

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11TH, 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, January 11th, 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, January 11th, 2022.

Call to Order/Pledge

CONSENT AGENDA

Reorganization

• **President**

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

• **Vice President**

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

• **Secretary**

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

• **County Attorney**

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Payroll – December 24th, 2021 and January 7th, 2022.

Approval of Claims – December 16th, 2021 and January 6, 2022.

Approval of Minutes for December 14th, 2021.

Weights and Measures Monthly Report for – November 16th to December 15th, 2021 Filed.

MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE – SCOT MACDONALD, DIRECTOR

ARTISTIC SERVICES AGREEMENT

1. Jordon Dollins
2. Angela Heid
3. Andrew Glorioso
4. Michael Glorioso
5. Stephen Dean
6. Benjamin Leonard-White

VENUE RENTAL AGREEMENT

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Citizen Appointments to the following Boards:

- **Alcohol Beverage Board – 1**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Jason Gilliana, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **Board of Health – 2 of Democrat Affiliation**

Com. Biggs, Was Dr. Boxum on the board as well?

Com. Blaney, No. She would be replacing Donna Werner. Donna has been a great board member. She has put in some years of service. I had no problem with her. I just feel that in the middle of a pandemic we could really use a doctor. We had a lot more applications than usual. I liked Dr. Boxum.

Com. Biggs, Donna has requested reappointment?

Com. Blaney, Yes.

Com. Biggs, Who was the first name, I'm sorry?

Com. Blaney, There is Donna Werner is currently on the board and Linda Boxum is the doctor.

Com. Biggs, But who was the appointment before the recommended?

Com. Blaney, Terry Wultich.

Com. Good, She is a nurse.

Com. Biggs, I will support Terry's reappointment but I see no reason to replace Donna Werner at this time.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Terry Wultich and appointment Dr. Linda Boxum, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **Board of Zoning Appeals – 1**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Luther Williams, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **Convention, Recreation & Visitors Commission – 2**

Com. Blaney, Kurt Gillins has asked not to be reappointed.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Richard Riley and appointment of David Bolla, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **Gary/Chicago International Airport Authority Board -1**

Com. Good, No applications were received. We will advertise for this appointment again.

- **Parks and Recreation Board – 1**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Bryan Waisanen, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **Plan Commission – 2**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Luther Williams and Bob Gilliana, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **PTBOA – 2**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the appointment of Tami Bianco and Nancy Kolasa, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **Redevelopment Commission – 2**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Stephen Sularski and Jason Gilliana, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

- **West Porter Fire - 2**

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the reappointment of Chuck Murray and Pat Dragash, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners Appointed to the following Boards:

- **NIRPC – Com. Good**
- **Plan Commission – Com. Blaney**
- **Storm Water Advisory Board – Com. Good**
- **Community Corrections – Com. Biggs**
- **Juvenile Justice Advisory Board – Com. Biggs**
- **EMA – Com. Biggs**
- **Child Protection Team – Com. Blaney**
- **911 Advisory Board – Com. Biggs**
- **Center for Workforce Innovations – Com. Blaney**
- **Redevelopment Commission – Com. Good**

Com. Good, The three of us are on these boards and we have split those up over the last several years. I would suggest that we maintain the same board's positions that we had from last year if that works for everyone.

Com. Good, moved to approve the Board appointments stay the same as last year, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

An Ordinance to Establish Porter County, Indiana as a Broadband Ready Community – 2nd Reading.

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

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

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

A Grant Writing Service Agreement between the Porter County Board of Commissioners and Dannielle Herald.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Dannielle Herald for a Grant Writing Service Agreement, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

SHERIFF DAVE REYNOLDS

An Ordinance to Establish a Fund for the Receipt of Monies from the Department of Treasury Equitable Sharing Program Pertaining to Seized Items – 2nd Reading.

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

PURDUE EXTENSION - ANNETTA JONES, DIRECTOR

A Contractual Service Agreement between Purdue University and Porter County Government.

Com. Good, Scott is this for their operating agreement within the building that we do every year?

