

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, APRIL 19TH, 2022
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 19th, 2022 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.

Com. Good, Good Morning this is the Porter County Board of Commissioners' meeting Tuesday, April 19th, 2022.

Call to Order/Pledge

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Payroll – March 18th, April 1st and April 15th, 2022.

Approval of Claims – March 17th, March 31st, April 7th and April 14th, 2022.

Approval of Minutes for February 22nd and March 15th, 2022.

Treasurer's Monthly Report – March 31st, 2022 – Filed.

MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE – SCOT MACDONALD, DIRECTOR

ARTISTIC SERVICES AGREEMENT

Valparaiso Community Band.

Com. Good, I have a question. What does the band do Scot?

Mr. MacDonald, It is the Valparaiso Community Band. They are hosted out of Valparaiso University. We have had a relationship with Professor Doeblner for about 10 years. They come and do a free concert at the theater for the community. It is also a food drive for one of the local food banks. I don't know which they've selected. They collect can goods. That is the cost of admission.

VENUE RENTAL AGREEMENT

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW BUSINESS

COMMISSIONERS

Appointment of a Citizen to the Plan Commission Board – Must be of Democrat affiliation. The appointee will complete the term of Michael Mirochna which ends December 31st, 2022.

Com. Good, We didn't receive any applications so we will leave this open until the next meeting.

Appointment of a Citizen to the Airport Authority Board - Must be of Democrat affiliation. The appointee will complete the term of Bob Poparad which ends June 30th, 2024.

Com. Blaney, moved to appoint Matt Soliday to the Airport Authority Board, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

The Citizen Appointment of Don Ensign to the Hebron Economic Development Commission.

Com. Blaney, moved to appoint Don Ensign to the Hebron Economic Development Commission, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, I'd also like to point out that Don also serves on the Porter County Redevelopment Commission.

GIS - Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal – Annual Premium for 2022 – 2023 \$1,177,372.00.

Mr. Behrendt, Mark Behrendt with General Insurance Services. I would just like to go into the renewal process. This year we received renewal terms from Liberty Mutual. We also received word from Travelers that they regretted losing you a few years ago and wanted to quote this year. We received terms from them and also for display purposes what an all lines aggregate program might look like. I'm not sure that is something you're ready for now but it might be something we will look at down the road. I will let Matt go into the results we have received from our carriers.

Mr. Webber, So as a market whole in the entity space we're seeing about 8 to 15% as a whole. That is pretty much in line with what Liberty Mutual came back with. As Mark mentioned Travelers came back into the picture and because the County has been performing extremely well in terms of losses and loss control they were very aggressive. So much so that it was a low single digit percentage over the expiring and double digit percentage over the renewal from Liberty Mutual. Overall they came forward with that plus an agreement in writing if the County meets a certain loss ratio threshold that they will keep a maximum of 3% rate for the next two renewal terms.

Mr. Behrendt, This is a very rare commitment. Again, if it is over that certain threshold it doesn't mean that if (Inaudible). If you are still profitable you are still going to keep that low increase.

Com. Good, Just for the pleasure of the press and the people in the audience can you give us our last year's premium for Liberty, then give us their renewal and then tell us how Travelers then came in with their quote because I think the numbers speak as to what is going on out there and how we've performed here.

Mr. Webber, The expiring Liberty Mutual lines were about \$940,000.00 once annualized. The renewal came in at about \$1,020,000.00. Traveler then came in at \$899,000.00.

Com. Good, Is that A rated or Triple A rated? Triple A rated Travelers Plus. That is pretty interesting compared to the fact also that when we switched to GIS about 5 years ago our premium in this category was right around \$1.7 million. That is where we were just a few short years ago. I think its good news and we're moving to a better carrier.

Mr. Behrendt, Right and we've had two years with each. I think we feel pretty comfortable with Travelers claim service. It's better than Liberty Mutual's.

Com. Good, We have Travelers in our hotel business and they are the best. Top notch out there. Any other questions from the Board?

Com. Biggs, 5 years now you've been with us?

Mr. Behrendt, This is going into our 5th year.

Com. Biggs, I think I assume correctly that we have more employees. Things are more expensive.

Mr. Webber, Bigger budget.

Com. Biggs, We're running leaner than we did 5 years ago. I think that speaks a lot of the work that you guys have done.

Mr. Behrendt, We appreciate it.

Com. Good, I would also like to thank our different departments Highway, Buildings Facilities. They have been meeting for the last few years. Workman's comp issues I know that is a real issue that we had. Worked on trying to control that cost. Our safety when the guys are out there working.

