

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, MARCH 14TH, 2023
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, March 14th, 2023 in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Administration Center.

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

Call to Order/Pledge

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Payroll – February 17th and March 3rd, 2023.

Approval of Claims – February 9th, February 16th, February 23rd, March 2nd and March 9th, 2023.

Approval of Minutes for February 7th, 2023.

Weights and Measures Monthly Report – December 16th, 2022 to January 15th, 2023 – Filed and January 16th to February 15th, 2023 - Filed.

MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE – SCOT MACDONALD, DIRECTOR

ARTISTIC SERVICES AGREEMENT

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Lucky Stiff – Benjamin Michalak | \$ 300.00 |
| 2. Nonsense – John Peluso | \$1,800.00 |
| 3. Nonsense – Julia Paige Thom | \$ 600.00 |
| 4. Nonsense – Jennifer Fenstermaker | \$ 300.00 |

VENUE RENTAL AGREEMENT

1. Valparaiso Community Band – Memorial Day Concert – Fee Waived
2. Parkview Elementary School – Talent Show - \$500.00 Non-Profit

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the consent agenda, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Honoring former Sheriff Dave Reynolds.

Com. Biggs, We had announced I believe at our first meeting of the year we were going to be honoring the service of former Sheriff David Reynolds. Due to some personal commitments he wasn't able to be here but the Board of Commissioners felt it important to honor Dave and his 16 years in the Sheriff's Department which is very unusual. He was a good Sheriff. We'll miss him but we just wanted to bring that up. They've already come by and picked up his little plaque. We didn't want to fail in mention that.

COMMISSIONERS

Ordinance Creating a Non-Reverting Fund # 8165 for Receipt of Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservancy District (VLACD) Blackhawk Beach Grant – 2nd Reading.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve on 2nd Reading, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Ordinance pertaining to Puppy Mills update.

Atty. McClure, We're tracking House Bill 1121 to see how it proceeds to our state legislature to see what that may or may not turn out to actually prohibit us from doing in its final language assuming it's passed. And I will keep tracking it and keep the Commissioners updated as to the progress.

Com. Blaney, Is there any reason we shouldn't pass it now?

Atty. McClure, Only with the possibility that if the state does pass it we would be preempted. It's either pass now and hope they don't or it's changes of language or wait to see what they do.

Com. Blaney, Well I personally would rather move ahead with it.

Com. Biggs, I will entertain a motion to move on with it.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve moving forward with an Ordinance pertain to Puppy Mills, Com. Biggs second, motion carried.

Com. Regnitz, opposed.

Com. Biggs, If we need to change it we have time. We can change it.

Contracts Agreement for Appraisals to lease out space at the Sheriff's Residence.

Com. Regnitz, I asked a commercial realtor to come over and walk through the old Sheriff's residence with us to determine whether that would be something viable that we could lease out on a longer term basis. It does look like that we have the possibility of doing that. In speaking with Atty. McClure we need two appraisal by certified appraisers for what the market value would be and we do it as is. Which means that whoever is leasing it would have to make the leaseholder improvements. A couple of things that we realized as we were walking through there we were noting that there was not a restroom on the first floor, but there actually had been a restroom on the first floor. So it is just a matter of putting the toilet back in. The sink back in. A wall in, a door to make that a restroom again. Another thing that the realtor suggested is that we not have doors on the wood frame but we have something like a barn door that is attached to the plaster because that can be repaired but the wooden framing may not be. We just don't want to destroy the historical significance of that. We are hoping that the leaseholder makes those improvements at some point in time and we will provide a lease abatement and then at some point in time as we are actually generating revenue that we can use that to make other improvements to the property.

Com. Blaney, For discussion what do you mean by a lease abatement?

Com. Regnitz, Whatever their expenses are in terms of fixing the walls and everything that they need to do to make it into a workable space of course we would have an agreement. And we would have to approve through our Facilities Dept.

Com. Blaney, Has this been in front of the Council yet?

Com. Regnitz, It doesn't actually have to go in front of the Council.

Com. Blaney, Well most abatements do. So it hasn't been in front of the Council as far as buy-in? We don't really have a set plan that has been publicly discussed with the Council about the whole Opera House and the expansion yet right. It doesn't seem like we have an agreement on that at this time.

Com. Regnitz, Can I just ask Atty. McClure. He didn't indicate that this would be something that we needed to bring in front of the Council.

Atty. McClure, In order to lease out the property we do not have to take it before the Council unless the appraisals come back and the proposed fair market rent produces \$25,000.00 or more a year.

Com. Blaney, Well and as far as bringing in front of the Council I mean that we needed to officially. I just think it is wise to have buy-in when we have these plans on the table for the expansion that includes that building.

Com. Biggs, I believe that correct me if I'm wrong Barb that there has been individual conversations or conversations made with individual board member in regards to this idea. As far as a formal presentation in front of the Council, no that has not happened to my knowledge.

Com. Blaney, And will we have anything in an agreement that will handle the historical? If we are leaving it to leasers to do the improvement.

Com. Regnitz, That would absolutely be something that we are cognizant of and all of those leaseholder improvement would have to be approved in advance yes. This is just a good way for us to help to maintain that building and to make improvements to that building without having to asset taxpayers to subsidize that.

Com. Blaney, But if we rent it out to a private entity the taxpayers won't be able to visit that building and enjoy the history.

Com. Regnitz, Well actually it is not in use right now. The back portion which is the old jail will still be used as the old jail and the POCO Muse will still offer tours through that portion of that building.

Com. Blaney, But not the residents?

Com. Regnitz, Not the residents, correct.

Com. Blaney, Okay.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve to receive Appraisals to Lease out Space at the Sheriff's Residence, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, Opposed.

Opioid Settlement Funds – Resolution to fund a Police Resources and Outreach Coordinator (PRO) in the Sheriff's Department.

Com. Biggs, Can you give us a description of what this position is exactly and what its responsibilities would be?

Sheriff Balon, Absolutely. Good morning. The Police Resource and Outreach Coordinator is going to be someone that holds a master's degree level that comes in and provides services outside the realm of where the police get involved. We're there to identify and connect this person to people that are in need of services for substance dependencies, mental health, homelessness but it goes bigger than that as well. This person would go through our daily reports. They would identify children that may have been exposed to a critical incident within their home or some exposure. They would connect with the schools and make sure that child doesn't get lost in the crack so to speak. This person would also deal with going through the reports where there's elderly in the community that might need some further assistance. They would connect those dots from all types of different realms where the police could respond, help identify and then proceed to have our PRO Coordinator kind of put these people in the services that will just help reduce call for service and make sure that people are receiving the services they need that police and fire go to on a regular basis.

Com. Biggs, So it is to make sure that people are receiving the services that they need.

Sheriff Balon, Exactly right.

Com. Biggs, It is freeing up the police officers to do what they were hired to do.

Sheriff Balon, Absolutely and internally we also have an internal component as well because this person will also help kind of further train our officers on how to identify different types of scenarios where people are in crisis and also it will help provide a wellness component to the officers. What they say is the average person deals with five to six traumatic experiences in a lifetime. Where public safety personnel deal with that in one month. So you know in order for our officers and our First Responders to be able to help people that are in crisis we need to make sure that they receive everything that they need and the tools that they need to make these transitions go even smoother.

Com. Biggs, I think it's a wonderful idea.

Com. Regnitz, And just from a funding perspective we are estimating that is going to be \$100,000.00 a year. We will be able to fund that with our current anticipated funding for 16 years including this year.

Sheriff Balon, That is what the numbers show. That total includes salary, benefit, training that type of thing that person will need in addition to that.

Com. Biggs, And all of that is coming out of the Opioid Funds for the next 16 years.

Ms. Grskovich, My understanding was that it was 6 years.

Com. Regnitz, 16.

Ms. Martin, How did you come up with the 16 number because the number that we had within the restricted funds is \$600,000.00, which would be 6 years?

Com. Regnitz, How we came up with that number is we added the non-restricted and the restricted came up with \$2.5 million and divided that by 16.

Ms. Martin, Well you are talking about the money that hasn't come in yet.

Com. Regnitz, Yes.

Ms. Martin, Okay because currently we're just talking with what we have.

Com. Regnitz, Correct, but we do know that money is coming in.

Com. Biggs, Well it's a wonderful idea and I'm glad you came up with it. I think we are going to reap some benefits by that. I think you will see those benefits in short order.

Sheriff Balon, It is something that I did in Valpo and I've seen a big success in it there.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Resolution to fund a Police Resource and Outreach Coordinator in the Sheriff's Dept., Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors – Proposed Bonds of 2023.

Com. Regnitz, This is the company that did our last fund. We've asked them to submit a proposal to do this year's bond.

Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors – Financial Advisory, Consulting and Compilation Services.

Com. Regnitz, Baker Tilly also did that for 2021 and we're just asking them to do an update for 2022.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve both Baker Tilly Municipal Advisor Agreements, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

A Cooperative Funding and Development Agreement between the Porter County Convention, Recreation & Visitor's Commission and the Porter County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the promotion and development of the Porter County Memorial Opera House.

A Cooperative Funding and Development Agreement between the Porter County Convention, Recreation & Visitor's Commission and the Porter County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the promotion and development of the Porter County Expo Center.

A Cooperative Funding and Development Agreement between the Porter County Convention, Recreation & Visitor's Commission and the Porter County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the promotion and development of the Porter County Museum Foundation.

Com. Blaney, How many years have we been doing this?

Atty. Hollenbeck, A long time. At least 10 years.

Com. Blaney, I just wanted to express my appreciation. I think these dollars really make the difference for the venues. So I appreciate it.

Com. Biggs, Lorelei can you give us and the audience an idea of what kind of funds your agency is giving to these other departments.

Ms. Weimer, For all 4 it is \$150,000.00 for the year.

Com. Blaney, Together.

Com. Biggs, It's a lot of money.

Ms. Weimer, It's a lot of money.

Com. Blaney, And the fourth one that is not on here because they are not directly under us is the Parks.

Atty. Hollenbeck, That is correct. The three that are being asked to approve are the three over which you have authority, responsibility and jurisdiction.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Cooperative Funding and Development Agreements for the Porter County Memorial Opera House, the Expo Center and the Museum, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Recommend Plan Commission to review Ordinance Number 20-11 "Unified Development" in order to potentially repeal or revise.

Com. Regnitz, We recognize that there might be some liabilities and some deficiencies in our current solar ordinance. This is a proposal to refer that to the Plan Commission to potentially repeal it and or revise it.

Com. Biggs, Scott can you give a little bit more of the background on this as to what it will apply to or what it won't apply to.

Atty. McClure, I believe that we have some underlying property right issues. We have a current ordinance. The ordinance was passed. We've had some things happening in the private sector as far as leases and things. I believe that those fall right now legally under the ordinance. The changes that may be whether it's by repealing or by amending. The repeal I think it's a little easier to say I do not believe that people that are sitting with current leases that are signed would be affected by a repeal of the solar ordinance. I believe that there is a sound argument to be made that they would be under the current. Whether it's the repealed or not. The repeal and or amendment that would be added to the ordinance would affect those pieces of property that are not currently under lease with the company at this point in time. I think that is the easiest way to do it. It is a complicated issue dealing with taking property rights.

Com. Biggs, So if I understand what you are saying that any property owner who has a current signed lease with a solar company these amendments wouldn't affect them.

Atty. McClure, Would not necessarily affect them. Correct.

Com. Biggs, That to me is somewhat disturbing because I mean as we all know that according to NextEra's own admission that you know they are for the better part of over two years they've been in negotiations with the property owners. And Porter County at the time had not even...we didn't know they were in town doing it. That is my point. And right now we could have solar companies getting landowners under lease. Even if we pass something next month it's not going to apply to them. My point is we have no idea of how many parcels of land, how many acres in this County are under lease without our knowledge where that land is currently sitting. I think that holds us at a huge disadvantage. The law is the law and it is what it is.

Atty. McClure, I mean our solar ordinance goes back to 2020 I believe or 2021. So under that point a reading of it has a legal use. We weren't party to the leases so we aren't aware of what leases may or may not be out there. Depending on the lease. Depending on the land. Depending on the zoning those things did not need additional zoning approval. In it lies the crux of the issue but what you're attempting to do is send it back to the Advisory Plan Commission to be able to review it for either a repeal or amendment to the terms and for them

to have that set back up as they do and a recommendation for this Board to review and potentially pass.

Com. Blaney, When is the next Plan Commission meeting?

Com. Regnitz, The 25th I believe.

Atty. McClure, 22nd maybe.

Com. Regnitz, Sorry.

