

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TUESDAY, APRIL 6<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, April 6<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, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Approval of Payroll – March 19<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.**

**Approval of Claims – March 18<sup>th</sup>, March 25<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.**

**Approval of Minutes for March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Honoring Jim Atkinson for his years of service as the Porter County Veterans' Officer from 2008 through 2021.**

Com. Good, We have someone in the County building who is retiring. I have been up here for 7 years and have seen what this man has done for the County and for the Veterans of this County. This Board wants to send Jim Atkinson off in a good way. We would like to have Jim come forward because there is something we would like to give him. On behalf of the citizens of Porter County we would like to give you this small token of appreciation to Jim Atkinson for his service to the community and the Veterans of this community. We are really going to miss him. Do you have anything you would like to say?

Mr. Atkinson, I've received more than I've given and I want to thank the Commissioners for their public service and dedication to all of the departments they are responsible for. I have never been turned down for any type of request. We have a wonderful Board of Commissioner and County Council. I mean that sincerely. I've had a wonderful 13 years and it is in good hands. I would like to thank the Auditor's office for helping us very much also. Thank you for helping the Veteran Community, it really means a lot.

Com. Good, Jim's replacement is going to be Joseph Baruffi, who has been working with Jim in this department for quite some time. I know Jim has been working for quite some time to find his replacement. He was very concerned about getting the right person in his job to carry on. We are going to go with his recommendation so Joseph Baruffi will be the head of the Veterans Administration of Porter County. We wish Joe a good start and all the best.

**A Donation from the Porter County Board of Commissioners in the amount of \$4,700.00 to assist in building a permanent Memorial to Honor those who served.**

Com. Good, Don Ensign can you please come up here and give a brief explanation as to what you're doing and give the public an idea of what you're doing.

Mr. Ensign, I am a member of the Veterans' Memorial Parkway Commission and the Friends of the Veterans' Memorial. We are working on the World War I and World War II Memorial in Crown Point. We have the Korean War Memorial in Leroy and Hebron was honored to be the designated spot for the Middle East Memorial. As a former Councilman I worked on

getting the Next Level Trails Grant. We built the first mile of the Veterans' Trail in Hebron. It is well received. Laura was at our dedication, very well received. We leased a section of the property that the trail was on for the Veterans and dedicated it as a Middle East Memorial. The pandemic has really thrown a wrench in everyone's world including ours. We started meeting with Veterans and trying to come up with a design for the Memorial. We have a proposed design right now and we're trying to raise funds to start engineering and designing as soon as we can start to get face to face meetings with everyone again to conclude what we want to build there. We've sent letters as you all have received to 7 Counties Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski and Starke counties asking the Commissioners and the Council to help us with support to take that first baby step to building this Memorial. That is our goal. We want to honor the Veterans and the lost Veterans and the PTSD Veterans who have suffered. My daughter in-law lost her nephew. He came back 3 weeks from the Middle East and committed suicide. There are a lot of goals there to honor those folks. Basically that is where we're at. The Town of Hebron is going to be very proud to have this Memorial in our town and Porter County. Our plan is to someday to be able to run all of the way to Hammond on this trail, head towards Kouts and that town and try to work our way. That town has acquired a little bit property on the other side of Rte. 8 the railroad property and we're slowly picking away at it. As everything else it takes time to do it.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Donation of \$4,700.00 for the Memorial to Honor the Veterans, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, We received a letter from Don and his group outlined what each county owed based off of their population.

Mr. Ensign, It's a weighted vote. Just like NIRPC, we did the same thing.

Com. Good, That is how the \$4,700.00 was decided. Good luck Don I hope we are one of the first ones to jump in.

Mr. Ensign, You are and hopefully we can get everyone on board and get moving. I greatly appreciate it Commissioners. We really thank you.

Com. Good, Thank you Don.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **COMMISSIONERS**

#### **An Ordinance Establishing a Fund for Deposit of Proceeds from a Soil and Water Conservation Grant to the Porter County Park Department – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Ordinance on 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

#### **A Resolution of the Porter County Board of Commissioners Concerning the Assignment of Porter County Tax Sale Certificates to the Porter County Storm Water Management Board.**

Atty. McClure, Most of them are going to the Porter County Storm Water and Management but there is also the Conservancy District and the RDC has one parcel. These are the pieces of property that have gone through the regular tax sale. They are now at the Certificate Tax Sale stage and we would be giving those to other government entities whether it be Conservancy District or for the Storm Water Board. I believe we have a list of 23 at this point.

