

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, APRIL 11TH, 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 11th, 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 – March 31st, 2023.

Approval of Claims – March 30th, 2023.

Approval of Minutes for March 14th, 2023.

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

COMMISSIONERS

An Ordinance Creating a Non-Reverting Fund #4933 for Porter County Community Foundation/Porter County Historical Site Preservation Fund - 1st Reading.

Com. Blaney, What is this?

Com. Regnitz, We have a fund at the Porter County Community Foundation for historical site preservation. We really haven't been taking off any of the 5% annually.

Com. Biggs, I'm surprised to hear that too.

Com. Regnitz, So we are just going to start doing that. It is a little under \$5000.00 this year.

Com. Blaney, Rather than let it build?

Com. Regnitz, We can actually be using it right now, actually taking advantage of it.

Com. Blaney, Do we have a plan for it?

Com. Regnitz, We can talk about it once we get it over here. I'm hoping that we can use it for a couple of the different projects that we have, but obviously we'll have to vote on that later.

Com. Blaney, I don't know how it works for sure. Does it come out on a certain date or can we take it out later when we get projects figured out?

Com. Regnitz, You actually have to make a decision by the end of March to take it out and then the check actually arrives sometime in April.

Com. Blaney, We haven't made this decision yet so is this for next year?

Com. Regnitz, Actually one of the things that we know we need to do in the Sheriff's residence is to fix the stairway going up to the attic so we can get some of the original doors out. That could be one of the things that we could use it for.

Com. Blaney, I got that, but you said the end of March and its April.

Com. Regnitz, We already asked for them to send the check. We just need to have a fund for it to.

Com. Blaney, Who asked? You guys? This is the first I've seen this. We can just do that without going to a meeting?

Com. Biggs, I think Com. Regnitz stated that she has asked them to go ahead and move it forward and what we're doing now is creating the fund in order for that to be completed.

Com. Regnitz, We haven't voted on how we're going to spend.

Com. Blaney, Any of the three of us could call over there because I know there are some other accounts that have money in it. MOH has an account. The Animal Shelter has an account. And just say we want this changed without coming to this Board. How does that work?

Atty. McClure, We've never done it before. We've never asked for the money out of the accounts.

Com. Biggs, Right and that is the difference.

Com. Blaney, So how should it work? Is this how we do it, we just ask for the money?

Com. Biggs, They reached out to us and told us the money was available.

Com. Blaney, They do every year.

Com. Biggs, Right, well they did and because we were planning on doing some work there in the old Sheriff's residence. Barb had thought because she is leading that project that it could be used for that purpose this year.

Com. Blaney, Well I would just appreciate being in the loop. I think it should go through a meeting.

Com. Biggs, Well that is what we're doing now.

Com. Blaney, After the fact.

Com. Biggs, None of the money has been spent.

Com. Regnitz, The purpose of this is to create the fund.

Com. Blaney, I know.

PUBLIC HEARING OPEN

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this fund? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this fund? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this fund?

Ms. Miller, (Inaudible - not at mic.)

Com. Regnitz, These were dollars that were set aside at the Porter County Community Foundation to be used for historical site preservation. We have the ability to take out 5% a year on a smooth basis. (Inaudible) average over 20 quarters we can pull out 5%. It's a little under \$5000.00 because we are in the process of doing some work potentially at the Memorial Opera House and potentially at the Sheriff's residence. I thought we should start to pull the money out. The only way we can do that is to put that into a fund. When that check arrives it needs to go into a fund. This is not voting on how the money is being spent. It's just creating a fund for the check to go into.

Com. Biggs, It can only be spent on historical preservation.

Com. Regnitz, It would be for the Courthouse. It would be for the Memorial Opera House. It would be for the Sheriff's residence.

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak against this fund? Anyone wishing to speak against this fund? Anyone wishing to speak against this fund?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Ordinance on 1st Reading.

Com. Biggs, Do you have anything Laura?

Com. Blaney, No I just don't like how this was handled. I hope we do it differently in the future.

Com. Biggs, Is there a second? Second.

Com. Blaney, Opposed.

Full Time Security Officer for the Admin Building.

Com. Biggs, I've asked Scott to look within our fund and Melanie to put a full time security officer in this building which we never had. I think it is time. Its money I wish we didn't have to spend but I think it's a sign of times. Cost wise it's priceless if something were to happen here.

Com. Blaney, Will this be a single full time person? Or will we have a couple of part time people?

Com. Biggs, It will be a couple of part time. They will be employed out of the Sheriff's Dept. Other court security. They are just an extension of that. To correct myself it could very well be primarily a person and then when that person goes on vacation once a year or twice a year whatever it is I'm sure they'll bring somebody over for that period of time.

Com. Blaney, Will the Sheriff be managing this?

Com. Biggs, Yes. The Sheriff will be managing it. It's an employee out of the Sheriff's Dept. Out of the court security section

Com. Blaney, And this will go to the Council because he is asking for more people on the street too?

Com. Biggs, Yes.

Com. Blaney, It's good.

Com. Regnitz, We did ask for this to be on their agenda.

Com. Biggs, Yes this will have to go in front of the Council.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Full Time Security Officer for the Admin. Building.
Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

CLERK JESSICA BAILEY

Voter's Registration move - Discussion.

Com. Regnitz, I'll just give an overview. Last year the Health Department received a \$1 million allocation from the ARPA funds for their use. One of the things that they want to do is they want to expand their operation to the back of the building, which means that there are two other departments in their Veterans Administration. The Coroner at the same time is bursting at the seams and doesn't have enough room for everything that they need to store and manage in that space that they have. We were attempting to find a location for the coroner. Then at the same time the health department asked if we could also look for a space for Veterans Administration. One of the places and just because of the requirements of the coroner we looked at Voters Registration. Jessica has been so kind and cooperative in working with us in looking at a couple of different options as to where we might be able to move them. Can we just first talk about one of the things that we want to do even before we start the moves and that is the storage of your one piece of equipment over at the Expo Center and the need for our Facilities Department to create a closet for that? That's going to be part of our discussion today and getting approval for that.

Ms. Bailey, Yes currently our central count machine which is our big (Inaudible). The DS850 is our central count machine. It counts all of the absentee ballots both in person and by

mail. Every time we move that machine, it's supposed to be a stationary machine, we all hold our breath waiting for it to be delivered to the Expo Center, which is where we do all of the election night reporting. That is actually where we run the machine and then we calibrate it when it gets there with the help of our vendor. Then when election night is over we pack it back up, hold our breath while it goes back to its storage. We get chastised each election by our vendor for the movement of that machine and the recalibrating of it. It takes a lifetime off of the machine every time it has to go.

