

**Porter County American Rescue Plan
Sub Committee Infrastructure and Facilities
Friday, April 22, 2022, 10:00 p.m.
Commissioners' Meeting Room Chambers
Porter County Administration Center 155 Indiana Ave., Valparaiso IN 46383**

Voting Members Present:

Jeff Good
Sylvia Graham
Mike Jessen

Citizen Members Present:

James Hazzard
Curtiss Streitmeier

NonVoting Member

Mike Novotney

Jeff Good opened the meeting. Today's meeting is for applicant presentations. At the April 26 meeting they will be hearing the next batch of presentations. At the May 2nd meeting the committee will talk about the results and grade them.

Presentations:

Porter County Agricultural Society – Dave Bagnall presented. He gave a history of the Porter County Agricultural Society. They host the Porter County Fair. The Expo Center was host to covid testing. The Expo Center was host to a jury selection for a high-profile murder case because covid restrictions did not allow that at the Courthouse.

Their request consists of four phases for electrical and one fencing proposal. Phase 1 is \$150,000 for an electrical loop. Phase 2 is \$150,000 to replace the power on the south side of the barns. Phase 3 is \$200,000 to replace the power on the north side of the barns. Phase 4 is the generator for Expo Center West. This facility is a disaster staging area. There is an MOU with NIPSCO. It has been suggested to install a generator. This cost is \$125,000 to \$150,000. The fencing around the fairgrounds is 35 years old. This request is \$107,000.

Q – How far out is delivery on a generator?

A – Six to 8 months away.

Q – Have they looked to FEMA or any other alternative funding source for the generator?

A -No

Q – Is there a generator there now?

A – No

Q – How confident are they in the prices they have obtained.

A – They are confident they can stay at these prices.

Q – What is the time frame?

A – They want to go ahead as soon as they get the ok.

The Ag Society is a 501c3. They would qualify for Revenue replacement grant.

Porter County Coroner – Cyndi Dykes presented. The first proposal is for a Porter County Morgue. The second proposal is for two new cargo vans. She gave the specs for the morgue located in Howard County and Marshall County. Currently Porter County shares a morgue with the hospital. The two vans currently being used are a liability to the county because of their age and condition. Each new van would cost approximately \$50,000.

Q – Where is she suggesting the morgue be built?

A – She was going to leave that up to the County. She assumed they had property available.

C – There is no land available. A possible future site might be at the jail.

A – Are the trailers still plugged in and being used?

A – Yes.

Q – What is the agreement with the hospital? Do they charge for space etc.

A – Not yet.

Q – Will this increase costs for the County going forward?

A – It would be good to have everything under one roof. It would be more secure.

Q – Is 90 a normal number of autopsies for a year?

A – That was a high number last year.

Q – Is there some type of reimbursement back to the coroner office for the autopsies?

A – No

Q – Are the current vehicles four-wheel drive?

A – The new ones would be all wheel drive.

Q – With these funds could you do a lease?

A – It would have to be an acquisition.

C – Very concerned about sustainability of the morgue.

A – She is hearing more and more hospitals are cutting ties with coroners.

Q – Do most counites have a physical morgue or a relationship with the hospital.

A – Most are building their own morgues.

C – It would be difficult to get a project like this done in the time frame allowed for ARPA funds.

C – The Steering Committee is requiring all projects to be obligated by mid-2024.

Attorney McClure stressed the importance of the July 1, 2024 date for projects to obligated. If a project is close, it needs to be made sure the project will complete in time so the funds do not have to be returned to the US Treasury. If not, it gives the county six months to grant the funds to another project.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust- Chris Krause, Executive Director of Shirley Heinze Land Trust. He is here to discuss the conservation and restoration of the east branch of the Little Calumet River corridor. Their mission is to preserve and restore land in northwestern Indiana. Chris discussed projects they have done that protected land. Everything they do is partnership focused. They are requesting funds to protect 67 acres. The property they are looking to purchase will allow them to improve storm water and drainage function of the property. This is a way to promote best management practices. They are confident they can implement this project. They have

the staff capacity to do so. They can acquire this property within six months of getting County approval. They have restricted funds available to use for this project. They did not have any major financial hardship from covid. They had staffing challenges. They did have an influx of visitors at their areas.

Q – Is there a storage capacity for water that will benefit from this?

A – Yes. He does not have specifics. This will help Chesterton and Porter.

C – Storage capacity is always something they are looking for; both upstream and downstream.

C – This is an exciting project. It is an outgrowth of several years of conversations to turn this corridor into a wetland storage area of significance. Kemper Ditch runs through here. It is in need of maintenance. If Shirley Heinze bought this property, the County would be able to work on this.

Q – Who will own the property.

A – Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

Department of Storm Water & Development – Mike Novotney presented. The Storm water program coordinates activities, administer programs, implement projects across unincorporated Porter County to provide drainage, improve water quality, reduce flood damages and maintain and enhance the County’s valuable storm water infrastructure. Their efforts are funded by the Storm Water User Fee. They are part of the Kankakee River Basin/Yellow River Basin Development Commission. Per State statute, the County is making a direct payment to that Commission. This is about \$200,000 per year that comes out of the Storm Water User Fee. This saves taxpayers money.

