

**PORTER COUNTY COUNCIL  
Reorganization Meeting  
January 10, 2024**

The Porter County Council met on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Administration Center, 155 Indiana-Suite 205, Valparaiso, Indiana.

Mr. Rivas called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Rivas, Welcome and can we get a roll call?

Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes sir.

Members present were Council Member Jeremy Rivas, Council Member Red Stone, Council Member Andy Vasquez, Council Member Greg Simms, Council Member Andy Bozak, Council Member Mike Brickner, and Council Member Sylvia Graham. Also present was, Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Council Attorney Harold Harper and Council Administrative Assistant Joy Blakely. Not Present were Auditor Karen Martin, and Auditor Deputy Ryan Kubal.

**Election of Officers**

Mr. Rivas, All right so 2024 here we go and we are off to a good start. It's an election year and the politics are all around, it's fun. I haven't had this much fun you guys since Poparad and Whitten used to...

Ms. Graham, Yeah.

Mr. Rivas, used to have some real battles going into this stuff.

Mr. Bozak, They would battle each other?

Mr. Rivas, Oh yeah.

Mr. Bozak, Really.

Mr. Rivas, it was back and forth...

Mr. Simms, You weren't born yet Andy.

Mr. Bozak, That I believe.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah, it's fun but...

Mr. Vasquez, You are talking to this one right?

Mr. Rivas, Yeah. So it's an election year, let's just make sure we keep the taxpayers in mind as we move forward with everything. So with that, I will open up the floor for election of officers. We usually have it in order, but obviously start with the President, so I will open up the floor for the President of the County Council for 2024.

Mr. Stone, Mr. President, I'd like to make a motion for Mike Brickner for President.

Mr. Vasquez, I second it.

Mr. Rivas, There is a motion on the floor and a second on the floor for Mike Brickner. Are there any other motions for President? Seeing none, can we get a roll call?

All in favor of Mike Brickner as President by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Rivas, Here you go.

Ms. Graham, You didn't want...

Mr. Rivas, What's that?

Ms. Graham, You didn't want to continue?

Mr. Rivas, Oh it's alright, Mike come on over here in the center. The gavel stays in the middle.

Mr. Brickner, that didn't take long.

Mr. Rivas, Nice, I get to come over here.

Mr. Bozak, We're at opposite ends now.

Mr. Rivas, Poparad was good from the corner.

Mr. Bozak, Grab your name tag too.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah for sure.

Mr. Vasquez, They are all going to have to be bank shots now.

Mr. Brickner, I got to put the seat up higher. Okay well that was fast, I didn't know if you wanted to finish out. I appreciate that and why don't we finish up with the elections here. Let me get my agenda, we are still with officers...thank you. hold on, we have the Election of Officers. Do we have any nominees for Vice President?

Mr. Vasquez, I'd like to nominate Red Stone.

Mr. Bozak, I will second it.

Ms. Graham, I'd like to nominate Jeremy Rivas.

Mr. Simms, Second.

Mr. Brickner, Any other nominations for Vice President? Can we do a roll call on the Vice President since we have two.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes sir.

Ms. Graham	-	Jeremy Rivas
Mr. Brickner	-	Red Stone
Mr. Bozak	-	Red Stone
Mr. Simms	-	Jeremy Rivas
Mr. Stone	-	Red Stone
Mr. Vasquez	-	Red Stone
Mr. Rivas	-	Jeremy Rivas

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Red Stone 4-3

Mr. Rivas, Mr. President I'd like to point out, breaking from tradition is what just happened from a long time of having the opposite party not in the presidency has traditionally for a long, long time have been held by the other party. And obviously it worked...

Ms. Graham, Yes.

Mr. Rivas, You know it shows bipartisanship, it shows especially as close as the Council that's 4-3. And here we are...obviously you look at the finances, the position of the county, but just to point it out, but hey things change, so good luck.

Ms. Graham, You have full control.

Mr. Brickner, I don't know about that, but that's...

Ms. Graham, Yeah.

Mr. Brickner, As far as full control, well thanks Jeremy. And I appreciate your words, and appreciate...I think that a lot of good things have been done, have been accomplished and I think we have a lot of good things in store for the future as well.

Do we have any other Election of Officers?

Mr. Bozak, No that's it.

Mr. Brickner, Okay.

### **Attorney Contract**

Mr. Brickner, With that said...

Mr. Stone, Attorney's Contract.

Mr. Brickner, I'm sorry?

Mr. Stone, Nothing, I just said Attorney's Contract.

Mr. Bozak, Yeah, next agenda item.

Mr. Brickner, Attorney's Contract is next on the agenda.

Mr. Bozak, Are we sticking with Harold? That was a joke.

Ms. Graham, Have you guys decided?

Mr. Stone, I'd like to make a motion to approve Harold Harper.

Mr. Vasquez, I second it.

Mr. Brickner, Do we need a roll call? Or just all in favor?

All in favor signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Brickner, Congratulations.

Attorney Harold Harper, Thank you very much. It's be a pleasure and it will continue to be a pleasure. Thank you.

Mr. Bozak, Nice to work with you.

Attorney Harold Harper, Vice versa.

Mr. Brickner, Well earned.

### **Surveyor Agreement**

Mr. Brickner, Next up on the agenda is our Surveyor Agreement.

Mr. Bozak, And do we know, is this the same Harold as years past, there's no changes?

Attorney Harold Harper, Same figures, yes.

Mr. Bozak, Okay I'll move to approve. The same as last year?

Attorney Harold Harper, Yes.

Mr. Bozak, Thank you.

(Handed out Surveyor Agreement to be signed)

Mr. Brickner, So what do we have on the Surveyor Agreement?

Mr. Bozak, I made the motion, we need a second.

Mr. Stone, I second it.

Mr. Brickner, We have a motion, and a second on the Surveyor Agreement for Kevin Breitzke.

All in favor signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

## **Citizen Appointments**

### **Porter County Redevelopment Commission**

Mr. Brickner, Good next we have Citizen Appointments.

Mr. Stone, Mr. President I'd like to nominate Ralph Neff.

Ms. Graham, For what?

Mr. Stone, For Porter County Redevelopment Commission.

Ms. Graham, I'd also like to nominate Donald Ensign for Porter County Redevelopment Commission

Mr. Simms, Do you need to second this?

Mr. Brickner, So this is for Porter County Redevelopment?

Ms. Graham, Yeah.

Mr. Simms, Yeah, I'll second it for Don Ensign.

Mr. Vasquez, Yeah, I'll second it on Ralph Neff.

Mr. Brickner, So we have Don Ensign and we have Ralph Neff and who did you say Red? Did you nominate somebody?

Mr. Stone, Ralph Neff.

Mr. Brickner, We have two for Ralph Neff, anybody else for Redevelopment?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, I can call roll call.

Mr. Rivas, Harold do you know...excuse me Mr. President, do you know...I don't I don't think so, but it's not like certain amount of party do you know?

Attorney Harold Harper, Jeremy which one are we on? I'm sorry...