Atty. McClure, This is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Purdue Extension Contractual Service Agreement and Porter County in the amount of \$153,765.00.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the Contractual Service Agreement with Purdue University, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

FACILITIES – RAY CLOYD, SUPERVISOR

Videotec – A quote to provide and install access control on 8 doors at the Valpo Courthouse and 1 door to the elevator at 157 Franklin in Valparaiso in the amount of \$32,741.66.

Mr. Cloyd, Good morning. I'm here to request fob access to the Courthouse for the Clerk's entry to their office and also 157 for the elevator.

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

Com. Biggs, Did you get more than 1 quote?

Mr. Cloyd, No we've always had Videotec.

Com. Biggs, They have currently installed and maintain all of the cameras in the buildings now?

Mr. Cloyd, Yes.

Schindler Elevator Corp. – An upgrade Order Agreement to install a card reader which will restrict access in the amount of \$19,563.00.

Mr. Cloyd, The Schindler Elevator goes along with the fob access. We have to have them involved. That will stop people from using the employee elevator.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Schindler Elevator Agreement, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Good, Ray thank you for everything last year. Your department had a great year.

HIGHWAY DEPT. – RICH SEXTON, SUPERINTENDENT

Award Bids for 2022 Supplies.

Mr. Sexton, We are going to award the bids for 2022. For limestone Whitcomb Trucking, Ozinga Materials and Harry Brown Trucking. We would like to use Triple J-Mar for fuel. We will accept all other bids.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the 2022 Supply Bids, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Biggs, Rich in the future will you please print that and give each of us a copy with your recommendations.

Mr. Sexton, Yes sir.

ESRI – An Electronic System with a tracking and mapping feature for work done and materials used in the Highway Dept. in the amount of \$2,450.00.

Mr. Miller, Essentially it is an online ticketing system. What it will do in the first stage is allow the head office to assign jobs to people in the field. Online software allows them to communicate throughout the course of that job. It improves communication and efficiency that way. It will also apply accountability because every job that is assigned a GIS point that stored in perpetuity. Down the road when we have several done we can run an analysis on those points which will enable them to take a holistic approach to highway maintenance. Look for repeat problems. Issues of concern around the County. I think it will greatly improve the efficiency of the department with their job ticketing and trafficking.

Com. Good, You are basically creating more data. I'm sure Matt Gavelek the Highway Engineer has been involved in this because he will be the recipient of a lot of that information. And the Highway Dept. as well.

Mr. Sexton, For example when we install culverts it will give us a timeline of how long they last. Those types of things we keep track of on paper now, but to have it on a map and to know that we installed this culvert on this date. We paved a specific road on a specific date. This will be so much more efficient.

Com. Blaney, The work orders completed along with the materials will all be accessible online?

Mr. Sexton, Yes ma'am. Currently right now if we have a phone complaint we keep them in a log book. They will have access to put it on a map which will be sent to the foreman in that district. Then Jim and I will know about it as well. It will allow us to include pictures and various things like that which will keep a better record than we can currently do.

Com. Biggs, They are using a similar process in the Storm Water Dept.

Mr. Miller, Yes, very similar. A lot of elements like that will be in this same application.

Com. Good, It is just about accumulating more data. When you have 816 miles of road data becomes....because everything is a pecking order in its condition. That is how we're making our decisions every day and it's good to have good information.

Mr. Miller, The second phase of this will be a public basing form. The public will be able to report their concerns like they do with the storm water complaints.

Com. Good, It's a way for the public to communicate with the Highway Dept. So the dollar amount of \$2,450.00 is a onetime...is there an annual service agreement?

Mr. Miller, The license for the field workers to be able to operate and use this application is \$350.00a year per user. So that will be 7 users all together.

Mr. Sexton, In the future further down the road we are looking into using our GPS in all of our trucks to create a map. In Anchorage Alaska they have a map tracking system that ESRI uses. This is much further down the road but this will get towards what we can do. When our snowplow trucks are out it will track and know if they are done with a road and done with a subdivision. Eventually will head into tracking all of our trucks like that, which will be made aware of to the public.

Mr. Miller, Improving efficiency internally and also transparency. The public see what is going on and what the County is doing.

Com. Blaney, That is always our goal.

