilman Cunningham made a Motion to reopen the Budget Hearing, which is seconded by Councilman Santana.

Councilman Santana asks what Mr. Cunningham is trying to accomplish, not to exceed the \$150,000 each year that is budgeted.

Councilman Cunningham would like a check and balance system so the new Council could ask what they have we gotten for \$37,500?

Attorney Friedman stated it makes it almost impossible to project as a Department going quarter to quarter, that is why you budget on a yearly basis. He agreed with the Council that the Department should stay within their budgeted amount.

Councilman Cunningham asks if Attorney Friedman would be comfortable with reducing the amount from \$150,000 to \$114,000 so it comes out to \$150,000 with the 2014 carryover. Councilman Cunningham wished he could have brought this to the Council's attention earlier, but he did not find out about it until the second Commissioners meeting in December.

Attorney Friedman is agreeable with the carryover of \$36,000 and a reduced budget of \$114,000 for a grand total of \$150,000.

Councilwoman Sosinski stated that if we have tabled the \$1.0 Million and this is something that could be addressed in January and they could speak for themselves, this caught her off guard.

Auditor Winski stated normally this money would be allocated in January.

The Motion to reopen the Budget carried 4-2 with Councilwoman Sosinski and Councilman Yagelski voting Nay.

Councilman Cunningham made a Motion to reduce the Office of Economic Development from \$150,000 to \$114,000 to coincide the with the \$36,000 rollover which will bring the total amount to \$150,000. The Motion is seconded by Councilman Santana.

Attorney Friedman asks for a point of clarification, with the \$36,000 currently there, is that with all of the bills being paid.

Auditor Winski stated she is assuming they have been paid for, but will have to verify that.

Councilman Cunningham will elaborate further and say that after all of the bills have been paid, the \$150,000 is max.

Attorney Biege wants to clarify all the Council is setting up a budget number, if more is done with a contingency on it, it could become problematic, especially to ask for additional money is very easy.

Councilman Cunningham made a Motion to Budget the Office of Economic Development with \$114,000 which is seconded by Councilman Santana. Motion carried 5-1, with Councilwoman Sosinski voting Nay.

A Motion was made by Councilman Garner and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to close the Budget Hearings Motion carried 6-0.

2015 SALARY ORDINANCE

President Yagelski stated the Salary Ordinance No. 2014-12A must be passed tonight.

A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilwoman Sosinski to read by title only. Motion carried 6-0.

President Yagelski reads by title only: *Ordinance No. 2014-12A An Ordinance Adopting the County of La Porte, Indiana Salary Schedule and Compensation Policies.*

A Motion is made by Councilman Bernacchi and seconded by Councilman Santana to approve. Motion carried 6-0.

COUNTY COUNCIL/ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Councilman Bernacchi would like to ask for a 30-minute Workshop on the Franklin Street Bridge Project and 30-minute Workshop on Economic Development prior to the January 26, 2015 Regular Meeting so that new Council Members can be brought up to date.

Councilman Bernacchi would like to develop a Committee for Governmental Salary and Compensation packages the next few weeks he would like dialogue on this. The last study was done quite a few years ago and looks at other counties.

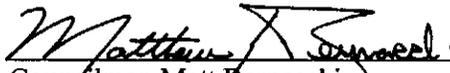
Councilman Garner thanks Councilmen Cunningham and Mrozinski for their years of service. Councilman Santana echoed those words and wished all a Happy New Year.

Councilman Cunningham would like to point out at their last Meeting in November the Council had voted of 7-0, 6-1, 5-2, 4-3 and 6-0 with 1 abstention. This is a far better example of the democratic process in voting than the last 48 meetings of the Commissioners where there has never been a nay vote or a dissenting comment. Although we disagree on many issues, he has more respect for each Council Member than he did when he started serving with them and he wants to thank each and every one.

ADJOURNMENT

A Motion to adjourn was made by President Yagelski and seconded by Councilman Santana. Motion carries 6-0.

EXAMINED & APPROVED BY THE LA PORTE COUNTY COUNCIL this 26th day of January, 2015.



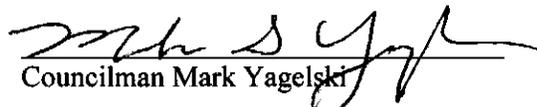
Councilman Matt Bernacchi

Absent

Councilman Terry Garner



Councilwoman Lois Sosinski



Councilman Mark Yagelski

ATTEST: 

Joie Winski, La Porte County Auditor

N/A

Councilman Earl Cunningham

N/A

Councilman Rich Mrozinski



Councilman Jeff Santana