

**PORTER COUNTY COUNCIL
Regular Council Meeting
April 18, 2023**

The Porter County Council met on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Administration Center, 155 Indiana-Suite 205, Valparaiso, Indiana.

Mr. Rivas called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. All right, can we get a roll call?

Members present were Council Member Jeremy Rivas, Council Member Red Stone, Council Member Greg Simms, Council Member Andy Bozak, Council Member Mike Brickner, Council Member Sylvia Graham, and Council Member Mike Jessen. Member(s) not present Council Attorney Harold Harper. Also present was Auditor Karen Martin, Auditor Chief Deputy Ryan Kubal, Auditor and Council Administrative Assistant Joy Blakely.

Mr. Rivas , We have a quorum, sounds good.

Minutes

Approval of minutes for September 20, 2022 and December 6, 2022 Council Meetings.

Mr. Rivas, We have approval of minutes for September 20, 2022 and December 6th 2022 council meeting

Mr. Bozak, Motion.

Ms. Graham, Second.

Mr. Rivas, There's a motion and second, discussion? All in favor signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

First Reading

Mr. Rivas, First Reading please.

Auditor Chief Deputy Dave Wichlinski,

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF PROPOSED ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

Notice is hereby given the taxpayers of Porter County, Indiana that the proper legal officers of Porter County, Indiana will meet in the Porter County Government Administration Building located at 155 Indiana Avenue, Valparaiso Indiana 46383 on April 18th, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. to consider the following appropriation adjustments to the county budgets for the year 2023 and to transact any further business which might come before the Council:

General Fund				
Commissioner General Fund	1000-11100-000-0068	Salaries	\$	28,000.00
Juvenile Detention Fund	1000-11100-000-0381	Salaries	\$	-1,661.00
LIT (Local Income Tax) Fund				
LIT Fund	1112-39850-000-0068	Economic Development	\$	500,000.00
LIT Fund	1112-11100-000-0068	Salaries	\$	28,000.00
			\$	528,000.00

21.027 CSFRF Lead Grant Fund

CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-11200-000-0610	Hourly	\$	18,000.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-12100-000-0610	FICA	\$	1,377.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-21100-000-0610	Office Supplies	\$	2,337.50
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-22500-000-0610	Other Supplies	\$	1,500.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-31300-000-0610	Training and Education	\$	1,500.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-32100-000-0610	Travel	\$	2,000.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-32300-000-0610	Postage	\$	200.00
			\$	26,914.50

Taxpayers appearing at such meeting shall have a right to be heard thereon. The appropriations adjustments as finally made will be referred to the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance. Where applicable, the DLGF will make a written determination as to the sufficiency of funds to support the appropriations to support the appropriation made.

Karen Martin
Auditor of Porter County

Publish March 31, 2023

Mr. Rivas, Thank you. I know we've got a long agenda here.

Councilman Mike Jessen

Mr. Rivas, So I'm going to take a pause for a second, you know I told everybody that this was Mike's last meeting so all of his friends showed up today.

(Laughter)

Mr. Rivas, These are the friends that you've made County Government.

(Laughter)

Mr. Bozak, Wow.

Mr. Rivas, Sorry Mike this is what we got here today.

Mr. Jessen, It's a roast.

Mr. Simms, I didn't know it was a roast. Oh my God!

Mr. Rivas, So before the three (3) people leave. You know so maybe we should do this before.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jessen, I've got ammunition too Jeremy.

(Laughter)

Mr. Rivas, So yes, you know, I know it's not a whole lot. But it is a plaque Mike, it's in Appreciation of your Outstanding Service of the Taxpayer of Porter County. What is this your ninth (9) year Mike?

Mr. Jessen, Yes, I'm in my ninth year. Yep.

Mr. Rivas, Ninth year and yeah, when you called and told me the bad news, for at least Porter County. It was very tough to take. I know that yes, I'm a Democrat, you're a Republican, but I even think five (5) years ago, or whatever not quite five (5) years ago...maybe a couple of years, two (2), three (3) years ago, talking about whether you were going to run again, and I actually hoped that you would run again. Because I you bring a lot, you brought a lot to this County, and I've appreciated working with you. You know one thing, whether you were in the minority, the majority, whether you

were President, it just seemed like you always found middle ground. You always found...you know, you always govern from the middle on the common ground, and just went about your business. You came prepared, you were always respectable, and you just... you brought a lot to this County, over your years here. I think what we have done over that time has been incredible too; you know whether it has been the Storm Water stuff we've tackled. The Facilities we have tackled, our finances they are in great shape. Everything, people getting along, you know moving forward we have kept the B.S. out. You know the social stuff, we've come in here, we've done our job for a while now and County Government is just a way better place because of you Mike, it really is. You've left your mark here, and I appreciate it. I am a little irritated, and ticked that you're leaving. But you know good for the organization that you're going to. You know our loss their gain for sure, so just thank you for everything Mike thank you for you know your friendship, thank you for the work you've done up here, and don't go too far alright?

Mr. Jessen, Nope, no way.

Mr. Rivas, We need you, so anybody else want to say anything? Nope, it doesn't sound like anybody's got anything.

(Laughter)

Ms. Graham, Oh wait a minute, wait a minute. I would like to make some comments. As you all know, I've been here for quite a while, and I've seen people come and go, and Mike you are the absolute person that could be relied upon, you do the work of the people, you have done the work of the people. You've had an open mind, always working for the good, the benefit of the County, and that's so appreciated. I worked on two (2) of the ARP Committees with you, and I was very impressed with how the how the meetings were handled, and the input that you had at those meetings. You are going to be sorely missed, and not only personally but the County too. You've done a good job for the County, and thank you so much for all you've done.

Mr. Jessen, Thank you Sylvia.