Com. Biggs, I assume that wasn't an inexpensive.

Ms. Bailey, Yes it was upwards of a quarter of a million dollars.

Com. Regnitz, We are hoping that we don't have to move that back to this building after the primary election. I would just like to have Daniel talk about what his plan for that machine so that will actually get taken care of in advance of May 3rd where we'll store it over at the Expo Center.

Mr. Sullivan, Right Lori Daly the director of the Expo Center and I looked at some options of that a few weeks ago. Came up with one that we like. The best is right off of their office. A very secure place. The storage area already exists. Really it is just a matter of changing the doors on it so they are more secure so it could be locked and it has security surveillance cameras in the area already. That should probably be the best option.

Com. Regnitz, That is something that your facilities department can handle in terms of building that.

Mr. Sullivan, Oh sure.

Com. Regnitz, And we know that we have to video surveillance on that and you are prepared to be able to handle that as well.

Mr. Sullivan, Yes.

Com. Regnitz, The other issue that we had at our last 10:00 Commissioners' meeting was we were under the assumption that early voting was going to have to move to 157 Franklin along with Voters Registration. Jessica can you just explain why we don't have to do that here in?

Ms. Bailey, One of the early vote sites has to be at a clerk's office and that is done in North County in Portage.

Com. Regnitz, So that requirement is handled so we don't have to worry about dealing with that here. Early voting will still remain in the Admin. Center just as it always has been. At that last meeting we also were hoping but it turns out that that's an aggressive schedule. We were going to be able to move Voters Registration during their quiet period starting on May 3rd for 10 days because they can't touch ballots. In terms of having everything ready for them to move over that schedule is not going to work in this case. Now what we're hoping to do that during the County Fair period where you have a number of people that will be staffing the booth over at the County Fair.

Ms. Bailey, At the County Fair we have a booth every year and the majority of our staff staffs our booth while it is there so we have a skeleton crew inside the actual office. So if we move during the 10 days of the fair it's still a 10 day schedule. It is just bumped enough and then construction will be finalized and we won't have to work through construction because that's not ideal for the office staff.

Com. Biggs, Makes sense.

Com. Regnitz, And can I just say that today I would like to get approval for Daniel and Jessica to work together to lay out the space both on the first level for their office space as well as the lower level for storage of the equipment. And can I just turn that over to Daniel we don't have it finalized down to the nth degree but these are just some of the conversations that we've been having so far leading up to approval today at the Commissioner's meeting.

Mr. Sullivan, So the first floor has a significant increase in square footage over their existing place for the offices Voters Registration. There's some adjustments we would like to make before moving them in that way we don't have to try to work in the space while they're

there. That's the reason for the July thing. We're first meeting this afternoon with a contractor to see if that's doable but I think it is. Then the downstairs storage is basically I think we've heard that there's an issue with the current location of the storage equipment at the Admin. Building where the temperature and humidity isn't quite ideal. This makes an improvement on that. It's a tight space. We need to make some room down there, but I believe we can and make it better for them than they have here as well to store down there.

Com. Regnitz, move to approve that Daniel take the next step in terms of laying out the requirements in the space for the move of Voters Registration and the Election Dept. over to 157 Franklin, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Biggs, Continue to keep us, all three of us up to date as to what's going on.

Com. Regnitz, I've asked Daniel that they come back and they just report at our next meeting on May 9th.

Com. Blaney, I have a question. Is the Election Board involved in this? Have they approved this move and what are their thoughts?

Ms. Bailey, We haven't really discussed it in a meeting at all. I can, we have an upcoming meeting.

Com. Blaney, I would like to hear what the Election Board has to say before I am in favor of this.

Com. Biggs, Does the Election Board dictate where you are operating out of?

Ms. Bailey, Not historically.

Com. Biggs, Only government does stuff like that.

Com. Blaney, I just want to know what their thoughts are. I don't want them to make the decision before I hear their thoughts.

Com. Biggs, Well she is the only elected person on that body.

Com. Blaney, I understand that.

Com. Biggs, She answers to the public. Nobody on that Election Board does.

Com. Blaney, The Election Board is made up of members of the public.

Com. Biggs, Not elected.

Com. Blaney, Opposed.

PORTER STARKE – MATTHEW BURDEN

Presentation on Mobile Crisis Work and Turn Over.

Mr. Burden, Thank you for having us here today. I just want to start first by introducing Sandy Carlson who has actually been with Porter Starke for a while as our Vice President of Clinical Services just to help fill in any of the gaps if there is any questions on some of the Clinical Services. I just want to start by commending all of you. You have all been to Porter Starke to visit. To talk with us. To ask tough questions and make our system better. I really appreciate that. I also wanted to start by saying that none of this could be possible without the grants we've received including the ARPA funds and you've been a big champion of that Com. Biggs. All of you have been very supportive. I wanted to make the point that not only are those funds helpful in developing all the infrastructure for what we have to do to carry out these services but when we apply for other grants we get to say that the county supported us in this effort by doing this. We're one of four mobile crisis grants in the state. We're one of 12 current CCBHC grants which we'll get into a little bit and it looks like we're in good shape to also receive a Crisis Stabilization Unit Grant from the state. All of this is over \$10 million worth of support over the next four years to make sure that we're staffed to the level to do the things that we can do. So with that I do have some extra copies I can give you either before or after. We'll go ahead and into the first slide. This is a little bit of a mouthful of an acronym of CCBHC and I want to talk about it briefly because if you've been following the state legislature Senate