Mr. Rivas, Redevelopment

Mr. Brickner, Redevelopment.

Mr. Vasquez, This one.

Attorney Harold Harper, The Redevelopment commission, it is the one-year term...

Mr. Rivas, But it doesn't have to be like...

Attorney Harold Harper, There's no political affiliation requirement for this one that I'm aware of, and I did review the statutes for all of these.

Mr. Rivas, Okay, thank you.

Mr. Brickner, Okay, so we have Don and Ralph, can we do a roll call?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes sir.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Brickner	-	Ralph Neff
Ms. Graham	-	Don Ensign
Mr. Rivas	-	Don Ensign
Mr. Vasquez	-	Ralph Neff
Mr. Stone	-	Ralph Neff
Mr. Simms	-	Don Ensign
Mr. Bozak	-	Ralph Neff

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, 4 to 3 in favor of Ralph Neff.

Mr. Stone moved to nominate Ralph Neff to the PC Redevelopment Commission 1 year term to expire December 31, 2024. Seconded by Andy Vasquez.

Mr. Brickner, Okay, congratulations to Ralph.

Mr. Bozak, And just to confirm Mr. President does Joy, do you notify the other the person that was on it prior, that they're no longer on it. And notify also notify the new person?

Council Administrative Assistant, Yes I do.

### **Alcoholic Beverage Commission**

Mr. Brickner, Next board appointment is for the...let me see here the ABC Board. Currently that is Thomas Swihart is serving on that board. This has one appointment here on it?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, It is.

Ms. Graham, I'd like to uh nominate Thomas Swihart.

Mr. Stone, I second that.

Mr. Brickner, Okay we have a nomination and a second for Thomas Swihart. Are there any other nominations for this board? Okay seeing none, All in favor of retaining Thomas Swihart for the ABC Board signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Graham moved to nominate Tom Swihart to the Alcoholic Beverage Commission, 1 year term to expire December 31, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Stone.

**Indiana Dunes Tourism (CRV)**

Mr. Brickner, Indiana Dunes Tourism (CRV).

Mr. Simms, Mr. President I nominate Mitch Peters to the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board.

Mr. Bozak, Second.

Mr. Brickner, We have a nomination for Mitch Peters and a second. Is there any other nominations for Tourism? Okay hearing none, all those in favor of retaining Mitch Peters for Tourism signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Simms moved to nominate Mitch Peters to the Indiana Dunes Tourism 2-year term would expire December 31, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Bozak.

**Park Board – (R )**

Mr. Brickner, Okay next we have Park Board.

Mr. Simms, Mr. President, I nominate Harris Peterson.

Mr. Stone, Mr. President, I nominate Craig Kenworthy.

Mr. Vasquez, I second Craig Kenworthy.

Ms. Graham, Second on Harris Peterson.

Mr. Brickner, Okay we have a nomination for Harris Peterson and a second. And a nomination for Craig Kenworthy and a second. Any other nomination for Park Board? Okay hearing none, could we get a roll call for Park Board?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes sir.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

- Mr. Rivas - Harris Peterson
- Mr. Vasquez - Craig Kenworthy
- Mr. Stone - Craig Kenworthy
- Mr. Simms - Harris Peterson
- Mr. Bozak - Craig Kenworthy
- Mr. Brickner - Harris Peterson
- Ms. Graham - Harris Peterson

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Harris Peterson 4 to 3.

Mr. Simms moved to nominate Harris Peterson to the Park Board (R) 4-year term to expire December 31, 2027. Seconded by Sylvia Graham.

Mr. Brickner, Okay Harris Peterson is on the Park Board.

Mr. Bozak, What? Oh Harris won it?

Mr. Brickner, Yes. Correct?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes.

Mr. Bozak, Thank you.

### **Porter County Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals (PTABOA)**

Mr. Brickner, So then the next Board PTABOA the Porter County Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals, we have one, two, three, four five individuals. This would for one person here?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Yes.

Mr. Brickner, Any nominations for PTABOA Board?

Mr. Bozak, I nominate Mr. Ondrovich.

Mr. Stone, Second.

Mr. Bozak, Sorry if I butchered it.

Mr. Vasquez, It's Ondrovich.

Mr. Bozak, Ondrovich.

Mr. Brickner, We have a nomination for Mr. Ondrovich. Is there any other nominations? Okay seeing none, I'll close it up. All those in favor of retaining David Ondrovich PTABOA Board signify by saying Aye? All those Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Bozak moved to retain David Ondrovich to the PTABOA Board 1-year term would expire December 31, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Stone.

### **Chesterton Economic Development Commission (EDC)**

Mr. Brickner, Alright the next board Chesterton EDC. Again, we have three individuals seeking this appointment. I think this is the appointment we just did in December, because they wanted to reappoint Lloyd Kittredge. We just did this last month so I would just say that we reappoint for an entire year if you guys don't mind, this was the only applicant.

Mr. Stone, Mr. President I'd like to nominate Lloyd (Buck) Kittredge.

Mr. Bozak, Second.

Mr. Brickner, We have a nomination for Lloyd (Buck) Kittredge Is there any other nominations? Seeing none, I'll close it up. All those in favor of retaining Lloyd (Buck) Kittredge for the Chesterton EDC Board signify by saying Aye? All those Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Stone moved to reappoint Lloyd Kittredge to the Chesterton EDC, 1 year term to expire December 31, 2024. Mr. Bozak seconded.

### **Porter Economic Development Commission (EDC)**

Mr. Brickner, We have unopposed Porter EDC Board.

Mr. Bozak, I nominate Margo...

Mr. Brickner, Pardon?

Mr. Bozak, I move to approve Margo Machnik.

Ms. Graham, Second.

Mr. Brickner, Motion and a second to reappoint Margot Machnik. Any discussion on that? All those in favor to retaining Margot Machnick Porter EDC signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Bozak moved to reappoint Margot Machnik to the Porter EDC, 1 year term to expire December 31, 2024. Ms. Graham seconded.

### **Valparaiso EDC**

Mr. Brickner, And finally, looks like our final Board Appointment Valparaiso EDC. Our current Board appointment is Patrick McGinley

Mr. Stone, I make a motion to retain Patrick.

Mr. Brickner, Motion to retain Patrick McGinley

Ms. Graham, Second.

Mr. Brickner, So I have a motion and a second. All in favor of retaining Patrick McGinley for Valparaiso EDC signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Stone moved to reappoint Patrick McGinley to the Valparaiso EDC, 1 year term to expire December 31, 2024. Ms. Graham seconded.

Mr. Brickner, I think that concludes our Board Appointments, yes that's it.

### **Council Appointments – 1 Year**

Mr. Brickner, Ok everybody's favorite is next, we have our Council Appointments. Did everybody get a list of what everybody is currently on now? Do you want to just kind of go through the old list and see how we want to do that?

Mr. Stone, Yes.

Mr. Brickner, Because maybe that might be easier than what we have now. Does everyone have this list?