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

#### **Delta Dental – A Dental Plan Contract with Porter County Government.**

Com. Good, This is our dental plan contract for Porter County Government. This is a renewal.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve Delta Dental for renewal, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

#### **GIS - Property and Casualty Insurance:**

- 2020 – 2021 Expiring – Annual Premium - \$1,060,355.00
- 2021 – 2022 Renewal – Annual Premium - \$1,162,376.00

Com. Good, We are renewing our Property and Casualty Insurance for the County. We have been out in the market to see if there was any more meat on the bone. We met with GIS last week but can you please give us a synopsis of what we are looking at here.

Mr. Keene, We are here today to review the Property and Casualty Insurance with the County. We met with the Commissioners last week and did a report back on our stewardship of what we've done for the last 3 years. You hired us roughly 3 years ago to completely review the Property and Casualty program and we're pretty pleased with the outcome so we are just going to share some of the highlights that are somewhat meaningful to the County regarding the Property and Casualty Insurance Program.

Mr. Berhardt, The summary we gave you has program highlights and accomplishments starting with 2017. We completed the County's comprehensive audit and the property and casualty exposures. We forward the deficiencies directly to the Commissioners. We amended the current insurance policies to include the coverages that we identified which were deficient from the audit and then we moved to a fee based arrangement rather than the traditional broker commission arrangement.

Mr. Keene, It is just a clarification we became the broker kind of mid-term of that policy term so we didn't have a full 12 month period in 2018.

Mr. Berhardt, In 2018 we represented the County. We went to the market place and went through the bidding process for insurance. We recommended moving the insurance program except for Work Comp to Travelers with a savings of 19%. We established a partially self-funded Work Comp program for long term cost savings. Established an organized Safety Committee, organized loss control visits to various departments, assisted recommendations, driver safety program, recommended and organized professional building appraisals for all County locations to establish adequate levels of insurance coverage and that appraisal showed that we were about \$25 million under insured. In 2019 we negotiated a 4.9% renewal increase. Some of it what is exposure but the net was an increase of 2.6%. Continued with safety meetings and in 2019 there was a 52% reduction in worker's compensation claims.

Com. Good, To me that is a celebration. 52% in work comp. loss payments. The safety meetings work I guess.

Mr. Berhardt, Yes they do. They keep everybody conscious. In 2020 we took the County to the insurance marketplace and to make sure we were in a good place. After that process we recommended moving everything but the work comp. to Liberty Mutual with a savings of 14.8% over what Traveler's offered. In that year there was a 31% reduction in worker's comp. That brings us to 2021.

Mr. Keene, This year after an extensive review of the entire program we successfully negotiation a renewal with Liberty Mutual. You can see the numbers on the screen that represents roughly a 9.1% increase. Of the increase 3.6% is exposure (Inaudible). The actual rate increase itself is 5.5% which is significantly better than the marketplace which is forecasting a 12% to 15% rate increase for municipalities across the board. We are super pleased with the result of that. Moving forward the key to the insurance program and the risk management program is to really control the things you can control. Mark mentioned and then Jeff reiterated the 52% reduction in worker's compensation. That is a direct result of safety meetings and being very transparent about what the County is trying to accomplish from a safety perspective. Moving forward we will continue to strategize on what the best approach is. It has all been evident from this past year, a pandemic year that risk is always evolving the key to a good risk management program is to constantly keep evaluating exactly what risks the County is presented with on a regular basis. We do that through a series of quarterly meetings. Of course those were a little irregular in 2020 for obvious reasons but we will get back on the path and continue those meetings. Also another thing you can analyze is the data. We are constantly analyzing data to help guide our decisions in what direction to go in (Inaudible). Com. Good last week suggested that we start to do more of an individualized by department safety meetings which will create individual safety cultures within each one of those departments. We will continue down that path. We've had a great relationship over the past 3 years.

Com. Biggs, As Com. Good said if we breakdown those departments then we can see as Commissioners who is doing and who is not.

Mr. Keene, Absolutely. Obviously each department has its own unique risk.

Com. Good, We were talking about more of our 5 or 6 large departments. It is different from Highway to a Jailer, it's very different. So we want to start being a little more specialized in

these discussions. We see what we've gotten so far, but we think we can get a little better. Its awareness and good training, all of the right things to do.

Mr. Keene, Correct, very good points. We are here today to ask to continue our relationship with the County for another 3 years. We are here today to ask for the Commissioners' approval of that.

Com. Good, I would like to point out also that on the workman's comp. that we have been touting some of the successes in workman's comp. but I think it is also good to point out when we went in this direction with GIS 3 years ago we made a decision to be self-funded in our workman's comp. We are now carrying a balance. We are still putting money into that balance but we are seeing our workman's comp. fund grow now. The more we can continue to grow that fund and we can continue to drive our costs down we should be in a very good healthy place with our own money for our own workman's comp. claims. That was something that we talked a lot about and so far it seems to be moving in the right direction and it is doing what we wanted it to do. I just wanted to point that out. Not a lot of people do that. It's a little different.