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

DEVELOPMENT & STORM WATER MNGMNT. – BOB THOMPSON, DIRECTOR

2 Appointments to the Storm Water Advisory Board – Seeking Appointments – No Party Affiliation needed.

Com. Good, Are these for the SWAB Board? Did we advertise for this?

Mr. Novotney, Yes. No they got left off of the advertisements so we need to advertise for that. Our next meeting is not until February (Inaudible) I believe so we have time to fill. One is Todd Elliott's position. His appointment ended at the end of 2021 so he has reapplied. Then Bob Gilliana moved over to Plan Commission so we need to fill his spot. We want to announce that we are seeking appointments for the Storm Water Advisory Board.

Com. Blaney, Are there any requirements?

Mr. Novotney, There are no party affiliation requirements. Technical knowledge is not even a requirement. If someone wants to show up, work and cares about the infrastructure and people of Porter County.

Com. Blaney, Do the applicants need to live in unincorporated Porter County?

Mr. Novotney, They do.

Com. Good, The 28th of January deadline for those applications.

Mr. Novotney, Thank you.

United Consulting – A Design Services Agreement for Bridge 40, County Rd. 1000 S. over the Reeves Ditch in the amount of \$230,550.00.

Com. Good, The Reeves Ditch is the very large ditch in South County that connects to the Kankakee River. That is where all of our water goes to the Kankakee River. That is the spot.

Mr. Thompson, It is right at the County Line. A lot of that water from Reeves Ditch also comes from LaPorte County. This the bridge that we had to close because of rapid deterioration. We had an inspection done on it and it was opened backup not too long ago but at a very small weight limit, maybe at 8 tons. What did we post down there Rich?

Mr. Sexton, 12.

Mr. Thompson, It's at 1000 S. The easiest way to get to it is 600 E. There use to be an old granary and you head east.

Com. Good, Is it just a regular bridge? What is our span on it?

Mr. Thompson, About 40 I think. Which is a typical bridge down there in the south part of the County. The abutments are right at the water's edge. When we redesign it we will be pulling those out.

Mr. Novotney, So the span length will more than likely increase from right where it is at right now.

Mr. Thompson, We're finding that we going to see 65' to 70' for some of these. Since this was rapid deterioration part the contract is that it is on an accelerated design. We want to have the design done in a year's time and we want it to be soon.

Com. Good, Keep pushing them.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve the United Consulting Design Agreement, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

United Consulting – A Bridge Inspection Agreement for a 2 year cycle in the amount of \$225,950.47.

Com. Good, Since this is the first of the year can you just go over briefly what they do, how we're rated by the State and what we have to do to comply.

Mr. Thompson, This is part of the Federal Transportation Act through the Federal Highway and administered by INDOT. All of the counties within the State have to inspect their bridges once every 2 years. If there are any bridges rated in poor condition they will have to be rated once a year. There is a 4 year cycle but INDOT has so many contracts going on at this time that they approached some counties and we were one of them if we could go on a 2 year cycle so they could start staggering them with these contracts. They got hit very hard this year but they are hoping to stagger them. This is getting into the inspection process for all of our bridges.

Com. Good, How many?

Mr. Thompson, I think we're up to 132 right now.

Com. Good, That is in the cities and towns too. That is not railroads. That is not trains. Bridges for the toll roads, trains for the railroads, none of that. It is just our bridges in the County of Porter.

Mr. Thompson, Right. Local roads. Our compliance date is May which means our consultant has to start in May and inspect all 132 bridges this year. They usually have it done within a month and a half. The following year it will be the bridges that are considered in poor shape that need to be watched on a regular basis. I would just like to point out to the fact that when Mike and I took this over there were 18 to 20 bridges on that list. We are down to about 10.

Com. Good, Chipping away at it. They were pretty decimated. As you can see you can't do a bridge in 6 months. It takes almost a year and a half to two years just to work through the government, the federal government and the different entities you have to work with.

United Consulting – A 1 year Supplemental Agreement No. 3 for On-call Engineering Services.