Mr. Rivas, Anybody else? Mike Brooker you're not going to say anything to your old friend?

Mr. Brickner, Well I was going to go last, but I'll go ahead and just say that...

Mr. Jessen, We don't want this to go on for an hour.

(Laughter)

Mr. Brickner, If there was a job description for local government, for an individual that would represent local government, I think Mike's picture would be there. And you know kind of being the newer person, that now is Red, but I learned a lot from them, and understand that local government success is based on relationships, it's not based on party. I think Mike has set the bar for that, a lot of things have been accomplished over the years. When I worked for County Government I sat on the other side of the table, and I had the opportunity to be in front of the Council, and I think that the Council has come forward leaps and bounds. I think with Mike's presence here is a big reason for that. So he's going to be missed, but I think when you said...I heard a couple people say this is good for the Boys and Girls Club. So congratulations to them and that's going to be some big shoes to fill.

Mr. Rivas, For sure, anybody else?

Mr. Stone, So I was excited Mike when I found out, because I've only known you for four (4) months on the Board. But when I found out that you were going to be at the Boys and Girls Club, and being a Boys and Girls Club member myself in Duneland. I was excited, because I get to keep working for you. It's a tough job, and I know you're going to do a do a great job for us. So it's a great organization and I appreciate you, thank you.

Mr. Jessen, Yeah, thank you.

Mr. Bozak, I did see all these Facebook posts with you and your grandkids, I was like you...you obviously love kids. So I think this is a perfect fit for you.

Mr. Jessen, I just love my grandkids.

(Laughter)

Mr. Bozak, See it's a great fit! I think though, I am really excited for the County and the Boys and Girls Club, for all the different ways you can impact not only this County, but the other areas.

Mr. Simms, That was funny and clever.

Mr. Bozak, And yeah we're going to lose a lot. We lose some knowledge, we lose the guy that's always prepared, and comes to meetings extra prepared. And I've always appreciated that, because you know sometimes when you don't know what to say, and you come through. You have it written out, and it's well done. So I just appreciate working with you, and I want to thank you. With the things that I've learned from you over the years, and maybe you've learned one or two things for me.

Mr. Jessen, Thanks Andy.

Mr. Rivas, Thank you, anybody else?

Mr. Simms, You're not expecting me to say anything are you Mike?

(Laughter)

Mr. Jessen, You're going to say what you want to say. I learned that about you Greg.

Mr. Simms, No I'll tell you what, the biggest thing that I appreciate is...well not the biggest thing, because all this stuff is so true that everyone said, and I don't want to repeat that, but you know when I first got on, and we went out after work I will tell you that I enjoyed that so much. In regards to just sitting down at a table having a just an honest, realistic conversation just about stuff. And so many people know you, it's like holy crap you can't go anywhere without someone knowing Mike. But that's what I appreciated, the just sitting down, and having a conversation on this is how things are, or what can we do, how can we move things forward. And that's, just like Jeremy had said too about the it didn't matter Republican Democrat it's what can we do for the County? And you are definitely the epitome of that, and it's been wonderful for the Community, and that attitude is going to work wonders at your Boys and Girls Club. And because again, so many people, so many different diversities and stuff are a part of that, and man you just you see nothing but good, and nothing but how can we do better for the County. So again, I appreciate all that, and I know we'll be crossing paths a million times.

Mr. Jessen, Thank you.

Mr. Rivas, Commissioner Blaney you have worked with Mike for a while, do you have anything to say? I'm sorry I put you on the spot, but...

Commissioner Blaney, That's alright. I echo everyone's statements up here. When Mike first told me that he got this job, I thought my first response was, that's awesome for the Boys and Girls Club! Then I was like, oh gosh...

(Laughter)

Commissioner Blaney, I'm going be really rough um just it's just a huge loss he's got so much historical knowledge. He's talked me off the ledge more than once, when I'm upset about something, you got me back to the middle ground where we all should aim to stay get to things done for the county. He is a friend and I imagine that we'll still be crossing paths, and he will be missed in the county. I think...

Mr. Jessen, I told you today I was changing my phone number.

[Laughter]

Commissioner Blaney, I'll find you.

(Laughter)

Commissioner Blaney, So thank you.

Mr. Jessen, Thank you Laura.

Mr. Rivas, So, thanks Mike, I appreciate you...

(Applause and Standing Ovation)

Mr. Rivas, Mike the floor is yours if you would like to say anything.

Mr. Jessen, I'm going to save my comments for the end of the meeting.

Mr. Rivas, Okay perfect! So is...

Commissioner Blaney, (Inaudible)

(Laughter)

Juvenile Detention – Director Alison Cox

Juvenile Detention General Fund - 1000-000-0381

Reduction -\$1,661 to 11100 Salaries. Reason: Reduction needed because we hired new Detention Manager.

Form 144 \$48,649.00 to \$46,988.00 Detention Manager

Reason: Need to reduce salary -\$1,661 for Detention Manager. Salary reduced from \$48,649 to \$46,988.

Mr. Rivas, All right, let's get going because it shouldn't take long for those comments Mike.

So, Juvenile Detention it looks like there's a reduction, my favorite. General Fund Reduction -\$1,661 to 11100 Salaries. The reason reduction needed because we hired new Detention Manager.

Mr. Bozak, I make the motion.

Mr. Rivas, Motion on the floor.

Ms. Graham, Second.

Mr. Rivas, Second, discussion? Hearing no discussion, could get a roll call on the reduction?

Auditor Karen Martin,

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

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

Form 144 \$48,649.00 to \$46,988.00 Detention Manager
Reason: Need to reduce salary **-\$1,661** for Detention Manager. Salary reduced from \$48,649 to \$46,988.