Com. Biggs, I certainly think that you earned to be considered for another 3 year contract and I also think there is a benefit that as you get to know us better that you are better able to advise us on what directions that we should be going in from year to the next. There is a benefit in that and you all have certainly done your job.

Com. Good, And again I would like to point out to the public and for the record they are getting paid a flat fee for their service. There is nothing happening on the contract, backend, frontend nothing. This is a flat fee. This is what we did the first 3 years and that is what we going to do the next 3 years, none of that changes.

Com. Biggs, Very, very, very good point.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the renewal of the GIS Property and Casualty Insurance contracts, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, One other thing I would like to say. I've been on calls for insurance with hotels and you were spot on. We're seeing 15% to 20% increases across the board. I think what happened here was well done. Thank you!

Mr. Keen, You're welcome, thank you!

### **Animal Shelter Director Authority to Pursue Estate Gift.**

Com. Good, We had something unique happen to us several weeks ago. This is all I know so I am anxious to hear what you have to tell us.

Ms. Bianchi, Probably a month ago Centier Bank came to the Shelter and informed me that we were a beneficiary of an estate from a woman who had adopted a cat from us. Her entire estate will be left to the Animal Shelter. We are the full beneficiary of this estate.

Com. Blaney, It appears to be a good number.

Com. Good, So the Shelter was a good idea.

Ms. Bianchi, Yes.

Com. Good, That is exciting.

Ms. Bianchi, I don't know exactly what numbers they're talking about at this point but it is going to be a substantial donation.

Com. Biggs, God bless her for doing that.

Ms. Bianchi, Yesterday or the day before I received a letter from Centier Bank asking that I provide a copy of my driver's license, obviously and then Board minutes or similar documentation indicating that I am the Animal Shelter Director. That is why we're here today to make that official so I can sign the documentation. I'm looking forward to this, lots of great ideas.

Com. Biggs, I think what Jeff pointed out, it is important, the Shelter the way it was put together and what's going on out there it does send a message to the residence we're wanting to do something special and different and we take it seriously. When residence see that I think things like this start to happen.

Ms. Bianchi, I agree. Very exciting.

Atty. McClure, For the sake of the Board minutes we need a motion approving Toni pursuing the Estate Gift and that she has the Commissioners' authority to do that.

Com. Good, moved to approve the pursuit of the Estate Gift, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, I know I've said this before but these types of things would not be happening if people were not confident in what was happening out there.

Com. Good, Exactly and that is a tribute to you.

Ms. Bianchi, It's a tribute to my team. I appreciate that.

Com. Good, Thank you Toni.

Ms. Bianchi, We did get our new Transit and it is working out really well. I appreciate that too, thank you very much.

**CYNDI DYKES, CORONER**

**An Ordinance Establishing a Local Control Grant for the Indiana State Opioid Response (2) Mobile Response Teams, Funding for the Porter County Opioid Fatality Review Team Received from HealthLinc, Inc. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Ordinance on 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

**EMA – LANCE BELLA, DIRECTOR**

**An Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Fund for the 2020 Homeland Security Grant Program, SHSP Grant Agreement – 1<sup>st</sup> Reading.**

Mr. Bella, This is a fund for a grant that we applied for last year from Homeland Security. We had specked out, done an assessment of our building and decided we could better secure it with some camera systems inside and outside. We specked those out, applied for a grant and received a grant for \$30,720.00 in Homeland Security. This would establish that fund. We would put the security system in and then Homeland Security will reimburse the County for that full amount.

Com. Good, That is for your EMA building?

Mr. Bella, Yes sir.

Com. Biggs, Do you have cameras out there now?

Mr. Bella, We do not.

**PUBLIC HEARING OPENED**

Com. Good, Is there anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? Second call anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? Third and final call anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? First call anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Second call anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Third and final call anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance?

**PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Ordinance at 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

**E911 – TONY STUA, DIRECTOR**

**A Proclamation Recognizing the Week of April 11<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.**

**Recognizing April 11-17, 2021 as  
National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week**

Whereas emergencies can occur at any time that require police, fire or emergency medical services; and,

Whereas when an emergency occurs the prompt response of police officers, firefighters and paramedics is critical to the protection of life and preservation of property; and,

Whereas the safety of our police officers and firefighters is dependent upon the quality and accuracy of information obtained from citizens who telephone Porter County Central Communications; and,

Whereas Public Safety Telecommunicators are the first and most critical contact our citizens have with emergency services; and,

Whereas Public Safety Telecommunicators are the single vital link for our police officers and firefighters by monitoring their activities by radio, providing them information and ensuring their safety; and,

Whereas Public Safety Telecommunicators of Porter County Central Communications have contributed substantially to the apprehension of criminals, suppression of fires and treatment of patients; and,

Whereas each dispatcher has exhibited compassion, understanding and professionalism during the performance of their job in the past year;

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Commissioners of Porter County, Indiana declares the week of April 11 through 17, 2021, to be National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in the County of Porter, Indiana in honor of the men and women whose diligence and professionalism keep our County and Citizens safe.