Mr. Thompson, The bridge inspection are for spans of 20' or greater. What we are going to be doing with the 1 year supplemental agreement is looking at spans less than 20'. They will be 5' to 19' 11". We don't have an inspection inventory on those types of structures. Those structures are important to the County as well. We will be starting that up this year in May.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve both of the United Consulting contracts, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

JODI JACKSON – VALPARAISO FAMILY YMCA

A request to host the Annual Ringing in Spring 5K/10K Road Race to be held on Saturday, April 3rd, 2022 at 7:30 a.m. The race will start and finish on Cumberland Dr. by the YMCA Pavilion.

Ms. Jackson, It will just be the 5K this year.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Annual Ringing in Spring, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

CARRIE HONEYCUTT – FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU

A request to use the sidewalks surrounding the Courthouse grounds for 10th Annual Chalk the Walk on Saturday, June 11th, 2022 from 6:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The event will include live music and free creative children's activities. There will be 1 tent set up on the pavement for registration and information.

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

Ms. Honeycutt, Thank you so much.

CITIZEN REMARKS

Ms. Gingrich, Good morning my name Elizabeth Gingrich, 102 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso. I'm coming a little late to the game in terms of ARPA Funds. I am a professor of International Trade at Valparaiso University's College of Business. I'm a local attorney. I am an editor of an international journal and I would say think globally, act globally. The world came together in Glasgow Scotland this past November. Businesses, governments, local governments, national

governments. One thing we all know is that we have a very slim window of time to act. China is the number one country in terms of the highest carbon emissions but we are the United States per capita the highest. Indiana just joined Louisiana as the two top States in this country with the highest carbon per capita emissions. Porter County has an air quality as per the WHO of 1.4 above what is acceptable. USA News and World Report has put Porter County's health at 60 out of 100. I was hoping that this federal grant....it's not just a federal grant it's a war chest that was given to this County by the federal government in May \$33 + million as emergency pandemic funds to look at health care. To look at clean air. To look at clean water, waste water. I understand that back in October that this Board agreed to an ordinance basically parcel out half of that money. \$5 million to renovate the Memorial Opera House, which I can't see looking at the statute how that fits in in terms of the guidance. The Board of Commissioners are the fiduciaries of not just federal taxpayers but of this County of doing something for us all. Homelessness, mental health, opioid addition, again clean air. Why can't we use some of this to electrify our bus system? Our kids are breathing in diesel fumes, the dirtiest form of energy. At least twice a day during the school week. Why can't we put in charging stations the town? Why can't we put solar on the County government buildings? Let's use this money to put Porter County on the map for all of the right reasons. Indiana was the third largest State to use the most coal in 2021 after Texas and Missouri. Indiana has the nation's largest coal refinery company in the State. This is not the best way of going. Again, we have a war chest. We have housing concerns. We have clean water, clean air concerns. I would hope that as fiduciaries you would use this to notify not for profits, the largest employers, and the smallest of businesses and have a special meeting where people don't have to take off a day from their work to come and put in their two cents as stakeholders of this County to do something rather grand with this money. This is just a plea again to follow the Dept. of Treasury guidelines. To follow the purposes of ARPA and to look at what are the major ills of Porter County that can be used to rectify a lot of wrongs. I thank you.

Com. Good, Thank you.

Ms. Lane, I am Robyn Lane. My address is 258 Haas St., Valparaiso, Indiana. I wasn't sure if the community was aware of the spending of the Corona Virus local official recovery funds. Did you guys utilize that when you were making your decisions for the money that was going to be spent throughout the last year? Any of the Commissioners? Are you aware of this? Have you seen this?

Com. Biggs, I'm very aware of it.

Ms. Lane, Have you guys seen this? You can find it on Indiana.gov.

Atty. McClure, The public comment portion is for you to make comments and then the Commissioners can respond if they chose to.