Mr. Rivas, And to go along with that, there's a Form 144 \$48,649 to \$46,988 dollars Detention Manager. The reason, need to reduce the salary by the **\$1,661** for Detention Manager.

Mr. Bozak, So moved.

Mr. Jessen, Second.

Mr. Rivas, Motion and second, discussion? Can we get a roll call on the Form 144?

Auditor Karen Martin,

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

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

Mr. Rivas, Thank you.

Juvenile Detention Director Alison Cox, Easy-peasy thank you.

Health Department – Director Sheila Paul

Health Department Lead Grant Fund - 8915-000-0610

Additional \$18,000 to 11200 Hourly
\$1,377 to 12100 FICA
\$2,337.50 to 21100 Office Supplies
\$1,500 to 22500 Other Supplies
\$1,500 to 31300 Training and Education
\$2,000 to 32100 Travel
\$200 to 32300 Postage

Reason: Appropriation needed for new grant fund to investigate and manage lead causes

Form 144 Lead Investigator/Educator Up to \$30 per hour

Reason: Form 144 needed for a new Lead Investigator/Educator

Mr. Rivas, Health Department...Health Department, I'm not sure is it Lead (Leed) or Lead? I tried, I had to go back and ask my...

Health Department Administrator Sheila Paul, Lead.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Lead, this is lead poisoning awareness grant for lead cases.

Mr. Rivas, Lead Grant Fund. There's an
Additional \$18,000 to Hourly
\$1,377 to FICA
\$2,337.50 to Office Supplies
\$1,500 to Other Supplies
\$1,500 to Training and Education
\$2,000 to Travel
\$200 to Postage

Reason, appropriation needed for new Grant to fund investigation and manage lead causes. So there's an additional in front of you?

Mr. Bozak, Motion to approve.

Ms. Graham, Second.

Mr. Rivas, Motion and a second, discussion?

Ms. Graham, I just want to ask about the Grant, how long...do you have any idea how long it's going to last, or where does it come from?

Health Department Administrator Sheila Paul, You go ahead.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Actually it's a two (2) year Grant. The second year will start...actually July 1st of this year and go to June 30th of next year. So we're probably into it, but they didn't get the money out...actually out to us until just recently. So that's why we're just now coming before you to get it appropriated.

Ms. Graham, Does this look like a reoccurring a grant that would occur?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, I wouldn't be surprised if it was, because the State's really pushing for...uh they lowered the bloodline level or the threshold they have for children that are up to six (6) years of age. So there's really no normal amount of lead in a person's body, but in children they've got a lot of hand and mouth activity. They can they can get into lead dust, and if you've got an older home you're using a window, and the window goes up and down they usually use a lot of lead paint on window surfaces. Because the lead paint lasted a long time, and but it causes that dust and a children/child going along with little moist hands, and but anyway it affects children worse than adults so that's why we're testing adults...I mean children.

Ms. Graham, Okay.

Mr. Bozak, So is that what this is going to be? Is going out to the schools, and testing? Or, only for the kids that have potential problems, how does that work?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, These are these are children that are nine (9) months through eighteen (18) months of age, and we're... that's our target, but because that's the age it affects a child when their brain is developing so much. But, right now we're expanding our program, and we are actually testing children that come in for immunizations. We look at their age when they come in, then we ask them if they've been tested. If they haven't, we offer them a test right then and there, and then we also get...if children have a blood lead test at a doctor's office, and it's elevated, it's reported to us so we can do follow-up on case management on that child along with their Physicians.

Mr. Bozak, This Investigator will do will go to their home, and find the problems?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, We have a Certified Lead Investigator, a Risk Assessor...yes.

Mr. Bozak, And if they find it, do they help remediate it, or do they say, hey here it is?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, No we actually try to identify the source, and then um, you know, you take away the source you get their blood level to drop, so that's what...and you know, as far as remediation, we don't have the money of course, and this kind of Grant. But then maybe we can get them, maybe hooked up with other resources through the State or through other resources to help with that. So, we actually have been working with Lead, we offered a Lead Prevention Program for children in 1995, so we actually have been doing this in the State called, you know

back when this was offered, said “Connie you're already doing this, why don't you get money” it's like okay yeah.

Health Department Administrator Sheila Paul, We will go with that.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Yeah we'll go with that.

Mr. Bozak, We already have a Lead Investigator?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Yeah.

Ms. Graham, Since 1995?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Yeah.

Mr. Stone, Do you see a problem in lead pipes? Just like the plumbing in certain areas?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Yes, well any house that was built before 1978.

Mr. Stone, Right.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Has possibility of either lead...leaded pipes or lead solder in their copper pipes. So yeah, there can be. Yes.

Health Department Administrator Sheila Paul, I just wanted to make sure that we draw your attention to the fact that we did change the numbers just a little bit, do you want a new copy of that because there is um a Lead Analyzer we want to purchase. Rather than it going to hourly, so we can do the test in-house and get immediate results rather than sending them away, and contacting them several days later. We can help them right away when they're in the office, and give them those results. Would you like a copy of that right now, or do you have that?

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Same bottom line.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah...

Mr. Jessen, So should the motion reflect the reduced hourly?

Mr. Rivas, So yeah, Madame Auditor is that fine. Then the motion will just be for the \$14,000 dollars into the Salaries, and then...

Auditor Karen Martin, The additional \$4,000 will go into Other Equipment.

Mr. Rivas, For the...to Other Equipment. So the Motion and the Second agree to amend this?

Ms. Graham, Yes.

Mr. Rivas, To reflect that?

Mr. Bozak, Yes.

Mr. Rivas, Okay perfect. Further discussion? Seeing none, could we get a roll call on that additional?