Com. Biggs, In my opinion I am drawing from nearly 20 years of experience sitting up here. This has happened very quickly. And I can't think of a project of this size that has even come close to maturing as quickly as this has. It has been really difficult on our end to try to get a hold of it. To try to makes sense of it. And a big reason that is they came into this County without first coming to us and set these leases up. Now we could be very well waking up 5 or 6 years from now and the southern part of our County looked like something of a sci-fi movie. That is my fear. It is what it is. The law is what it is and we'll do the best that we can in regard to all of it. At the end of the day we are going to follow the law and we are going to be fair. We are going to look at the existing ordinance and recommend amendments where we feel they need to be made in order to get some kind of control of this because right now it is out of control.

Com. Regnitz, moved to refer Ordinance No. 20-11 Unified Development to the Plan Commission for potential repeal and or revision, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Recommend Plan Commission to update Telecommunicator Ordinance in regards to Institutional zoning.

Atty. McClure, We have had a few issues come up and as the Telecommunication world continues to modify and change the telecommunication ordinance was originally written. And when we were looking at more static, large size cell phone towers that has slowly evolved and changed to things that aren't just cell phone towers. With those changes specifically institutional zoning. That is normally your schools, your government buildings things along those lines. We think we need to take a look to make sure that we're not overly constricting the telecommunication equipment that may or may not need to go into those areas. I think we can look at the particular zoning without necessarily making a wholesale change to the entire ordinance itself. Again, I would since it's coming out of Commissioners' office we just need a motion and a second to send it to the Advisory Plan Commission for them to take a look at it and send up any potential recommendations.

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

Curt Ellis' New Role.

Com. Regnitz, At the last Council meeting that we were at we got approval to change Curt Ellis' title to Media Specialist. As a result we are hoping that we can shift more of Curt's role to a PR role to tell our story, our County story. One of the things that we are hoping to accomplish and take Board action on today is that the responsibility for maintaining the individual department's websites will be turned over to the individual department if they have the ability to do that. That is basically what we're asking the Board today to approve.

Com. Biggs, Those who have worked with him you know that Curt is very talented at what he does. I just think that this takes better advantage of his talents putting him in this new role.

Com. Blaney, The reason that we got to this place was one person doing all of the different websites was so we would have a unified message. It came from one person and it made a lot of sense. This used to be where we had websites being managed by each individual department and we had a hodgepodge. That wasn't unified and wasn't consistent so I'm not in favor of going back to this.

Com. Regnitz, And that also was a concern in our conversations. One of the things that we're going to be doing is that all of the changes have to be approved. They don't just go directly to the website so they will be approved.

Com. Blaney, Who is approving them?

Com. Regnitz, The IT Department will be approving them. They have a template. There was a template on the website. There's not a lot of deviation from the template.

Com. Blaney, Well I would rather seeing IT doing IT stuff.

Com. Regnitz, This actually is IT stuff.

Com. Blaney, Websites management when we're being threatened with privacy hacks and everything else every day.

Com. Biggs, That's where that's all managed out.

Com. Blaney, That's fine. You guys voted yes and I will vote no.

Com. Biggs, Privacy hacking and privacy issues are not managed currently out of Curt's office.

Com. Blaney, Exactly and I don't want to give it to IT who should be managing hacks and take away their time for something like making sure the colors are right on the website.

Com. Biggs, That is what I stated. Currently hacking into our system is managed out of IT.

Com. Blaney, Yes. And I don't want them to spend their time making sure the colors are correct on our website.

Com. Biggs, Well I don't think that that is what they are looking for.

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

Com. Blaney, Opposed.

Space needs - Discussion.

Com. Regnitz, I wanted to bring to the Commissioners attention some of the work that I have been doing with regard to a number of different department having additional space needs. It started with the Health Dept. They have \$1 million from the ARPA Funds and they are hoping that they are able to expand their operation. They have five different functions within their department. At the same time we have the Coroner reaching out to us in our Admin. meeting mentioning that they are completely out of space. Bursting at the seams. In fact they are using some of the space that the Health Dept. is hoping to move into. We asked Sheriff Balon if he would show us the space that was available over at their facility thinking that might be a possibility. It turned out for two reasons that that was not a viable option and that it did not meet the Coroner's needs. Sheriff Balon was hoping that he could use that space because he's trying to create some mental health beds within the Jail. And in so doing he needed to move people into those offices that we were considering for the Coroner. So then we came back and one of the requirements for the Coroner is to have covered parking. We started looking at Voters Registration to see if there might be a possibility that we could move Voters Registration and the Elections Dept. You also have to have the ability to have early voting which complicates it. Right now currently we have Voters Registration we have early voting in this building. We initially were looking at the Courthouse thinking that might be an option because then it would be under the County Clerk in the same facility. And that would be beneficial to the County Clerk but we realized that that was going to present its own challenges with having to go through security. We would have to build a restroom. Or we were looking at the old probation space on the first floor. With having to move security, having to put a restroom in that space and the additional work that would need to be done. It just didn't seem like that was the best option. So then we looked over at 157 to see if that might be a possibility. We met with the Clerk Jessica Bailey.

Com. Biggs, That's the old jail folks on right down the road here.

Com. Regnitz, At 157 Franklin and it seems like this is really just the perfect solution because there's very little that we would need to do in the old restaurant space. The one thing that I was concerned about was the kitchen area and somebody getting hurt with the freezers and refrigerators and kitchen equipment. Daniel pointed out that all we have to do is close and lock that door and they can't get into that area. It also is beneficial in that all of the data drops

are there. They already have an office that could function as their ballot space. From a handicapped area out the back door there is a handicap parking space right outside the back door. And outside the front door not directly in front of that door but just a little to the north there's a handicapped space. There's possibly a second handicap space I'm not sure two okay. Daniel's telling me there are two. Then the city parking lot is just kitty corner to 157 Franklin Building which means that the walk is not is not a problem. It's probably the same walk if you parked in the garage here and walked in for early voting. At the lower level we would be able to have what do you call that a cage? And we would be able to house all of their equipment in one spot. Right now we have equipment in three different spots downstairs and in the garage. And that equipment they need to be touching every week to make sure it's still working. They have to turn it on, they have to plug it in. A lot of that equipment is in the garage where it's cold and the equipment is degrading over time because it's not able to be temperature controlled. Plus the people that have to go in there and work with that equipment. It's really cold in there during the winter. So in this case it would be warm it. It would be bright and we could secure that to whatever extent that needs to be secured both audio visual and visual as well from a perimeter perspective. Then in terms of Voters Registration the Health Dept. said is there any way we could take the space where Veteran's Administration is currently. So we looked to see if we would be able to fit both Veteran's Administration and the Coroner in that space of Voters Registration. And just yesterday we're showing that space to Veteran's Administration and they were really excited because the door would be right by the elevator on the first floor. We could actually swap outdoors so they would have the same glass door that they have. I think that would fit there. I'm not sure that's the same size doors and or we can give them a glass door. Currently that is the employee only wooden door. We would just put a wall, a simple wall to separate those. Two of the offices we would have to put walls and doors in but the thing that they were really excited about that they were going to get that storage room that is currently being used as the ballot room. The have a number of different things that they need to store in there and they were really excited about that. When the Coroner Cyndi Dykes looked at it she thought that would be a great option for her. One of the problems that she has right now where she is storing her I hate to say body bags and all of her equipment when she pulls thing out of that room, it's the storage area that's used by other people. If she even takes one thing out somebody might put something else in there and then she doesn't have storage space. We'll be able to give her her own storage room where she can keep all of her supplies. In looking at this this is really a win, win, win for everybody. Everybody wins in doing these moves. The Health Dept. is going to be able to take that entire space going backwards. Now I'm looking at a timeline for this and then talking with our Clerk it appeared that May 3rd would be the ideal date. The election equipment is going to be coming back and rather than moving that more than once. We would move that right into their new permanent space. I asked Daniel if we could say okay not May 3rd but let's move it back three weeks earlier than that just in case there are any glitches. That way we truly are ready for them on May 3rd. As a project manager I always like to work ahead and make sure we've got enough fluff time in there in case anything goes bad. The other thing that is really good about that is they have a quiet period of 10 days where they can't touch the ballots or anything so that would be time for them to move over to 157. Then that would give us the opportunity to build out the space in the former Voter's Registration so we can move the Coroner in. We can Veteran's Administration in. Daniel will be talking about it in a short while about the plans for doing all of the work in the Health Dept. I was hoping to bring that today for the Commissioners' approval.

Com. Biggs, Any questions Laura?

Com. Blaney, Has parking been addressed over there because I know currently we have quite a few problems and the early voting line is wrapped around the building here.

Com. Regnitz, I know that having assigned parking places is the issue that they have over there. That is the issue that they have, but if you look at the City parking lot just kitty corner that has adequate parking. I've been over there several times.

Com. Blaney, I mean we still haven't come to an agreement with the bank right across from 157. They are calling us complaining about parking all of the time.

Com. Regnitz, Daniel has about 10 signs and we've asked the Sheriff to talk to his Sheriff's deputies to encourage people not to be parking there. So I don't know if they are still having the issue, but I was just there and it is like plastered on every wall, every window about not parking over there. I don't think that we are going to have early voters defying parking orders.

Mr. Sullivan, Yes parking for both. Parking for the public (Inaudible) an early voting. There is the parking lot that is to the southwest that could be used. It's pretty well open during the day. It could be used for early voting people when they are coming in there as well as the street parking. And then right now there isn't enough parking for staff at 157. That is a concern. That would be another four cars that would have to be using the parking lot that is to the east northeast over there, which is where a lot of them are parking now. And if that isn't sufficient we could also have some folks still parking at the Admin. Garage here a couple of blocks away.

Com. Blaney, That is a long way for voters to walk.

Mr. Sullivan, From?

Com. Blaney, From here.

Mr. Sullivan, I meant for staff. I feel very comfortable with the early voting distance that they had to walk. Honestly, it is literally kitty corner. All good points.

Com. Blaney, And that parking lot doesn't get full?

Mr. Sullivan, I haven't seen it full. I've been over there a lot because as you mentioned due to those issues with First Source Bank and keeping track of that.

Com. Biggs, Who owns that parking lot?

Mr. Sullivan, It is public. The City of Valparaiso.

Com. Blaney, Have we talked to them?

Mr. Sullivan, About?

Com. Blaney, About using that parking or if they have any plans for that space before we move into it.

Mr. Sullivan, No.

Com. Regnitz, We wanted to get approval first before we...

Com. Biggs, Well I think you've done a wonderful job. Whether you've done a lot of work here. And thank you very much, but I do have some of Laura's as well and about the parking. Let's get that...

Mr. Sullivan, Tied up.

Com. Biggs, Yes that then move ahead with approving the project. Before we approve the project in its whole I've got to be comfortable with the parking problem. We don't want to mess with these voters. We don't want to do that. Get that all tied up and bring it back to the Board of Commissioners in this next meeting we will move on from there.

Mr. Sullivan, Thanks, sounds good.

SHERIFF JEFF BALON

An Ordinance Creating a Non-Reverting Fund for Receipt of Proceeds from the Adult Community Corrections Grant for the Porter County Jail – 1st Reading.

Sheriff Balon, I will explain it and Kathy can follow up, but essentially we are here to request a second account opened up for the DOC Grants that way it keeps the money kind of separate. One deposit can go into one account. The following year another one. It's to keep better housekeeping and accounting.

Atty. McClure, I believe it just boils down to odd year, even year for auditing purposes.

Sheriff Balon, Right.

Ms. Grskovich, It was at the request of the Department of Corrections.

PUBLIC HEARING OPEN

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak in opposition of this ordinance? Second call, anyone wishing to speak in opposition of this ordinance? Third and final call, anyone wishing to speak in opposition of this ordinance? First call, anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Third and final call, anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Ordinance on 1st Reading, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

A Request to extend time off for an Officer.

Sheriff Balon, Yes and we have been giving him duties too while he's at home recuperating. Different tasks that has really seemed to help us streamline some tasks within the Sheriff's Department. So I would ask that we extend that. He's recuperating well.

Com. Biggs, Probably good for this too that he's getting something to do.

Sheriff Balon, Yes.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the extension of the Sheriff's officers' time off, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

NorthShore Health Centers, Inc. – An Agreement to provide Substance Abuse Services for 1 year.

Sheriff Balon, This is an annual contract that we sign with them. They provide mental health, substance dependency counseling and services within the Jail.

Atty. McClure, \$106,000.00 for the year and 12 equals installments.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the NorthShore Health Centers agreement, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Utility – An Agreement for a 5 year renewal for Body Cameras in the amount of \$599,900.00.

Sheriff Balon, In addition to the body cameras it syncs with the in-car cameras. Provides us with GPS locations things like that. It is just something we've done. This is just a five year contract. That is how we do it and I'm requesting that extension.

Com. Biggs, Do you have that built in to your budget?

Sheriff Balon, Yes.

Ms. Grskovich, For this year we did just discuss at the County meeting two weeks ago that this year it is going to be paid for out of our seizure money and we will address it annually.

Com. Biggs, You have all of that buttoned up?

Sheriff Balon, Yes.