Bill one is focused on three numbers which are 988 and five letters which are CCBHC. The first question is what exactly that? It stands for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics. This is a national framework for treatment to have something that's comparable in every single state in the Union as opposed to each state having a CMAC System that's unique. Now the good news is that Indiana is 24 community mental health centers are well positioned to all become CCBHC and Porter Starke is already on that way because we've had a grant in the past we've, got a current Grant and to develop many of the services within that there are additional grants including the ARPA funds that are supporting the infrastructure for that. Where you'll see the biggest difference from what we have today is on the crisis continuum and Sandy will be talking about that in a bit. First I just wanted to tell you and again this is a lot to summarize there's 68 pages worth of 115 criteria to become a CCBHC. We did a self-evaluation to see where we stand in this. Looks like we're at fully (inaudible) or substantially (inaudible) on the vast majority of the types of services, the organizational capacity, the hiring capacity where we need the most development and where there's historically been not permanent support at the state level has been in the area of Crisis Services and that's what we're gearing up to do. We currently have a staff of 330 employees. We have psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, nurses and clinical staff of all sorts that are there. I wanted to show you the growth trends over the past 10 years in terms of our workforce. You can see a little over 200 employees 10 years ago. Up to 330 today. That's over on the left side. On the right you'll see what we're up against as an industry. That gray line at the top shows turnover. The percentage turnover within our industry in the state. We get benchmarking results every single year. You can see this is a difficult field. I know that turnover and retention of staff is a challenge everywhere but historically it's been tough for us and when you look at that trend going up and up into each year it shows you that it's harder and harder to keep people in this field. It doesn't always pay the best. It's subject to burnout but you can see our results. We've managed to beat those results consistently every year and even through the pandemic when turnovers were some of the worst we were able to beat those state benchmarks. What I'm most excited about what I shared when Barb visited recently was that our most recent results show that we actually saw a significant drop in turnover. I truly believe that's because of the ARPA funds and because of the grants that we've received that are letting us support staff at a more competitive level. So again thank you for that. And we didn't have our state benchmarking yet. So I hope for the best for them as well but it'll be a surprise if they see that big of a (Inaudible). Just really quickly so when will CCBHC happen in Indiana? Right now we're on track to be fully implemented by 2027. Again, good news for us is that we have grant funding that's going to cover most of this here at Porter Starke Services for the next four years all the way up through at least the beginning of 2027.

Com. Biggs, Excuse me what is the CCBHC stand for?

Mr. Burden, Yes so that's that Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic and that's that mouthful of an acronym. I wish that they would have come up with a better way to say it. N Unfortunately that's what we have to work with so I try to just repeat it and repeat it and repeat it.

Ms. Carlson, I still have to remember what it says and I've been working with it for years now.

Mr. Burden, You can think of it as kind of the modern CMHC the Community Mental Health Center and the treatment system for that. There are a lot of moving parts to that. The good news is the state is on board. There's a lot of things that need to be done statutorily for that to happen permanently that are in progress and moving well through Senate Bill One at this point. Is this some sort of fad? We don't think so. You can see an orange there that's every state in the Union almost that has something to do in developing this treatment infrastructure, the CCBHC infrastructure. So that's why Indiana is on that path and actually ahead of a lot of other states at this point. We're excited for that. How will this impact care by Porter Starke Services? As I mentioned the key thing is going to be around crisis care. Right now we have our Psychiatric Hospital, which is an inpatient unit. Typically a length of stay there is around three to five days and it's for very acute situations. You can be admitted immediately with medical clearance and that's going to continue. What we'd like are a couple other services that are in the CCBHD framework. One of them is mobile crisis and the other is crisis stabilization or what we're going to call our crisis center. Sandy's going to talk about a bit of each of where we're at with both mobile crisis and the crisis center.

Ms. Carlson, We're in the process in fact right before this meeting I was on a mobile crisis call with our other partners in the state. We're one of four centers as Matt described that our developing mobile crisis teams and we're working together to create standards across the

state so that we're all doing the same thing. Our mobile crisis team is in process right now. The way that's going to work is that we're going to get calls from, through the 988 Center the emergency line especially for mental health emergencies and substance use emergencies. They will come to us. We'll deploy our mobile crisis team out to that event and then process it from there. So our purpose in that is to try to keep people out of the emergency room when they don't need to go there and out of jail when they don't need to go there. We'll manage them by utilizing our crisis center. This is a place that once we go out to someone's home for example or community center where the crisis is occurring we can transport people if necessary to our crisis center where we can talk with them further. We might need to hospitalize them in our hospital. We might need to get them to a med surge hospital if they have a physical issue or the police might need to take them if they've committed a crime. It's a place to triage those things. Sometimes people just need a little time to cool off. In our crisis center we'll have a space and place for them to sort of get it together. They're not beds there but there would be reclining chairs there and just a place for them to get some food, to have contact with some professionals who can triage the situation and help them move to the next step. We're really looking forward to that.

Com. Regnitz, Is that to get them in potentially medically stable if they're if they haven't been taking their meds or whatever.

Ms. Carlson, Yes. If they haven't been taking their meds and they need further observation and care we could put them in the hospital. If they haven't been taking their meds and they just need some consistent attention from a case manager for example or get back into connection with their therapist then we can facilitate that. If they're seeing other providers in the community that are not us we can make sure we make connections with those other providers to try to help them sort of get their feet on the ground again and then move forward.

Com. Biggs, And historically they would probably end up in the county jail.

Ms. Carlson, Correct historically they wind up in jail or they wind up in the ER. And right now we do go to the emergency room and respond when Northwest Health calls us. They don't always call us. This is an issue for them as well that they have a lot of people in their emergency room.

Com. Biggs, They're really not staffed to handle that.

Com. Regnitz, A lot of times they don't even hold them long enough to stabilize them or to get them in touch with the proper resources.

Ms. Carlson, And that's not their purpose as a med surge facility to do that. They do call us for help. We are happy to go there and we have a contract to do that with them but it would really be best for the client first of all and then for these other entities if we could surround them with people who know how to help them and get them on their way. Also, I would like to just point out that we have space for kids and families in the crisis center that we're establishing. This is significant because oftentimes when it comes time to hospitalize a child or an adolescent, child and adolescent hospitals are few and far between. It's hard sometimes to get kids in and they have to wait a while, while all of that is triaged. I'm saying hours. And you know sitting in our waiting room is not a very comfortable space to wait. We would be able to maintain children and families in a safe space, a comfortable space where we could help them until they can get to where they need to be. So we're really looking forward to this and we just appreciate your support.

Com. Biggs, Well it sounds exciting and it really is cutting edge compared to what we've had.

Mr. Burden, Yes, it's a big difference in the same dimension too is that whenever you can get the least restrictive level of care and get somebody stabilized it's better for them and it's less costly. So it's a win-win for the patient, it's a win-win for society.

Com. Biggs, Probably 99% of what we try to do up here affects in a positive way the quality of life and that's exactly what you're all doing.