Mr. Behrendt, The worker's comp is really in a good place right now.

Atty. McClure, The one I would like to point out is the expiring Liberty Mutual premium for the automobile coverage is \$234,202.00. Our renewal is \$223,955.00. I know we have more vehicles than we did a couple of years ago. This says a lot about the employees' use of the automobiles because it wasn't too many years ago we were having some concerns over the loss ratio. Things have really come into good focus. Again, the average was somewhere between 8 and 13% rate height for across the board because (Inaudible) like county municipalities. The fact that we were able to get back to Travelers and have a reduction is pretty extraordinary.

Com. Biggs, There was a lot of work done on this Board and a lot of work done on your side. We would come in 5 years ago and we had everything audited and asked for everything to be cleaned up which we've done. Thank you.

Mr. Behrendt, The department heads have been wonderful to work with.

Com. Blaney, It's been a great team effort.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal Annual Premium for 2022 – 2023 in the amount of \$1,177,372.00, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

HEALTH DEPT. - LETTY ZEPEDA, DIRECTOR

An Ordinance to Establish a Fund #8911 for the Receipt of Funds from COVID Related Grants Pertaining to Immunization and Vaccines for Children in the amount of \$345,894.75 – 2nd Reading.

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

An Ordinance to Establish a Fund #8912 for the Receipt of Funds from COVID Related Grants Pertaining to Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Disease in the amount of \$100,000.00 – 2nd Reading.

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

An Ordinance to Establish a Fund #8913 for the Receipt of Funds from COVID Related Grants Pertaining to Workforce Development CoAg in the amount of \$440,000.00 – 2nd Reading.

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

Com. Blaney, While you're here I received several calls about the booster shot. Are you doing those on walk-in or do people need to make an appointments?

Ms. Zepeda, Appointments because we want to make sure that we don't open up vials and then people not show up and we have to waste it.

Com. Blaney, Makes sense. I just wasn't sure what to tell them. Just call downstairs.

Ms. Zepeda, Yes, we do them Tuesday's here in Valpo and Monday's in Portage.

E911 – TONY STUA, DIRECTOR

A Request to Recognize April 10th – April 16th, 2022 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the April 10th – April 16th, 2022 Telecommunicators Week, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Mr. Stua, Thank you for your support of 911 the TC's really appreciate the week. The entire County got together and really took care of them. Thank you on behalf of the telecommunicators.

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT – MICHELLE BENSON

A Request to set up a display to celebrate Soil Stewardship from Monday, May 2nd through Friday, May 6th in the Admin. Rotunda.

Ms. Benson, This is a national celebration Soil Stewardship at this time of the year. There are 3000 conservation districts across the nation and they set aside this special time of the year not only to recognize farmers but really all of us that care for the soil even in small gardens and with our various hobbies related to the environment. I did bring a few gifts for you. This is our 70th year so we are excited about that and we have some historical highlights. There is a nice article about a Mr. Paul Good was our 1965 farmer of the year. He now lives in Mississippi. Also an article about Grover Biggs who was our first conservation farmer of the year. Sorry Mrs. Blaney we didn't have any for you.

Com. Blaney, The Shurr's were farmers.

Ms. Benson, The Shurr family has certainly contributed a lot in terms of conservation. So I brought you historical highlights and then a poster. This is actually a poster made from a photo from Porter County. So it's not a google photo or something like that. It is a real photograph. I do want to introduce Jacob Tosh. He is our District Conservation Project Manager. He started the end of October. He is relatively new and he has hit the ground running. We're keeping him busy.

Com. Blaney, Welcome aboard.

Com. Biggs, Right out of college.

Mr. Tosh, Yes.

Com. Biggs, Congratulations.

Ms. Benson, We're excited to have him.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve May 2nd – May 6th Soil Stewardship Week, Com. Biggs second, motion carried.

MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE – SCOT MACDONALD, DIRECTOR

Boyce Systems – A Maintenance Agreement providing Support Services for the Accounting System in the amount of \$1,085.00. The term shall begin May 1st, 2022 through April 30th, 2023.

Com. Good, Has this been working out pretty well?

Mr. MacDonald, Yes, it is the product that we have to use and it works just fine.

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

ITS – LEE CHILDRESS, DIRECTOR

A Request to Transfer Funds – Fund #1000 General Fund from Acct. #4510 Data Processing Equipment to Acct. #3120 Consultants in the amount of \$10,000.00. Need to pay consultants for ongoing projects and assistance with issues beyond our scope of knowledge. This adjustment will be reflected in next year's budget.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Request to Transfer Funds, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

FACILITIES – TRACY WOOD, INTERIM DIRECTOR

Mechanical Concepts – A Proposal to replace and install sanitary sewer piping located in the parking lot area at the 157 Franklin building in the amount of \$33,750.00.