Signed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.

Board of Commissioners  
Porter County, Indiana

/s/Jeffrey Good, President

/s/Laura Blaney, V.P.

/s/ Jim Biggs, Secretary

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

Mr. Stua, Thank you Commissioners and on behalf of the 911 Center I would like to thank you for all of the work that you've done for the 911 Center as well as the new building we're getting ready to move into hopefully this year. The dispatchers are seeing what the County has been doing for them and they truly appreciate it so thank you.

Com. Good, Thank you.

**EXPO CENTER – LORI DALY**

**A Request to Approve the following Contracts:**

**Catering**

- Aberdeen Manor
- Birky's
- Martini's
- Masters
- Nelson's BBQ
- Pikk's

Ms. Daly, This is a nice variety. High end, lower end, works for everyone's budget.

**Concessions**

- B&J Specialties
- Birky's
- Dorie's Food Stuff
- Suzie's Café
- Tate's Place

Ms. Daly, We did lose 2 caterers and we had 2 requests to come on, but we asked them to wait until next year because we didn't have any events last year so we felt like we would be taking away revenue from the folks that are with us.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Catering and Concessions contracts for the Expo Center, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

**FACILITIES – RAY CLOYD, DIRECTOR**

**Per Mar Security Services – A Quote for a Security Alarm System at the substation located at 326 W. 700 N., Valparaiso with an installation fee of \$1,440.00 and monthly monitoring fee of \$50.00.**

Mr. Cloyd, We need to put an alarm system in the substation because we are going to have some high value stuff in there.

Com. Biggs, What does the monitoring entail?

Mr. Cloyd, This is just for burglary not for fire.

Com. Good, If someone breaks in the alarm will go off and we'll have the company monitoring it to make the call to whomever to send the police.

Com. Biggs, Sometimes those are directly sent to the Sheriff's Dept.

Mr. Cloyd, All of the calls go to me first except for Highway and the Animal Shelter.

Com. Biggs, Where do they go?

Mr. Cloyd, The Animal Shelter goes to Toni for the burglary, but for fire it goes to me and the Highway goes to Rich.

Com. Blaney, move to approve Per Mar Security, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

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

**Standard Industrial & Auto Equipment - A Quote for a Portable Vehicle Lift for the Hebron Garage in the amount of \$45,789.03.**

Mr. Sexton, The current vehicle lift we use to service and repair vehicles would not pass inspection. (Inaudible). Due to rust issues and the wire ropes that lift the vehicle are stretching. It's actually tort rated 27,000 lbs. Most of our vehicles are 24 to 30 so we're not able to lift up all of our vehicles. This vehicle lifts up to 80,000 lbs. It is completely portable so it's not just restricted to one bay. You can move it to all of the bays. You can put it down and pick it up and roll it to the next truck. It is more efficient than the current lift.

Com. Biggs, How old is the current lift?

Mr. Sexton, 1999.

Com. Biggs, It's time.

Com. Good, I thought it was a little older than that.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Portable Vehicle Lift from Standard Industrial & Auto Equipment, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

