

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 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, June 13th, 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.

Com. Biggs, Good morning. Welcome to the Porter County Board of Commissioners' Tuesday, June 13th, 2023 meeting.

Call to Order/Pledge

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Payroll – May 26th and June 9th, 2023.

Approval of Claims – May 24th, June 1st, June 8th, 2023.

Approval of Minutes for May 23rd, 2023.

Weights and Measures Monthly Report – April 16th to May 15th, 2023 – Filed.

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

MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE – SCOT MACDONALD, DIRECTOR

ARTISTIC SERVICES AGREEMENT

- 1. Season 2024 – Show 4 \$12,520.00**
- 2. Season 2024 – Show 5 \$ 8,866.22**

Com. Blaney, Natalie can you give us a brief update on the Penguin Project?

Ms. Klobuchar, We have over 70 kids for part of the production already signed up. That is exciting. We recently secured the therapy dog as Sandy. For those of you who are familiar with the story of Annie there is a dog in that show.

Com. Blaney, The show is Annie?

Ms. Klobuchar, Well no everyone knows it is Annie. The dog is a therapy dog. We are excited to work with the animal. Auditions are tonight and everyone does get a part. So that is going to be fun. Scott told me that we recently secured the funding for a temporary stage and a lighting rig at the Boys and Girls Club. So they get to perform on a stage.

Com. Blaney, That is great! Thank you. And each of those kids has a mentor right?

Ms. Klobuchar, Oh yes.

COMMISSIONERS

Repeal Ordinance No. 13-06 – An Ordinance Creating a Non-Reverting Fund for Receipt of Charitable Donations for Porter County Central Communications – 2nd Reading.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Repeal of Ordinance No. 13-06 on 2nd Reading, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Opioid Discussion.

Com. Regnitz, I would like to invite all four of our presenters to come and sit in the front here. We will do these in order. Just to give everyone a perspective. Porter County has received a certain amount of money over the next 18 years. We are going to be spending \$160,000.00 of that each year. We're going to be discussing today the expenditure of 50,000.00 of those dollars for this year. Councilman Greg Simms and I have been working on this project since January. We are very excited that we have four of our recipients today to talk about the projects. Hopefully, at today's meeting we will give approval for these projects. At our evening meeting this month we will have a resolution, which we can then forward on to the Council for funding.

Com. Biggs, Do we have a representative here from Moraine House? Do we have a representative from Three20 Recovery? Juvenile Detention Center, I know that is you. And Portage Recovery.

Com. Regnitz, If you would just like to give a little bit of information about Moraine House and the project that we are hoping to fund for you.

Moraine House

Mr. O'Connor, Well I appreciate the opportunity to be here first of all. The Moraine House has been around since 1975. It started off as a 30-day program and now it's evolved into a six-month program where we treat alcoholism and addiction. Being around that long plus the house that we are in, I would say that house is around 100 years old. We do the best that we can off of client fees and grants but we just don't have enough to do everything that we need to do around the house. I was to put a list together after our first meeting. I put kind of a wish list together of projects that we are going to need done. I did have a conversation with Mr. Simms as well and the number one priority as far as to help us structurally is that we need a new roof. It is leaking and we do not have the money in the budget to do that. That is what we focused on for this. We would very much appreciate the help because that just takes any kind of extra fund we have to go find somewhere. Personal opinion we have been dealing with the opioid crisis all of this time. I think we are very deserving of funding via the settlement.

Com. Regnitz, Our recommendation is \$10,000.00. Their estimate came very close to that \$10,000.00. Thank you so much. Did you just want to give your name please?

Mr. O'Connor, Michael O'Connor. I am the executive director.

Com. Regnitz, Thank you Michael. Can we vote for all of these together or should we be voting on each of them individually Scott?

Atty. McClure, I would probably do these individually.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the allocation of \$10,000.00 to the Moraine House for roof repair, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, How does this work with Council?

Atty. McClure, Council has to approve this too.

Com. Biggs, This will now go to our County Council which is the fiscal body to have the last approval.

Com. Regnitz, One more step is Scott will put together a resolution with everything that we approved today and that will be presented at our next Commissioners' meeting which will then go to the Council.

Three20 Recovery

Ms. Paul, Three20 Recovery is seeking funds to support the salary of a recovery coach. What we are is a non-profit recovery community organization. We are certified through DMHA, the Division of Mental Health and Addictions. I think we've all seen the increase and the impact of the opioid epidemic and the need for services. Both treatment and recovery is very great. So again we are asking for funds to support a full-time recovery coach. We have already gotten the confirmation that the state will be providing matching funds pending the outcome of this. And

Com. Blaney, What is the amount of money you are requesting?

Ms. Paul, \$10,000.00

Com. Regnitz, So the state is providing \$40,000.00. Chesterton from their opioid funds is providing \$10,000.00 and we are hoping to provide \$10,000.00. The state required a matching grand and it had to come from the opioid funds. It couldn't come from any other source. Both Com. Biggs and I attended one of your events there and we are very impressed with your operation and what you are doing for the community so thank you.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve a \$10,000.00 allocation for Three20 Recovery, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Ms. Merle, May I ask your name?

Ms. Paul, Christine Paul.

Ms. Merle, Thank you.