Ms. Lane, Well let me continue on thank you. I did find this on Indiana.gov last month and I've just been browsing through and I do recommend any of the other people in this community to also go on Indiana.gov and look up this tool kit. It is actually beneficial in helping us in figuring out how these funds should be spent. At this point we're going to be working on the second disbursement that is going to be coming out. As the last person was saying...there is actually a couple of teams that was recommending that we have come together that is different people than the community. In the guidelines it actually goes over government leaders, teachers and educators, health care workers, non for profit organizers, employers, contractors, engineers and lawyers. I don't know if that has happened yet. I would recommend that we start working in that area. Apparently there is a core team that is supposed to be assembled to work together and make sure that that money is being addressed appropriately for the different areas in the community that are lacking and that would benefit from that money the most. In here it was going over the homeless community and each of the communities. I kind of felt like some of this was really interesting as well. It says the framework for assessing eligibility of projects and services identify the harmful effect of the COVID-19 and the (Inaudible) will address. Assess for disproportionate impact of the distressed populations or sectors and determine on how to prove the expense produces the expanded outcome to help those different areas that are already being affected by the COVID pandemic. I do urge you guys to utilize this tool kit for future decisions being made in our community. I also encourage that our community look at this tool kit and look at the ways to actually help our community on a higher level because as a health care worker I just am heartbroken to see that there are so many people suffering right now and to see if money can be spent to help these people that are suffering and are going through hard times is my goal. Like I said any way that I can do that that is what I'm advocating for at this moment. Thank you for your time and like I said if you haven't looked at this tool kit I would highly recommend it for everyone in the community.

Ms. Sweeney, Hi Sheila Sweeny, 1606 Carriage Dr., Valparaiso. I just wanted to give you a copy of a petition I put together that is being sent to the Council. I am hoping that when they receive this plan or ordinance that they vote no and the ARPA Funds can be reassessed from the start. Not just the second (Inaudible) but the first (Inaudible). I just made one copy. It is an ongoing petition. Right now it has over 130 signatures and comments from people in Porter County. It just got started so I assume that there will be many more signatures. I will this on to the Administrative Assistant. I just want to say as a citizen the pandemic wreaked a lot of havoc. It's not over and just for an example the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence reported that domestic violence deaths had risen 181% during the pandemic. That is huge. We have an organization called the Caring Place that has been outsourced to help our domestic violence issues in this County. \$5.5 million for an Opera House seems excessive to me when we have like the prior speaker spoke so much suffering that is ongoing. I'm sure if you spoke to the Sheriff the County Jail is the only place that people can go to recover from addiction. We have housing opportunities that had to give out tents to its homeless because there is not enough money for shelter for the people of this County. I could go on and on but \$5.5 million for charcuterie to have between performances seems excessive and disgusting. Please reassess this and I hope you will if it is possible rescind this plan, start over and get public input. I'm on vacation this week but I came in to talk to you. The regular folks who live in our County they are at work. There should be vigorous opportunity for public input from all of your citizens as well as your non-profits. Thank you.

Mr. Charriere, Gilles Charriere, 1606 Carriage Dr., Valparaiso. The first thing I want to say is I wish I didn't have to speak today because I have a lot of respect for our Commissioners. I do truly believe that their intentions are good and they really work very hard. I can't imagine working hard like this to serve our community. However, today I have to speak against the ordinance and the way the money is proposed to be allocated. When I became a U.S. citizen in 2017 I made a pledge in the court of law that part of being a citizen is being involved in the community and if I had to speak on a matter on behalf of the community I would. So that is why I'm here today. I have spoken to a lot of people including elected officials who some of them will not say publicly. Everyone I have talked to so far does not think that this plan is wise. That it reflect the intent of the American Rescue Plan. This being said I think that the best of intentions were at play when this was designed. I think we all make mistakes. I've made plenty so I'm not pointing any fingers. By the time that I saw the webpage from the County and it was asking for input...and actually you can see it when you go to the page. It says "hey we want your input for \$33 million", but when you click on it it says half of it is already gone. That is basically what it said. I don't feel like I had a chance to talk to my few friends that are involved with helping communities. When I talked to them they said they didn't know about it. I feel that we need to do a do over. Use the OCRA guidelines that are required. It would be nice to have a core team and get the input. You have to seek the input. Like I said by the time I found out about it it was too late. It seems like that is the case of most people in the County. I don't know when the people in Portage and Kouts will hear the money is being spent on a local project that is in Valparaiso. Very very respectfully I am asking that the Board of Commissioners would create a resolution as crazy as it seems to ask the Council to vote no on their own ordinance. I think when a mistake is made it is good to recognize it. At the end of the day it is not who is right, it is what is right. Thank you.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

Jeffrey J. Good

Laura M. Blaney

Jim Biggs

Attest: _____
Vicki Urbanik, Auditor