Ms. Carlson, That's actually part of our mission. Did you know that?

Mr. Burden, And I have to say too the other thing I wanted to mention is things have been very smooth in the transition from one auditor to the next in terms of getting our ARPA

funds through. We're already I think over halfway done in our progress billings from our construction and getting this going and on track to open the crisis center in the fall. We'll be doing at least a small ribbon cutting so I hope all of you are able to make that and get a chance to see it.

Com. Regnitz, Thank you thank you so much for coming.

Mr. Burden, Thank you for having me.

SHERIFF JEFF BALON

An Ordinance Creating a Non-Reverting Fund #9161 for Receipt of Proceeds from the Adult Community Corrections Grant for the Porter County Jail – 2nd Reading.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Ordinance for Receipt of Proceeds from the Adult Community Corrections Grant for the Porter County Jail on 2nd Reading. Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

PARKS DEPT. – JAKE MCEVOY, DIRECTOR

An Ordinance Creating a Non-Reverting Fund #8166 for Receipt of Proceeds from the Lake Michigan Coastal Program in the amount of \$36,250.00 – 1st Reading.

Mr. McEvoy, This is a reimbursable grant that we got through the Lake Michigan Coastal program. The primary purpose of that is to help fund personnel and supplies for our educational programming and community outreach. Primarily it is going to go to help updating and improving our parks, schools, field trips and our camp fun set programs.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance?

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

Atty. McClure, Jim this will have to go into the minutes. She is going to have to come up and ask and talk into the mic.

Ms. Miller, Dawn Miller. I just wanted a little explanation because what you were saying sounded really good.

Mr. McEvoy, We have three primary educational programs that we run through Porter County Parks. There are parks to schools where we actually bring programming of our educational, environmental, natural resource conservation restoration programming based curriculum that actually matches Indiana State Dept. of Education curriculum. We bring those programs to the schools in the winter and fall months. Outside of the nice weather that we are getting now. We have field trips where schools actually come to the parks and we put on similar types of programming but more actual field. We actually have the first one on site this morning at 8:45 the first field trip of the season. Then the third one is the Camp Funset. That is our Youth Camp. That is the elementary middle school aged camp program that we put on for eight weeks in the summer. This grant is to help fund the part-time naturalists, the camp counselors and as well as updating a lot of our equipment and supplies. Much have what has become outdated.

Com. Regnitz, Wait a second you're only getting \$36,250.00. How are you going to do all of that?

Mr. McEvoy, Yes so this is because it's a reimbursable grant that's covering 50% of it. I actually did apply for another \$37,000 grant through the same program. So I'm hoping we can get on a revolving basis with Lake Michigan.

Ms. Miller, Thank you for that explanation. I think it's fantastic.

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak against the ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak against the ordinance? Last call anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Ordinance for proceeds from the Lake Michigan Coastal Program, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

HEALTH DEPT. – SHEILA PAUL, DIRECTOR

An Ordinance Creating a Non-Reverting Fund #8195 for Receipt of Funds from the Indiana Department of Health for the Lead Grant Fund – 1st Reading.

Ms. Paul, Just basically the same thing we were here before for the lead grant 8195. We established that fund. A little confusion on our part. We also have to establish an ordinance to go along with that. No changes in anything. Just establishing an ordinance.

Com. Biggs, What are your plans on using this money for?

Ms. Paul, That will go towards part time staff to help with our lead program. As we mentioned before the allowable blood levels is dropped per State of Indiana and so just increased the testing. We know that we're going to have more children possibly fall within those levels. They would just require more follow-up, more testing. We've already seen an uptick in cases that are in that new range of blood levels. Then what happens there are multiple tests that have to be done. We have to get them back in the office for more testing. Previously we weren't doing much testing in the office. We were just if needed or it passed. Now we are testing every child of that age range.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak against the ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak against the ordinance? Last call anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Ordinance for Receipt of Funds from the Indiana Dept. of Health for the Lead Grant Fund 1st Reading, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

EXPO CENTER – LORI DALY, DIRECTOR

A First Amendment to Management Agreement with Porter County Agricultural Society--annual payment to Board of Commissioners of \$12,000 for Kankakee Valley REMC due to increase in monthly facilities charges.

Ms. Daly, Last year I received a letter from REMC. Our facilities charge used to be \$150.00 a month. They re-did some things on their end and came out and said it's \$2700.00 a month. So it was quite an increase. It wasn't just us it was anybody that has it. Anybody that pulls a lot electric, Aldi, Morgan Township Schools saw this increase saw this increase as well. The reason for it is because of stuff that's put in throughout the years to bring more electric to the grounds. We looked at consumption between us and the fair. About 38% was the fair's portion. We came up with \$12,000.00 that they'll pay directly to the county each August and this is retroactive back to last August.

Com. Regnitz, Do we just need to move to approve this amendment to the agreement? It says first amendment.

Atty. McClure, It's not a first reading. It's just the first amendment to the agreement with Porter County Agriculture Society.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the First Amendment to Management Agreement with Porter County Agricultural Society--annual payment to Board of Commissioners of \$12,000 for Kankakee Valley REMC due to increase in monthly facilities charges, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Boyce - Contract for Key Ledger accounting software in the amount of \$2,530.00.

Ms. Daly, The Opera House did this last month. I just am a little slow this year. This is the software we use for our accounting.

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

Standard Fee Waiver Schedule for External Agencies:

- American Red Cross
- Toys for Tots

Ms. Daly, Last month we did internal agencies. Other departments that request to use the facility at no charge. We approved those. There are a couple of external agencies that come on an annual basis. The blood drive for the American Red Cross and Toys for Tots.

Com. Regnitz, Do you just want to itemize those real quickly what the fee waiver is for both of those. They are a little bit different for each.

Ms. Daly, American Red Cross is \$1300.00 we would be waiving and Toys for Tots is \$1050.00. Toys for Tots does pay \$375.00 annually. That was something that was worked out before me and we've just continued that with your approval.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Standard Fee Waiver Schedule for the American Red Cross and Toys for Tots, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Special One Time Request for 50% reduction in room rental fees:

- Kiwanis Noon Club for Salute to Recruits on May 17th, 2023.
- Joint Kiwanis Noon Club & Valpo Rotary for Veteran's Day program on November 1st, 2023.