Atty. McClure, There is also a significant discount within this contract because it is a multi-year agreement. It is over \$140,000.00 of a discount.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Utility agreement for body cameras, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Canteen Services – An Agreement for Inmate meals for 4 years, with a 1 year renewal option.

Sheriff Balon, We chose to go with the current vendor. We did outside bids to make sure that it we're being cost effective and what that looked like. The current company that we use also came in with the best bid. They were very agreeable and they worked with us very

diligently and during Covid to make some adjustments. The contract expired December 31st of last year but they were also working with us not to increase the prices until we came to you with that contract. We are very happy with the services that they provide us.

Com. Biggs, Scott is this something you look at as well?

Atty. McClure, It is and I also want to point out that they're part of the Commissioners' policies of dealing with elected officials is that the contracts don't overlap into the next administration, which is why the last agreement finished December 31st to allow the potential for the next leadership to make a decision and take a look at the situation. So I think this is an example where it worked well. We may end up staying with the same place but that's after the Sheriff has had the opportunity to look at what they're providing and decided whether that's something to continue with. Yes I have reviewed it and I don't have any issues with it. I think it is good timing and it also has the one-year renewal option. So if there was a change in leadership after that there is an option that if something's going on to go ahead and patch another year on without causing an issue. This is exactly what we're looking for.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Canteen Services agreement, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

H.R. – RHONDA YOUNG, DIRECTOR

3 Quotes - Maxwell Leadership, Strategic Management and Pryor Learning – A Training Proposal for Porter County to Strengthen and Grow Influential Leadership.

Ms. Young, I received three quotes for manager training for our department heads and make it mandatory of the ones that fall under the Commissioners and invite the elected officials or their office managers. I received three but there are two that I really like. One was recommended from GIS that is Strategic Management. I've had conversation with her. Part of her presentation is she takes pages from her handbook and she talks to me a couple of times to find out what our issues and our problems and how she can help with that and research that. The other one that I liked also was the Maxwell Leadership, Deb Wapel. The difference of that one is that one is more generalization. How to become a great leader. I think it maybe down the road we can do that one but first I think we need to take the steps to show the managers what the problem is and how to foresee those problems and nip them in the bud before they get to be big problems.

Com. Biggs, This isn't a case of they have a problem and they bring them to her?

Ms. Young, No.

Com. Biggs, She is going to be holding two hour symposiums on each subject matter.

Ms. Young, Yes. She is going to go over topics like what is retaliation and how you speak to your employees, also bullying and really drive it down. What is favoritism? You may not think you're showing favoritism but other people do see that. So it is more about morale and showing them the definitions of what could be bigger problems.

Com. Biggs, That is a great idea.

Com. Blaney, I think that will be very helpful.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the quote by Strategic Management, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

CLERK JESSICA BAILEY

VR Systems – An Election Learning Management System License and Maintenance Agreement for online poll worker training in the amount of \$20,698.00 for 2 years.

Com. Biggs, Is that for two years?

Ms. Bailey, Yes. We are looking at VR Systems to further give options for poll worker training. A lot of times we're up to the grind and hiring people to be poll workers at the very last minute and hoping that they can attend one of two classes. This would alleviate that and in addition it would give a portal for all the poll workers to be able to revisit different videos and

training so if they went to one of the beginning classes they would be able to refresh before the election.

Com. Biggs, I think that is a great idea because we as you know when these past elections everything is moving so quickly and everybody has a job to do. Then they also have this job to do as well. People are human. Somethings get lost in the translation. You find out later as the election is going on that oh we forgot to tell them this or we forgot to tell them that. I think this is a much more organized way to approach it. I just wish it was free.

Com. Blaney, Can poll workers only do the online training or is this more of a backup?

Ms. Bailey, No we will be offering both.

Com. Blaney, They can pick one or the other.

Ms. Bailey, They can pick one or the other.

Com. Blaney, I just have a question. Are there any quizzes or anything built into this?

Ms. Bailey, There are quizzes and we actually can track work and see where they are in the process if they started. If they finished. How they did on the quiz. Where they had problems and we can see that as a whole. We will be able to take all of those evaluations and say okay people really struggled with this component and then give more training or different training or enhance the training.

Com. Regnitz, Jessica if somebody does an in-person training they could also use this as a refresher?

Ms. Bailey, Exactly.

Com. Biggs, Is this your idea?

Ms. Bailey, It is a group idea.

Com. Biggs, It's a great idea.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve VR Systems Election Learning Management Systems agreement, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

E911 – DEBBY GUNN, DIRECTOR

Recognizing April 9th through April 15th, 2023 as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

Ms. Gunn, This is just our annual recognition of a week that we celebrate dispatchers here in Porter County and Nationwide. Just a reminder to our community, to the Commissioners that it is just a special week where we kind of flourish our dispatchers with attention and it's just a special recognition.

Com. Biggs, Are you going to read it?

Ms. Gunn, Certainly.

Recognizing April 9, 2023 – April 15, 2023 as

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Commissioners of Porter County declares the week of April 9, 2023 through April 15, 2023, to be National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in the County of Porter, in honor of the men and women whose diligence and professionalism keep our County and Citizens safe.

/s/Jim Biggs, Commissioner
/s/Barb Regnitz, Commissioner
/s/Laura Blaney, Commissioner
/s/Attest: Karen Martin, Auditor

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve April 9th through April 15th, 2023 Telecommunicators' Week, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

AUDITOR KAREN MARTIN

Gabriel's Horn Corporation ARPA Agreement.

Ms. Martin, In front of you you have a contract with reference to Gabriel's Horn, which is located at McCool Rd. They have a total amount of \$270,000.00. They will be using this money for the expansion remodel of the current facilities including additional bedrooms, bathrooms, new kitchen, family dining and common areas. Also, additional staff to run the facility.

Com. Biggs, If the audience isn't familiar with it these are the monies that were distributed from the pandemic funds by County government. Scott do we need a motion to approve?

Atty. McClure, Yes.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve Gabriel's Horn Corp. ARPA Agreement, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

HEALTH DEPT. – SHEILA PAUL, DIRECTOR

A Grant Agreement between the Indiana Department of Health and the Porter County Health Department in the amount of \$26,914.50.

Ms. Paul, This is a grant that we applied for in 21. It is to help cover the cost of our lead case management. You may not be aware but the acceptable lead case levels has dropped from 10 micrograms per deciliter down to 3.5. They have also required that all children be tested for lead poisoning not just children on Medicaid. We have already seen our case jump significantly from about one a month to about 15 a month. This is just money to help offset the cost of that and we will submit an invoice to the state. Then we will reimburse us for our actions on it.

Com. Biggs, What is causing the jump?

Ms. Paul, They've just decided to lower the acceptable level within a child's blood for lead poisoning.

Com. Biggs, And that's what caused the jump?

Ms. Paul, Correct.

Com. Biggs, Otherwise the levels have been going down haven't they?

Ms. Paul, Are you asking have we seen an increase in lead exposures within Porter County. Not necessarily there's just a decrease in the acceptable amount of lead within the blood.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Grant Agreement with the Indiana Dept. of Health and the Porter County Health Dept., Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

ANIMAL SHELTER – DARRIN BIGGS, DIRECTOR

A Consulting Agreement with Toni Bianchi in the amount \$65.00 per hour.

Mr. Biggs, I would like to be able to utilize her services as not only a professional dog trainer but as a professional canine consultant when it comes to animals that have behavioral issues we need to be able to determine or not whether they are safe to be placed back in the community. That is where her expertise would come in.

Com. Regnitz, Did we add a not to exceed in this Scott?

Atty. McClure, I don't believe we have.

Mr. Biggs, The services are as needed. Obviously, every month is situational but at this point I have not had to bring her in.

Com. Biggs, This is not the first contract that we've had.

Com. Blaney, No, we did this last year.

Com. Biggs, I think we spent less than \$500.00 all year long. I'm not concerned about exceeding any number someone had in their head.

Com. Blaney, She does a good job.

Com. Biggs, She does a good job and it is better than having to hire somebody.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Consulting Agreement with Toni Bianchi, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

EXPO – LORI DALY, DIRECTOR

Frank Paul Entertainment – A Musical Services Agreement for Saturday, April 1st, 2023 at 8:30 p.m. in the amount of \$2,000.00.

Ms. Daly, We are doing a Jimmy Buffet tribute concert. This is the band.

Com. Biggs, Where does the proceeds go?

Ms. Daly, Directly to the Expo revenue.

Com. Biggs, Oh it goes to the Expo revenue.

Ms. Daly, Correct.

Com. Biggs, After the band has played.

Ms. Daly, Correct.

Com. Biggs, I think that would be pretty popular.

Ms. Daly, We did one, Bob Seger in the fall and it went over very well.

Com. Biggs, I remember that.

Ms. Daly, It was good.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Frank Paul Entertainment, Com. Blaney, 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 \$1,180.00. The term shall begin May 1, 2023 and end April 30, 2024.

Mr. MacDonald, This is what we use for key ledger, which allows us to input our expenses into public record. This is an annual contract that we renew every year.

Com. Blaney, Key ledger is a state requirement.

Mr. MacDonald, Correct. State Board of Accounts approved it.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Boyce Systems agreement, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

ITS DEPT. – LEE CHILDRESS, DIRECTOR

Comcast – A two year agreement for a line at 700 N. which has come up for renewal in the amount of \$199.95 per month.

Mr. Childress, That is our internet fee the access for 700 North.

Conference Technologies – A revision of the proposal signed last year to update the audio technology in the Chambers in the amount of \$109,039.29.

Mr. Childress, This is for the proposal you signed last fall. We submitted it to the Auditor's office. The Auditor's office kicked it back and said the language of the proposal didn't fit the ARPA requirements. So we worked with the legal department, our legal department and I think we are good now. The price did not change in this contract.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Comcast and Conference Technologies agreements, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

FACILITIES – DANIEL SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR

Seeking RFP's for Architectural Design Professionals. To support the Facilities Director in expanding the Health Department's Main Office at the Administration Building.

Mr. Sullivan, Basically I want to send an advertisement out to several local entities to help me to design the project as well as plan for budget, the scheduling, that sort of thing as you heard Barb talk about it is a multi-layered event right now. They will make sure we stay in compliance with everything including parking. By the way correction there is in fact one parking spot on the street in front of 157 Franklin. Looking for that kind of thing would be great.

Com. Biggs, This is something out of your expertise that is why you want to bring someone like this in.

Mr. Sullivan, Yes, I would say tools and technique at this point that they're going to have in this stuff to make actual construction drawings and the sort of things that would be just better served outside of my time.

Com. Biggs, You are recommending an RFP not an RFQ?

Mr. Sullivan, An RFP could include an RFQ to make sure they have the qualifications. I would actually have an RFP drawn up that would basically say these are the things I expected.

Com. Biggs, I think it would be better in an RFP.

Atty. McClure, I would ask that the Commissioners approve that RFP.

Mr. Sullivan, Right.

Atty. McClure, I think we're at the stage that we want an RFP but we're not to the stage that there is an RFP.

Com. Biggs, All we are doing here is announcing that we will accept RFP's for this work. Then this Board will review them.

Atty. McClure, No, no.

Com. Blaney, He needs to put the RFP together.

Atty. McClure, Com. Biggs, I don't think we have it in words yet.

Mr. Sullivan, Correct.

Atty. McClure, Correct.

Com. Biggs, You don't have it written.

Com. Regnitz, Almost written. Actually I had the question whether we needed that here today or not. We were going to try and get it in but we just didn't have enough time.

Mr. Sullivan, I could get the wording to you to see what you think and if you have any thoughts on it before we put it out before advertisement.

Com. Biggs, That is mandatory that has to go the County Attorney.

Mr. Sullivan, Okay.

Com. Biggs, Then we will just deal with it at the next meeting.

Atty. McClure, I think you guys can to a motion and a second vote and inform him to put it together to get it on the next meeting.

Com. Biggs, moved to approve seeking RFP's, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Emergency approval of a single source to repair 3 windows at 157 Franklin.

Mr. Sullivan, There has been some late breaking discussion on this one so I am not sure we're actually still requesting an emergency approval, but basically to move quickly on this project so we can make sure we get it done this summer. Even as of this morning I went out there to count how many windows we have that already have had the lentsils replaced on the 157 Franklin Building to try to narrow down what the cost would be. This issue out there right now is that we intermittent problems. Intermittent problems are hard to determine. The emergency it may well be that we'll have a good amount of water coming into a window or above a window. From what I heard before I started six months ago there was such an event in one room on the third floor there.

Com. Blaney, How did we deal with it then?

Mr. Sullivan, I don't know but I was told that it was enough to soak the carpet. I could tell you the carpet had not been replaced it was the same carpet that was in the hallway so apparently it had been cleaned enough there which is an unusual on a concrete.

Com. Blaney, It is not continuing to leak.

Mr. Sullivan, It hasn't continued to leak since then of course.

Com. Blaney, We should probably figure it out since it was just one window.