Mr. Bozak, It is the top of the Appointments 2023.

Mr. Brickner, No I have this one here, let me see...oh okay. Council Appointments 1-Year, so we'll just kind of go off of this.

### **Community Corrections Advisory Board**

Mr. Brickner, Starting with Community Corrections Advisory Board - Brickner and Harold Harper. I don't mind staying on that Board.

Ms. Graham, That's good.

Mr. Brickner, Harold are you okay with that? Does anybody else want to be on that Board? No, okay good.

Council moved to reappoint Mike Brickner to the Community Corrections Advisory Board, term to expire December 31, 2024.



## **NIRPC - Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission**

Mr. Brickner, NIRPC (Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission).

Mr. Stone, Mr. President I'd like to see if Mr. Vasquez would like to be on this. I know that he's expressed some interest, and he has a lot of time that he wants to get involved in NIRPC. Hopefully he brings some money back to Porter County.

Mr. Bozak, I got really nervous I thought you're looking at...

Mr. Stone, No, no, no.

Ms. Graham, Well that's good.

Mr. Brickner, So did you want to stay on it?

Mr. Stone, I don't want to stay on it.

Mr. Brickner, So you want to relinquish this to Andy?

Mr. Stone, We have to do a letter to NIPSC, so I just wanted to relinquish my NIRPC Appointment.

Mr. Brickner, Are you okay with that?

Mr. Vasquez, Yes.

Mr. Brickner, Okay perfect, thank you. Anybody else want to be on that Board?  
No?

Mr. Bozak, No, long meetings during the day. I've got to work man.

Mr. Brickner, So is that a letter that we send?

Council Administrative Assistant Joy Blakely, I'll do that.

Mr. Brickner, Okay thanks.

The Board moved to appoint Andy Vasquez to NIRPC, term to expire December 31, 2024

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Mr. President do you want to vote on all of these once we're done?

Mr. Brickner, I was wondering if we should do them one at a time, or can we vote at the end?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Just go through these just like you are doing, and then at the end, vote on all of them, unless anyone has an objection?

Mr. Brickner, Is that alright?

Mr. Stone, That's alright with me.

Mr. Vasquez, That's fine with me.

Ms. Graham, Well...

Mr. Brickner, Might make it easier.

Ms. Graham, Okay.

### **Plan Commission**

Mr. Brickner, I'll kind of go through these, Plan Commission. Greg Simms is currently serving on that now, do you want to stay?

Mr. Simms, Yes if I could, I'd like to stay on it.

Mr. Brickner, Good.

The Board moved to reappoint Greg Simms to the Plan Commission, term to expire December 31, 2024.

### **Recycling & Waste District**

Mr. Brickner, Recycling and Waste District. Sylvia?

Ms. Graham, I want to stay on that.

Mr. Brickner, You want to stay on that.

The Board moved to reappoint Sylvia Graham to the Recycling & Waste District Board, term to expire December 31, 2024.

### **EMA**

Mr. Brickner, EMA is Brickner and Simms. I'm good with staying on that. Greg?

Mr. Simms, Me too.

Mr. Brickner, Okay that's good.

The Board moved to reappoint Mike Brickner and Greg Simms to the Emergency Management Agency, term to expire December 31, 2024.

### **Porter County Council on Aging**

Mr. Brickner, Porter County Council on Aging. Sylvia?

Ms. Graham, Umm...

Mr. Bozak, She looked right at Jeremy.

Mr. Simms, No she looked at me.

(Laughter)

Mr. Bozak, She was ready for a Jeremy joke.

Mr. Simms, The other aging guy...yeah.

Ms. Graham, He has some time now.

Mr. Brickner, So you want Greg? Greg did you want that one?

Mr. Simms, If no-one else does I guess I can go on it.

Mr. Brickner, Sylvia are you alright with that?

Ms. Graham, Yes I am.

Mr. Bozak, You get the New Director.

Mr. Simms, I got to deal with it, yeah it's okay.

Mr. Brickner, So...

Mr. Simms, My age is moving in that direction.

Mr. Brickner, Anyway the Porter County Council on Aging would be Councilman Simms.

Mr. Rivas, They can pick you up.

(Laughter)

Mr. Brickner, Anybody else want to be on that, or just Greg? Okay good.

The Board moved to appoint Greg Simms to the Council On Aging Agency Board, term to expire December 31, 2024.

### **Juvenile Justice Advisory Board**

Mr. Brickner, Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, currently we have Sylvia and Andy Vasquez.

Ms. Graham, Yes I will stay on that.

Mr. Vasquez, I'll stay on that.

Mr. Brickner, Okay.

The Board moved to appoint Sylvia Graham and Andy Vasquez to the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, term to expire December 31, 2024.

### **Storm Water Advisory Board**

Mr. Brickner, Storm Water Advisory Board. Jeremy?

Mr. Simms, Normally it's the President though, right? Of the Council?

Mr. Rivas, Yes, I think it was, actually yes and I appointed you (Mr. Simms) as proxy.

Mr. Simms, So that would be yours Mike, unless you want to proxy it to somebody.

Ms. Graham, You can appoint someone if you can't make it.

Mr. Brickner, Well it has Greg as a proxy.

Mr. Rivas, Right.

Mr. Brickner, Do you want to stay as a proxy?

Mr. Simms, Sure, yeah I can do that.

Mr. Brickner, So I'll put my name on there. Jeremy did you want to be on that Board...stay on that Board?

Mr. Rivas, No, we only get one seat.

Mr. Brickner, Only one.

Mr. Rivas, Right.

Mr. Simms, We could proxy you though?

Mr. Rivas, No, I spent a lot of years when we started that.

Mr. Bozak, That's how we did the Portage stuff and everything? Through that Board right? South Haven, excuse me.

Mr. Vasquez, \$4,000,000 dollars.

Mr. Bozak, Yeah, that was awesome.

The Board moved to appoint Mike Brickner to the Storm Water Advisory Board, term to expire December 31, 2024.

Mr. Brickner, Ok Harold, should we keep going, or should we vote on this first group.

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Yes vote on this group.

Mr. Brickner, So we have the first section here of Council Appointments that we just went through.

Mr. Rivas, I make a motion to approve.

Mr. Bozak, Second.

Mr. Simms, Second

Mr. Brickner, We have a motion and a second. Do we just have a roll call on this or...?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, I would be happy to do so.

Mr. Bozak, No you can roll call it with a voice vote.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Bozak	-	Yes
Mr. Brickner	-	Yes
Ms. Graham	-	Yes
Mr. Rivas	-	Yes
Mr. Vasquez	-	Yes
Mr. Stone	-	Yes
Mr. Simms	-	Yes

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, 7 to 0.

**E-911 Policy Board Policy Board**

Mr. Brickner, Okay E-911 Policy Board. President of the Council and I was on that Board. And Jeremy you were on that Board?

Mr. Rivas, I think we Proxied that too. Yeah.

Mr. Brickner, Okay, I'll stay on that.