Com. Biggs, Did you have that in your budget?

Ms. Wood, No, it was never expected. We are going to pay for it out of our existing budget now.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the proposal from Mechanical Concepts, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, The sewer line that runs out to the City line there was a flat spot that had been there for quite some time. The building was empty for 15 years whenever everyone moved in that is when we found out we had an a ha moment. This is to correct the problem.

Videotec – A Proposal to provide and install access control and electric locking hardware to (8) doors at the Valparaiso Court House and (1) door to the elevator at 157 Franklin in the amount of \$35,104.70 or \$124.00 per month for 60 months.

Com. Good, There are no keys. These are access controlled. There is a digital entry of every entry and exit.

Com. Blaney, It protects the 911 Center.

Com. Good, We can control access to the freight elevator as well. It is basically securing our judicial and legal areas.

Ms. Wood, I would just like to say the \$124.00 per month is like a piece of mind maintenance. We are not accepting the \$124.00 a month maintenance. It will only be the \$35,104.70.

Com. Biggs, As you know that is roughly \$4300.00 per lock. What is on these doors now?

Ms. Wood, Keys. This will eliminate the key issue that we have at the Courthouse and then it will eliminate the public being able to use that freight elevator going up to the Prosecutor, Probation and 911 at the 157 Building.

Com. Biggs, I hope they are damn good locks for \$4300.00 apiece. That is a lot of money for a lock.

Com. Good, There is a lot of wiring.

Ms. Wood, They are hard wired. It is badge access so it is secure.

Com. Biggs, It just seems high to me.

Com. Good, We've looked at going to more controlled access points but this is one of the problems, the cost of them.

Com. Biggs, Maybe it's because it's the Courthouse. It's old infrastructure trying to get through it.

Ms. Wood, Yes.

Com. Good, The locks, the key issue at the Courthouse they have old skeleton keys that are 150 years old. The judges don't feel comfortable with that. I think it's time. We talked at our meeting Tracy and that is a real problem over there.

Ms. Wood, It is a security issue because there hasn't been a lot of records kept and keys returned from previous employees. That was the main issue.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the proposal from Videotec, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

3 Proposals for Water Treatment and Water Management at the following Porter County Government Buildings: Valpo Courthouse, Juvenile Detention Center, Portage Courthouse and Admin. Building.

HOH Water Technology	Monthly	\$662.00
Hydro Management	Monthly	\$635.00

Com. Good, Just so everyone is clear this is not to treat your drinking water. These are for glycol systems. Any building like this building has a hot water system where there is water going through it. You have to put a glycol product in the line so it doesn't get corrode. Two of our systems never had this, one does. We decided in talking we felt like we needed to do this to protect the systems. If you don't protect from the corrosion the pipes start breaking down faster.

Com. Biggs, You start seeing it on the faucets in the bathrooms.

Com. Good, This is more of a maintenance system. Our low quote is HOH and we use them currently?

Ms. Wood, Correct at the Juvenile Detention Center.

Com. Blaney, Is that the low quote?

Ms. Wood, The Hydro Management is actually a little lower than the HOH Water Technology. I tried to get some referrals regarding Hydro Management but I couldn't. Since we were currently using HOH we felt more comfortable continuing with them even though they were a little bit higher than the Hydro Management.

Com. Biggs, How are you happy with HOH?

Mr. Wood, Yes.

Com. Biggs, Are they doing a good job?

Mr. Wood, Yes.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the proposal from HOH Water Technology, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

HIGHWAY DEPT. – JIM POLAREK, SUPERVISOR

A Request to Transfer Funds – Fund #1169 LRS from Acct. #4420 Motor Vehicles to Acct. #4540 Other Equipment in the amount of \$20,000.00. Replace worn out roadside mower on one of the tractors.

Com. Good, Is that your tractors that you work on the side of the roads with?

Mr. Polarek, We have 6 of them. One the transmission is bad in and it is 13 years old and we can no longer get parts for it. This is one of our 2 case IH mowers that we have. The deck and the boom are so worn out that in the past what would have happened we would have bought a new mower with a tractor for about \$130,000.00 or \$140,000.00. There is nothing wrong with the tractor itself so we can take that unit off and actually put what would be a hay mower on steroids to do a roadside ditch. It would run off of the 3 point and the hydraulics all in the tractor. In 2 or 3 minutes we could drop that off and add another implement on our tractor.