Mr. Sullivan, It was three windows.

Com. Blaney, I mean what I read we needed to purchase five windows to fix two.

Mr. Sullivan, The proposal I have which was the first proposal yes would request it would be five.

Com. Blaney, It was less than five that got repaired?

Mr. Sullivan, There actually haven't been any repaired since.

Com. Blaney, But it's not leaking anymore?

Mr. Sullivan, That is because of the wind direction and that sort of thing. If we had a steady rain out of the west for exactly as much time as there was whenever this was. Sometime before July 2022 I presume we would have a leak in that window. It all depends on how long the water soaks into the brick. The water then gets inside the brick, runs down to the lintel or the lack of lintel and finds its way to the window is how that is working.

Com. Blaney, Have you gotten a lift and had any of our guys look at it from the outside?

Mr. Sullivan, I actually met with these folks who had the proposal that I sent to you all by email. I talked with them back in October or November when I was first exploring this and that is actually part of their plan.

Com. Blaney, What about our guys? I mean just for something temporary so we don't have to wait and have water keep leaking in.

Mr. Sullivan, There is nothing they can really do frankly because it's not like there is a hole they could caulk or something in this case. This is a case where water is getting into the brick itself. Getting on the wicking through the brick and inside the brick. Then running down inside the wall to above the window. So the only thing you could actually do is to kind of seal the brick from the outside, which is not something we would want to do visually. Right now I don't think it is necessary.

Com. Biggs, All kidding aside if the wind comes out of the west again and a couple days of rain that gets worse. That is why I was surprised you saying that it wasn't an emergency situation. We have a problem there that we haven't identified.

Com. Blaney, Do any of our guys remember how we handled the event before you got here?

Mr. Sullivan, I haven't asked the guys to be honest with you. I did do a search of emails' my predecessor or the emails I have of three years of Tracy Wood the former coordinator. There was very little mention of it.

Com. Blaney, We must of handled it internally then. I would ask them.

Mr. Sullivan, I can. I think it was handled other places as well. I will certainly talk to them.

Com. Biggs, Keep us abreast of what is going on. Speaking for myself I am not comfortable waiting around until next summer or this summer to do something about that because we live in Northwest Indiana.

Mr. Sullivan, And I hear you. I'm (Inaudible) jumping to fast because if we fix those ones we could have other ones leak and that could still happen.

Com. Blaney, Maybe there is a temporary fix we can figure out.

Mr. Sullivan, Potentially, yes.

Com. Biggs, But you will keep us up to date?

Mr. Sullivan, I will.

ABM Building Solutions – A Memorandum of Understanding for Preliminary Assessments.

Mr. Sullivan, Commissioners I am asking for approval of a memorandum of understanding with ABM Building Solutions. I have Eric Dustin here with me who is from ABM Building Solutions. If you have any questions for him. You talked to him last month as well. There was a request to update and change the language of that MOU to limit it to a lighting/HVAC and building envelope. We added building envelope issues later, which is a fair amount of what they'll be looking at. This preliminary survey, which will produce a report within 60 days is no cost to us. It is basically all risk to them to do a walk through. The main cost to us is my time. As well as those who we walk the building with. We will look at five, six, seven of our key most needed buildings. I think I will add 157 Franklin as well because there may be things there that we can say hey if we upgrade the lighting here or the HVAC system thee we can save money here that can fund that project. We've got one proposal for that right now to show us estimated costs.

Com. Regnitz, Then the other thing is you can take a look at the windows as you are looking at the building envelope for 157 Franklin correct. Can you just speak to that real quick?

Mr. Dustin, Absolutely so part of the building envelop is really anywhere that we could lose energy or infiltration so the cold the weather can get in. That includes generally windows are going to be the key component indoors.

Com. Biggs, Windows and skin.

Mr. Dustin, Yes. We can look at those as needed to. We have thermal imaging that we can do as well so you can tell where insulation may be wet, soaked all of the above.

Mr. Sullivan, There is actually one place out there that I haven't investigated the roof yet. It will be interesting to see if you can see there has been a report of occasional minor leak above in the ceiling tile on the fourth floor. So that is one thing he might be able to tell too with drones flying above and such.

Com. Biggs, There is no such thing as an occasional leak. It's either leaking or it's not.

Com. Regnitz, Well it is intermittent.

Mr. Sullivan, One of my least favorite words in this business.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the MOU with ABM Building Solutions, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com Biggs, Do you have anything to say Laura?

Com. Blaney, No I said what I had to say the last time.

Com. Blaney, Opposed.

HIGHWAY DEPT. – JIM POLAREK, DIRECTOR

Requesting Liquid Material Bituminous Bids for the Chip Seal Program for 2023.

Com. Biggs, Jim is in Road School. Is there anyone here representing the Highway Dept.?

Atty. McClure, All we need is a motion and a second to approve him being able to put that out for a bid on the liquid material bituminous for chip seal program for 2023.

Com. Biggs, moved to put the Liquid Material Bituminous out for bid, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

DEVELOPMENT & STORM WATER MNGMNT. – BOB THOMPSON, DIRECTOR

Seeking Sealed Bids - Bridge 40, 1000 South over Reeves Ditch project.

Mr. Thompson, This is for Bridge 40. This is under design right now. Their design is complete. They are working on contract documents. We're just now requesting approval to go forward with sending out and requesting for sealed bids.

Com. Regnitz, Bob can I just ask you a question? How do you decide when it is a sealed bid versus a non-sealed bid? What makes this a sealed bid situation?

Mr. Thompson, Correct me if I'm wrong. If it goes over \$100,000.00.

Mr. Novotney, It is determined by State Statute for Public Works projects. Any project that is over \$150,000.00 in estimated contract value has to be awarded via the bid process. The Commissioners some years ago passed a responsible bidder's ordinance that for any project over \$250,000.00 has to meet the counties responsible bidders ordinance requirements as well. It's all dictated by State Statute.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve Seeking Bids for Bridge 40, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Bridge 131, 200 West over Damon Run – Plan approval to submit to INDOT for bidding.

Mr. Thompson, This is different. Bridge 40 is all local funded. Bridge 131 is going to be through INDOT and this has Federal funding on it. We are asking for the plan approval on this to go down to INDOT so INDOT can then seek the bids for it.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Submittal to INDOT for the Bidding of Bridge 131, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

AT&T Agreement for relocating fiber optic - Bridge 1009, Lenburg Rd. over Salt Creek.

Mr. Thompson, This is in the City of Portage since we maintain all bridges within the incorporated areas too. Bridge 1009 is on Lenburg Rd. over Salt Creek. AT&T has an existing fiber optic. This agreement is for moving this fiber optic so that might interfere with our Bridge construction. Bridge construction should be happening next year.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the AT&T agreement, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Consultant selection for Engineering Design - Bridge 1014, N. Calumet over CSX Railroad.

Mr. Thompson, Again, this is another locally funded project. We're dealing with some deck issues on this particular Bridge. We went through the letter of interests that we submitted to the office and we have a recommendation for consultant on this particular design. And that would be DLZ.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve DLZ as Consultant for Bridge 1014, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Consultant selection for Bridge Inventory and Inspections for 2024 to 2027.

Mr. Thompson, We have to have our bridges inspected every two years. And for those in poor condition every year. We're up for a new contract on this. This is managed through INDOT again with Federal funding. We went through the letter of interest that were submitted into the office. We are recommending United Consulting for this particular job.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve United Consulting for Bridge Inventory and Inspections for 2024 to 2027, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Consultant selection for Construction Engineering for the Calumet Trail, Phases 1 and 2.

Mr. Thompson, This is going to be let by INDOT shortly. I think in April. We have to hire a consultant for the purpose of doing construction engineering or construction inspections during this work. Again, we reviewed the letters of interest that were submitted for this. We are recommending the Lochmueller Group.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Lochmueller Group for Calumet Trail, Phases 1 and 2, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

An Ordinance for land use and overlay for the Willowcreek Road Project – Discussion.

Mr. Thompson, We had originally talked about doing a land use plan. An overlay ordinance, which really would govern the land use. In our point we are probably going to recommend going forward with idea of an overlay, the ordinances. Looking at the path...

Com. Regnitz, Are you looking at a half a mile or a mile?

Mr. Thompson, We can go out as far as you want. We were going to propose, let's just look at a mile.

Com. Biggs, Will this be concentrated on the recommended path?

Mr. Thompson, Yes on the recommended path and it would go from 700 North down to U.S. 30.

Atty. McClure, And just for clarity are we talking a mile on each side of the road or are we talking a mile total.

Mr. Thompson, I would just recommend let's just do a mile on each side of the road.

Com. Biggs That is a pretty big distance a mile on each of the road.

Mr. Thompson, It is. A lot of the overlay ordinances that we have done in some areas the actual ordinance may not have affect for a quarter mile each side of the center lint of the road. Some cases we have gone up to a half mile. Realizing there is concerns out there we will investigate the mile.

Com. Biggs, Do we have any idea at this time what costs are going to be involved during this study?

Mr. Thompson, My estimate is probably going to be at least \$150,000.00 may even up to \$200,000.00.

Com. Blaney, I would assume if we were going to spend \$200,000.00 that we would make sure we had the route that is viable and agreed upon first.

Mr. Thompson, Correct. You also asked me to do 149. Do you want me to discuss that?

Com. Biggs, Yes sir.

Mr. Thompson, We looked at that as far as an option and a number of issues. We went to the NIRPC Regional Corridor Study that they have out. The whole idea with the Regional Corridor Study and it was done in 2016 was the main goal of the study was to improve mobility and connectivity by providing new connections. These connections also contribute to reducing congestion and travel times in the region. As I mentioned it is improving connectivity between major activity centers, high density of retail, industrial, commercial and institutional sites is what we are really looking at. They took the three County area, Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties and they came up with 22 connections that they felt would meet these goals. Then they went through and they did an evaluation of the 10 criteria that they put down that they wanted to look at. That was the location of the particular linkage to already congested areas. They were going to determine the regional impact by a transportation model. Also, location to an area with significant crashes, improves connectivity in urbanized areas, improves connectivity to major highways located in high density population near Willowcreek Rd. 149 scored on that point. On the next point, which was located in high density employment area. Located within a two mile radius of high density retail and provide better connection to Transit and rail centers and potential impacts to the environment. Those are the 10 criteria that they used on this and they pulled out a lot of census information. They had a new group study sessions on all of this. Willowcreek Road came out number three priority in the region it has a score of 83 and I think the number one had a score of 86. 149 connection was 21 out of 22. And why did 149 not score well? It proved that it did not have a regionally significant impact if it were to be constructed with the model. It did not improve connectivity to urbanized areas. Does not provide better connections to transit and rail. Does not connect high density population in employment areas or retails. Willowcreek met all those that I just read that 149 did not do. Portage built a four-lane road basically heading south out of a high density area, residential, high employment area and a high retail area right down to 700 North and that is only a 2021 foot wide road. 700 North heading west from the existing Willowcreek Road has almost the same ADT as 149 does down by 130.

Their average daily travel average daily traffic. The next thing we wanted to look (Inaudible) over the funding from Willowcreek over to 149? The answer to that is yes. We could but there's a process for it. And in that process and it's at NIRPC we could be told no.

Com. Biggs, NIRPC could tell us no.

Mr. Thompson, NIRPC could tell us no, but we can still put in your application in. The main reason why is because they did the Regional Corridor Study. Willowcreek number three. 149 21 out of 22. With that we would have to put in a brand new application. To be able to do that to NIRPC. Any funding that was spent on Willowcreek right now, which is \$800,000.00 will have to be paid back to NIRPC to be able to go over and use 149. So there was one big hurdle in front. We would also have to start all new NEPA document with 149 and we would have to consider Willowcreek as a no build option. Plenty of big problems with the new NEPA document because of the fact of the floodplains of Salt Creek, the wetlands with Salt Creek and the environmental impacts it would take. The mitigation to be able to go across those flood lands and wetlands with the bridge will be huge for the county to be able to do that. I think with the NEPA documents you're giving now all of a sudden Federal Highway the opportunity to say no because we've started Willowcreek.

Com. Biggs, And just so the people are clear it's no because they now know we have a better route, we just don't want to take. Am I reading that right?

Mr. Thompson, Correct.

Mr. Novotney, But to be clear it's two separate projects. Willowcreek Road was established in the Corridor Study the extension of Willow Creek Road was established in that Corridor Study as a necessary linkage right. So was 149 or at least evaluated as a necessary linkage. It's two separate projects and the traffic data, the congestion we're dealing with in Northern Union Township that's a driver for the Willowcreek Road Project. An extension of 149 wouldn't address those existing issues in any way.

Mr. Thompson, It's not serving what Federal Highway would look at as being the purpose of need.

Com. Biggs, Well what it sounds like to me is we could consider it but there's not going to be any funds to develop it.