Mr. Rivas, You have a great history.

Mr. Brickner, Okay so that's good

The Board moved to appoint Mike Brickner to the E-911 Policy Board, term to expire December 31, 2024.

Mr. Brickner, We can just keep going on few more of these.

Ms. Graham, Yeah.

Council Attorney Harold Harper, If I remember right the E-911 Policy Board and the Redevelopment Commission Appointment, those are by State Statute. We can vote on those, but we don't necessarily need to because we've already voted.

Mr. Brickner, We don't have to?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Probably not, it's when we question vote, but I don't think it's absolutely necessary because it's automatic by State Statute. The President is automatically appointed to the Board.

### **Porter County Redevelopment Commission**

Mr. Brickner, But we do have a change though from Don Ensign...I'm sorry is it Ensign or Ezine?

Ms. Graham, Ensign.

Mr. Simms, No you guys voted him off earlier, so it...

Mr. Brickner, Would that be Harris Peterson now Harold?

Mr. Vasquez, No Ralph Neff.

Mr. Simms, Ralph Neff he is replacing Don Ensign.

Mr. Bozak, Joy will update that on our Appointment list.

Council Attorney Harold Harper, This is where we (Council) have an automatic membership on the Board.

Mr. Rivas, I thought we were talking about Ensign?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, As well as the Council. Ensign was voted on.

Mr. Bozak, It's on our Appointment list Jeremy.

Mr. Rivas, Oh gotcha.

Mr. Stone, So the Porter County Redevelopment Commission is the President of the Council as well. We did that one too.

Mr. Bozak, We didn't.

Mr. Simms, Yeah we did.

Mr. Brickner, We can keep going down the list.

Mr. Rivas, Oh there it is.

Mr. Brickner, So let's continue then with the Thomas Swihart.

Ms. Graham, Thomas Swihart.

Mr. Rivas, We already did it.

Mr. Brickner, Yes we did all of these.

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Mr. President, we can vote on the E-911 Policy Board and the Porter County Redevelopment Commission for the President if you want to, but you don't have to, certainly we can and then we can move on to the Council Liaison Appointments.

Mr. Brickner, Okay, let's do that then. So let's do a roll call on E-911 and Porter County Redevelopment Commission?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes sir.

Mr. Vasquez, What are we voting on?

Mr. Brickner, We're doing a roll call on the E-911 Board and the Redevelopment Commission.

Mr. Vasquez, Yes or No would be needed to pass it through?

Mr. Brickner, Yes.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Vasquez	-	Yes
Mr. Stone	-	Yes
Mr. Simms	-	Yes
Mr. Bozak	-	Yes
Mr. Brickner	-	Yes
Ms. Graham	-	Yes
Mr. Rivas	-	Yes

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, 7 to 0.

The Board moved to appoint Mike Brickner to the Porter County Redevelopment Commission, term to expire December 31, 2024.

### **Council Liaison Appointments**

Mr. Rivas, So now we have our Council Liaisons Appointments.

Mr. Bozak, Do we have to run down all of them?

Mr. Stone, We have to run down all of them unless everybody doesn't wants to make any changes.

Mr. Bozak, I like where I'm at.

Mr. Vasquez, I like where I'm at.

Mr. Bozak, Unless someone wants to add?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Someone could certainly, unless there's some desire to change. You could make a motion to the current Council Liaison Appointments.

### **Adult Probation**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak and Greg Simms

### **Airport**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak and Greg Simms

**Animal Shelter**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Antabuse**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Greg Simms

**Assessor**

Council Liaisons are Jeremy Rivas and Greg Simms

**Auditor**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham, Jeremy Rivas and Red Stone

**Circuit Court**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**General Courts**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Superior Court 1**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Superior Court 2**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Superior Court 3**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Superior Court 4**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Superior Court 6**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Clerk**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Jeremy Rivas

**Commissioners**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Jeremy Rivas

**CRV - Tourism**

Council Liaisons are Jeremy Rivas and Greg Simms

**Coroner**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**E-911**

Council Liaisons are Mike Brickner and Sylvia Graham

**Election Board**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak, Sylvia Graham and Jeremy Rivas

**Emergency Management Agency (EMA)**

Council Liaisons are Mike Brickner and Greg Simms

**Expo Center**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Extension Office**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Greg Simms

**Facilities**

Council Liaisons are Jeremy Rivas and Greg Simms

**Family Youth & Services Bureau**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Jeremy Rivas

**Health Department**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham, Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Highway**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak and Red Stone

**HR**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Andy Vasquez

**ITS**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak, Jeremy Rivas and Greg Simms

**IV-D Court**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Jail/Sheriff & Sheriff's Garage**

Council Liaisons are Mike Brickner, Greg Simms and Red Stone

**Juvenile Detention and Juvenile Probation**

Council Liaisons are Mike Brickner and Andy Vasquez

**Memorial Opera House**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Greg Simms

**Museum**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Greg Simms

**Opportunity Enterprises**

Council Liaisons are Jeremy Rivas and Greg Simms



**Parks**

Council Liaisons are Mike Brickner, Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Plan Commission/Building Department**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak and Greg Simms

**Portage Township Assessor**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak and Jeremy Rivas

**Porter Starke**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Greg Simms

**Print Shop**

Council Liaison is Greg Simms

**Prosecutor**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Jeremy Rivas

**Public Defender**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Jeremy Rivas

**Recorder**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak and Greg Simms

**Recycling and Waste Management**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Greg Simms

**Soil and Water**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Andy Vasquez

**Development and Storm Water Management**

Council Liaison is Jeremy Rivas

**Surveyor**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Jeremy Rivas

**Treasurer**

Council Liaisons are Sylvia Graham and Jeremy Rivas

**Veterans**

Council Liaisons are Andy Vasquez and Greg Simms

**Voters Registration**

Council Liaisons are Andy Bozak, Sylvia Graham and Jeremy Rivas

**Weight and Measures**

Council Liaisons are Greg Simms and Red Stone

Mr. Rivas, I make a motion to keep the current appointments.

Mr. Stone, I second it.

Mr. Brickner, Keep them all?

Mr. Bozak, Yes.

Mr. Brickner, We have a motion and a second to maintain course for the Council Liaison Appointments. We don't need a roll call on that, could we just do a "All In Favor"?

Mr. Rivas, Yes sir.

Mr. Brickner, So we have a motion and a second to keep the current Council Liaison Appointments. All those in favor retaining same Council Liaison Appointments signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Rivas moved to keep the same Council Liaison Appointments, 1 year term to expire December 31, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Stone.

Mr. Brickner, Motion carries, that makes that nice and simple.

### **Attorney's Report**

Mr. Bozak, Attorney's report?

Mr. Brickner, Attorney's report.

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Nothing for me tonight, just thank you and it's been a pleasure to be able to work with all of you.

Mr. Bozak, Thanks for not retiring.

Mr. Simms, Did you realize that Bozak was here when you said that?

(Laughter)

Mr. Vasquez, No he was in the bathroom I think.