Auditor Karen Martin,

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Bozak	-	Yes
Mr. Brickner	-	Yes
Ms. Graham	-	Yes
Mr. Rivas	-	Yes

Mr. Stone - Yes
Mr. Jessen - Yes
Mr. Simms - Yes

Form 144 Lead Investigator/Educator Up to \$30 per hour
Reason: Form 144 needed for a new Lead Investigator/Educator

Mr. Rivas, All right a 144 to create that Lead Investigator/Educator to up to \$30 dollars per hour.

Mr. Bozak, I make a motion,

Mr. Rivas, Motion.

Mr. Stone, Second.

Mr. Rivas, Second, discussion? Roll call please?

Auditor Karen Martin,

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

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

Mr. Rivas, Thank you.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Thank you. Can I just say to Mike, I've seen and I've been here a lot of years. Moreover, I've seen a lot of Council Members come and go, and I just appreciate when we have Council Members that say to our Administrators how can we help you with your job? How can we help you reach the public through the Health Department and through COVID (very emotional). You know you and Laura...you remember you came to us to see what we were doing, and what we needed, and I so appreciate that. My expectation of all of you is the same thing...Sheila how can we help you? You know we've tried to be so conservative.

Mr. Bozak, (Inaudible)

Mr. Jessen, Yes.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, We know you, but we try to be so conservative because we haven't had a lot of money to you know to spend. Now we've got a little more money to work with now, but we really try to be careful. But anyway, I am just very thankful for you.

Mr. Jessen, Thank you.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Thank you.

Mr. Simms, Sheila do you want to tell people about your truck real quick?

Health Department Administrator Sheila Paul, Is now the time?

Ms. Graham, Well why not.

Mr. Simms, Sure.

Mr. Rivas, Just give us a brief overview.

Mr. Simms, Just 30 seconds.

Health Department Administrator Sheila Paul, We got our new Mobile Health Clinic, and right now we are working with the graphics, it should go out next week to get wrapped. And then I believe right now tentatively May 9th, we're looking to have a ribbon cutting across the street. A little bit of an event, and as you guys all know because you approved it. We just hope to do amazing things with this, get it out into the community and take our services and more education out to the people. Where they are in some of those communities, that maybe don't have the opportunity to get to us and really just expand upon what we've been doing all along, but just get out to everybody. So it's coming, it's a promise, I know you've been talking about it for a long time but it's coming.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, Exactly it is.

Mr. Stone, Thank you.

Health Department Nursing Director Connie Rudd, You all are invited to be there too.

Mr. Rivas, Thank you.

Parks and Recreation – Park Superintendent Jake McEvoy

Parks General Fund - 1000-000-0803

Transfer \$22,995 from 36200 Building and Structures to 45400 Other Equipment.

Reason: Transfer needed for the replacement of dilapidated playground structure.

○ **Parks Master Plan Discussion Park Board and Park Superintendent Jake McEvoy**

Parks Master Plan (Discussion on sale of Brookdale Park and use of monies from sale)

Mr. Rivas, Parks and Recreation. There is a General Fund Transfer \$22,995 from Building and Structures to Other Equipment. Reason: Transfer needed for the replacement of dilapidated playground structure.

Ms. Graham, Motion to approve.

Mr. Bozak, Second.

Mr. Rivas, Motion and second, discussion?

Mr. Bozak, Is that enough?

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jake McEvoy, For this particular unit, yeah.

Mr. Rivas, Further discussion? Seeing none, all in favor of the transfer signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign?

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Rivas, That's good, you were going to give a presentation, but I'm told not this month, you're not ready?

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jake McEvoy, Yeah I've still got to go to the Commissioners first.

Mr. Rivas, Okay.

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jake McEvoy, Put the proposal to them and then after that I bring back here.

Mr. Rivas, All right

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jake McEvoy, I got a little ahead of myself I got a couple more steps I got to accomplish first.

Mr. Rivas, All right no problem, sounds good thank you.

Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jake McEvoy, Thank you.

Second Reading

Mr. Rivas, All right that's great. Second reading

Auditor Deputy David Wichlinski, The following Appropriations have come before you for your consideration. Whereas it has been determined that it is now necessary to appropriate more money than what was appropriated in the annual budget. Therefore be it resolved by the Porter County Council of Porter County Indiana that for the expenses of the taxing unit the following additional sums of money are hereby appropriated out of the funds named and for the purposes specified subject to the laws governing the same

General Fund

Commissioner General Fund	1000-11100-000-0068	Salaries		\$ 28,000.00
Juvenile Detention Fund	1000-11100-000-0381	Salaries		\$ -1,661.00

LIT (Local Income Tax) Fund

LIT Fund	1112-39850-000-0068	Economic Development		\$ 500,000.00
LIT Fund	1112-11100-000-0068	Salaries		\$ 28,000.00
				\$ 528,000.00

21.027 CSFRF Lead Grant Fund

CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-11200-000-0610	Hourly		\$ 14,000.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-12100-000-0610	FICA		\$ 1,377.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-21100-000-0610	Office Supplies		\$ 2,337.50
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-22500-000-0610	Other Supplies		\$ 1,500.00
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CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-32100-000-0610	Travel		\$ 2,000.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-32300-000-0610	Postage		\$ 200.00
CSFRF Lead Grant Fund	8915-45400-000-0610	Other Equipment		\$ 4,000.00
				\$ 26,914.50

Mr. Bozak, Move to approve.

Ms. Graham, Second

Mr. Rivas, Motion and second to approve on second reading. I would just like to say for the record, on Mike's last meeting we and reduce the General Fund.

(Laughter)

Mr. Bozak, (Inaudible)

Mr. Rivas, Can we get a Roll Call on a second reading?

Auditor Karen Martin,

Motion carried on the following roll call vote:

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

Auditor Karen Martin, 7 – 0

Mr. Rivas, Perfect.