Mr. Thompson, NIRPC could say no and I was kind of privately told by somebody that the group that's the board that oversees when they look at us turning away from Willowcreek to number three and going to 149 is the number 22 or number 21 out of 22 that (Inaudible) tells no.

Com. Biggs, Right because we're competing with all those projects on that list. So if we go from 3 to 21 out of 22 it's very likely we don't get any funding. Plus we have to pay back almost a million dollars that we've already taken from them.

Mr. Thompson, Yes.

Com. Biggs, That's what I'm saying is it just sounds like we can either move forward judiciously with what we currently have. What we put a lot of time in, a lot of study in. Or we can try to throw it out and cross our fingers and hope we fall on what \$20 million. You had 2000 linear feet of bridge that has to be constructed on 49 my understanding. If we were to extend 149.

Mr. Thompson, Currently what we have at NIRPC is \$6 million dollars for the construction and the completing the NEPA for Willowcreek now. And there's a resolution that was approved by the boards looking at it getting us \$10 million in funding to do the Phase 2, which is the bridges and that is 2029.

Com. Biggs, But that's on the recommended route.

Mr. Thompson, Correct.

Com. Biggs, The number would be significantly different if we were to just hypothetically move out to 149.

Mr. Thompson, Yes.

Com. Biggs, There's what two or three?

Mr. Thompson, We may not see any of that.

Com. Biggs, Right yeah, that's my point and then we don't solve the problem.

Com. Blaney, Do we have any new information since the Expo meeting? I'm hearing a lot of stuff that we already knew but is there any anything new to learn about the 149 extension option?

Mr. Novotney, I think just as Bob put his seer hat on right and trying to read the tea leaves here in terms of fundability of that project. And I think that's what Bob really spent time investigating and putting together the background for you here this morning as well.

Com. Biggs, I think a significant amount of what Bob spoke about was new information. I was not aware of having to go back to NIRPC. It's not likely that NIRPC is going to find favor of this. And we weren't clear on whether or not we had to pay that money back and now we know.

Mr. Thompson, We will.

Com. Biggs, I appreciate it you. Do you have anything to add?

Mr. Thompson, No.

Com. Regnitz, Wait a second do we do we want to do something with the overlay at this point for the preferred route?

Mr. Thompson, Well I guess if you want me to go forward with this then a motion to request that I go out for RFQ's or quotes.

Com. Blaney, Well are we are we sure the route is happening? I don't want to spend \$200,000.00 on nothing. We already have a lot of money out there that might be on nothing.

Com. Biggs, What would you recommend then Laura?

Com. Blaney, Making sure we pick the route.

Com. Regnitz, I thought we already have the route. We have the preferred route which is a one....

Com. Biggs, (Inaudible) there was a primary route identified.

Com. Blaney, Well there is but I don't think that was made known to the public really.

Com. Biggs, Well I disagree with that. I think the public is well aware what that recommended route is. That's what's the cause of a lot of the contention is that they are aware of it. Some of them don't agree with it.

Com. Blaney, All right.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve an Ordinance for Land Use and Overlay for the Willowcreek Rd. Project, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

A Performance Agreement and Guarantee - Senior Living at St. Andrews.

Mr. Thompson, They are completing construction. They are getting close to wanting to have a recorded plat for this particular development. I was going to ask Mike explain what this is.

Mr. Novotney, I think you did but there comes a time in every subdivision's life where the developer reaches substantial completion of the necessary public improvement, roads, sanitary sewer, water, storm water. And they're to apply to the Plan Commission for secondary plat approval. That is the point to which this project is at. So they've submitted to the

department the necessary performance agreement that essentially says we're to finish any remaining public improvements and we promise to address any operational maintenance items that might come up. Along with that performance guarantee. So a financial guarantee that if they don't do those things that they said they were going to that the County has some method of recourse to get those things done. That is what is in front of the Board this morning is that performance agreement and guarantee for approval.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Performance Agreement and Guarantee, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

ALISHA BROWN – EXTRA MILE FITNESS COMPANY

A Request to use County roads located in Jackson Township for the 3rd Annual What the Hill half marathon on Sunday, May 14th from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m. The event will begin and end at Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve in Chesterton. A map is attached.

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

Com. Blaney, I just want to clarify the date before our next meeting since I can't be here.

Com. Biggs, Is there anything on that agenda Laura you would like us to hold?

Com. Blaney, I have no idea what is on that agenda at this time.

Com. Biggs, Anything of any major importance we will just hold off okay?

Com. Blaney, Okay. I'd like to say that I'm disappointed that we can't move meetings with four months' notice.

Com. Biggs, We moved nine meetings last year and I wasn't going to get in the habit of doing that.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Ms. Good, Deb Good. I wasn't planning on speaking but I just wanted to check and I know we had the opportunity to communicate last night. I just want to get on record the proposal that NextEra has made in regards to the project in Morgan Township. You have all receive that proposal from NextEra?

Com. Blaney, I think we have an email. I don't think we have an official document that I'm aware of, but they did email us.

Ms. Good, I would like for the community to be aware because I want them to understand that they have been heard. NextEra heard what the concerns were and one of which was the sound. They provided a sound study I believe at least we've seen the sound study from down in Cass County showing that the majority of the plots on the NextEra Solar project there is at 32 decibels. Up to 52 on some of the plots and as a result of that NextEra is committing that the decibel level on the property will be no more than 55 decibels. Also, promising to committing to repaving and resurfacing any road that is used for construction. There's a fourth one I'm missing. My big one is and for my little school of Morgan Township of 236 kids at a high school they're committing \$2 million on the day of construction to Morgan Township School.

Com. Regnitz, Here's a fourth one 400 feet.

Ms. Good, Yes thank you Barb. They're going to push the project back another 400 feet away from anyone's property. So I think those were the real concerns that I heard that evening. And between them I was disappointed that the landowners weren't given an opportunity. We've made a lot of accommodations that are very unusual to other projects that have been done in the area. I know that Barb tried to explain. We were given three minutes and I know that we went over our three minutes but it would have been nice for the property owners. I think we could have allayed a lot of fears if we would have been able to lay out...even if we could have had some plats, some maps to show. I know for Barb particularly. Her entire area is going to be wrapped with farm grounds. They're not going see the solar panels as they come along the property. They will be buried behind the crop. I know the

Maxwell's have moved theirs way back we have moved ours way back. As a matter of fact our farm sits....our property....the only people that will even be looking at where the panels will be will be my husband and myself and our daughter. We had our daughter and her family sit in on the meeting with NextEra and I'm a little confused at the comment about how quickly they swept in because we've been working with NextEra since 2019 when I asked them to come and do a World Affairs conference to speak to my 16 high schools. I had to approach the Commission because they refused to talk to my high school students without having a meeting with the Commissioners. They had been trying to do that for like two months and they said they hadn't been able to. That was with Hunter Armstrong out of...and Barb you remember this because we were working through this when I was trying to do the conference. You weren't on the Board obviously but I couldn't get them to speak until I met with you. Being a good neighbor they didn't want to talk to us students until they spoke with you. I called Jeff Good and said hey I need a favor. I'm trying to put on this World Affairs conference for 16 high schools. I need them to come and speak about renewable energy. He said Deb let me see what I can do. Let me talk with Commissioners. He called me back a week later and this is in 2019 because my conference was in November of 2019 and to be clear when I called Jeff I said NextEra is in my house talking to us about putting solar panels on our property and that was in 2019. I told Jeff in that phone call. He called me back and he said we have spoken. We are going to meet with them. They can go ahead and speak to your students they can about solar but they cannot talk about wind. So as a result NextEra came up. They were my speaker. They financed the entire conference for the 16 high schools and they've financially sponsored that World Affairs conference every year since. So I'm a little confused. We've been working with them for three years. Jeff knew the very day that they were in my house. That was three years ago. It took us two years to sign our contract so I'm really confused that this is saying that this they just swept in and this all happened so quickly because it really didn't. It's been a long process.

Com. Biggs, They were in your house according to you clear back, four years ago. (Inaudible).

Ms. Good, Talking to us.

Com. Biggs, When did you actually sign?

Ms. Good, It took us two years. We've only signed a year ago. However long that took we signed a year ago.

Com. Biggs, They formally approached us less than two years.

Ms. Good, March 25th of 20.

Com. Biggs, I think it was April is what I was told by students.

Ms. Good, I have the email.

Com. Biggs, Okay I'm not I'm not going.....I'm just saying. And and they had the signed leases already.

Ms. Good, No two years, it took two years.

Com. Biggs, Before they came to us you had a signed lease with them.

Ms. Good, I signed this lease last year in 22. They came to you in 20.

Com. Biggs, No sign leases with us. No they didn't come to us (Inaudible).

Ms. Good, Oh no no they did come to you on March 25th.

Com. Biggs, Not according to our (Inaudible).

Ms. Good, I have the email Bob. I have the list of people who are all in attendance.

Com. Biggs, Debbie I'm just telling you what I've been told.

Ms. Good, I can show you the email that I just looked at.

Com. Biggs, And that's my whole rub with this is that these leases were signed before Porter County was brought into the conversation trying to get it filled from us.

Ms. Good, That is not true. In the same way when Hunter called me and said Mrs. Good I would love to come speak at your conference and bring our team but we can't because we're trying to get a meeting with your Commissioners. We've tried for two months. We can't get a meeting. And I said let me see what I can do. This was October of 19. I called Jeff, the one and only time I've ever called Jeff Good for anything and said look I'm a Rotarian. I'm the Youth Services Chair. I'm trying to put on the 16 High School Conference.

Com. Biggs, But what is that? I understand Debbie.

Ms. Good, He knew he knew.

Com. Biggs, How does Jeff go from you want to talk about renewable energy to high school students, to they're coming here to Porter County to set up.

Ms. Good, I told Jeff when I talked to him they came to our house this week I asked if they could speak. Matt DeRose different Matt went back to corporate and Hunter Armstrong at corporate called me and said we would love to do this but we cannot do it unless we talk with your Commissioners. All along the way any communication that I have had with them that has been their attitude. That has been their approach is to always consider the Commissioners first. When I talked to Jeff that day I said to him and that was the day that they were in my house. I explained that they were in my house. They're looking for landowners to put a lease. There's a solar ordinance in place, which meant that this County was open.

Com. Biggs, You told Jeff that.

Ms. Good, I told him that.

Com. Biggs, In 2019.

Com. Blaney, The state did their stuff back then, which is why we did our ordinance. I know that the Plan Commission definitely talked to some companies. There's a lot of companies out.

Ms. Good, I'm struggling that we're putting NextEra in a bad light. That they didn't do their due diligence and they have done their due diligence all along. I've been very very impressed. It's the reason you don't have an application. The only reason you don't have an application is they wanted to hear from you first before they put it in. They've been very respectful like everything that I've communicated.

Com. Blaney, I have a suggestion. I'm changing the topic a little. If we bring this back to Plan Commission and landowners have made a lot of concessions that seem to be more palatable can you let Barb as our Plan Commission representative know what those are and maybe that's something we can work into our ordinance. That would make it more palatable for neighbors if there are big zones in between.

Ms. Good, I would appreciate that I know that that's what we tried to do in our three minutes, which is why when the meeting was over I came to you and said the landowner should have been given an opportunity to explain what they were trying to do.

Com. Blaney, I just feel like you've spent the most time trying to figure out what is beneficial for the neighbors.

Com. Biggs, I respect your statement but I don't agree with you that you didn't have the opportunity to speak. NextEra had 20 minutes up there. They had 20 minutes to speak before anyone else did. That all could have been brought up. There could have been more than just you. The last I heard there was like a dozen different landowners that have...and how many spoke? Two or three? Whose fault is that?

Ms. Good, I don't think there's a dozen landowners. I don't think there are twelve of us. To expect twelve to be thee that would not.

Com. Biggs, NextEra had twenty minutes to speak. They could have very easily showed maps where this thing was going to go in at, exactly where it was going to go in at. They could have said how many landowners they had under contract. They didn't. They didn't

cover any of it. All it was was look at the great opportunity it is. Debbie I know you're good people. I know the Maxwell's are good people. I would hate to be in the position you're in. I know that entire community down there is friend against friend right now.

Ms. Good That meeting tore us apart and I'm not sure for what reason.

Com. Biggs, It was boiling. Something had to be done.

Ms. Good, But what is going to be done?

Com. Biggs, I don't know yet. We're still in the infancy stages of all this.

Ms. Good, My grandchildren are being attacked and I'm not sure for what.

Com. Biggs, That is unfortunate. Knowing most of those people in that room I know you are all good people.

Ms. Good, Many people didn't show up because they didn't want to be beat up. My husband did not come. I was the fool for coming.

Com. Biggs, Well I didn't think you were a fool for coming.

Ms. Good, I would have been there either way. I learned to be thick skinned but I'm not sure what we accomplished.

Com. Biggs, My hope is whatever is decided here eventually. What's best for that community?

Ms. Good, That is my prayer. God's will be done whatever that is.