Mr. Bozak, That would be normal.

### **Any other matter that may come properly before the Council**

- 2023 Encumbrances – Auditor's Office

Mr. Brickner, Any other matter that may come properly before the Council. We have the Auditor 2023 Encumbrances, so does everybody have a copy of this?

Ms. Graham, Yes.

Mr. Brickner, Any discussion on this before we vote on it? Any questions?

Mr. Bozak, Is there anything that you want to point out to us? Everything's normal?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Everything is normal. Yep.

Mr. Rivas, And we have contracts in place for everything? The invoices received and everything is lined up?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes

Mr. Brickner, Okay.

Mr. Rivas, I make a motion to approve the encumbrances of \$223,454.95.

Mr. Bozak, Second.

Mr. Brickner, We have a motion and a second...

Mr. Bozak, I just have one question...can I ask one question? The first person on there it says Vendor – Melissa Hartig, it says no department. Why is she getting travel expenses? Or am I reading that wrong? What does that mean, why does it say no department? That's what stood out to me.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yeah, sometimes depending on the nature of their trip, they may not be associated specifically with a department.

Mr. Bozak, So that will just come out of the General Fund?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, No it will be encumbered by that fund. But yeah, no that's...

Mr. Vasquez, Exactly what does she do?

Ms. Graham, Is she an employee?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Employee...

Mr. Vasquez, She's an employee?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Off of the top of my head I'm not sure what that was.

Mr. Bozak, That just stood out to me.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, It also could be a clerical error though too. I'm not sure on that.

Mr. Brickner, Any other questions or discussion? Andy?

Mr. Bozak, Thank you.

Mr. Brickner, Do we need a Roll Call?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Yes sir.

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Stone	-	Yes
Mr. Simms	-	Yes
Mr. Bozak	-	Yes
Mr. Brickner	-	Yes
Ms. Graham	-	Yes
Mr. Rivas	-	Yes
Mr. Vasquez	-	Yes

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, 7 to 0.

Mr. Brickner, I think that kind of wraps up our agenda, I don't think that during this meeting we have any comments during the Reorganization Meeting or is that saved for the Regular Council Meeting?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, It's...

Mr. Bozak, You're the executive.

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Certainly we could, I don't think there's anything legally, it's...

Mr. Brickner, How about if we save those for our Regular Meetings if that is okay with everybody? Are you okay with that Sylvia?

Ms. Graham, That's fine.

Mr. Vasquez, There's only one (inaudible)

Mr. Brickner, When is the next meeting?

Council Administrative Assistant Joy Blakely, January 30<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Brickner, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 okay.

Council Administrative Assistant Joy Blakely, You are going to have a Foundation Meeting and Regular Council Meeting.

Mr. Brickner, On the 30<sup>th</sup>?

Council Administrative Assistant Joy Blakely, Yes

Ms. Graham, Before we retire I want to make one comment?

Mr. Brickner, Yes.

Ms. Graham, Okay. I would like to formally announce...

Mr. Simms, No...

Ms. Graham, That I am not running for office.

Mr. Rivas, You're running for office?

Mr. Simms, She put her application in today, I saw it.

Ms. Graham, No...and I just want that to be put out there. I will complete my term; this is the first day of my last year in office. And it's a real trip...

Mr. Stone, Can I ask you how long you have served?

Ms. Graham, I will have more to say, later in the year as it goes along. But anyway, I want to make that official, so that I do not stop anybody from running.

Mr. Vasquez, Sylvia let me sit...

Mr. Stone, How long did you serve Sylvia?

Ms. Graham, This is 16 years.

Mr. Vasquez, I'd like to personally say, thank you for all your time on here Sylvia and all you've done.

Mr. Simms, She's still here for a year.

Mr. Brickner, I don't want I don't want to be premature, in case you change your mind.

(Laughter)

Mr. Simms, Yeah.

Mr. Brickner, I know this is early, but you know you it's been...

Ms. Graham, I think that it's time.

Mr. Brickner, You have served the county well.

Ms. Graham, Right.

Mr. Vasquez, Yes.

Mr. Brickner, Thank you for your service...

Mr. Bozak, Mr. President, I would like to thank Sylvia as well. It's been great working with you, and not that we're done. I didn't mean it like that. I don't know...

Mr. Brickner, They say there's still time...

Mr. Bozak, Can I say one other thing, I know we moved our meeting to the 30<sup>th</sup>, I may or may not be here as I mentioned in the emails. I have a doctor appointment that evening, so just so you guys are aware.

Mr. Brickner, Appreciate that.

Mr. Simms, When did we move it?

Mr. Rivas, Well Mr. President, as I think we're wrapping this up, I just want to say there's a couple things I'd like to say. I was talking to Councilmember Stone a couple weeks ago, and he brought up something about...and you know it fits in with the Elections, and this is a big Election and the politics have clearly already started. You know Red, you talked about if the Commissioner's can pass an Ordinance that they can't take contributions from Contractors.

It's a interesting concept, and with the whole thing of being transparent and open during Elections, and I just want to put it out there, to maybe the Auditor's Office. And my response was I don't think it's against the law for anybody too do that, so I don't think you really pass an Ordinance. But what I said to Red was, and I thought some cities were trying this, was like a transparency portal of contracts. It is, you know we have done a lot of work in this County, we're growing, and we're doing a lot. We've got the Highway Garage, we've got the Jail, we've got the Memorial Opera House plus all the Storm Water stuff that we're doing.

I mean, is there a way that, we can have all of the Vendors and Contractors that we do business with on our website? You know a place people can already go to whoever's getting money through the Elections website with the everybody's Campaign Finance reports, but I think it would be good if we had a transparency portal on there too, that show who are we doing business with.

Mr. Bozak, Are you asking for like how much?

Mr. Rivas, No I...

Mr. Bozak, I'm just trying to picture this.

Mr. Rivas, No just who the County's doing business with.

Mr. Stone, I've talked to you Jeremy, about this several times, and I'm I have no problem with that I work for the City of Chicago.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah.

Mr. Stone, And literally, and you might think I'm lying because it's the City of Chicago. I work with this Engineer for five (5) years, we were on a 36-hour turn I literally went to buy her coffee, and a sandwich, and she goes Red I can't, I can't. I went what are you talking about? I'm just...she goes no I can't, that's how strict, at least she was with, you know taking anything from Vendor. You know, but...

Ms. Graham, As it should be.

Mr. Bozak, Is that something...

Mr. Stone, But like you said it's not illegal, but at least if we had a list of hey, here's all the Vendors who work in Porter County. Hey I'm all about transparency, I have no problem with that.

Mr. Bozak, Is that something we could do? Or the Commissioners would have to do?

Mr. Rivas, Well...

Mr. Bozak, It's a good idea.