Attorney's Report

Mr. Rivas, Attorney's report. Harold called, had a deposition he was in the middle of, and I said did not look complicated, we had only a few items so he had nothing to present either.

Any other matter that may come properly before the Council

Mr. Rivas, So with that, do we have Any other matter that may come properly before the Council?

Mr. Jessen, Yeah, did I miss the LIT Fund, was the Economic Development piece withdrawn?

Mr. Rivas, Yes.

Mr. Jessen, Just checking.

Mr. Stone, I saw that on there.

Mr. Jessen, Anything else Jeremy?

Mr. Rivas, No, the floor is all yours Mike.

Mr. Jessen, All right settle in folks.

(Laughter)

Mr. Rivas, Is it time to go to the bathroom?

(Laughter)

Mr. Jessen, Here is my actual letter of resignation, but after all the kind comments and remarks I may not I may not turn it in.

(Laughter)

Mr. Jessen, Because, I might want to stick around and spend time with all you folks. For me it's bittersweet, the fact that I'm actually leaving the County Council after eight (8) years and four (4) months. It was tough to get me involved with County government. And when I was first approached, I was very happily engaged with the Union Township School Corporation School Board, doing great things, surrounded by kids. Ninety-five percent of what we did centered around Kids and Joyful events and Veterans events, and appreciating the Bus Drivers and Teachers, and all that good stuff. So and I was warned coming into County Government, that it wouldn't always necessarily be that joyful. And so, I was fairly prepared, or I thought I was pretty prepared for that for that part of it. I knew in the County Government I wouldn't be surrounded by kids, which truly that is my passion as it turns out ultimately that's who I'll be serving, with all that I have in my next in my next role. But I said that I was willing to step up to...or get involved with County Government, because I care about it. I think it's important work. I'm committed to say that we need people in County

Government, Local Government, State and National too, people who are well qualified for the position, who are able and willing to embrace the role and are willing to commit the time necessary to do it right. I mean, that's the first part of it.

Second of all, I think the next ingredient that's so important, is making sure that people are getting involved with Public Service or Public Office. I want to make sure that they're doing it for the right reason. I mean, why are you doing it? And if it's truly to help the people, and to represent the people, versus elevating your own stature in your mind, or getting a title before your name, or accolades, and that sort of thing, clearly that's not the reason you'd want to get involved with this type of a role.

So as I got involved with County Government, it was all new to me. I said goodbye to the schools, and I was willing to sacrifice, in the sense, sacrifice the joy that came with that role. Because, I knew that although there'd be less joy, there'd be a terrific opportunity to get work done. And back in 20?? what was it 2013, no 2014 when I ran the first time. The County was in my view, and I said it publicly, much to the dismay of many people, I said County government was broken in my view. And as I saw it we had a County Commissioner's Office at times struggled getting along and we had a County Council. So three (3) Commissioners, we had seven (7) County Council members that oftentimes had difficulty getting along, and then you throw the ten (10) into a room to try to get something accomplished, in my I think the word I used was dysfunctional. And that took some of the people by surprise, when I made that statement but I believed it, and I was committed at that time to do everything I could do to make it less dysfunctional, and hopefully more productive or more efficient.

We went to work, Commissioners went to work, the Council went to work, and we have, I would say over the course of the eight (8) years of my involvement in County Government...we've gotten a phenomenal amount, a phenomenal amount of work done. And this isn't to rehash history, but I think it's important to note some of the accomplishments that this Board, along with the County Commissioners have achieved over the last over the last eight (8) years.

And it includes...it's a long list, and this isn't an exhaustive list. But if anyone knew the Animal Shelter back in the day, it's much different, much different today, that's an accomplishment.

When you look at the Expo Center and the work that was done at the Expo Center and how that looks today. And the asset that they the county has out the Expo Center is something that through the renovation, everyone involved with County Government should be should be proud of frankly. And the citizens should be appreciative of that work.

We didn't stop there, the North County Complex...North County Government Complex went through a complete remodel/renovation. In fact, in partnership with the Portage Township Trustee, we partnered with them and added a building for the Trustees Office along with the Food Pantry up in up in Portage. That was another accomplishment.

We also took care of the Courthouse, which was in bad shape from a restoration standpoint, and some of the facade on the outside building, some interior work. We went through a pretty major remodel renovation there.

At 157 Franklin we bought the building, and ultimately turned that into what is now E911, the Prosecutor's Office, and Adult Probation. That was no small feat, and moved all those people from where they were over to a new newly renovated building.

Some of the other things that people don't see so readily, but are very impactful from an infrastructure standpoint. We were talking about bridges during that time, and we had bridges that were in such disrepair, that we closed the bridges. This was because we were fearful of cars, and we even had conversations about school buses crossing some of these bridges. That they weren't well cared for, and as a result of it were unsafe. So we tackled that issue, created a funding source for the bridges and today the county is in a much better position, obviously relative to bridge safety, and we don't have bridges closed as a result of it being unsafe.

The other less visible things that were the focus of our previous administrations, involved infrastructure items such as Storm Water. Storm Water most people don't think about, but I'll tell you it impacts all the residents to some degree. And the biggest projects we started with was the storm water situation up in South Haven. Which not too many years ago...which was shocking to me that we lived in this day and age, where you'd have a storm of a century, or whatever it was, and you'd have boats going down the middle of streets down South Haven, literally. And you say, how is that how is that possible? And that was basically because of Decades of neglect, and an unwillingness to tackle some of those issues that required a lot of resources, and a lot of attention. And the past two (2) administrations, dug in and through the work and effort...not anywhere near done yet, but I'll tell you, the work that's been done up in South Haven, relative to Storm Water and Infrastructure is phenomenal work that we all should be very proud of. Roads impact everybody throughout the county, and we have, especially the last few years, have been very aggressive on Paving the Roads, Restoring Roads, taking care of the maintenance for a long period of time. There is still plenty of work to be done, we haven't even scratched the surface as it relates to Storm Water, and also Roads.

