

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
10:00 A.M.**

**(The entire meeting is available to watch on the Porter County website.)**

The Regular meeting of the Porter County Board of Commissioners convened at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Administration Center.

Those present were: Commissioners Laura Blaney, Jeff Good, Jim Biggs, County Attorney Scott McClure; Executive Administrative Asst. Melanie Massey and Recording Secretary Kathy Merle.

**Call to Order/Pledge**

Com. Good, Good Morning this is the Porter County Board of Commissioners' meeting Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Reorganization**

- **President**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve Jeff Good as President, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **Vice President**

Com. Biggs, moved to approve Laura Blaney as Vice President, Com. Good, second, motion carried.

- **Secretary**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve Jim Biggs as Secretary, Com. Good, second, motion carried.

- **County Attorney**

Com. Good, moved to approve Scott McClure as County Attorney, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Approval of Payroll – December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

**Approval of Claims – December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

**Approval of Minutes for November 17<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

**Weights and Measures Monthly Report Filed – November 16<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

**Treasurer's Monthly Report for November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – Filed.**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Citizen Appointments to the following Boards:**

- **Alcohol Beverage Board – 1 Appointment (No political affiliation necessary.)**
- **Board of Health – 2 Appointments - 1 Democrat and 1 Republican**
- **Convention, Recreation & Visitors Commission – 3 Appointments (No political affiliation necessary.)**

- **Plan Commission – 1 Appointment** *(No political affiliation necessary.)*
- **PTBOA – 2 Appointments** *(No political affiliation necessary.)*
- **Redevelopment Commission – 2 Appointments** *(No political affiliation necessary.)*
- **Stormwater Advisory Board – 2 Appointments** *(No political affiliation necessary.)*
- **West Porter Fire – 1 Appointment** *(No political affiliation necessary.)*

Com. Good, We still have some coming in so we will be pushing this out until our February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. We want to give an additional 2 to 3 weeks for people to apply. What deadline do we want to give? A week before our meeting?

Com. Biggs, Yes I wouldn't want to make it any closer to our meeting date.

Com. Good, Should we say January 25<sup>th</sup>?

Com. Biggs, I would make it that Monday.

Com. Good, We will say January 25<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for board applications.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **COMMISSIONERS**

#### **Commissioners Appointed to the following Boards:**

- **NIRPC**
- **Plan Commission**
- **Storm Water Advisory Board**
- **Community Corrections**
- **Juvenile Justice Advisory Board**
- **EMA**
- **Child Protection Team**
- **911 Advisory Board**
- **Center for Workforce Innovations**
- **Redevelopment Commission**

Com. Good, I would make a suggestion that we keep the appointments the same as last year unless someone has an issue with that?

Com. Biggs, That is fine with me.

Com. Blaney, I just not have been able to make the Child Protection Plan meetings. I have looked into a proxy and it's not allowed per code. I didn't know if either of you had any interest in doing that, If not I will try to get there. It just hasn't worked out very well with my schedule.

Com. Good, Let's just keep it the same this year and we can talk about it. Maybe we can pitch in help out by attending the meetings.

Com. Blaney, Okay, I'm fine with it then. I just didn't want to be keeping it if someone had an interest.

Com. Biggs, Over this last year Commissioners I think we've all had that problem primarily due to COVID. It's one of those things. You try to attend those meetings where there are real votes being taken on significant business. Given the circumstances over the last year it is understandable why you are going to miss some meetings. You can't help it it is just the way it is right now.

Com. Good, move to approve the Commissioners will be reappointed to the boards they were appointed to in 2020, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

#### **COVID Vaccines Administered through the Porter County Health Dept.**

Com. Good, Today the Porter County Health Dept. will begin to administer vaccines to the public in Porter County. They have been working extremely close with the State who is working with all of the counties to supply them with the vaccines and the order and structure of which all of this is going to be done. I do know that there are some seniors over 80 that have already started getting appointments.

Com. Blaney, They are there right now.

Com. Good, I know my mom got her appointment, she is 82. We received an update yesterday from the Health Dept. and EMA that the State is working to administer the vaccines in the nursing homes, which the State is responsible for as well. The information that you see on our website is dictated by the State. The counties cannot coheres any of that because if they do we are suspect to large fines. The pace will go based upon the State and the supplies that are given to us at the time. I think it's a big day in Porter County and I'm proud of that. We have to be patient. Let's start moving towards getting back to normal, so we can move forward.

Com. Blaney, I just wanted to add that the State Dept. of Health field staff has already been at our site today and gone through our work flow and made sure that everything is the way it is supposed to be. They were very happy with our set up and said we were doing a fantastic job. Hopefully we can keep it up and our website doesn't crash. It looked like it was running very smoothly for the first day being opened. It was impressive.