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

**A Presentation by the National Parks Dept. regarding the Calumet Trail.**

Mr. Thompson, The Calumet Trail exists as you can see today is a limestone trail, that was improved around 2000. The Calumet Trail is on NIPSCO property. We have a license agreement to use the existing utility corridor and also we are just north of the South Shore Railroad. This trail right now as you can see in the picture on the left is what stopped our construction in 2016. That is a pipeline control station. They had a pipeline that went through this section of the Calumet Trail and I held off on construction because of that particular section of the pipeline. As I mentioned as you can see this is part of the trail. You can see that you have the utilities and the South Shore along this trail. My daughter and I were up and down this trail doing the filming. It is 9.1 miles of length along the NIPSCO corridor as I mentioned. There is a tower transmission along this. It is part of the National Grid. It also has underground pipelines adjacent to the trail that stopped our construction and there might be some underneath the trail. The use of the trail requires the County to enter into an agreement with NIPSCO on the use of their property. Again, I want to emphasize this is NIPSCO property we are on. NIPSCO can close this trail for maintenance or permanently with a 30 day notice. That really has a major affect because we have Federal Highway Funding. If they decide that they are going to permanently close this we are paying back all of the money to the Federal Government for anything we have on the trail. If NIPSCO damages the trail with their routine maintenance along the pipelines or if they have to get in and do work on the towers we are responsible for repairing the damages that were done by NIPSCO according to this agreement. The agreement also has specific guidelines on construction of the trail and it cannot be greater than 1 ft. above the existing grade. We also sent this agreement down to DNR because a few years back we were looking at next level trails. DNR's legal department wrote an email back that says the grantee should have concerns with this agreement because we have concerns with this agreement. Especially with the closure of it. That's where we learned that we would have to pay all of the money back if they closed it. Mike Novotney and I our County Engineer went up to the National Park and spoke to them. I told them that we wanted to get this trail off of NIPSCO property. I need to say that NIPSCO has been great. They have been very courteous to allow us to have the trail on it, but it is just something on the agreement that I wanted to get the trail off of that property. With that I want to introduce Rafi Wilkerson of the National Parks Service to have him explain with this trail means to the National Park. Real briefly Mike and I went out and rolled out a map with the highlighters and we looked at Paul, Rafi, Chris and Eric at the time and we said mark up the map and tell us where you think the trail could go. They hesitated at first looking at me like is this guy for real or what. Then they took the markers and had a lot of fun. I am going to let Rafi explain what this trail means to the National Park.

Mr. Wilkerson, Thank you for letting me speak and thank you for this opportunity. For the National Park in a broader scheme we are a park of two halves. We have a western half and an eastern half. A promise of this broader project which is called the Market Greenway Trail. We very thankful for NIRPC on this who has been guided us on this for a couple of decades, but our hope is that a lot of people don't realize that the National Park stretches from Broadway in Gary right by the Railcats Stadium all of the way to Mount Baldy and we have no unifying trail. You cannot get from one half to the other. The other thing is we are an urban park. And as such unlike Yellowstone where very few people could ride their bike into the park this park is urban. With this sort of trail we can accommodate and draw in all kinds of visitors not using cars and having more of a green space. This trail is real important to us specifically to the Calumet Trail. Our oldest trail map shows this on it being from the 1970's, but it is largely unusable. Bob actually portrayed it much better than it is most days. We've seen fish on the trail twice. Legitimate reports by rangers it is under water most of the time. It is very very unusable, but it is maybe our most important trail section. It could connect more than 20 national park assets. From beach parking lots to trail parking to restrooms not including a lot of other private amenities and towns. It is very important to us. We fully support this trail reroute. A lot of it would be on our land, as well as the Town of Beverly Shores but we're very supportive of this and we want this to happen and view this as a critical, sort of next generation asset for the Park.

Mr. Thompson, As you see here this is a conceptual thought on where we would like to have the trail. This was drawn out on our meeting with the National Parks. The red dash line is existing. The yellow dash line at the very end is the existing Calumet Trail today. As you see the broader line that goes through there it is through the National Park and also through Beverly Shores. It is going to be shared facility this is on Furnessville Rd. as you can see. We had some biker's photo shopped in on Furnessville Rd. this is National Park. It is really a beautiful section on

the National Park. We did traffic counts on it. It is not very busy at all. We are looking at doing some shared facilities on this. This is a section in Beverly Shores, Beverly Dr. It is on a closed section right now. It has been closed for a number of years and you will see later in a video why it is closed. Here we would like to open this section up and improve it for pedestrians. We have been speaking with Beverly Shores which I should introduce you to Jeff Benson. Phase I as you see there we do have funding with NIRPC. \$1.6 million in Federal Funding for this Phase that you see in a red dash line. That was going to be constructed in 2016 and we stopped it because of NIPSCO. Right now we have construction funding that is going to be available on July 1<sup>st</sup> of next year to do this section. We are now through and dusting off the engineering plans and getting them ready for this construction. I am hoping to have the engineering plans done by this summer and I should introduce Kathy Luther with NIRPC, she is Chief of Staff with NIRPC. So what you see here is going up to the NICTD Train Station there is a project here with NICTD. They are going to get the trail underneath the 49. Then we are going to get to the Dune Park Train Station. From there we are going to figure out how to get through the parking lot that particular area. Then you are going to get to the broad area there that is on U.S. 12. We are going to stay on the north side of U.S. 12 a separate trail from the Highway. Get to the National Parks Tremont rest area, where they can use the restrooms, it's opened. Then we want to cross over 12 at this location. Hopefully with the hawk type system, get to U.S. 12 again a separate trail going up to Furnessville Rd. Furnessville Rd. is the straight line going due east. Take Furnessville over the Kimmel, Kimmel up north to U.S. 12 again hopefully a hawk system there. That is the old visitor's center and then take it up to the old Beverly Dr. which is the closed section. The curved area that you are seeing there.