Along the way, we also created the Foundation. Which was a significant accomplishment, because we had a significant amount of money from the sale of the Hospital that sat in an almost non-interest bearing account earning one (1%) percent or less in interest. We created a Foundation and that alone, which was a pretty heavy lift, and included a lot of cooperation from a lot of people. This has ultimately created tens of thousands of...no tens of millions of dollars in return to the County, and that was a huge accomplishment.

And so I've said in the past, that there's no doubt in my mind that through the work that has been done in the last eight (8) years, is really as much work if not more than had been done in the previous twenty (20) or twenty-five (25) years. And, I don't say that to be braggadocios about it, or say it was all Mike Jessen, because it was far, far, from that, this involved a lot of different people are willing to work together, cooperate, and collaborate to get the work done. And that's the type of work that can be done if you have that cooperative spirit, and so I think if I had made a contribution to this this particular Body or to County Government in general, hopefully it's been to bridge the gap. Where there might be difficulty with communication, and throughout the Commissioner's Office or the Council's Office bridging the two to work together, to accomplish the good work of the citizens. That for me...that's what it was all about. That is what I set out to do, and hopefully in some small way I was able to make a positive contribution. Because for me, I am District... as my plaque says I'm District Four, and so I'm from, and I represent District Four very proudly. But it's really the work that's done not only District Four, but it's the work that's done up in South Haven, it's the work that was done in Portage, or Kouts, or Hebron, because it's not a North/South thing. In my view, it's not a Republican or Democrat thing. It's a...it's a Porter County thing, and I've always contended that with the 175,000...how would you say 175,000 odd or so, not meaning people are odd, but 175,000 people. The thoughts, the ideals, and so forth...that they live by aren't that different, the demands, the things that they need in their life, to improve their quality in life it's not that...it not, it shouldn't be that complicated if we eliminate the distractions. So I'm convinced in saying that we can't govern effectively in an environment, or atmosphere of controversy, or divisiveness. We see it at the National level, and we see it at the State level ad-nauseam, and we can't let that happen at the Local level. And so, rather than debating, arguing or creating divisiveness over how the ARPA money should be spent. Or whether or not there should be a Solar Farm or not, or creating controversy, or dissension about a particular fundraising event, or rental out at the Expo Center. Whether it's the Willow Creek Road Expansion or not, whether it's to renovate the Sheriff's Residents, to what degree or not. Or whether it's the Memorial Opera House, we've talked about that ad nauseam over the last over the last years. And at times creating controversy, creating divisiveness, and the goal has to be that everybody has to work together. And so, I guess my charge to this Council and also to the Commissioner's Office, is to say that we've got to work together, and as a as a taxpayer I'll be I'll be watching closely.

There's a lot of work to be done, roads throughout the county still need a significant amount of work and improvement. We've made a small dent I think, but we don't have a plan at this point going forward, to correct it for the long term Stormwater Projects

in South Haven. We spent \$20 million dollars or so on South Haven, there's still money to be spent there. Shorewood Forest is/was second on the list of Storm Water issues, and as a result of that we told the residents of Shorewood Forest to be patient on the roads, we want to fix the storm water first. Because if we don't take care of the storm water issue, to repair the roads would be senseless, and that is absolutely true. But, we made that statement three (3) years ago, and we're still nibbling at taking care of some of the issues that need to be done to take care of the storm water, and all the while, the roads literally in many cases are crumbling, and so there's plenty of work to be done in that particular area as well.

So there's big ideas, big plans, you can tackle many things and ideas that people have, but ultimately anything and everything we do has to be paid for somehow, some way. There has to be an effort to work collaboratively. The three Commissioners have to work together; the seven Council members have to work together. All ten of you somehow some way have to work together, you have to communicate, work collaboratively, you have got to at times compromise, you have to focus on...this has been an effort, and hopefully I've made some progress address in that. I hope that you can develop meaningful relationships with your fellow Council Members and the Commissioners to get the work done. Built on trust, you have to trust one another, and you have to have mutual respect for one another in the in the work that you do.

I have had the privilege, and pleasure of working in this particular capacity over the eight (8) years, plus it has been an absolute thrill for me, I've learned a lot. I wouldn't have had the opportunity to meet some very, very, wonderful people, and develop the relationships that I've developed. And those relationships...many of those relationships will last long after tonight I can assure you. Department Heads and so forth that I've had the pleasure of working with over that time, and developed those friendships and relationships that I mentioned I mean Scot MacDonald, terrific, terrific person. Lori Daly at the Expo, Bob Thompson, Mike Novotney, Kristy up in the Storm Water Development Office all those folks are outstanding individuals who have done significant amount of work for the County. The people on the Council and especially the ones that I've had the opportunity to work with for a long period of time Sylvia it's been an absolute pleasure. Jeremy, our relationship has developed over the years and in a significant way, and I'm phenomenally thankful for that. The relationship I've had with the Commissioner's Office during that during that time has been wonderful. Laura, what a blessing it's been to get to know you, more specifically over the period of time. Jeff Good who is an outstanding individual, a great leader who through his efforts, much of the work that I talked about that has been done, is a credit to Jeff Good. Along with Scott McClure who's been a true asset to the Commissioner's Office in my view, over that time. He is a tremendous individual, with tremendous talent that he's been giving to County Government. Curt Ellis another incredible person. Kathy Merle, Rhonda Young, through HR. The Auditor Vicki Urbanik, and Tony Downing, I mean to work with them over a period of time has been wonderful. It's been a group/team effort. Connie a wonderful opportunity to meet you on a professional and personal level, and Sheila the work that you do.