Com. Biggs, I don't have the luxury of sitting up here and deciding on things that is only going to benefit a dozen property owners. I've got an entire Community down there I have to think of thousands of people actually. It was very clear in that meeting to me as an elected official that the far majority of the people in that room did not want this.

Ms. Good, Because you let the bullies take control and they got to speak. They should have come to the microphone if they had something to say. They would prefer to stand in the back and be bullies.

Com. Biggs, And you know as well as I do that I tried my best.

Ms. Good, I know that but we can't succumb to the bullies either. Those of us who I believe are good people are not going to stand up there and yell and scream

Com. Biggs, We're not going (Inaudible).

Ms. Good, I was bullied. You know I was bullied.

Com. Biggs, That's too bad and it's not right but we're not going to get bullied.

Ms. Good, I just want to make sure that NextEra I believe has been respectful. The first thing that they did in this County was come and present to the high school students on renewable energy. They spoke about solar. They did not speak about wind at Jeff's request. I know that in November of 2019 the Commissioners were aware that NextEra was here. That's all I wanted to say.

Com. Biggs, Let me just say this Debbie I think you make some very good points but I want you to keep this in mind. There's a reason NextEra come into this County and started throwing around millions of dollars. Developers don't do that. They just don't. As a matter of fact it's just the opposite side of the equation is that they ask we'll come in here what will you do for us. They don't come in here and throw millions of dollars around and they were doing it for a reason because they know they're going to put or they want to put an industrial operation in the middle of farmland and it's an established farming community. That's the only reason they're offering (Inaudible) to the school.

Ms. Good, That's what they do around the country. That's how we get energy.

Com. Biggs, Well I'm just speaking for myself here the other two can jump in here anytime you don't get my attention doing that

Ms. Good, Doing what?

Com. Biggs, Throwing around money like that. Shaking money in front of me. That's not going to get my attention. What's going to get my attention is first I want to hear from where this is going in because if you just read our land planning regulations or uses that doesn't belong down there. It just doesn't.

Ms. Good, But then there shouldn't have been a solar ordinance in place.

Com. Biggs, How convenient. Well maybe we shouldn't have had a state we shouldn't have had a state official calling up here and saying you better get one and because.....

Ms. Good, That's not the landowner's problem. There was an ordinance.

Com. Biggs, I don't disagree with that. I don't disagree with that there's a lot of victims here. There's not just one or two. There's a lot of victims her. I'm just saying if we're going to do this we have to think about more than just a dozen or so people who own property out there.

Ms. Good Can we identify exactly who those people are.

Com. Biggs, How would I possibly do that?

Ms. Good, You're wanting to recognize those people, how do we identify? To me those are the people who live across from and are going to be impacted by it. Not the people that live in another township or let's listen to them. Let's identify what their real needs are because with the proposal that NextEra just came back with it does address the concerns that they presented that night. So I don't understand how do we move forward when they're offering what it is that everybody wanted.

Com. Biggs, From what I heard that night oh there was many many issues. There wasn't just setback issues or throwing more money to the school district.

Ms. Good, The big issue with sound.

Com. Biggs, There was some sound. There was environmental issues. Then there was just overall change in the entire culture down there. You have to remember Deb there is more than just NextEra we have to worry about. There is lot four different other companies knocking on our door.

Ms. Good, I understand that there needs to be a cap. I get that. I do understand that.

Com. Biggs, I'm not even sure we can do that.

Ms. Good, I just wanted to address one the proposal and two they didn't just swoop in. For us it has been a four year long process. There was an open house that was last year in August that they brought all their people up from Indianapolis and Florida. I mean I was there for the meeting. And where were the people then?

Ms. Miller, Interrupting. (Inaudible).

Ms. Good, There were signs out on the Expo Center. Anyone driving from Morgan Township to Valpo would have seen all of the signs. We went to our neighbors, we talked to our neighbors. I don't know what else you can do. It just...all of a sudden our executive meeting where Matthew was going to present and hopefully the landowners would have been able to sit and talk to you peacefully got cancelled. It ended up in a free for all meeting with people yelling and screaming and we didn't get an opportunity to express civilly what was going on.

Com. Biggs, You're right. That part of it was disappointing but you have to admit there's screaming going on both sides of the aisle.

Ms. Good, I didn't hear it. I watched it a few times. I did not hear any of the landowners at the microphone. There might have been a heated comment at the microphone. I'm referencing people who were not at a microphone and were yelling and crazy stuff from the back of the room.

Com. Biggs, It was very emotional.

Ms. Good, It was emotional and one person that got a little heated was baited and his comment was taken was referencing which I'm not going to go into. It's not mine to clarify but I knew what he was referencing. If people understood it they would have understood it differently.

Com. Biggs, As I said I know you're good people.

Ms. Good, I thought so until now.

Com. Biggs, Well you are and we're going to get past this. We're going to have to find a way to do it where at least the majority of us are on board with it.

Ms. Good, I know you have a niece and a nephew down in Morgan Township. You know what our school is dealing with. You know we don't have the money.

Com. Biggs, I haven't heard a peep out of them.

Ms. Good, Well I'm just saying we do not have ball fields. Our kids are going to other communities far away to play, to practice their ball games. We need money and unless somehow you guys come up with some money for our little school...

Com. Biggs, In all fairness to the Board of Commissioners it's not our job to come up with the money.

Ms. Good, I'm not saying that but you have the opportunity to help that \$2 million make it to Morgan Township.

Com. Biggs, Well I am not going to allow myself in my seat make that decision based on the money that's being thrown.

Ms. Good, I am not saying that. That's not fair.

Com. Biggs, Well you just said.

Ms. Good, For us and I made this clear at the meeting that we had. First of all I don't even own the ground. My husband owns the ground with his four siblings. That was a family decision. You know what you do the best with what you can do. Before we sign the contract I have a landscaping project that NextEra has approved that will be in my backyard because I am building our single level retirement home across from the farmhouse on that property and that will be in my backyard but you know what I'm not going to see it because I got all this beautiful landscaping that's going to go all along the property there. We don't get an opportunity to say that. Everybody's looking at the dot that they can see that's all they're looking at. They won't look at the bigger picture

Com. Biggs, It's very emotional do you if you if you had said it that night you think it made any difference.

Ms. Good, No because most people that night still didn't hear what was said.

Com. Biggs, It was very emotional but how do we bring that down how do we bring some civility and discussion to it.

Com. Biggs, Well my job is I see it in as the president Board of Commissioners is not add to it. I'm not going to feed it.

Ms. Good, Well that meeting definitely did.

Com. Biggs, That meeting had to happen. We're not going to do stuff behind closed doors. Let me say something. The discussions that had gone on with NextEra were we being done in closed doors and the public wasn't aware of it.

Ms. Good, That is not true.

Com. Biggs, It is absolutely true.

Ms. Good, They had an open house and they met with you. They've met with you many times.

Com. Biggs, Oh really, they met with me many times.

Ms. Good, You're bored, you're Planning Board.

Com. Biggs, Exactly, the Planning Board. It wasn't even the Planning....

Ms. Good, Is that behind the doors?

Com. Biggs, Yes.

Ms. Good, That's with the County.

Com. Biggs, Yes it was with representatives of our RDC and the Plan Commission behind closed doors. Outside of the eye of the public.

Ms. Good, There's nothing nefarious that went on I want to make sure that we're very clear on that.

Com. Biggs, I'm not suggesting that. What I'm suggesting is that that meeting had to go on because the public needed to know about it. They didn't need to know about it when the 10-foot chain link fences started going up or the solar panel started going in.

Ms. Good, But remember the meeting needed to happen, but remember there was an open house. NextEra had an open house. I do agree the meeting needed to happen with the community. Not the way it happened but it needed to happen somehow more civilly I don't know. I will not agree that everything that they've done has been behind closed doors. If meeting with the Planning Commission and that is a private meeting or people weren't there or weren't invited that's not closed doors.

Com. Biggs, All I'm saying is that I felt the meeting was necessary. That's why I called it because nothing had happened like that yet and we needed to hear from the people who live down there.

Ms. Good, My reference wasn't that the meeting shouldn't happen. I suggested that you would have heard from Matthew first with the plan with the landowners. I think that needed to happen before the public meeting so that you were aware of what accommodations and everything that we were going to make. So that those corrections could have been made in that meeting and it would have dispelled a lot of what everybody said. You guys still don't know the accommodations. That should have been clear to you guys before that meeting happened and I don't think it would have.

Com. Biggs, They had 20 minutes to speak up there. We've still not have been made clear of what accommodations are made.

Ms. Good, Barb Patterson tried and she had it all written and she got cut off in three minutes. Mark Maxwell tried too. I didn't address the accommodation part on my side but I'm just saying I think it could have gone better if you would have been aware of what the....no other county in Indiana is in the position of making the accommodations that we already made. Not to mention what NextEra is coming along and now suggesting. Thank you for the time.

Com. Biggs, Thank you.

Mr. Martin, Bob Martin, Washington Township. I thank you that you open this up at the end of your meetings. We do it at a school board meetings. I looked at the agenda when you began the meeting because I wanted to see is there anything related to solar farms. When I saw number 10 last night I thought they're considering something about it. Whatever happened

at Morgan Township will affect the entire County. I have proposals in front of me as a farmer so I'm glad you're looking at an ordinance to either modify or repeal allowing solar in farm ground. I made my points. I asked questions at the school board meeting. I asked questions at that meeting that are not answered because they are not answerable. Why are we putting it in a cloudy county? I know why it's here. It's here because NIPSCO is going under and all of the infrastructure is here to do it here. As I quit at the end of my three minutes I was about to talk about the corn stock that's on that emblem. If we allow uncontrolled solar panels we better remove the smoke stack and put a solar panel right there because that's what will happen. There's that many companies that are sitting at the door waiting to see. Just my wife walking around two other companies talked to Jean and said they were there checking out how this was going to be handled. So I understand that as Commissioners you're in an awkward position because there's an ordinance that apparently allows what's going on to go on. I was a part of the 2007 master plan for years. Two and three years I spent avoided doing things with my kids because I'm concerned about the long-range picture of what Porter County looks like when I'm gone and my kids. We have an airport ordinance that actually restricts what I can do with land that is right around the airport. I was willing to sign on to. Why because I'm looking Beyond myself to what's good for the community which is what an elected official is supposed to do. You guys are doing it. You're in an awkward position because there are property rights I understand that. The questions about why here still need to be asked Matt Johnson never answered me when I said why are you doing it in a cloudy County? I mean the answer is obvious I already said it. His answer to me at that point was our solar panels reflect both on the top and bottom sides (Inaudible) anything about solar. I have similar things that run different things. I'm not anti-solar. I'm going to have solar on my barns within a year or two okay, but I'm not in favor of communities encouraging the federal government to throw money at companies to put more Federal projects that are under the auspices of a private company that can then go out and offer. I have an offer in front of me for a thousand dollars an acre for the next 35 years that I haven't signed okay. And the reason is because I don't think it's the best use to farm ground. I think there's other places to put it. And that's what I heard you as Commissioners I applaud you for the stance I have no ill feeling towards my neighbors that think this is the best thing to do. That's a debate that has to happen in a person's heart but as planners you can decide is this in the best interest in the future of what's going to go on here in Porter County. I applaud you for having approved. For having the Plan Commission look at that ordinance and see if solar needs to be restricted to other areas besides letting it happen in AG zone. Anyway I'm done you all three heard me the other day. I don't want to be here 20 minutes. I stayed away for 15 years. I came back last year here when we were starting to approve subdivisions in areas where they shouldn't be. I stayed away 15 years. I'm back it tells you something. It tells you we're looking at issues that are dear to the heart of people that have been willing to just let it go for 15 years, but are back. So thanks for your time.

Com. Biggs, Thank you Bob.

Ms. Miller, Dawn Miller, Valpo. Kind of changing gears here um. Have some disturbing stuff that I just learned about. We're having an all age's drag queen show here at our Expo Center on Saturday May 20th and let's see admission is \$10.00 per person at the door, kids 12 and under are free. Why are we permitting this? I don't know if you guys have seen the uh symbol for the Porter County LGBTQ LMNO whatever but this is their symbol. It's a rainbow hand, a big rainbow hand with a smaller hand inside of it. That screams pedophilia to me. It does to a lot of people. Um not only are we having an all ages drag queen, show it's a halfway to Halloween market and drag queen show. I don't see why this is necessary. We also after this are supposed to have another one I believe it is called a Bizarre Bazaar. That one is in September. Another all age's drag queen show for our children. Why is this being allowed to happen in our community, in our town? I mean we already had you know the drag queen show at the Memorial Opera House. At least it was 18 and older I don't agree with them but you know this is these are things that our children should not be exposed to. I've been told to keep an open mind. Why am I going to keep an open mind to something for grown adults to have our children go to? That's not something that we should be doing. We pride ourselves on having morals and values so why are we having these here? Why is this allowed? Why don't we have an ordinance put in Valparaiso to keep our children protected from all age's drag queen shows? I reached out to all three Commissioners I received two responses back. Com. Blaney I didn't receive a response back from you. I'm not sure why but I mean I kind of wish uh you could have engaged with me with this. You know we've already had a drag queen Story Hour at our library, which you know why can't we just have a female go up there dressed in a princess costume what's the difference. Or have a clown go up there. Do we really need a man dressing up like a woman to go teach and read to our children? I watched a YouTube video and it's a drag queen and he specifically said why would you take your children to anything like this? He said this himself. He says we do disgusting, provocative, sexual things and you want to expose your children to this. Why is this okay? I don't understand. I mean if

we're going to continue doing things like this we should open up a strip club. We should open up an all ages strip club here just let everybody come on in since I mean perversion seems to be the new norm. I mean why not so I mean I think this really needs to stop. And then she comes up and I'm sorry what was her name, Laura Daly comes up and says the proceeds from the Jimmy Buffett concert are going to uh the drag queen shows. Are you serious?