Com. Good, Bob could you explain what a hawk system is because some people may not know what that means.

Mr. Thompson, When a pedestrian presses the button it will start flashing yellow to warn the traffic there are pedestrians there, they're at a cross zone. It will go from a flashing yellow to a red. Then the vehicles have to stop to allow the pedestrians to go across. That is the hope. We are going to take the trail down to Beverly Dr. to Central Ave., Central Ave. on to the existing Calumet Trail again and then finish up...that's less than a quarter mile/half mile section on the Calumet Trail. Central Ave. the National Parks are saying it is very popular with birders, with a lot of wetlands people like to walk up and down that road. It is just a very low volume traffic road. We even thought of some alternatives. The green is an alternative where we looked at of a possibility of taking it further up Kimmel to Lake Shore Rd. in Beverly Shores. That connects all of the beaches in the National Park and it also has the homes up there from the World's Fair that were brought over. Again, these are all concepts. One of them shows Montana Ave. We all agreed later that Montana Ave. is probably not a good road to use bring it back to Lake Shore County Line Rd. I have a little video to give you an idea. My daughter Macy and I went up there. This is the section that will get paved in July of next year hopefully. This takes you up to the train station. As you can see we're right in the middle of all of the high power lines of NIPSCO. They also had their gas line underneath there.

Com. Biggs, Are you still on the NIPSCO right-of-way here?

Mr. Thompson, We are. Now we are coming up to 49. This is where NICTD will be doing a project with a double track. The trail actually has a curve underneath the same pier that they are going to be using with the railroad but they're going to put a wall and fencing to separate it from the train. After you get underneath the bridge you'll see the pathway that takes you over to the parking lot, they are going to move that. You can also take that and go to the State Park to the left. Here I am on Furnessville Rd. I didn't film the area along U.S. 12 since I was on the shoulder. This is Furnessville Rd. and it's so much better than going along the utility corridor. Heading east to Kimmel Rd. Again, this is National Park Rd. Kimmel Rd. just off by the old (Inaudible). Again National Park Rd. coming up to U.S. 12. This is another area we're hoping to have a hawk system at there is a crosswalk there and a lot of people that park there during the summer and then will walk up to the beach. Across 12, there is the South Shore Railroad. Now we're heading up to the old section of Beverly Dr. that is closed. This is the closed section of Beverly Dr. probably my favorite area to ride. It's beautiful in here with the wetland, a lot of birds.

Com. Biggs, Is this under water any time of the year?

Mr. Thompson, We're going to be doing a (Inaudible) study on it. This is the reason why it was closed. There is a culvert there. The culvert blew out and it is just increasingly getting larger there. I think Rafi supplied the bridge.

Com. Biggs, What is the total distance approximately of what we're looking at along the water?

Mr. Thompson, Along this section of Beverly Dr.? 3 miles. This section is closed. With the permission of Beverly Shores would be to redo that for pedestrians. Here I am on Beverly Dr. coming up to the main drag, far south up to the beaches. Broadway, continue on Beverly to Central Ave. As you can see there are a lot of wetlands again. Coming up to Central Ave. and down Central Ave. We're back on the Calumet Trail and to the left takes you to the parking lot on U.S. 12 or County Line. You are going to see the improvements that Michigan City made on their concrete pad right after (Inaudible). This is the warning light. I'm going to go up there and press the button letting people know that someone is there. I will show a flashing yellow and then eventually it will go to red to stop the vehicles allowing me to pass.

Com. Biggs, We could put more signage along that road knowing to let people to pass.

Mr. Thompson, We could it is just kind of ironic, Macy and I continued on for a regular ride and got over to the other section of U.S. 12 and had the same warning lights. People stopped and waived us across.

Com. Good, You are more in the open area here where people are starting to accelerate.

Com. Biggs, Do you know what the speed limit is there?

Mr. Thompson, 45. Here is the Calumet Trail and that is the end. To give you an idea about what Rafi said Macy and I rode back from Michigan City using the old existing trail. I struggled with my mountain bike in certain areas because of the water and the softness of the trail. Macy was on a fat tire bike. She was doing alright but she still felt the drag of the wetness and the softness of the soil on those huge 4 inch wheels. We were soaked by the time we got back to the car at Mineral Springs. It's a much needed improvement.

Com. Biggs, That section running through Beverly Shores is gorgeous. I'm familiar with that. If you enjoy watching wildlife it's gorgeous.