Mr. Rivas, The Auditor's Office holds all the contracts, so it would probably be their undertaking. So I don't know what that entails, that's why I wanted to put it out there. I don't know what that workload it would be? How long it would take? I'm not looking to throw all kinds of things, I can see them already...like (complaining), I mean it's just a conversation to have, I think as we continue to develop as a County, to have a transparency portal, and this is the biggest Election, right? It's Presidential, this is the big Election in every cycle, so I just wanted to put that out there. I mean, I don't know, we can talk about it later.

Mr. Stone, Yeah.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, You can look at, certainly something like by the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Stone, Whether we...whether we do it this year, or if we at least plant the seeds, and then get it started, get it going. for you know...

Ms. Graham, I think it's great.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah, I mean who's got a contract in the County? Who's doing business with the County? Vendors, Contractors, I mean we're doing a lot, we have done a lot of work over the last five (5), six (6), seven (7), eight (8) years, you know whatever.

Mr. Bozak, Is this list going to be like...I'm just curious, is it pages, upon pages? Or is it pretty...

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, If you're doing the entire contract, it'll be pretty big.

Mr. Bozak, Okay.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, I mean it's the simple database, I mean assuming that everything's within Indiana Code and Ordinance that we're allowed to.

Mr. Rivas, I don't think the contract, I just think a list of names.

Mr. Stone, The names of the Companies.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah.

Mr. Stone, In the County.

Mr. Rivas, I mean if somebody.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, List of Companies...

Mr. Rivas, Yeah if somebody further wants to, I mean they have every right to with a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) or do something else, but at least it shows who's doing business with the County.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Um yeah, we'd be open to that.

Mr. Brickner, So do we have somebody even...who's managing our website now? Do we have somebody managing County website?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Every single department manages their own departmental page. So...

Mr. Brickner, So who would that be? Us or the Commissioners that would put that on the website?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, Well I mean, if it's through the Auditor's Office...

Mr. Brickner you would do that?

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, The Auditor's Office.

Mr. Brickner, Okay.

Mr. Rivas, That's why I don't know what the undertaking would be, maybe they're going to talk tomorrow, and call me names for asking. But I just think at some point in time it's a good thought.

Mr. Bozak, One thing I would add to that, it's very important if we're going to do that that we keep it updated. So maybe if it could tie to our database, and I don't know if that's possible? But otherwise it's got to be updated, as we're doing things putting bad information out there look bad.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski, I'll take a look at the...I'll take a look at everything, and see if we can get some in concept for you, by your January 30th meeting. If we want to put that on there, we can have that discussion then.

Mr. Rivas, Yes, yeah it look at it. Look into it...

Ms. Graham, It makes commonsense.

Mr. Rivas, And just the other thing, I've thought about this for a while. And I've talked to a few people. It's about transparency, the Commissioners would have to do and it's a Tax Fraud Ordinance, Red you probably have got some understanding of that. There's been conversations over the last couple years, about raising LIT (Local Income Tax), raising Wheel Tax, raising the Storm Water, I just think that maybe this Council would have to do those things. That it's called a Tax Fraud Ordinance, where if people are out there paying cash, and cheating by misclassifying people, they're avoiding taxes, and those taxes pay for Cops, for Firefighters, for Services, if we have people that are cheating by paying cash on projects, or misclassifying people. That before we go and consider, or whoever raise taxes on people, we should make certain we're collecting all the taxes that are already due. So I mean...

Mr. Stone, Jeremy, I think and it could be something we could look into. I believe, I might be wrong, I think LaPorte County has something similar to that.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah.

Mr. Stone, I think, I don't know what it took them to pass it, and whether it was an Ordinance or whatever.

Mr. Rivas, It would probably have to be a Commissioner Ordinance. Yeah, but and I know Randy Palmateer he's presented those to a number of Municipalities. I think Valpo has a Tax Fraud Ordinance. So, I mean before we even consider raising taxes on anybody, let's make certain that we're collecting the taxes that are due.

Mr. Bozak, What's the...what is this Ordinance? Are you talking about hiring a person too?

Mr. Rivas, No...well that that would be the enforcement sure, but if people are breaking the law, that also could be something handed over to the Prosecutor. I mean if people...

Mr. Bozak, But it's a law now, they have to pay the tax.

Mr. Rivas, Well they have to sure, but I mean it's a huge problem in the construction industry, and as we continue, this economy continues to grow, and we continue to get more and more involved in construction.

Mr. Stone, And not only that, I mean, which you know, we can't be the police I get it. But like even Workman's Compensation, General Liability, they pay cash, a guy gets hurt and what happens it goes on either the County, you know it goes on somebody else's insurance. So it's really, it's a...it's a big problem.

Mr. Bozak, But why can't it be attack now, is what I'm getting at? Like why do we have to pass it?

Mr. Rivas, It's not...I mean that's a great question, because if you asked...I bet if you asked a Prosecutor that, he would say I don't I don't have the resources to go after that. And Randy Palmateer has approached the Prosecutors about it. And a good example too Red, is in Chesterton, why you would remember a couple years ago...

Mr. Stone, We had...

Mr. Rivas, A death.

Mr. Stone, A gentleman fall off...I was adamant about it...

Mr. Rivas, And he was like on three tiers down as a contractor, we're not...

Mr. Stone, I think he was from Indy.

Mr. Rivas, I don't know who he even worked for right?

Mr. Stone, We couldn't even find out who he worked for.

Mr. Rivas, It isn't right. We're paying a lot for construction, as the construction is going on, and I know we've had conversations regarding Wheel Tax, Storm Water, LIT, let's make sure we're collecting the taxes due to us.

Mr. Stone, The one thing I do know is, I mean if we do, I know the majority of the jobs in the county are Union Contractors.

Mr. Rivas, Under the RBO (Responsible Bidder Ordinance).

Mr. Stone, That's a good thing.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah.

Mr. Stone, Because Unions get audited...or the Contractors get audited by the Unions, they get audited.



Mr. Rivas, Yes.

Mr. Stone, You know there's a lot of safety measures, you know things that have to go on.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah, so thank you for the time. I think those two are things we really should consider. Kind of as we're...

Mr. Bozak, What are you going to do with that second one? Are you going to go to the Commissioners or when you...?

Mr. Rivas, Well no, if President Brickner would entertain it, maybe as we get going this year to having Randy Palmateer come in here explain the different Municipalities, Counties that have it. What's in an Ordinance like that, and you know the enforcement of...

Mr. Bozak, Okay.

Mr. Brickner, You mean like a presentation, or informational thing for us?

Mr. Rivas, Yeah, purely presentational information.

Mr. Brickner, Can you...would you be able to kind of take the lead on that? Do you have a contact for him?

Mr. Rivas, Yeah.

Mr. Brickner, So you would be able to do something like that?

Mr. Rivas, I can see if in the next couple months he can show up.

Mr. Bozak, I think that'd be great, that's good information to know.

Mr. Brickner, Yeah. I don't know if we need to do anything formal just...

Mr. Rivas, I'll talk to him, and I'll talk to you Mike. And at some point, we'll see the availability, and see if you want to put it on the agenda for just presentation.