Com. Good, I remember when they use to do it with sickle mowers. They use to go down the road and put the sickle mower down.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Request to Transfer Funds, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

DEVELOPMENT & STORM WATER MNGMNT. – BOB THOMPSON, DIRECTOR

Structurepoint – A Supplemental Agreement for the Engineering of Phase 2 of the Willowcreek Rd. Project in the amount of \$1,477,090.00.

Mr. Thompson, We're keeping the same agreement and DES number for our projects with the State on tips. What this does the supplement adds in Phase 2 of the Willowcreek Rd. extension. Phase 2 being from S.R. 130 down to 650 E. It includes the bridges that will go over S.R. 130 and the two railroad tracks and also the connecting road.

Com. Good, This is probably a follow up to the infrastructure bill. We submitted the Willowcreek Extension Project as our project for the infrastructure bill correct?

Mr. Thompson, Correct, we did. That went to the Congressman's office.

Com. Good, This is tied to the submission and everything else as well.

Mr. Thompson, Correct. I should point out with this particular supplemental agreement we do have an 80/20 match on this already through NIRPC. 80% of the funding on this will be coming from Federal Highway.

Com. Biggs, That even sounds better.

Com. Good, That does sound better. We'll take that 80 all day long. It's usually 50.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the Structurepoint Supplemental Agreement for Phase 2 of the Willowcreek Rd. Project, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Mr. Thompson, One quick thing we were awarded this morning \$1 million with the CCMG. It came from INDOT this morning.

Com. Blaney, That is the full amount.

Mr. Thompson, The full amount. We'll have \$2 million of projects going out with \$1 million matched from the State. Matt is going to start getting all of our prep ready.

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 6th and Saturday, May 7th, 2022 from 9am – 2pm with backup rain dates of May 13th and 14th.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the sale of Vidalia Onions, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF NWI – KELLY ZYGOWICZ

A Request to use the North East and North West Corners of the Courthouse grounds on Saturday, May 7th from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. to bring increased awareness of the scourge of human trafficking hurting our nation and world.

Ms. Zygowicz, We would like to have a Save our Children rally in front of the Courthouse area on the 7th.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the request to use the Courthouse grounds on Saturday May 7th, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

LAPORTE COUNTY TAX DISCUSSION – VICKI URBANIK, AUDITOR

Ms. Urbanik, May I just say something. I apologize for not putting this on the agenda but literally just moments before I was in a meeting with representatives of the Auditor of State Office and the Department of Local Government and Finance and the officials from LaPorte County. This is going to impact our County so I feel like I would be remiss if I didn't discuss this. There was an error in LaPorte County with the calculation of homesteads and the State determined and announced this morning that they would have to recertify all of values in LaPorte County and reissue tax bills. Why are we impacted? There was no homestead error in our County. I want to emphasize that. We are impacted because we are considered cross county jurisdiction with LaPorte County as is St. Joseph County. We have a school district, Michigan City. That school system is also in our County. We have 3 taxing districts that are affected by the tax rates in LaPorte County. As a result we will have to wait for the recertification in LaPorte County due to their error and then we will have to reissue tax bills in Pine Township, Michigan City Schools, Beverly Shores and the Town of Pines. It is my hope that this does not in any way impact our settlement process because our taxing units need to get their draws including our County. We will have to re-advertise our Tax Rate Chart.

Com. Biggs, Some people have already paid their taxes correct?

Ms. Urbanik, And that is fine we will settle up in the fall after the tax bills are issued. I just want to bring that to your attention in case you hear from any taxpayers. This was not a Porter County issue. Strictly with the values in LaPorte County.

Com. Blaney, We could end up with a delayed distribution right?

Ms. Urbanik, This morning the discussion seemed that we're only going to have one distribution. In June and in December. It will go as scheduled.

Com. Biggs, Vicki just so I understand this it will only affect in this case the Beverly Shores area and some of the Pines that share the Michigan City School District.

Ms. Urbanik, Yes.

Com. Biggs, Okay, other parts of Porter County.....

Ms. Urbanik, No. Basically they are going to see a change in their tax rate. Right now we have a tax rate for those 3 districts because they are going to re-certify the values that are going to affect the Michigan City Schools there will be a change in the tax rate. I don't know if it's going to go up or down.

Com. Biggs, If you're not in the Michigan City School District you don't have anything to worry about.

Ms. Urbanik, Right.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

Jeffrey J. Good

Laura M. Blaney

Jim Biggs

Attest: _____
Vicki Urbanik, Auditor