Mr. Thompson, It really is. I think that is one of the things we were trying to do was to get a National Park experience with this trail versus going down the utility corridor. We really wanted to give everyone an experience.

Com. Good, As we talked earlier I have a great concern over the security of that line, the transmission, that is a National Grid line. That is not out of the norm to have to worry about security for that these days. I'm glad we're moving in a direction to get some of this off of that and show more of the natural beauty that we have up there.

Mr. Thompson, It was a lot of fun exercising the National Park staff to work this through and figure it out. Again, this is conceptual right now. This is what we would like to see going forward. We've already met with the Town of Beverly Shores.

Com. Good, I'm glad to see you folks here too. I think this is the right direction. We feel that way and I hope that everyone up there does. I think that we have a great opportunity to do something really unique. I'm excited.

Com. Blaney, It will be great for our tourism too.

Com. Biggs, This is clearly a project that is going to support the Park and the Town of Beverly Shores. There is not a down side to this.

Mr. Thompson, To give you an idea I belong to an association called Venture Cycling it is for bike touring. There are routes that go around the southern part of Lake Michigan and how does the tour direct them, down to U.S. 12. They avoid the Calumet Trail because of the condition of it.

Com. Good, I believe that.

Mr. Thompson, I've been up and down U.S. 12 on the day that we filmed this and it is just not fun.

Com. Blaney, It's not safe.

Mr. Thompson, It isn't.

Mr. Wilkerson, I also feel that the timing is great. The momentum...this trail Portage has got \$4.2 million to get across Salt Creek. There is active construction on it currently. It is really picking up steam. We're very hopeful that the changes at the State level and the Federal level

that funds will be coming this way that could really see the 58 mile trail from the Illinois State Line to New Buffalo, Michigan finally made a reality in the next 5 to 10 years or so.

Com. Good, This is a big connector piece too.

Mr. Wilkerson, This is the horizontal length but that will draw the vertical lengths down into the County and pick up these communities to get the bikes up into the Park.

Com. Good, And I agree with the timing because of the double tracking. NICTD is going to bite off that piece of that bridge the engineering to date that go with the Federal Funds that didn't have that included because double tracking was not around back then. So you are right the timing just couldn't be better. I've talked to NITCD because we're going to be doing some creative things around the station to get them off of the trail out on to 12. We have some things we have to work out with them. We've already had positive conversations. They are another stakeholder. Like I said at the last meeting seeing the numbers of the bikes on trains. The year after year increase on that it's pretty obvious that this is the right thing to do.

Com. Biggs, Bob transferring those grant funds that were initially awarded for the Calumet Trail basically turning those over to what is going to be another trail isn't going to an issue?

Mr. Thompson, Those grant funds were for the Dunes Kankakee Trail. It was a reimbursable grant it wasn't where they sent us the money and then we had put the money back into the trail. We spent all of the money and then we had to prove that we spent it. We showed them all of the cancelled checks and then they gave us the money back. It is County money and we're just designating it towards trails.

Atty. McClure, I think he is talking more about our future grants. Our future money that we have from NIRPC.

Com. Biggs, I have been speaking with NIRPC about that. Phase I where I showed that we're staying on the existing trail we're going forward with that. We have been talking with NIRPC about this matter of fact Rafi drove Mitch Barloca who heads up the trail program down this route so he is well aware of it. We have engineering funding that is going to be coming up in July for Federal Funding that starts the very eastern part of that.

Com. Biggs, So you're not foreseeing any kind of issue?

Mr. Thompson, No.

Com. Good, And I think we also talked about if we can get things pulled together this fall while there is a submission of the next level of trails. Another funding grant so we are going to try to get that. With all of the things that are going on in Washington right now we've been having discussions on how we can elevate this project up to our delegation so we are actively having those conversations as well.

Atty. McClure, Now that we have a true Federal Park they are flush with money too. So we're (Inaudible).

Com. Good, I think this is a quality of life project for Porter County and we're excited that we get to work and collaborate with all of the entities and stakeholders in this. I know I apologized to Bob. I have been the one that has sort of been pushing to get it done quicker, because I think there is a real need and I think wouldn't this have been cool if we had it during COVID. A lot of people could have gone up there and rode their hearts out.

Com. Blaney, What Michigan City is doing it will be great to connect to that.

Mr. Thompson, And we met with Michigan City too Rafi set that up for us.

Mr. Wilkerson, There is definitely connection. Michigan City is willing to work with us. I will tell you that they have said to us that the pavement hadn't even cooled yet and people were on it.

Com. Blaney, I see people on it every time I'm over there.