Com. Biggs, Jeff I would also like to mention that this is only for specific groups right now. If you're not part of that group we're not at that section yet. If you're part of that group make an appointment if not you will have to continue to be patient.

Com. Blaney, To be clear there are no walk-ins. Even if you are part of that group you need to get online and make an appointment before they will take you.

Com. Good, I would also like to say if you have family members in this category I would help them to go online and get registered. It's a little bit cumbersome to do that if you are not used to technology. If you do have loved ones or friends who are in this category you may need to check with them just to make sure to see if they need any help. Let's just make sure that for the compromised and the elderly we help them vaccinated the better it is for the rest of us to come in. This is going to take a herculean effort but I think we all need to be a part of it.

Mr. Ellis, If people want to register they can go to porterco.org and right at the top of the screen there will be a big red alert with information to register. Also, for those who are not internet savvy or don't have internet they can also call 211 and register over the phone.

Com. Good, Remember the State of Indiana Health Dept. is setting up the list and the priorities. The county health depts. have no say so, they are just there to administer.

Com. Blaney, And we are putting that information up on our website as soon as it is available. I'm looking forward to getting my vaccination.

#### **A Legal Service Agreement between the Porter County Board of Commissioners and Rhame, Elwood and McClure.**

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the Legal Service Agreement with Rhame, Elwood and McClure, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

#### **An Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Fund for Payment of Computer Assisted Dispatching and Records Management System for Porter County 911 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Ordinance, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

#### **AIG – Accident Insurance Program for Volunteer Groups Plan 2 in the amount of \$500.00 a year.**

Atty. McClure, This originally came from the Mary Poppins flying scenario at the Memorial Opera House and dealing with having volunteers doing some dangerous things regarding flying and the setup. So in dealing with making sure that the appropriate insurance was available we started to discuss with GIS potentially the need to have an accident insurance policy for the volunteers that we have. Not only at MOH but at the Expo or EMA, PACT, the Animal Shelter has volunteers so a relatively small amount of money we help out by getting this accident insurance program, which allows for some of those medical bills to get paid if someone were to have an accident. They are in that in between. They are not employees, they are not part of our work comp program. So this not only helps those volunteers if there is an accident but also protects the liability and the cost that could be potentially be associated to the County. Once we saw the pricing that is why it was recommended that the Commissioners consider it due to as we keep chiseling away at our complete total insurance program this was one of those areas that we shored up and were surprised at the relatively low cost of that.

Com. Good, I think that is a good thing to have because we have a lot of volunteers. It is good to know we have that we have a little blanket of protection at not a big cost.

Com. Good, moved to approve, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

A request for approval by Mr. Tim Stoner to continue leasing approximately 7 acres from County for farming off of State Rd. 2. Mr. Stoner has given the County a check for \$1,015.00 for 2020.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

**157 FRANKLIN ST. – PAY APPS.**

Pangere Corp. – Pay App. #10 in the amount of \$68,297.74 for material and labor. This will be the final payment.

E.C. Babilla – Pay App. #5 in the amount of \$11,916.60 for roofing. This will be the final payment.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve both pay apps., Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

**NORTH COUNTY ANNEX – PAY APP.**

Circle “R” Electric – Pay App. #18 in the amount of \$4,465.59 for electrical. With a remaining balance of \$46,565.80.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the pay app. Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

**SHERIFF DAVE REYNOLDS**

An Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Fund for the Indiana Office of Energy Development Grant Agreement – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading. These funds will be used to purchase two (2) Interceptor Power Bikes and two (2) new 2021 Polaris Ranger ATV’s.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the Ordinance, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

**CYNDI DYKES, CORONER**

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Porter County Coroner’s Office and Pathologix, LLC regarding autopsy services rendered by Dr. John Feczko.

Atty. McClure, I worked with the Coroner on getting this put together. It is a cost savings and it does get reviewed every 6 months because we’re doing it slightly different based on average amounts of autopsies. It can go 10% up or 10% down. The contract was made to keep both parties protected. I believe if this is approved it will go out slightly passed the current coroner’s term but as we’ve done in the past we would like to have those contracts expire at the end of the elected official’s term. This one goes about 6 months into the following term because we also don’t like to set up the potentially new elected official which obviously that is yet to be seen without an agreement for autopsies on day 1. This would give our current Coroner the ability to review that and go from there. I don’t have any problems recommending this agreement.

Com. Biggs, And this is of course supported by Coroner Dykes.