Com. Blaney, She didn't say that.

Ms. Miller, Oh she didn't say that?

Com. Blaney, No.

Ms. Miller, Okay. I'll look back. I could be wrong but.

Com. Blaney, The proceeds from the concert go to the functioning of the Expo Center.

Ms. Miller, The drag queen shows.

Com. Blaney, They are renting the venue from us.

Ms. Miller, Okay so why are we allowing them to rent a venue for and all ages...I can see if you want to do the 18 and over. I mean I don't have to agree with that but why all ages?

Com. Blaney, I think we are going to have a discussion.

Com. Biggs, Dawn this isn't the first time they've had their show. The difference is the way that they've advertised it this time. They put a Halloween theme attached to it. They've advertised 13 and younger are in free and they're selling alcohol on top of it. We are going to address that. Constitutionally whether you don't like it or your neighbor doesn't like it. They have a right to go out there and do a show if they are willing to pay and follow our rules. You can't tell them no.

Ms. Miller, I don't want to tell them no, but I do think that we should have at least some kind of a restriction on age.

Com. Biggs, We're going to address that but we have restrictions now. There can't be any nudity, there can't be any vulgar you know, especially with the children. They can't do that now. What we're going to do is we need to have a hard conversation. For me it's about the liability. If we're going to we're going to operate a venue out there and allow the general public to rent it and what liability are we taking on if we're allowing liquor to be sold in there at the same time they're offering children at the age of 13 to come in there. They're also advertising that it's an adult venue. That's what we need to address but nobody here wants this.

Ms. Miller, I'm glad you say that but I'm just wondering why I never got a response back because I know you have children and I would think that that would that would be important to you to protect them from things like this.

Com. Blaney, I have not taken my children to a drag show but if I wanted to and somebody told me I couldn't I'd be upset. It's a venue that we rent out. They have as much right to hold a program there as a church down the road. And people get to choose where they take their children.

Ms. Miller, That is so wrong but that's okay that's your opinion. And that that's that's that's terrible. I mean this this is pedophilia.

Com. Blaney, No it isn't.

Ms. Miller, It is, that's what drag queens like to do. They they love to prey on our children. Why would a drag queen want to perform in front of children can you answer that I'm just curious. Would any grown man dressing as a woman say oh I need to go and and perform for this kid.

Com. Blaney, (Inaudible – interrupted by Ms. Miller.) all right why do they need to go and sit with our kids and read to them I'm just curious? If you could answer that. I mean what is the appeal?

Com. Blaney, I'm not answering that.

Com. Biggs, Dawn than you for your comments.

Ms. Hardesty, Jean Hardesty. Want to just speak about the Willowcreek extension. I heard several times that 22 I believe, different routes or whatever were chosen and Willowcreek is number three. What was number one, what was number two? And why was not number one or number two chosen over number three?

Com. Blaney, Those weren't all north-south routes in that area. They were all the road projects in the region that NIPSCO's looking at.

Com. Biggs, So number one.....number two was they weren't even in Porter County.

Atty. McClure, The projects above the Willowcreek project I believe are both in Lake County and I believe they're both in North Lake County.

Ms. Hardesty, Because I know in LaPorte County they have wanted to do as far as going through green space as far as roads, however the Commissioners says no. We are not using green space. We're going to use what we have. As far as the Willowcreek when we did have our question and answer on January 30th at the Expo Center, which I appreciated because it was done much better than the other ones where you just had people standing every which way.

And there were 10 people at each section wanting to ask questions. My last question when I spoke I said can anyone tell me the benefits of this road for Union Township. There was not one response. So I ask it again what is the benefit or how will this road benefit the residents of Union Township and again there was no response. We had a community meeting and I brought this up and another person that was there said oh yeah and they didn't answer you did they. Now I just find it very interesting you are investing this much money in a project that you are starting off that you don't have the benefits for our community other than probably taxes and the upkeep of the road. Plus also too is that what I'm understanding Portage has the weight limit. If you're talking trucks they're going to get to Highway 6 and have to go east or west because they're not going to be able to go straight onto through Portage. That's kind of an issue. So it's like okay you're going to get so far. This road is almost the furthest west that you can possibly go in Porter County. I don't believe that people in Shorewood are going to drive down 30 to get on this road to go northeast to Portage to get on the toll road or to get on the expressway. I don't believe, which I really don't care about Lake County but I don't believe people in Merrillville are going to get off Highway 65 come down 30 to get on this road to get maybe halfway to Portage. So I guess when something doesn't make sense then it's very difficult to understand. And the one thing that I did not appreciate was your tone when you said people need to accept it. I will never accept.

Com. Biggs, Who said that?

Ms. Hardesty, You said that. Com. Blaney was like well you know people shouldn't we kind of wait and let this.

Com. Biggs, Oh you just you mean this meeting?

Ms. Hardesty, Yeah you just said it at this meeting because she was like well you know don't you think we should kind of let the residents know or whatever and your response was well they already know. They just have to accept it or they don't want to accept it.

Com. Biggs, I don't believe it we'll go back we'll go back.

Ms. Hardesty, Please do.

Com. Biggs, We'll go back. I'm 99.99% sure I didn't say that the (Inaudible) are just going to have to accept it.

Ms. Hardesty, Go back and look.

Com. Biggs, Oh I will.

Ms. Hardesty, Good because you did. You even told my son that when you had a meeting with him. You just have to accept it and the reason we don't....

Com. Biggs, I didn't tell your son that either and you know I've never met with your son where I didn't have other people in the room. Look and I've said it in our meeting out there. I can think of a thousand things I'd rather be spending our time on our money on than putting that road through that farmland but sometimes in this job you've got difficult decisions to make. That road is not being put in to leave or attract truck traffic.

Ms. Hardesty, You haven't said what the benefit is so what is why are you putting it....

Com. Biggs, Sure I think there's plenty of people have talked about with the benefits...

Ms. Hardesty, Nobody told us and that was asked at a meeting.

Com. Biggs, It is to alleviate the traffic they're coming off of Willowcreek Road coming on to 700 North and those County roads off of 700 North.

Ms. Hardesty, I live there. I travel that road frequently to get into Portage. Do you know where the traffic is? The traffic is going east and west. The traffic is east and west on 30. The traffic is east and west on 130. And the traffic is east and west on 700. That's where the traffic is.

Com. Biggs, They're coming off of County roads.

Ms. Hardesty, No they are coming straight down 700 because when you're at the intersection...

Com. Biggs, Let me ask you a question why do you think we want to put it in?

Ms. Hardesty, I have no idea and that's the big question is that's what doesn't make any sense. I don't know why you want to put it in but the thing is that you know you were talking here about the solar panels. You know the solar project or whatever. You know the residents having rights, farmers having rights. And the reason to go back for me saying that I will never accept this because you know what you are taking our land. You are taking our land. You are using eminent domain to put in a road that makes no sense. I don't know who's going to take it. It's not going to be trucks. As I said no one lives.

Com. Biggs, There'll be local traffic. The people who live there.

Ms. Hardesty, No no. If you are there, no. I'm not going to drive down that way to get to Portage. I'm going to go my old way that takes me like 10 minutes maybe you know people in Shorewood are you going to drive down there to get to Portage. I don't think. Salt Creek Commons are they going to drive down to get to that road to go to Portage? Probably not.

Com. Biggs, So you're suggesting that all the studies that have been done by people with college educations that are to know things like this, Traffic Engineers that everybody's wrong. NIRPC is wrong, StructurePoint is wrong.

Ms. Hardesty, That's not what I am saying. I'm not questioning anybody's ability. I'm just questioning does it make sense because so many people that you talk to say oh yeah well Willowcreek you know we've heard that 20 25 years ago it's talked about. I don't think Porter County has changed or Union Township has changed to warrant that to even be in process now. Again like I said I guess the attitude. You just have to accept it when you just come in. Our farm is 124 years old. We are a Hoosier Homestead Farm. Does that matter, no? Our Lieutenant Governor Susan Crouch's article in the paper so please so proud to award this award to people. Looks forward to the state fair every year to just give these awards. You had someone from the Agricultural Department talks about how hard it is and the work and the determination for it to stay in a family over a hundred years. I did call her and of course you speak to someone else and I explained my concern. You know she feels happy, she feels proud all of this but I told because then they said well she really doesn't have anything to do with this and I said I understand but I wanted to know at the end of the day it means something. Someone wants to take your land and that's what it is. So all the ancestors that had come before my husband's family all the work, all the deciding whenever it was like okay this daughter gets this piece of land. Kurt's dad gets this piece of land. He knows that this daughter will sell to this to keep the land together. All of that because somebody said oh you know what this is a good idea or this is the best route or whatever. Which I disagree again too

because the three things that you have always reportedly have said two businesses have to relocate. All right but farming is a business.

For 124 years we have been part of Indiana's agricultural economy. No mention of that, none. You know what we are, we are a parcel. Nothing about farmland. We are a parcel four-year-old parcel of land. The second thing is that you say oh well no houses have to be moved. All right but at our meeting the gentleman said where the bridge is going to be he's not even going to be able to open his garage door. So the value of these homes do you think that they're going to be up there? I'm not thinking so. And then the third and the most one of the most disturbing things it says that the emergency personnel chose this is the best route. Nobody has any information out there about that because we've been trying to find out who has said this. I can't even remember what his name is, the vice president said surveys had been sent out. So I called Scott Farrell, that's the number to call. Scott what about this survey? Well there was never a survey. Well that's good because Chris Murphy said oh yeah the Sheriff's Department, the ambulance service, the fire department all right nobody knows any of this thing. And then my son Andrew continues to pursue it because we come from a firefighter family. My dad assistant chief of South Haven, my uncle chief of South Haven, Andrew was a firefighter. As long as he could work permitting you know in Union Township. And then to have this statement and it's always there, every presentation. Two businesses, no houses, emergency personnel. And then so Andrew sent it to you what response he got from Scott Farrell. Supposedly back in early 2020 these people had been notified. Some names were not even there. It just said fire chief. Then it was the Porter County Sheriff Joe Reynolds then I think there was one other name that was on there the police chief of Portage but then down below what he writes to date no one has responded. So how can this then be put out? What if I'm like wishy-washy on the fence and the emergency personnel put this out maybe that is the best route. How true is that statement that continually is up there?

Com. Biggs, I don't disagree with that. That's why since the first year that when I became board president that I told Mr. Thompson to tap the brakes on the entire project until we do some due diligence on our end.

Ms. Hardesty, Say that again.

Com. Biggs, To tap the brakes on the project until we do our due diligence on our end.

Ms. Hardesty, I thought you first granted him to do something on this proposed project

Com. Biggs, Is to do the overlay, which was requested by the public that we do because we had a public meeting.

Ms. Hardesty, You did.

Com. Biggs, During that public meeting it was asked that we do an overlay, a study.

Ms. Hardesty, Definitely because everybody was saying why was there not a comprehensive study before this was even done.

Com. Biggs, Right. I agree, totally agree with you that should have been done first. It's going to get done now.

Ms. Hardesty, So the project you are saying is still on hold.

Com. Biggs, Well yes. When you said that I said you're just going to have to accept it well I'm not going to say that. I wouldn't have said that.

Ms. Hardesty, You told Com. Blaney when she was speaking.

Com. Biggs, Well why would I say that when no decisions been made. Why would I say that when I'm okaying \$150,000.00 maybe \$200,000.00 overlay study that may change everything?

Ms. Hardesty, I don't know.

Com. Biggs, Well that's what I'm saying.

Ms. Hardesty, I don't know but go back and look at the...

Com. Biggs, And the other thing is Ms. Hardesty is that we are in regard to the public safety segment of all that StructurePoint had reached out to different agencies and what has come back is the vast majority never got back with them. Including the Union Township Fire Department. They did not answer that survey. So we're going to rewind. We're going to resubmit and we're going to get answers.

Ms. Hardesty, That would be amazing but like I said Scott said there was no survey. There was one response. It was third party response. I just called and talked to Scott two days ago he called me back because we've been playing phone tag.