Com. Good, We're excited to complete our section. I know this office is fully behind it. Talking with some of the Council members we're in a good position to complete this. We have to keep marching on and we have to keep working with our stakeholders to make sure that get everybody together on it and we come up with something that everyone signs off on. That is the key and that will be the result of a successful project at that point.

**An LPA Consulting Agreement with DLZ for the Calumet Trail.**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the LPA Consulting Agreement with DLZ for the Calumet Trail, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, This is to complete the void section.

**An LPA Agreement with INDOT for the Calumet Trail.**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the LPA Agreement with INDOT for the Calumet Trail, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, I would like to thank the National Parks for coming here along with Beverly Shores and NIRPC so we got this off on the right start and everyone is moving in the same direction.

**A Resolution Re-Establishing the Cumulative Bridge Fund.**

Atty. McClure, This would be the Resolution to Re-Establish the Cumulative Bridge Fund. This would take the proposed Bridge Fund to \$.055 on each \$100 of assessed valuation. I believe that it was at \$.04. This is the first public meeting that we need to have to establish the Cumulative Bridge Fund that all of the Commissioners are well aware but for the record this stays within the actual tax levy itself. It doesn't move the overall tax levy it is just how it is reorganized within under that tax rate.

Com. Blaney, It's not a new tax.

Atty. McClure, It's not a new tax and this also is the fund that takes care of not just County bridges but all bridges within this County are county bridges whether they are a municipality or not. This is the fund that funds and for all of the construction and the maintenance items for all of the bridges within the four corners of the County.

Com. Good, I would like to remind everybody that this is more of a civics lesson than anything. I know when I was elected 7 years ago our bridge fund was the lowest in the State out of all 92 counties and we're number 7 in the number of bridges. We've doubled it twice in the last 4 years and we're second to last now. We're not doubling it this time. What we did so everyone knows we did an inventory and we did a 10 year forecast out of the bridges and the things that we felt that we needed to have for funding we ran that out. All this increase does is help us reach that 10 year plan. We're still being very conservative. Out of that 10 year plan 70% of the bridges were in municipalities and towns. It was in that range of the bridges and we have some large ones coming up as well that we have to take care of. We don't take this very lightly but we think we have the data and we've done the work. What we've found out with our bridge crew and what we're doing is the real goal with bridges is to keep them maintained, because if you can maintain them they will last longer. That is one of the things we are really working on up here to get that system going pretty good. I just wanted to point that out. A lot of people don't know those statics and it's sort of revealing when you say it.

**PUBLIC HEARING OPENED**

Com. Good, Is there anyone wishing to speak against this resolution?

Mr. Benson, I'm speaking in favor of it. It's not like a cumulative capital development fund which (Inaudible) but if you don't renew it (Inaudible, not near a microphone.) I'm all for it.

Com. Good, Second call anyone wishing to speak against this resolution? Third and final call anyone wishing to speak against this resolution? First call anyone wishing to speak in favor of this resolution? Second call anyone wishing to speak in favor of this resolution? Third and final call anyone wishing to speak in favor of this resolution?

**PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Resolution Re-Establishing the Cumulative Bridge Fund, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

**THE ORAK SHRINERS OF MICHIGAN CITY – JON MILLER**

**A Request for permission to sell Vidalia Onions on the Northeast corner of the County Administration Building on Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 9am – 2pm with backup rain dates of May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Mr. Miller, Thank you for taking the time to hear me today. Orak Shriners which I am a proud member of is going to resume their Vidalia fund raiser this year. Unfortunately we were not able to have it last year as many know some of the other events were cancelled also. This year we feel confident in doing it. This year they're going to try something a little bit different. They are going to do it on a Friday and a Saturday 9 to 2 out front here on the northeast corner. The reason that they tried to Friday there is also an event going on with the Valparaiso Fire Fighters at the Pavilion so we're trying to work on capturing some of the traffic from that event. Our Shriners would work out there. They will not block the street. They will be on the street corner selling bags of Vidalia onions \$10.00 a bag, 10 lbs. The same price they have been for several years. They are top notch. They come from the east.

Com. Biggs, Are those the sweet ones?

Mr. Miller, They're very sweet. I've seen some people eat them like apples. They are very good onions, they keep for a long time. The biggest thing is it is a very large fund raiser for our group. The Shriners are huge into philanthropy primarily with the Shriners Hospitals. This is a fundraiser to keep those hospitals going. Help with the transportation costs. We transport children to the hospital. Does anyone have any questions?

Com. Biggs, I will take a bag as well.

Mr. Miller, I also have a flyer and was wondering if I can hang it up in the appropriate spot?

Com. Good, Yes and I'm okay with the second day too.

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

Mr. Miller, Thank you.

Com. Good, Thank you Jon.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

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

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

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

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