Com. Good, Yes, she submitted it to be placed on the agenda.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the MOU, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

**FACILITIES – RAY CLOYD, DIRECTOR**

Homewood Disposal – An agreement for recycling at the Porter County Expo Center in the amount of \$68.00 per month.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve Homewood Disposal, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

**HIGHWAY DEPT. – RICH SEXTON, SUPERINTENDENT**

**Award Bids for 2021 Supplies.**

**PRODUCT**  
LIMESTONE DELIVERED:  
FOB:

**VENDOR**  
WHITCOMB, HARRY BROWN  
SOUTH LAKE STONE, HARRY BROWN, WHITCOMB

SLAG DO TO PAST SUPPLY ISSUES:	ALL BIDDERS
BITUMINOUS PLANT HOT MIX:	WALSH-KELLY, REITH-RILEY, BOYD COLD PATCH- CENTRAL PAVING, WALSH KELLY, REITH-RILEY
LIQUID BITUMINOUS:	ASPHALT MATERIALS
EQUIPMENT RENTAL:	ALL BIDS
SIGNS AND POST:	ALL BIDS
CALCIUM CHLORIDE:	GREAT LAKES CHLORIDE
DIESEL FUEL:	TRIPLE J-MAR
CULVERT AND GUARD RAIL:	JAMES DREW, METAL CULVERTS INC., DEBCO, TRI-STAR
BRIDGE BEAMS:	AMERICAN TIMBER BRIDGE
PULVERIZING:	MT. CARMEL

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the vendor recommendations made by Highway Superintendent Sexton, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, One of the things I would like to alert the public to and it is something we have been wrestling with over the last week. When the Auditor submitted our budget the State it came back and they basically cut us back \$940,000.0 between the two categories for paving this year. Which has pretty left our coffers almost empty for doing any type of paving this year. The guidance we were receiving from the State for the past several years when the fuel tax was increased hasn't really seemed to make it to the local level, which is causing us some issues. I think what we need to do is discuss with the Council what type of action or things we need to take because over the last several years we have been just sort of keeping up with the funding that we've had as it has diminished over the last few years. It is getting to the point now where we have to figure out how to somehow get ahead of this and get the source of funding that we could use on a continual basis. It is really hard to put a plan together to maintain 816 miles of roads when you have the funding moving all over the place. It is almost impossible. I think we have a task in front of us that we need to take a look at and discuss with our Council members to see where we need to go and what we can come up with to fund this department and this task, which I believe is one of the top ones why county government is here for. We're just letting the community know that we have some issues that we need to work through and we're going to take that task up and we're going to figure out how to do that.

Com. Biggs, Mr. Chairman as the Commissioners know over the last 4 years this has been going on progressively less and less and the H funds made available to us, which is difficult to understand when we all understand that the gas tax has not gone down. I don't quite understand the reason why we keep receiving less funds than we did the previous year. At least that has been the case at the minimum the last 4 years. I know right around that 4<sup>th</sup> year 2017 or 2018 I believe it was there was a big push for the wheel tax. Speaking from me personally I'm not going to consider that. I would never vote for that. We need to do something on our end to protect our best interest because it doesn't seem like we're getting that support downstate as we have in the recent past.

Com. Blaney, You guys covered it. We have to pave the roads so we are going to have to figure it out.

Com. Good, That is what Com. Biggs said commissioners don't raise taxes.

Com. Blaney, It's the Council.

Com. Good, We're not trying to dump anyone in the hot seat. I know they are very familiar with what has been going on over the last 4 years as well. I think this is just a call for us to get together and figure out the situation that we're in and to set it up so we know where we're at every year and what we can do. Again, having this many miles of roads with this type of funding we get I honestly don't think that the funding mechanisms...it just seems odd to me that we're in a county within a lot of miles of roads, in the lake effect snow area, we have a lot of bridges. I just don't know how they divvy out all of that money but we're going to have to figure it out ourselves and have these discussions with the Council. We're not trying to put anybody in the hot seat. It is just something that we need to discuss and these 2 boards need to figure out where we're going to go. I look forward to that discussion.

Com. Blaney, I agree with that.

**DEVELOPMENT & STORM WATER MNGMNT. – BOB THOMPSON, DIRECTOR**

**An Amendment to the Dunes Kankakee Trail Fund Ordinance No. 11-11 – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading – TABLED until February 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

Com. Good, Scott can we do the 1<sup>st</sup> Readings on these?

Atty. McClure, On the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading I think technically we could, but at this point I think we would be better off and better served to move it to the first meeting in February. In short basically we have \$80 to \$90,000 in that Dunes Kankakee Trail Fund and this amendment would allow us to utilize those funds up there on some of the trail projects that we have going on at the north end of the County. Eventually that would be what the amendment would be for but given the circumstances we're trying to keep 1<sup>st</sup> Readings to a minimum on this type of a plat form.