Com. Biggs, Scott?

Ms. Hardesty, Farrell. We when we were talking I said something about repeatedly again how can you make this statement which I consider false representation if no one has responded for that to be up there? I believe that's false representation okay but anyway. So this is what he said though he goes we did not use that in our decision making. That is Scott's words. So I said all right you didn't use that. That was not part of the deciding factor. I said was the issue of two businesses relocating was that a decision maker. Yes. The whole no homes have to be removed was that a deciding factor? Yes. But Public Safety the public safety of the people of Union Township then was not part of it?

Com. Biggs, Well let's define the public safety issue. You seem to be concerned about that. The study they're talking about is to whether or not it would encourage or increase response times of first responders. That is what we're talking about.

Ms. Hardesty, Yes that's what the fire department but we're also talking about the Porter County Sheriff who is also that's their jurisdiction. And for them to go clear across the county for a road that I'm not sure who's going to be on this road, other than farmers, which there's a huge question there. Is that because if anybody has been...

Com. Biggs, You mean if we were to put a new road in there the only people to be on there is farmers?

Ms. Hardesty, Farmers will be on that road. I don't know who else like I said. I don't know of anybody that's going to travel all the way that far west to go northeast.

Com. Biggs, Well you know what if you end up being right the engineers that have been responsible for putting all this together should just turn in their pens.

Ms. Hardesty, Well you know what I guess as far as engineers too is I'm thinking of the current Willowcreek that floods all the time and you don't know that until you get there and it says road closed.

Com. Biggs, County government didn't design that project.

Ms. Hardesty, I'm just saying but public safety. I don't know. All I know is again.

Com. Biggs, Well I want you to understand I totally get where you're coming from I'm seventh generation here. My wife comes from a centennial farm in Southern Lake County. I get where you're coming from but again I don't have the luxury of sitting up here or we don't. We have to do what we feel is for the betterment of the entire County. I can think of a thousand things I would rather do to spend money on that road. Put that road through the through farms like yours. If I could come up with a better idea or there was a better idea out there we'd be looking at it.

Ms. Hardesty, If that's the case then the population is not where you're putting this road. The population is all east in Porter County. If you are looking to accommodate the most people it is not the furthest west that you can possibly go when the next road over is County Line. Again, if you're out that way its precious farmland and as people have said they have moved out there because that's the community they want to live in. They don't want to look out and see traffic or whatever or who knows who's going to be there.

Com. Biggs, I don't disagree. I'm just sitting here thinking the irony between our conversation and the conversation that went on about the solar panels.

Ms. Hardesty, Well it is different because she's got people who said oh yeah you know property owners should have rights. We don't have rights.

Com. Biggs, Ooh you have rights.

Ms. Hardesty, No we don't. You're taking our land.

Com. Biggs, No you have rights.

Ms. Hardesty, Oh I do so I can say no you can't come through our field.

Com. Biggs, Well you didn't ask me whether or not I was going to take your land.

Ms. Hardesty, You pretty much you indicated that.

Com. Biggs, No, no I don't think it did.

Ms. Hardesty, Okay that I will remember.

Com. Biggs, I've sat up here for nearly 16 years. I've never condemned anybody's land

Ms. Hardesty, Well you certainly you're doing it when you're coming taking Willowcreek to 30. Not only our farm....

Com. Biggs, That condemnation has not come up in the conversation.

Ms. Hardesty, What about eminent domain.

Com. Biggs, Or eminent domain it's not come up in the conversation. What has been the conversation is we need infrastructure there to move traffic. That has been the conversation. That's why we've hired the engineers. That's why we've put it for grants to determine what's the best process in doing that? They're starting to finalize that. We're starting to get a handle on it. Now nobody's come in front of me and said hey Biggs we need to take that farmer's land.

Ms. Hardesty, Well how are you going to get through?

Com. Biggs, You might be surprised what I say. Well I've sat up here a long time and I have never done.

Ms. Hardesty, Are you asking me if you can come through our farm.

Com. Biggs, No, no more than I'm asking you if you hit your thumb with a hammer whether or not it hurt. I know you're going to say you don't want me through.

Ms. Hardesty, I'm just saying you said you know we have rights well then my right.

Com. Biggs, You do have rights as far as I'm concerned.

Ms. Hardesty, All right then no you cannot come through our field.

Com. Biggs, A pretty good guess talking to you and Andy.

Ms. Hardesty, Exactly, exactly no you cannot come through our field. Everybody has heard it. You have been told you could not come through our field. So the road stops.

Com. Biggs, Good to know. That's pretty powerful.

Ms. Hardesty, The road stops at 450.

Com. Biggs, That's pretty powerful.

Ms. Hardesty, (Inaudible) ever far you want to take it or whatever you know and the thing I guess the thing that bothers me the most this is the only place where my husband has lived. Other than two years of being in the army during Vietnam this is his home. This is where he was born. This is where he is was raised, he grew up. He did not even go away to college

because of the farm. He went through the extension to get his degree. 75 years so take off two okay so 73 years this is where my husband has been. And even as a young person always farming, always doing something with the farm I know but you know what do you know how many mornings I see him sitting with his cup of coffee knowing what is going to happen to the farm. Do you know the mental thing that happens to a person who knows that they have no control? It's in somebody else's hand to just take it away. We are not a large farm. What you are proposing to do and the way it divides the farm it may not be profitable for us to continue.

Com. Biggs, Well you may be surprised to know that when it comes if we can't make a case to you and the other property owners as to why we need to go through there and you're willing to let us go through there. That's where I stop. I'm not going to take your land. I don't care who knows it.

Ms. Hardesty, All right so the road will end at a certain road because it's not coming through? There will be no bridge.

Com. Biggs, There could be 60 degree angles to it because there's a bridge.

Ms. Hardesty, There's the bridge so you can imagine how far back this bridge is even going to start going across our field to go over a road and to railroad tracks that are pretty high up.

Com. Biggs, Well Mrs. Hardesty and other two Commissioners can speak for themselves but I think it's going to be a very difficult decision by the Board of Commissioners to condemn property.

Ms. Hardesty, So I can go home and I can tell Kurt and Andrew that if we say no we're good.

Com. Biggs, Tell them I said Hi.

Ms. Hardesty, No, no. I'm going to tell them that you said....

Com. Biggs, We're recorded.

Ms. Hardesty, I know you recorded. So I will be here again saying remember what you said? You said you would not condemn our land. No emanate domain.

Com. Biggs, Yep. Never done it. Ain't going to start now.

Ms. Hardesty, Did everybody hear that? Thank you.

Com. Biggs, You're welcome.

Ms. Tomczak, My name is Linda Tomczak. I didn't come here prepared to speak. Bob Martin said he's back after 15 years. I haven't been here for 70 years. That is not something I'm proud of that. I have great respect for all of the people that have gotten up here and shared their hearts and been willing to speak up. I also have respect for you folks for serving us and for everything that you do.

Com. Biggs, We get paid big, big bucks for that.

Ms. Tomczak, Just want to say thank you. I also want to say that I am so thankful to be an American and to have the freedoms that we have. To have the freedom to disagree but like its people have spoken here today. They're concerned about what's ahead and my heart is breaking for the children of our County, of our country. As I see the degradation of our values, of our morals. I'm realizing that it's going to take more than just to be responsible citizen than just giving blood or working in the polls. That we got to be willing to take a stand. So I just am taking a stand today to speak out against this drag queen thing that's at the Expo Center. I recognize fully that these people they could have a right but when it comes to letting children, children 12 and under to go into something like that free. It's an outrage and I want to know as a citizen, I want to know what right do I have to speak up? Can I stand in the parking lot with a sign? What can we do to express our disagreement with this even as it goes forward? Can you give me an answer?

Com. Biggs, I think partially you're doing it right now. I know there's an awful lot of people like you out there.

Ms. Tomczak, But how can we make, I'm one voice in this little group but how can we make our voice heard. How can we make our voice heard in the community?

Com. Biggs, Well I'm not going to suggest you go out and protest in front of that building when that's going on. I just think that has just the potential of being ugly as they say but what you're doing right now is a lot. You're doing very well. So we are going to we're going to amend our regulations as to what we're going to allow out there. I don't know how the vote will end up on it, our regulations for the use of those buildings. I agree with many of the people or some of the people that have spoken today. We have no business operating an event like you know at rental at the Expo Center. If we're going to allow adult themed programs to go out there and that are allowed to advertise children under the age of 13 or admit it while we're at least while they're selling alcohol and there's no mention that they even had to be accompanied by an adult. Well that's going to change.

Com. Regnitz, Linda can I just assure you that the organizer is willing to work with us. We've had conversations with them already and we're going to do whatever we can to help change the messaging with regard to this event.

Ms. Tomczak, Thank you.

Com. Biggs, You're welcome.

Ms. Tomczak, (Inaudible – speaking from the audience.)

Com. Biggs, I don't believe you need a permit.

Atty. McClure, We have a process. That's why we heard to take the road today for the Run. That's why we hear the ones at the Courthouse Square for whatever du jour protest is happening. We hear them almost every single meeting. So yes we have a process.

Ms. Miller, What's the process?

Atty. McClure, The process is see Kathy Merle and she's got the information to hand out, to fill it out.

Com. Biggs, She'll give you the forms. You fill them out and bring them back to us and then we approve them in a meeting.

Ms. Miller, (Inaudible – speaking from the audience.)

Atty. McClure, We have a right to reasonably have restrictions on it.

Ms. Miller, That's fine I understand that.

Atty. McClure, That's why there's a process.

Com. Biggs, Getting hungry just so you know.

Ms. Theory, I won't argue. My name is Susan Theory and my husband Jack and I have had Theory Movers for about 45 years and in that business we have used so many of the young men from the Maureen House and from the Respite House. We've had them into our home and we have learned to love them. Well they have had such terrible childhoods and problems. I find it so ironic that you have been talking about having now a social worker to go along with the police and wanting to give money to help young people have good lives and rebuild their lives. At the same time you're talking about allowing children to watch a drag show and the sensuality that they expose. I would like to ask you each one before you reconsider or make a decision. I would ask you to find a way to watch one of their drag shows where they have, they do things that I cannot even describe to you. And they have little children sitting around and they come right up to the children and they shake and they do all kinds of obscene things. And the children see them. They have this sensual music played and it is evil. I beg you to have the courage to watch what they want to do to our children. I appreciate everything you're doing, that you're listening and we will be praying for you because you will answer for the decision that you make.

Com. Biggs, Thank you.

Ms. Burke, My name is Alana Burke and I will just say a few brief things because I did not come prepared either. I'm very concerned as a mother and a grandmother about the drag queen presence at the Expo Center and the library. The cry of my heart is who is going to stand for the children because even though parents may be allowed to take their children and I understand that but I'm just saying who's going to step in and protect our children. All along the way there you know you can't buy cigarettes till you're eighteen and get it done we've lowered all of those things too. Porter County is known for being a healthy place and a farm community.

Their 4-H is so big here. So many people support 4-H. The Expo Center is pretty much known now as the fairgrounds and for a community for 4-H and all kinds of good things. It's the money, we need the money here? That we're going to lower our standard and have these people come in. I agree with everything Sue said. She put it very, I don't want to restate it because she put it very well.

Com. Biggs, Let me be clear on that. The money has nothing to do with it. It's allowed constitutionally.

Ms. Burke, So we have no rights then.

Com. Biggs, We have some rights but we can't trample on other people's rights in you know while flexing ours. As long as we're going to be in the business of renting something like the Expo Center out we're going to have this problem. It's just the changing world we live in unfortunately. Ten years ago we would have never had this conversation but this is the reality we live in today. As long as we rent those buildings out this can happen and it does it doesn't mean though and this is you know I want to make this clear it doesn't mean we can't have rules that is not going to discourage in the intermixing of children with adult theme events. That I believe that we can address and we're going to address it. As I stated they were here before. I think like I was told that it's their fourth year. This is the first year that they've done this children's themed Halloween alcohol your coming free thing. It caught everybody off guard. They did me.

Com. Regnitz, By the way just don't think this is the first time we're having this conversation because believe me we've had many conversations about this and what we can legally do. I want you to realize that we are hearing you and we are taking this seriously.

Ms. Burke, So we need to figure out how we can work together then to make it.

Com. Biggs, We're going to do what the law allows us to do.

Ms. Burke, And what about the library because that's a public place.

Com. We don't have a say in the library.

Com. Blaney, But I did speak with someone on the board yesterday and said that's not a thing anymore.

Ms. Burke, But the Opera House because it's rented out.

Com. Blaney, We're talking about the Expo right now.

Ms. Burke, Okay, right. Thank you.

Com. Biggs, Thank you. Is that it folks? Thank you very much have a great afternoon.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

Jim Biggs

Barb Regnitz

Laura M. Blaney

Attest: _____
Karen Martin, Auditor