Mr. Brickner, Anybody else have anything else to share? I was just going to say I think it would be remiss without letting you know Jeremy, sincerely your leadership on the Council has been an influence on all of us, you've done an outstanding job. and I just want to say thank you for your service and all the time you served either as Council President...

Mr. Rivas, I'm not going anywhere.

Mr. Brickner, You know Jeremy, and I really mean this. I mean I speak for myself, but if anybody else would like to say something...but I just want to thank you for everything you've done and I look forward to, you know continuing just like tonight, you know being able to share your knowledge and expertise with us as a team.

Mr. Rivas, We have a lot of work to do, I've said that, you know it's read a lot that with government there's always a lot to do, and not enough money to do it. Right? Really, but we've come a long way Sylvia knows...

Ms. Graham, Yes that's true.

Mr. Rivas, Sylvia was here a of couple years before me, I came in here and there was a lot going on.

Ms. Graham, It was bleak.

Mr. Rivas, And it wasn't always that good, and we've come a long, long way with this government. Porter County Government is a good unit of government, with low taxes and great services. It doesn't always come easy, trust me, this Council has had its battles and backstabbing's. And it happens right? But you move on, and move forward.

And way back when, you know like when I was drawn out of my district for standing up to a Commissioner...I was. Do you know that the FBI used to run around these hallways chasing people, I mean it wasn't good. I mean I had 30...this room was full of people in red shirts because they wanted me to vote against something. I knew it was right, we had to fix our Facilities. It hasn't been easy, you sit here long enough you're going to be scarred up.

You just do the right thing, you put the Taxpayers first, and we keep it going. We're going to keep going, we're in a good spot. So, I'm glad to hand that over, if you look at our AAA Rating, we're in great shape. So, Mike don't screw it up.

Mr. Brickner, I can't mess it up. Yeah, but you know our goal I think as a group is to carry on, you know we are the we are the keepers of the citizens money.

Ms. Graham, That's right.

Mr. Brickner, And to stay focused on that, and you know we talk about transparency and accountability. And those are principles I think this Council really hold on to, and these are values that you set the bar for the Council and we continue with that. But we are the keepers of the finances, and it's a big responsibility. So anyway we look forward to...

Mr. Stone, Mr. President I wanted to let Jeremy know, we can't vote on it now we don't have the Resolution. But with NIRPC (Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission), we we're going to have to come up and either do something with that, or not do something with that. It's a Resolution, and so that's going to be coming, I think they want...

Ms. Graham, They want more money.

Mr. Stone, They want more of a per capita tax, I think we're at .70 cents they want a \$1.50, which is going to add about \$150,000 to our General Fund, which means they're going to suck it down. There is a House Bill, I think was introduced down state right now that's going to the legislature. They want us to write a Resolution saying, please Legislators mandate us to NIPRC. I have a problem with that in and of itself, you know I think NIRPC (Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission) does a lot of great things, but I think that's something we're going to have to discuss.

Ms. Graham, I am so glad to hear you say that. NIRPC (Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission) in case somebody doesn't remember is what the County...what we sued as a Council to try and stay out of.

Mr. Rivas, No, that was the RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority).

Ms. Graham, Oh it was the RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority).

Mr. Rivas, Another Regional entity.

Mr. Stone, So I been talking about this a lot...

Ms. Graham, Okay, but anyway I just wanted to say to us as a Council to be careful with our tax dollars, that we have done a good job and when I have the State or whoever is coming to us wanting us to write a Resolution so that they're able to do something else.

Mr. Stone, Yeah.

Ms. Graham, That doesn't sound right, I want know...somebody's going to have to really explain to me the cost. What is this going to cost?

Mr. Stone, I had talked to Ty Warner before tonight, and I was very straight up with Ty. I told him that personally I don't ever speak for the Council, I speak for myself just like everybody here does. I said I have a problem with introducing a Resolution signing on to it saying sure let's have the Legislators force us to pay NIRPC money. If NIRPC (Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission) needs more money they can come in front of us, and you know...

Mr. Bozak, How about they get it from the State who has a ton of extra cash.

Mr. Stone, I didn't even get into that with them.

Mr. Bozak, They are swimming in it.

Mr. Stone, I said personally, I kind of have a problem with that, and I know they do a lot of good things. but he's like, well you know inflation and this...and that we haven't had a raise in years.

Mr. Bozak, We have road issues. We have road problems too, that we have to take care of our people in Porter County that we have to take care of first.

Ms. Graham, I agree, and in the paper today it was saying that all of our road money doesn't come back to us, we're all aware of that.

Mr. Stone, Right, I wanted to bring that up, because I told him I would at least address...

Ms. Graham, Thank you.

Mr. Stone, I told him that I would at least address it with the Council, and whether or not we decide to write the Resolution to go down State to make us give NIRPC more money. You know, if they are going to do it, they are going to do it. That's the way I look at it, I mean, I'm not going to sign a Resolution to say hey, please let us force us to pay them more money.

Mr. Vasquez, So the NIRPC's never approached this Council to ask for more money?

Mr. Rivas, Now.

Mr. Stone, No I was I was on the NIRPC Board, I think it was a December meeting, and you know, we have four (4) meetings a year.

Mr. Brickner, Right.

Mr. Stone, As a Council representative, and there's Fifty (50) people in the room. They gave a two-minute presentation that says, you know we're getting \$.70 cents, and we want a \$1.50. We just need to...it's not a raise, we just need to keep up with inflation. I went, oh if we're paying you more money, that's a raise. I understand it's inflation, they haven't had a...I think the \$.70 cents was back in 1995, don't quote me on that, but it's been a while. But whatever, you know Lake, LaPorte and Porter County give them...

Mr. Bozak, (Inaudible)

Mr. Stone, It's times...they times it by four (4), so it's really their Operating Budgets that they're looking at. You know for their Administrative Budget, that's how they operate, it's from Lake County, LaPorte, and Porter County, the per Capita. And then, they get a grant four (4) times that, and that's what they get to operate. He was trying to explain it.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah. I mean it's a necessity though, I mean it's a Regional Planning right and they do all the planning, rating, like if you want to get Federal dollars.

Mr. Stone, Yeah the Federal dollars.

Mr. Rivas, And like Willowcreek Road, the reason it got high up, it's been on a plan for Forty to Fifty years from NIRPC. I mean they plan regional growth, and then when we want our Federal Dollars, it's got to be in their plan, they're necessary, I mean we can't...

Ms. Graham, Speaking of that, I thought...

Mr. Rivas, We can't do it without them.

Ms. Graham, That was all...

Mr. Vasquez, Said and done?

Ms. Graham, Yes.

Mr. Vasquez, No, we've been kicking that thing around since 1987.

Mr. Rivas, Willowcreek Road?

Mr. Vasquez, Yes sir.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah, right.

Mr. Stone, That's why Andy is going to be our representative, because he was on a 2040 Plan...

Mr. Rivas, Oh.

Mr. Stone, And I think they're up to a 2050 Plan is I'm not mistaken.