**INDOT – A Revised Agreement for 100 South with a new letting date in their Fiscal Year of 2022.**

Atty. McClure, I have been working with Mr. Thompson on this for quite a while. I have reviewed it and it's in good form and would recommend it.

Mr. Novotney, We appreciate your consideration. INDOT is agreeing to move this to Fiscal Year 2022, this is the amendment to the agreement to make that take place.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the INDOT Revised Agreement, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, This State funded project is getting pushed back a year or two.

**PORTER COUNTY SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNCIL - DAWN PELC, EXEC. DIR.**

**Comprehensive Community Plan.**

Ms. Pelc, Good Morning and thank you for having me. I am not going to present the Community Plan but what I'm going to do is ask you for approval of the funds from Fund #48 which is the Community Grant Funding Program we have. That is directly related to the Comprehensive Community Plan. Anyone that is submitted a proposal had to follow the plan along with the different problem statements we have in the County that were approved down State. We also collected data. I would also like to mention if anyone would like to come to our office and meet us and get more details on what we do there, we're basically a referral and resource for the County. We hover about \$1 million in funding the CDC, SAMSA, IGAI and DMHA. What we get those funds for is basically to roll out different programs and strategies in the community for mainly youth based programs that we have such as mental health awareness training. Any of these programs that we have can be accessed by Porter County, we're in all of the schools. We help with the 9 police agencies we work with throughout the County by providing different types of funding. That is one of the things that we do with the money that we're here asking for approval today. I know it is a lot so if there are any questions you have ask me. Otherwise I may just keep going.

Com. Biggs, I just have one question. My question is how much assistance do you get from Porter Starke?

Ms. Pelc, We do get some assistance. Porter Starke provides the professionals for our Mental Training Awareness Program. We actually have an MOU with them through this program which is provided by SAMSA and that is a 3 year MOU to provide the training for police, EMS, teachers, different businesses and first responders. Anyone that might have interaction with kids or adults that they can easily spot that might have a mental health issue. From there Porter Starke will take on the referral. People don't have to go to Porter Starke but the question you asked is do we work with them and we do. They are also on all different kinds of committees so we get their input on different things.

Com. Biggs, My question is that assistance that your agency receives is there a fee associated with that assistance?

Ms. Pelc, Through this MOU for the Mental Health Awareness Training we get money from SAMSA and we have a contract that we pay Porter Starke professionals and then when we have any of these trainings there is no charge for anyone to attend.

Com. Biggs, But there are fees associated to the contract with them?

Ms. Pelc. Correct.

Com. Biggs, It is difficult for me to understand why you're having to take some of your grant money and throw it to Porter Starke for that assistance when Porter Starke is collecting nearly \$2.5 million a year because they have their own tax rate within the larger tax rate in Porter County. It doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

Ms. Pelc, The money that is given to Porter Starke that we have the contract with it has nothing to do with the County. The money that we're asking for today it is with SAMSA and a Federal level. We have Porter Starke as a partner because our organization does not have the skills to do that training. We partnered with Porter Starke through the Federal Grant.

Com. Biggs, I understand that it is just confusing to me whether it's Federal dollars or grant dollars from State or Federal government for that assistance would be better spent in other areas where maybe we're not giving as much attention to as we'd like to because of the lack of funds and Porter Starke is already receiving \$2.4 million a year in tax revenue.

Ms. Pelc, I could find out but I would have to a discussion with their CEO because I am unfortunately unable to get into too much detail with you about that.

Com. Biggs, No you don't have to do that. I thought maybe there was a clearer reason as to why we're paying for that service when we're already being taxed to the tune of \$2.5 million a year. There is no need to do that. Thank you.

Ms. Pelc, Thank you.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Comprehensive Community Plan as submitted, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Biggs, You all do good work over there and we really appreciate it.

Ms. Pelc, Thank you very much.

**JODI JACKSON – VALPARAISO FAMILY YMCA**

**A request for approval from the Valparaiso YMCA to host the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Ringing in Spring 5K/10K Road Race to be held on Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 at 7:00 a.m. The race will start and finish on Cumberland Dr. by the YMCA Pavilion.**

Com. Biggs, moved to approve, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

**KATE FLANNERY – FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU**

**A request to use the Courthouse grounds for Chalk the Walk on Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 6:30 unto 2:00 p.m. The event will include live music and free creative children's activities. They are also requesting the use of the outlet for one speaker and microphone.**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffrey J. Good

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura M. Blaney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Biggs

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Vicki Urbanik, Auditor