Ms. Daly, Rotary and Kiwanis both came to me at the end of December. Old Town closed which is where those meetings were held and both have found new locations but for the larger events there is not a facility to host them. They came to me to try to get them within their budget for this year because it was unexpected. They're asking for a 50% off room reduction for both of those two events.

Com. Regnitz, I have to recuse myself because I'm in Rotary for the second one. I don't know if we want to vote each of these individually.

Com. Blaney, I'm happy to do them together.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Special One Time Request for 50% reduction in room rental fees, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, Could you thank the AG Society for us.

Ms. Daly, I will. That was quite a shock when that all came down. That is a lot to absorb.

Com. Blaney, Appreciate their help.

FACILITIES – DANIEL SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR

Space needs – Discussion.

Com. Regnitz, I didn't want to keep Jessica up here for this whole discussion. Actually moving Voters Registration and the Election Dept. is the linchpin for Daniel to do this other portion. I just asked him to come at the 10:00 meeting so that we can have an update each meeting as to where we are in the whole process. I know at our last meeting we approved the RFP. I don't know if you have some slides to show at all today.

Mr. Sullivan, Let's see what they look like Curt. Give me number 1. This is the West wing of the first floor where Voters Registration is right now. You can see that kind of wavy red encircling part that is where they are right now. It is something like 2000 square feet or something like that depending on how you measure it. That triangular part is the North wing / West wing at 157 Franklin. This is where I'm saying it is a considerable increase in the number of square footage that we can use. What you are looking at is actually a drawing from the last

project that was done out there. That is why it has the hashing out there because it wasn't included in the contract but it does have where the probation offices and such we're. It kind of give you an idea in those very thin lines of where offices could be laid out. Met with the folks yesterday about how we could exactly do it and put them in there in a way that works. That is where we came up with an approximate timeline of how we think we can actually have those adjustments done by the July time. When it is time for the fair and that's a time when their staff works well for them. That is what we are going to shoot for. I think it is doable. The x's and dashes in there are new areas. Just a few walls to take down and a few walls to put up. Very doable.

Com. Regnitz, Do you want to go to the first level again and just show the Health Dept. and where that is.

Mr. Sullivan, That would be number 3. Currently Veteran's Services is in a117 and a119. Right there in the center. Coroner's is in a104 and a103 to the left and they use a little bit of storage in a106, which now we've moved the extra people from the Health Dept. Initially, plans were with this upgrade to the Health Dept. was to not include those spaces, those would stay there. This is an opportunity to give them those spaces as well and do more for those Veteran's Services folks and the Coroner office that needed improvement as well. By doing this we give the Health Dept. pretty much the entire east wing. I say pretty much because a116 right there, the large meeting room that we know is 102a will stay as a meeting room.

Com. Biggs, More importantly they are going to have growth space now, which they haven't had.

Mr. Sullivan, Exactly.

Com. Regnitz, I'm just wondering if we maybe want to configure it so that the conference room is moved more towards where a117 and a118 is. Then we don't have to cut them apart.

Mr. Sullivan, Yes I think that is a great opportunity because it kind of gives some hallway exposure now to that meeting room if we do that. We can make improvements to the meeting room to make it more useful to County events as well as public use.

HIGHWAY DEPT. – JIM POLAREK, DIRECTOR

Receive and Open Bids for Liquid Material Bituminous Bids for Chip Seal Program for 2023.

Ms. Martin, We received two bids for the liquid bituminous material. The first one is from the Clink Group.

Mr. Polarek, We will take them back to look over and when Storm Water is through we will give you the results.

Ms. Martin, The second one is from Asphalt Materials.

Com. Blaney, Bitmap Quality Asphalt Products and Asphalt Materials Ink.

Mr. Polarek, We have kind of split decision. The AE90S Asphalt Materials came in the lowest at \$2.528 a gallon but then on the dust stop and the fog seal bitmap came in cheapest at \$2.05 a gallon. We recommend excepting both bids for those two products.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the recommendations by Director Jim Polarek AE90S Asphalt Materials came in the lowest at \$2.528 a gallon but then on the dust stop and the fog seal bitmap came in cheapest at \$2.05 a gallon. , Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

DEVELOPMENT & STORM WATER MNGMNT. – BOB THOMPSON, DIRECTOR

Lochmueller Group – Amendment No. 1 for the Right-of-Way of Porter County Bridge #56, 1050 South over Pleasant Township Ditch not to exceed a fee of \$309,299.00.

Mr. Thompson, That is the total contract amount. The right-of-way services is the amendment. It's not a large amount at all, it is just amending the total contract amount. Bridge 56 is on 1050 South. It is just east of Baums Bridge Rd. It is currently the one we have closed

because it failed. This is for amending so we can start doing the right-of-way acquisition for this bridge.

Com. Regnitz, What are you amending in this?

Mr. Thompson, The right-of-way services are always a separate contract. In this case since we are doing everything local with INDOT that is a separate contract.

Atty. McClure, We need the not to exceed contract is being modified from \$292,149.00 to \$309,299 for an increase of \$17,150.00 for right-of-way services.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Lochmueller Group Amendment No. 1, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

The Gardens at Loomis Lake, LLC - Kilmer Minor Subdivision Performance Agreement and Guarantee.

Mr. Novotney, This project Minor Subdivision has reached the point in the development construction of its common infrastructure. They are seeking approve of their secondary plat. What is in front of you this morning is the performance agreement and guarantee that they say there are going to finish those common improvements. If not we have the financial guarantee that will allow us to order them complete or have them completed by other means so that those that move into the subdivision are properly served by road and storm water infrastructure. The staff is recommending approval of this performance agreement.

Com. Regnitz, Is this something Scott needed to approve?

Atty. McClure, I reviewed it yes.

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

Timberland Farms, Phase 3 – Request for Final Acceptance of Public Infrastructure.

Mr. Novotney, In the course of construction and development of any subdivision, private development the development proceeds public infrastructure. Common infrastructure is constructed. The county preliminarily accepts it those public improvements if the Commissioners so choose to do so. And once that preliminary acceptance takes place there's a three year standard maintenance period. Essentially, that three year period is a guarantee by developer that everything has been constructed in accordance with the plans and specs and there is no material defects in the work. Once that the three year period expires we revisit everything. Make sure everything is working properly. Everything has been completed. There are no issues. That is where Timberland Farms Phase 3 is in its development. The developers petition that the County Commissioners accept the public improvements. In this case just the roadways serving Timberland Farms Phase 3 as public infrastructure, which means that we are now completely on the hook for maintaining/caring for the roads that serve the development.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve Timberland Farms, Phase 3 Request for Final Acceptance Public Infrastructure (Just the roadway), Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Mr. Novotney, Correct. The storm, the sanitary and the water are all covered by either Valparaiso City Utilities or in the case of storm water Damon Run Conservancy District.