The funds requested will only be used for construction. For every 40 cents contributed toward a project the Department will contribute 60 cents of their own money. The projects he is presenting are:

A drain tile at the Fairgrounds. It has had longstanding issues. Twenty-years ago it was suggested that the drain be reconstructed. The drain is corrugated metal and is past its life expectancy. They cannot clean or televise the drain because of its condition. The project cost is \$1.25 Million Dollars. The project would serve unincorporated Porter County only.

Carriage Hills. This is Jackson Twp. CR 550 East North of 900 North. The subdivision is 20 years old. They are having catastrophic storm sewer collapses there. The construction plans are totally different than what was installed. This should have gotten 50 years of use. Because of the bad construction it now needs to be repaired. This project needs to be done as soon as possible. The roads would need to be repaved because the storm sewer runs under a portion of the roadway. In this case the road paving would be allowed for ARPA funds.

Q – Was this a known problem?

A – It was not high up on the list. There were repairs in 2019. It looked less than ideal but did not show that anything like this would happen. It has been videoed now and it is falling apart.

C – The Department now has oversight on projects. New issues should not happen.

C – Attorney McClure discussed the history of what it has taken to get to where they are today. In 2007 there was not a Department. It was a Board. Now there is oversight and a Department that makes sure things are done correctly.

C – Has the review process changed.

A – Yes. Before outside consultants were hired to review projects. Now it is done in house. People can be held accountable.

Shorewood Forest – Over 50% of the pipes serving this development are in need of reconstruction. The older section was constructed using corrugated pipe and they are past their life expectancy. The newer section was constructed with reinforced concrete pipe. The cost of this request is \$685,000. It would include two projects in the Devon ravine – One to reconstruct the sediment forebay and one to implement erosion control and flow control measures from the ravine. The other project would be implementation of 219/221 Shorewood Drive ravine restoration project. This would be a pilot program to show how ravines can be restored with the work to last well over 100 years.

Greater South Haven – Coventry, New South Haven and Salt Creek Valley Commons. New South Haven has 75% of its pipes in need of reconstruction. Nearly all seem to be lineable. Salt Creek Commons has 85% of its pipes in need of reconstruction. 70% need to be replaced. Coventry has 100% of its pipes needing to be replaced. The request is \$1.65 Million Dollars. This would include construction of the New Castle Road storm bypass sewer, implementation of the area storm sewer reconstruction project. Salt Creek Valley Commons has two projects. Reconstruction of the storm sewer. This needs to be done right away. The detention pond cleaning project.

Q – Once these items are fixed, where will the water go?

A – There is a combination drain tile, storm sewer and grass waterway that conveys the runoff to Salt Creek.

Kemper Ditch Arm 18. This is in the land acquisition request of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust. Over the last 100 years there has been no upkeep on this ditch. It is in need of significant reconstruction. The watershed stops at the parcel Shirley Heinz Land Trust is wanting to acquire. Concurrent to these efforts there is a petition to vacate this portion of Arm 18. That would allow IDNR to use funds from their Stream and Wetlands Mitigation program on that parcel to do a significant wetland restoration project. The County would reconstruct the drain to that point and then IDNR and Shirley Heinze would take over the maintenance. Upstream there would be an easement exchange. This project request is \$235,000.

Willowcreek Road and CR 700 North – flood reduction project. This has long standing flooding issues. Over the last few years they have worked with the City of Portage to remedy this. The City of Portage is what is flooding but the water is coming from the County. This request is \$930,000.

Attorney McClure explained the project originally designed has been cut down significantly in affected land and cost.

Q – How do they account for the fact that they might have more rain over the next years.

A - Right now they design based on historic rainfall data. They need to move to more probability-based models.

Q – Will there be some share cost in this project?

A – The City of Portage has already contributed in terms of the design work they done. If fee simple acquisition is needed, they are still at the table for that.

Public Comment

Tom Benezak – 3402 Flint Lake Gateway. Interesting point that this money came because of issues with covid over the last three years and now it is being used to fix infrastructure that has needed fixing over the last 40 years. There seems to be jurisdictional issues with the City and County. Has this been settled in Court as to who has to clean this up? This is a problem in the whole state. His home is in the Lakes Area Conservancy. He asked what contribution Shorewood is making to the projects. Answer: They are paying the storm water user fee. The Shorewood POA is responsible for everything under the water level. They are undertaking a multimillion-dollar lake dredging project.

Eric Bird – 103 Dunes Park Trail – Thanks for the process. Thanks to Mike for his work. He works for Shirley Heinze and appreciates the Storm Water Board.

Citizen – Portage will be helping. Why do they come to the County? Answer: A lot of the water that is contributing to the problem in Portage is coming from the County. The City agreed to pay for design and land acquisition. The County agreed to pay for construction and management of the construction contract.

High Priority project is it going to be South Haven or Shorewood. Answer: They are on concurrent tracks.

Why can't the County go in Salt Creek? Answer: The Salt Creek Tributary is a protected tributary.

Is any of Shirley Heinze part of the Marquette Trail? Answer: Not this request.

It is disappointing that they cannot find a morgue for the coroner. Answer: they said they would be looking at this in the next couple of years when the bond is paid off for the jail.

Why should this money go for blacktopping and fences at the fairgrounds? Answer: There was a person electrocuted at the fairgrounds. Children, families and animals are all out there. It needs to be a safe place. This request answers public health issues.

Was there a loss of revenue? Answer: Yes. There was a lot of loss of revenue. Events were cancelled and emergency services were using the facilities which were all due to covid.

The meeting adjourned.

Jeff Good, Chairman

ATTEST:

Vicki Urbanik