It's been an absolute pleasure of mine to commit my time and energy into this particular role. People from the past that I am very appreciative of, in terms of my learning Leadership and County Government. Jeff Larson was a terrific asset to the County Council. John Evans in the Commissioner's Office previously, was a terrific individual with a great leadership. Karen Conover who was outstanding to work with, and is still a very good friend of mine today. Bob Poparad who is no longer with us, however in terms of his leadership and contribution of the County over the many, many, years. What a treat it was to get to know him on a more personal level. So to me it's always been about the people. It's always been about the relationships. If you can work together, you can get a lot more done, and also have fun along the way. So without hesitation, I leave here with my head held high on the accomplishments that we've made. And with a very, very, full heart based on the friendships that I've gained and I'll have I'll have forever. And so for this I thank each and every one of you, and everyone that played a role in my County government experience. Joy, I don't want to forget you, so it's been wonderful working with you over the course of the entire time. So I especially want to thank the voters of District Four, who entrusted me to occupy this temporary seat. This is not Mike Jessen's forever, I'm borrowing this seat and I'm going to leave this seat, and someone's going to occupy it. We're here to serve on a temporary basis, to do our work, represent their interest, and that I've done and feel

very, very, happy to have that opportunity. So for all of you thank you. Thank you all very, very, much.

Mr. Stone, Thank you Mike.

Mr. Jessen, Thank you.

Mr. Rivas, Thank you Mike, well said.

(Applause)

Mr. Rivas, You will indeed be missed Mike, but you're right government moves on. Somebody else will occupy all these seats one day. So with that, does anybody have anything else to say?

Mr. Simms, Other than Ole Miss Baseball. Because you know, Jeremy Rivas's son is a starting pitcher at Ole Miss. I had a chance to go down there a couple weeks ago, he is a phenomenal pitcher! One of the most consistent pitchers according to the head coach there, which is pretty impressive. I guess the thing is, we have a lot of kids in our community that do awesome things, and I wish we knew more about all of them. Because it is so cool, to know that people from our region are doing phenomenal things, not only here but beyond. And I will tell you in one of the coolest things I saw, and I told Jeremy this...uh I think I told you, but anyways I'll tell you again. After the game the kids go out of the field, and the fans have a chance to go out there. Seeing these college kids treating every little kid like they are just golden, anybody signing autographs for balls and stuff. It is just so neat to see the younger people...and these are college kids, just reaching out too. That was awesome, but then we go to a restaurant afterwards, and while we were sitting there eating, people came up to his son and congratulate him for a wonderful game. That was so neat, and thank you for being a part of Ole Miss and that kind of thing, it was just neat to witness. And I just appreciated it...I just appreciate the invitation down. It was an awesome experience, and I wish more people would get the chance to experience this.

Mr. Bozak, Let's get a bus...

Mr. Simms, You know if anyone you know has something, I would go to more places. If people did that kind of stuff in our community. I'm telling you there may be...

Mr. Bozak, Let's go.

Mr. Simms, Honestly there could be other people that have kids that are going and playing in these awesome arenas and stuff. And it's just it's neat to see our own people from our community really going there. It's just nice to support it, that's what I mean, it was just it was so cool to see. So Jeremy, I appreciate that and look forward to seeing your kid in the Pro's someday.

Mr. Rivas, Thanks for coming down Greg. It is a treat, and I think that we don't do enough of celebrating our youth. Brad and I have had these conversations...Mike, you know Mike going to the Boys and Girls Club, we've got to express in our community, we've got to invest in a social infrastructure it's what I call it. We've got to make sure we're investing in Parks, investing in Sports Facilities, investing in Arts, our Memorial Opera House, you know stuff like that. We have to give things for kids to do, you know to me if you want to keep you know crime low. If you want to keep our kids here where they graduate High School, and College you have to...they have to have opportunities, they have to have jobs. Then they have to have things for their families, you know, for the kids to do. Then to do things as a family...to do things as a family is also important. People may say, well that is not our charge. I would disagree, quality of life is a huge part of what we're doing. We need to make sure we're investing in that social infrastructure, you know being involved.

Mike what you're about ready to embark on, is to me that's part of that social infrastructure. What Valpo's doing with their Park System, we really need to figure out our Park System, to take it to another level. You know there's no doubt about that, and that's why some of us have been so passionate about the Opera House. You know

Laura knocked me over the head early on when I got here, because I was a sports guy and we should have more sports fields. We should do that, but Laura made me see that there is kids that do other things too. You know Andy, your kids are involved in the Arts and Theater and stuff.

Mr. Bozak, They had Choir today.

Mr. Rivas, We should we should make certain that we have facilities, that we have venues, that we have these opportunities for our kids to do that. You know we don't to throw kids in the back of squad cars, we don't. We want we want them to go and have things to do, and I think that's an important thing. Porter County is a great place to live, it really is and we just we got to keep moving upon that. So I think it's important that we continue to focus on diversifying what we invest in. You know it's the taxpayers money, to make certain that when our kids graduate, maybe they want to come back here. Raise a family here, because there's things here for them to do. There is a job's here for them to do, there's things for the kids and the families. So, Greg you're right, it's important and I appreciate you going down there. Mike I appreciate what you're doing, and I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Jessen, Yeah, we just broke ground today. Today we broke ground on Valparaiso's first skate park.

Mr. Bozak, Yeah when is that?

Mr. Jessen, This afternoon.

Mr. Rivas, Yeah on top of that, they used to think skating was a crime right? Because the kids were out there doing something with their skateboards, or their bikes. You know BMX and they had long hair maybe they spray painted it, and maybe they got some tattoos. But, heck they're doing things, they're out there doing something, let's give them a place to go.