Plan Commission Resolution – Recommendation to Repeal Ordinance 20-11, Solar Energy Systems.

Mr. Thompson, This is Planning Commission Resolution 23-02. The Planning Commission held a special meeting on the 5th of April of 2023, reviewed and held a public hearing on the recommendation that was forwarded by the Board of Commissioners to them on repealing and revising the solar ordinance number 20-11. This was recommended by the Plan Commission favorably by an 8-0 vote.

Com. Biggs, Bob as you know you have a long history here. We don't normally do something like this. It doesn't happen often at all. Explain to us and the public as to why we felt in the particular instance that there needs to be a revision. In other words the ordinance that we currently have.

Atty. McClure, Just report why the Plan Commission Committee recommended to the Plan Commission for this.

Mr. Thompson, If I remember correctly five items that the Plan Commission recommended. There were environmental concerns. There are two bullet points underneath. Research on the panel construction for recommendation on specific panels. We've been hearing quite a bit on how panels leak. Certain chemicals but there are other panels out there that are solid state that do not leak. Looking at an ordinance and actually writing in the ordinance what type of panel they have to use. Also, the recommendation under the environmental part to study impacts on wildlife including migratory birds. The decommissioning agreement it was reviewed and recommended that there would be a bond for that ordinance. It does not require a bond, but the bond be renewed on a five year basis. That way it is reviewed regularly on costs for removal since these are 20/25 year leases that we have been hearing about. Setback and landscaping requirements. Review the requirements we have for the project as compared to how they're going to sit on the local roads. If they are adjacent to a residential parcel. These are setbacks they are going to look at. That was part of the recommendation is to review that. Maximum noise levels. Our ordinance is silent on the noise level. So putting an actual decibel amount on that. Density or site location within the unincorporated areas to residential growth areas and review soil conditions to determine prime farmland was part of it. Also, a look at putting in a labor agreement so there is the use of local labor force with the construction. Those were the bullet points that were brought up by the subcommittee to the Planning Commission and reported.

Com. Biggs. Sounds like they did their homework.

Com. Blaney, Yes.

Com. Regnitz, I thought they were going to need a first and second reading on this.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance?

Com. Regnitz, There was a weird confusion at the Plan Commission. If you are in favor of repealing the ordinance you are in favor of this resolution. So would anyone like to speak in favor of repealing this ordinance?

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak against the ordinance?

Ms. Connor, My name is Rachel Connor. I represent Hoosiers for Renewables. I'm the executive director. Our office is in Carmel and I live in Pendleton so I'm not a resident but we do have member advocates in Porter County. I'm happy to provide names of any advocates at any time for the reference of the Board. Our members do ask that the Board vote against this ordinance and we also ask that as you go through this process of revising that the process be incredibly transparent. Just so that our membership is able to see when the Plan Commission or sub-committee will be meeting and how they can provide information or testify during the revision process. Thank you.

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak against the ordinance? Last call anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Plan Commission Resolution to Repeal and Revise Ord. No. 20-11 Solar Energy Systems on 1st Reading, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, It sounds like the Plan Commissioner sub-committee did a lot of work on this and raised some really valid points. Thank you for that.

Mr. Thompson, Was that motion for just repeal or is it to repeal and revise?

Atty. McClure, It was to approve the Plan Commissioner's resolution for repeal and revise and it was approved on 1st Reading.

Com. Regnitz, Can we also just mention that we will have 2nd Reading this Thursday at 1:00.

THE ORAK SHRINERS OF MICHIGAN CITY – JON MILLER

A Request for permission to sell Vidalia Onions on the Northeast corner of the County Administration Building along with North side of the Courthouse on Saturday, May 13th, 2023 from 9am – 3pm with a backup rain date of May 20th.

Mr. Miller, I'm a member of the Orak Shrine myself. It is actually a joined effort between the Orak Shrine and our (Inaudible) Local Lodge 137. Its onion sale time again. As you know you've been gracious in giving us the opportunity to sell onions on the corner out here. This year our lodge is trying to experiment. They're going to sell onions on this corner here and also in front of the Courthouse. I guess we're going to man up and get the swat team of guys that sell onions this year.

Com. Blaney, Sounds like a great Mother's Day present.

Mr. Miller, It is. If you've never had a Vidalia I highly recommend it. Some people eat them like apples. The crux of this entire project is this is our primary fundraiser for the Orak Shrine and as you know the Orak Shrine along with Shriners International provides a lot of beautiful, wonderful hospitals and this is our big fundraiser.

Com. Biggs, What is a bag of onions?

Mr. Miller, A ten pound bag of onions is \$10.00. It's been that way for a long time.

Com. Regnitz, Can I put in a preorder right now.

Mr. Miller, If granted this opportunity to do this if you wouldn't mind me putting a flyer on the door or maybe somewhere if that's okay.

Com. Blaney, Yes.

Mr. Miller, We thank you for your past support and just asking for support again this year.

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

Mr. Miller, I've been doing it before I was a Shriner. I was actually kind of slow at getting my fez. I've been working with them for about eight or nine years. I know when I was the Recorder I started doing it. I wasn't even a Shriner yet but it was something I believe in. Our local Lodge 137 is very active and we have a lot of members that are Shriners.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the request to sell Vidalia onions for the Shriners. Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Mr. Sheely, My name is Gordon Sheely. I live in East Morgan Township, east of 650. Thank you for the opportunity to ask some questions. First off I'm not part of any group for or against the Malden solar project. My name's not on any petitions for or against that. Very good friends on both sides of this issue. So it's kind of complicated for me. Up until a few months ago honestly I really knew nothing about projects that were being proposed in Porter County specifically Morgan Township. The neighbor said something to me probably three or four months ago that within a mile to a mile and a half of us there are farmers that have signed up land for solar. Well we've never been contacted that this was going on out there. So I just started out of curiosity going about where this started and how it got going, so on and so forth. When I Googled up, I always call it Google University because that's my information up try to find things out because I'm kind of a self-learner. If you Google up Malden Solar it says it's a subsidiary of NextEra. Wellbeing a subsidiary you can be wholly owned, partially owned, you can be a separate company operating under their name. Who or what is Malden Solar? Is it actually NextEra or maybe some of these questions....I mean, you don't know. Just trying to recently because I cannot find anything on the internet who comprises Malden Solar. I mean there's no board of directors, there's no employees, there's no....I haven't found anything. So I'm trying to go back to the beginning of this because I say I'm a newbie on this. I'm trying to

educate myself on how this project got started and so on and so forth. So I don't know whether you know who Malden Solar actually is or who makes up Malden Solar.