Mr. Vasquez, Yeah, I was I was there in 2001 doing plans, and then again in 2012.

Mr. Rivas, But it's a requirement, to get roads in those plans, and then those plans are the only way we're going to get funded from the Federal Government, I mean you have to have NIRPC.

Mr. Stone, And a lot of times...listen, I'm a contractor I deal with the Federal Government. I deal with States, Locals, Federal Government, you know it's a 80/20 Grant, so if you get \$100,000 say for a sidewalk, I've seen this before...a sidewalk, a 500 foot sidewalk, you go through NIRPC right, it's a 20/80 Grant. You think oh wow, we're only paying 20% percent. By the time they have Environmental, you know all these different things you're paying \$250,000 for a 500 foot sidewalk, when it would cost you \$100,000 if you just paid it out of pocket. So sometimes, I don't know if it's a good thing.

Mr. Brickner, Do they make presentations to the other counties?

Mr. Stone, I don't think they have, they just passed it at the general meeting.

Mr. Vasquez, At the December meeting.

Mr. Stone, I voted for it, I didn't vote for the actually increase that I would do the Resolution. I voted for I would take it back, and I would discuss it with our Council. As we should.

Mr. Vasquez, I talked with Ty Warner this afternoon, and he said that we would get four (4) times the money.

Mr. Stone, Four (4) time the money in.

Mr. Vasquez, And I said how much is that exactly, four times going to Porter County? He said well I'll get back to you on that.

(Laughter)

Mr. Vasquez, I don't mind giving money, and getting four (4) times the money.

Mr. Stone, I'm the same.

Mr. Vasquez, But, if we're giving \$100 dollars and instead of getting \$400 dollars we're getting \$99 dollars, and the rest is going to other Counties, I have a problem with that.

Mr. Stone, I don't want to subsidized Lake County and LaPorte County.

Mr. Vasquez, Exact.

Mr. Stone, That's just where I'm at, I'm here for Porter County.

Mr. Vasquez, We live in Porter County folks.

Ms. Graham, Exactly.

Mr. Vasquez, We take care of Porter County residents.

Mr. Stone, And our roads, and everything else need to get done.

Mr. Rivas, Well with that, let's talk about appointments too. This is another discussion, I sent an email to the Commissioners, Harold I cc'd you on that for the RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority) Appointment. We kind of let that lapse, and it's another one where we pay \$3.5 million dollars annually in a membership through our Income Tax. Sylvia, that's what the one you were talking about and...

Mr. Stone, Hey Jeremy, just so...

Mr. Rivas, Yeah?

Mr. Stone, Our LIT (Local Income Tax) is a half of a percent correct?

Mr. Rivas, Yes.

Mr. Stone, Our RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority) comes off that LIT (Local Income Tax),

Mr. Rivas, Yes.

Mr. Stone, So that people understand we have a of a half percent LIT we give \$3.5 million dollars to the RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority).

Mr. Rivas, Yes.

Mr. Stone, That comes off our LIT.

Mr. Rivas, We only govern off .25% percent.

Mr. Stone, Right.

Mr. Rivas, The other .25% goes the RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority) and Homestead credits. So yes, we actually only govern off .25% percent. But yeah, that was another Regional entity, and I believe in regional cooperation, don't get me wrong at all. We're all interconnected people, nobody works, lives, shops, in their community, there's no closed communities. But the RDA (Indiana Regional

Development Authority), it's a good organization. But I think maybe it's time we looked at our appointment and get somebody a little bit louder right now for Porter County. You know with the South Shore Line, they created...the State created these Transportation Development Districts, and they're basically Tiff districts around all of the...if you've got a train station, and that money flows to the RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority) correct? And so going about that we want money for Porter County, we need somebody fighting for us. I'm not saying this guy, but he's never sat in front of us. And we...I just think it's time we had somebody on the RDA...

Mr. Bozak, Is that the one that expired in 2018?

Mr. Rivas, No, we appointed him...

Mr. Stone, Well I think we appointed somebody and he took over from Jeff Good 2015, so his appointment started in 2016 and I think he's up in 2024 of August I believe. I think he's a very good guy.

Mr. Bozak, Is that Chris Campbell?

Mr. Stone, Yeah.

Mr. Rivas, Yes.

Mr. Bozak, But how come it says...we got to get that updated Joy it says 2018 on mine.

Mr. Rivas, Well we...if Harold can work with Scott to figure out exactly where we're at?

Council Attorney Harold Harper, Yes.

Mr. Stones, And I think a lot of these TDD's (Transit Development Districts), you're right Jeremy what they're doing, they're drawing their boundaries on the...within the train station, and then RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority) gets that money back.

Mr. Rivas, The increment.

Mr. Stone, It's their own TIF (Tax Increment Financing), and right now I know Chesterton, from what I saw doesn't have a TDD (Transit Development District) but I believe they want to possibly put a TDD around Chesterton. I'll tell you, the people around Chesterton, and I walk Dunes every day I don't know how happy they're going to be with these TDD zones putting commercial...

Ms. Graham, You're right.

Mr. Stone, Because I want the Dunes to be...you know when I drive down Hwy 49, I love the way it looks. It's woods, it's dunes, and I think the people of Chesterton need to understand these TDD's (Transit Development Districts) might come in, and they might be drawing boundaries. And you know, I think everyone needs to have a say on some of this stuff. So, there's a lot of things to talk about.

Mr. Brickner, A lot of issues to talk about.

Mr. Stone, Yes sir.

Mr. Brickner, You know as a group, and again you know while making sure our taxpayer money is being spent very diligently.

Mr. Stone, And Wisely

Mr. Brickner, Very good.

Mr. Rivas, The only way...you know sometimes we got to be loud, and the Legislators are in session, and they create a lot of these laws. If we want money from NIRPC (Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission), we want money from the RDA (Indiana Regional Development Authority), we want partnerships and assistance, or money from the State they got to know, we've got to say something.

Mr. Stone, I'd like NIRPC to stay in Portage as well too.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah. Thank you.

**Meeting Adjourned**

Mr. Brickner, Any other members have any good discussion before we adjourn? We're all good?

Mr. Bozak, I got no good discussion.

Mr. Stone, I make a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Bozak, Second.

Mr. Brickner, Motion to adjourn.

Mr. Vasquez, Second.

Mr. Rivas, Second, second.

Mr. Brickner, Motion and a second...

Mr. Stone, We're going to do our first public comment on our first January Regular Council meeting.

Mr. Brickner, Yeah it's a Regular Council meeting.

Mr. Vasquez, This is our Reorganization Council meeting.

Mr. Brickner, So move to adjourn, we're adjourned. Thank you very much everybody.

Motion to adjourn carried on a unanimous voice vote.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

**PORTER COUNTY COUNCIL  
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA**

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Mike Brickner

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Red Stone

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Jeremy Rivas

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Andy Vasquez

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Greg Simms

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Andy Bozak

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Sylvia Graham

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Martin, Auditor