Mr. Stone, Better than playing video games.

Mr. Rivas, Basketball courts, yeah baseball diamonds, Opera Houses. We need that stuff for these for these kids, and for the families to celebrate that.

Mr. Brickner, Do we have a status on the Opera House? I mean we had a unanimous vote last year on a plan, and we are getting towards the end of April, is there any news on that on the progress of that project?

Ms. Graham, As Liaisons, Greg and I have been meeting with the Commissioner Regnitz, and as you know, we did have a plan that was voted on and passed unanimously. But, right now we're trying to we're trying to come up with a new plan, it's...again it's like Mike said we need to work together for the betterment of the County. In my opinion I would stick with the plan that we had, but as you know Commissioners are the Executive Branch of our government, and they...it's been told that they're not fully in agreement with the plan that we passed, and we're trying to compromise...come up with a good compromise that will benefit the people. Is there anything more you would like to say?

Mr. Simms, No I think the word compromise is the key. It may be a small...like all the repairs should be done to solidify the building, the roof and all that stuff. And then there are the bathrooms, the thought is to perhaps slide out, not connect the buildings but expand the building, perhaps a little bit to give it the more room in the bathrooms it may need. But they're also looking at the possibility of extending the back of it. So the architects are getting involved a little bit more. They're trying to be creative to figure out plans of attack on what to do with it. But the goal is to preserve it, and then possibly expand it. I know I'm being kind of vague, but we're waiting on the Architects, and Scott and them to go over there and see what can work over here, or what about this kind of like thing. Shedding some new ideas into the mix of it, because there is some resistance as you know about connecting it to the old Sheriff's Residence. So that's where the compromise is perhaps coming in, and I say perhaps, because it's still in flux.

Mr. Brickner, Is this a cheaper option?

Ms. Graham, Yes.

Mr. Simms, Oh there's no doubt.

Mr. Brickner, Because we have we've allocated \$5,000,000 million from ARPA.

Ms. Graham, That's right.

Mr. Brickner, I think the Opera House Foundation committed another \$2,000,000 million. So is this...

Ms. Graham, That's right.

Mr. Brickner, Is this is, so this change is because it's cheaper? Or because it's better?

Ms. Graham, Well...

Mr. Simms, There's some resistance to using the...there's some discussions of possibly renting out the old facility. The Sheriff's Residence and be bringing that in as a revenue stream. And if that happens, then that would kill the plan to move into it. But that has not been solidified either, there's a whole bunch of flux of thoughts going in.

Ms. Graham, It is in the middle of discussion, however...

Mr. Simms, Nothing's off the table, we can agree on that.

Ms. Graham, Well nothing is off the table.

Mr. Simms, So...

Mr. Rivas, Yeah, Mike I think the current Board of Commissioners as they are took that plan and threw it away. Um...they don't believe in moving the bathrooms into a connector piece. Which was to me, the main component to free up space using ARPA Funds was to move the congestion to an open area. Have some open space, use the old Sheriff Residence to free up some other space for offices and stuff. And they don't agree to that. So I don't know, and I think as we were told months, and months, and months ago to get buy-in from the Foundation. I think that the \$2,000,000 million dollar commitment, they've shewed that away. I don't think they care for that, so they said get a buy-in, and then they said take your buy-in and go somewhere else. So it's...yeah, so everything's kind of been stopped, and where it lands I don't know, I just don't know. I'm still committed to the \$5,000,000 million dollars that I voted on.

Ms. Graham, I am too. The ARPA money for all the projects that have been given with the APRA money, I feel as if they're going on in progress...they are you know... except this particular one with the Memorial Opera House. Also the County owns that block, and I would like to see it stay at that, and have an Art Center for children and the community, however they're wanting to do it cheaper. I guess I shouldn't say that, maybe use the money in other ways.

Mr. Stone, I think that's well said, maybe use some more money in other ways.

Mr. Brickner, I think this is a good example of what Mike was just talking about. About working together, and how in compromise...

Ms. Graham, Yes.

Mr. Brickner, And this is the first I've heard of anything. So I appreciate you coming back with the information to the council. And hopefully something can be accomplished, because I think we all agreed, at least before Red got here. We all voted that was a priority, and we had an agreement on how we were going to spend that

money. We had a plan in place, we unanimously voted for that plan. I know elections have consequences, but we can't go back and change everything we've done because we have new people in positions. I mean there's things that we should be moving forward instead of being paralyzed by personal...what sounds like some personal thoughts, instead of what's best for the County. So I would be anxious to see what kind of plan we get, and how we proceed from here, because that ship should have sailed.

Mr. Simms, Well and to answer the question too about the Foundation. They haven't gotten involved yet, because they want to see what we're doing. To kind of, sort of see what's happening before they commit to something too. So that's why they're not...I know they want to do it, but that's why they're waiting too.

Mr. Brickner, Appreciate it.

Mr. Simms, We need to get our act together before they jump in too, if that makes sense.

Mr. Brickner, Okay thanks.

Mr. Rivas, Any other discussion before we tell Mike so long with an adjournment?

Meeting Adjourned

Ms. Graham, Motion to adjourn.

Mr. Rivas, There's a motion.

Mr. Brickner, Second.

Mr. Rivas, Second, all in favor of adjourning signify by saying Aye? Opposed same sign? We are adjourned.

Motion carries on a unanimous voice vote.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.

PORTER COUNTY COUNCIL PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

Jeremy Rivas

Mike Jessen

Sylvia Graham

Ronald Stone

Greg Simms

Andy Bozak

Mike Brickner

Attest: _____
Karen Martin, Auditor