Com. Biggs, For myself no I don't. No I have no idea. This whole NextEra the subject matter of NextEra is relatively new to us. When they came into the picture you know we had heard rumor a year or two ago that somebody was down there signing up landowners but we didn't know who it was. They didn't come and ask us our permission. I'm speaking for myself by the way.

Mr. Sheely, Well I know what the February 27th meeting NextEra during their presentation made a point of saying well this is only one percent of the farm ground in Porter County or in Morgan Township I believe Porter County. Well then you start finding out but it's not just maybe their project is one percent but you have all these other companies that are out there trying to get the same thing going. So now it's no longer one percent. So when you're proposing your program is one percent maybe that's yours but that doesn't give the county a good picture of what's actually going on when it's being proposed throughout the county and throughout the township.

Com. Biggs, I don't disagree. I think our last count we have four different solar companies knocking on our door. Just from the Malden project or Morgan Township project. Com. Regnitz had actually created a map showing the total square footage of what was projected at that time and it was actually larger than the Town of Kouts. I see where you're going with that it could be much larger than we think.

Mr. Sheely, Yes and that's a concern for spreading throughout the whole Township in that county.

Com. Biggs, And honestly sir that was one of the reasons we wanted to go back and look at the ordinance because the way the ordinance is currently written I mean we could literally wake up 10 years from now in most of our unincorporated areas it could look like something out of a sci-fi movie. I'm going to try and get through this quick because I know everybody wants to go to lunch. I know what that's like. Most of my questions here are probably going to be from the March 14th Commissioners' meeting. Some of them you may have answers some of them I might need to contact landowners there specifically. During that meeting it was stated that NextEra had committed to a decibel level not to exceed 55 decibels. Well it's easy to throw out a 55 decibel number where has it been measured from and at what point?

Com. Biggs, The property line.

Mr. Sheely, Which property line? I hope adjacent homeowners.

Atty. McClure. The property line of the home and the field meet.

Mr. Sheely, So the adjacent homeowners then at their property line in the field that would be 55 decibels.

Atty. McClure, Correct.

Mr. Sheely, And that is throughout the whole project?

Atty. McClure, That is what they are alleging yes.

Mr. Sheely, Okay so 55 decibels is approximately a conversation, a person-to-person conversation according to the decibel rating chart. If you were standing at the edge of your property you would basically be listening to somebody having a conversation at the 55 decibel range.

Atty. McClure, It would be 55 decibels at the property line.

Mr. Sheely, Okay. It's also talked about that NextEra would put \$2 million towards Morgan Township School. Is that Morgan Township Schools or is that East Porter County School Corporation?

Com. Biggs, I think it's East Porter County School Corporation. I talked to a School Board member now I may have understood that incorrectly but let's assume that it's not maybe it's just for the Morgan Township School.

Mr. Sheely, Does anybody know if NextEra offered any financial compensation to the surrounding homeowners that are going to be affected by this at all not just to...

Com. Biggs, The people that are leasing from?

Mr. Sheely, Yes.

Com. Biggs, I don't believe they have.

Mr. Sheely, During that meeting there was a discussion of the timeline when NextEra started leasing or asking to lease land for the solar project? Did NextEra contact the Board of Commissioners at any time prior to and this will look back to 2019 is I believe when they have Good stated that NextEra was at her house talking about....

Com. Biggs, They did not contact me.

Mr. Sheely, Okay. So prior to that NextEra never came to the Board of Commissioners and told them that they'd like to pursue a project here in Porter County.

Com. Biggs, Not at that time.

Mr. Sheely, Com. Regnitz was not on the Board...

Com. Biggs, I believe that they started reaching out, I'm speaking for myself again, right around 2022. The latter part of 2021. They wanted to meet and I refused to meet with them.

Mr. Sheely, Okay well the reason I'm asking and here again I'm asking questions. I'm trying to educate myself on this. Deb stated during that meeting that NextEra attitude had always been the Commissioners first. Talk to the Commissioners first before we do anything, but all of a sudden they're at her house in 2019 talking to landowners about signing up property. And the Commissioners don't know anything about it. So I'm confused as to where we went from the Commissioners being first to the Commissioners not knowing and already being discussions talked about signing a plan. I'm just asking questions because I don't know. I'm not trying to create a gotcha moment. I'm trying to ask a question because there's a lot of people that don't want this in their backyards there's people that do. I'm not against solar. I think there's a place for it. To be honest I hope it doesn't come to my backyard but I fully respect the landowners for using what resources they have available to I mean gosh how do you turn it down but I don't believe any one of those families did anything wrong. My problem is with the NextEra process. How it got rolling.

Com. Blaney, My guess is that the ordinance got passed in 2020. And so when they're operating under an ordinance they probably didn't feel like they needed to personally contact us. I don't know when leases were signed. They're not getting an application to us until right recently.

Mr. Sheely, Well I guess another question I had was during that conversation Com. Biggs and Deb were going back and forth about NextEra being at her house so on so forth and Com. Blaney you made a comment about the state was doing their stuff and we passed this ordinance. Why did the Board all of a sudden decide we need to pass an ordinance to get this get this on the books to allow that?

Com. Blaney, The reason you just mentioned. We were under the state was going to pass something that had fewer restrictions than what we put forward.

Mr. Sheely, Okay I understand. I didn't understand why at a local level we would go ahead and do something prior to the state and I understand...

Atty. McClure, There are many examples and when the state sometimes preempts the locals, we're a local. So if the state issue at that time was and it was actually a bill and actually made it through one side of the house that would have preempted the locals from being able to pass an ordinance to control the development of solar farms. At that time the Board of Commissioners had the Planning Department put together a solar ordinance that we would then not be preempted from being able to have the additional requirements at that time.

Mr. Sheely, Okay, so between 2019 when NextEra was at landowners homes and March/ April of 2020 when the ordinance was passed the language was written for the ordinance.

Atty. McClure, Correct.

Mr. Sheely, Was that language written by the County Attorney or was that language or was that standard language and other....

Atty. McClure, It was it was co-wrote by myself and Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Sheely, Okay kind of follows along the guidelines of other installations.

Atty. McClure, We looked at other installations but we also looked at the things that we were concerned about when dealing with other semi-like kind issues like wind turbines and things like that. That's why we were dealing with native plantings and setbacks and things of those natures.

Mr. Sheely, During the two meetings the ordinance was talked about and during that time there was the pandemic time where there were no public meetings like we're having here today.

Atty. McClure, To hear that up we never had a meeting that wasn't public. It may have been on Facebook. It may have been on Zoom but even during the pandemic even the early stages if we were having a meeting the Commissioners were having a meeting the public had a way of being present. I'm not saying it was the normal. I'm not saying it was the normal. I'm not saying it was the best but I keep hearing that repeated. In early 2020 when Covid and Covid lockdowns began to occur this Board continued to meet but this Board had to meet in a way to be able to hear, listen, see and comment. I can't remember exactly which meeting and exactly what process we were using but this Board just because Covid showed up this Board did not just all of a sudden have meetings by themselves. I just want to clear it up. I know you may not have exactly have meant that.

Com. Biggs, To be exact and the records reflect this the first reading where we approved the ordinance that was the same date that the governor come out and gave an executive order for people to stay in, same day. The same day County government later that afternoon shut down County Government. We we're at the height of this Covid thing. At that point the second reading was done on Zoom. It was not a public meeting in the sense that it was not in this building.

Atty. McClure, And the second reading wouldn't have been a public hearing at a public meeting anyway. First reading is the public meeting and hearing, second reading as we've done several today it's a public meeting but not a public hearing.

Mr. Sheely, I guess one of my concerns and not that there was anything done wrong but on an issue like this with changing an amendment or an ordinance to allow something like this and having it done during the meeting which is restricted because of the Covid and zoom. Did the public really have a fair chance to ask questions? I know they put it out there and I know they had the opportunity to watch it...

Com. Blaney, The public hearing only happens on the first reading which was done in person here in this chamber.

Mr. Sheely, In March.

Atty. McClure, Before it comes here just like we are doing the solar ordinance on the repeal and revise it has to come out of Plan Commission. Plan Commission also had a public meeting before the Commissioners had their public meeting.

Com. Blaney, And the public could comment at both.

Atty. McClure, At both. There were public meetings and public hearings.

Mr. Sheely, I think that is just about all I have to say. I was just trying to get myself educated on this and try to understand how we got to this point. And the only way you can understand how you get to this point is if you go back and ask how do we get to this point. I

appreciate your time. I will make one other one other comment. Big companies NextEra comes to mind with what's happened. I worked for a very large company for 40 years. And whenever they wanted something the first thing they did was divide the people at contract time. They would come in to contract negotiations and say well we want to give this group of people this. What about the rest of people? Well that's your problem. You take it up with them. So my point to this is and I don't think NextEra is...to me this is planned by NextEra to come in and try and divide people and then conquer. And that's been a tactic for years and years and years with big companies. I hope that everything works out for the landowners that signed up for this. I personally went over and spoke to Mark and Kim and I said I hope that they don't get blamed, which is one of my biggest fears was that their family and other families don't get blamed for the division within the community that NextEra has caused. I feel that NextEra has caused this. Not the individuals that were offered a business deal to diversify their portfolio as you might say. I wanted to congratulate the gentleman from NextEra at the March 20 or at the February 27th meeting for that meeting because that's just what he did as far as I was concerned, was divide a small community that was fairly close before.

Com. Biggs, The whole purpose of that meeting at the Expo Center was to get a pulse on what the community down there was thinking. I came in as board chairman this year and we have a new commissioner that came in at the first of the year and Laura could speak for herself but I think she was in the same position that I was is that there's a whole lot I didn't know. And I certainly didn't know what the community down there was thinking. I stated then I'll state it now that's who I work for. I want to know what they're thinking. NextEra's opinion is secondary to me.

Mr. Sheely, Thank you very much appreciate it.

Com. Biggs, You're welcome.

Ms. Miller, Dawn Miller. With the opioids settlement money and the ARPA money are there any plans. I don't think that anybody from Porter Starke is here. Do we know if there's any plans to expand in terms of their bedding because there's only 16 beds. I'm just addressing this because I didn't realize they had left. I was also you know wanted to bring up that they get three to five days in Porter Starke and then what's the next step? At the City Council meeting yesterday we had Peter Anderson bring up some facts that both the County and the City has got money and he'd like to see something with a coordinator and I think that's a really good thing he's on a right track.

Com. Regnitz, Just so you know we've already committed a \$100,000.00 for the pro-coordinator that is under the auspices of the Sheriff. He's actually selected somebody for that position and our little committee is working on a recommendation for the remaining \$60,000.00 for this year. We're looking at a number of different alternatives for that okay.

Ms. Miller, Fantastic I just think it's wonderful that this is something that we're addressing because this is something that is really a serious problem you know with all the drugs and stuff. And with all the money that you know like I said each town had got and well Porter County had gotten we could do a lot with that to help with the drug issues.

Com. Biggs, The Commissioners and the County Council have taken it very seriously and taking our time before making a decision to make sure we do the right thing.

Com. Blaney, As far as the ARPA funds are they still on the website the projects because they were on the website so you could review it.

Ms. Martin, I think they still are but we'll check on that.

Com. Blaney, Thank you.

Ms. Miller, If they're not I have all the notes. I just think its fantastic what all you guys are doing with this. I mean it's wonderful so thank you to all of you guys and to the City Council and the County Council because it is so important to try to get this under control thank you again.

Com. Regnitz, Can I just talk about what our next meeting is going to be at 5:30 on April 24th. We're going to have three things on our agenda. We're going to be doing a proclamation in honor and gratitude of the First Responders for their work over the weekend of the storms of March 31st and April 1st. We're also going to be doing a launch of our health and wellness

initiative that we're going to start within Porter County Government and then hopefully expand out into the community. Then we're also going to be talking about the Willowcreek Extension. We're going to be alerting that community so that they realize that that's what that meeting is going to be about on that day.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

Jim Biggs

Barb Regnitz

Laura Blaney

Attest: _____
Karen Martin, Auditor