Juvenile Detention Center

Ms. Cox, I'm Alison Cox and I'm the director of the Juvenile Detention Center here in Porter County. We have two projects that we would like to have funded. One is the Prevention Project and the other one is an Intervention Project. The first one I just gave you a handout in regards Juvenile Justice Jeopardy. This is a program that we have been performing for the youth involved with our system for several years now. There are different modules that you can actually create for your community through strategies for youth. It is a nationwide agency that actually works on relationships between Juvenile Justice Law enforcement and youth. The big thing that we've been doing with Juvenile Justice Jeopardy is exactly what it sounds like. It is the game Jeopardy. We've been mainly working with youth involved with our system but we also have done this program Valpo schools and Duneland schools. We do want to expand it to the Boys and Girls Clubs and all other school districts. The game that we have right now is old. It needs to be upgraded. I would also like to do some new modules. We would also like to update the modules to more substance abuse specific categories in regards to the law and what can happen. We're actually working on that process right now. That is the first project. The second project is doing a mentor program for our highest risk youth on our caseloads in the Juvenile Justice System. These would be our problem solving courts. We do have three problem solving courts right now. Our Juvenile and family drug court, our truancy court and our mental health court. We are dealing with substance abuse in all three of our courts. With pretty much 95% of the families involved with those three courts as well as with our intensive probation caseload. Those are the highest risk kids as well. I'll quote the late Judge Harper in regards to these are the kids that have one foot on a banana peel and the other one on the bus to DOC. Those are the highest risk kids and probably 95% of them also have substance abuse issues. The problem is that we really don't have a lot of mentors out there for kids and so I know that if we're able to have some type of funding in order for recruitment in order to pay for programs for some type of activities for these youth that we can take a kid to the movie. We can take them fishing. We can work with different agencies throughout the community to link these kids together. That is what we would also like to use regarding these funds.

Com. Regnitz, We are recommending \$10,000.00 for each of those two programs for a total of \$20,000.00.

Com. Regnitz, moved to allocate \$20,000.00 for the Opioid Fund Settlement to the JDC for their two programs, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Biggs, Just so we are clear what are the two programs called?

Ms. Cox, Juvenile Justice Jeopardy and Mentoring.

Portage Recovery

Mr. Monhaut, I spent all of this time on these flyers. My name is Jake. My last name is Monhaut. I feel like I'm in court. I've been the president of the Portage Recovery Association for six years. We've been open for over 30. I'm also a member of the recovery community this April I will celebrated 10 years. Very grateful.

Com. Biggs, Congratulations.

Mr. Monhaut, Thank you. The idea that we have at the PRA is something that I've seen variations of. Kind of like a recovery café. I thought the name Sobar was like really fancy and catchy and cool. Our landlord where we're at currently has additional space available in the building and is willing to give us basically 35% off the rent because we're a non-profit organization. The idea would be to start slow on weekends maybe five to midnight and then eventually expand to nights and eventually span to have a building that is open from eight in the morning until 10 at night. Where anybody in the recovery community can come get a cup of coffee, get something to drink, shoot some pool or hang out and watch the game. There is nothing like that anywhere in the area. I got the idea from different people in recovery that have said they had seen this in Texas. They've seen this in Chicago. They've seen this in just other areas. There's nothing like it in Porter County. A place that ideally eventually would be opened 24 hours where someone can safely go to. I always say one of my biggest dilemmas when I was new is that we're told to not go around people, places and things. You can't go to the bars, you can't go with your old friends. So then we get here and there are all these people and they're like well where are your new friends and do what we say. It is really hard. So to have a place where people can just go to, talk and hang out, get something to eat I think is much needed in the recovery community. The other thing is that we are on a time crunch with it unfortunately because the landlord who's been nothing but great to us said the deal only stands until July 1st. I sign like this dummy lease with them that he's going to hold the facility for us at no charge until July 1st. So if we get this funding then we're able to get this great deal. If not then the deal would fall through and he would open it up to the public again. He needs to make his to you know. It's just a great opportunity and so excited to hopefully share this.

Com. Regnitz, Our recommendation is to allocate \$10,000.00. The other reason that I think this is really important for both Three20 Recovery and for Portage is the majority of the halfway houses and the resources are in the Valparaiso area and so it is really important that we provide opportunities and facilities in the area. And so it is really important that we provide opportunities and facilities in areas outside of Valparaiso for those in the recovery community.

Mr. Monhaut, In Portage we have over 95% of the meetings at our facility. There's a couple meetings at churches throughout the city but it's 95% us.

Com. Regnitz, move to approve to allocate \$10,000.00 to the Portage Recovery Assoc. for their Sobar, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, And that is a cool name. Thank you Barb and Greg Simms who is not here for doing the work to put this together. These are good choices.

Grimmer Construction – Pay Application #1 in the amount of \$252,522.00 for the VLACD – Blackhawk Beach Project Grant.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Grimmer Construction Pay Application, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Pulse Technology – An Equipment Maintenance Agreement for the mail machine in the Admin. Bldg. in the amount of \$1,141.32.

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

Sheriff's Residence Lease Terms – Discussion.

Com. Regnitz, Just to recap we have been discussing leasing of the Sheriff's residence. For those who have missed the conversation this is the building directly to the east of the Memorial Opera House. It has been vacant since March of 2020. So it has been vacant for over three years. We are hoping to lease this out. We did not need to go to the Council for approval if we stayed within a three year lease and under \$25,000.00 in revenue per year but we did want to make it available to the Council should they want us to lease it for a longer term or for a larger dollar amount. We did meet with the Council and they didn't have any interest in entertaining that conversation. So we are back to our original plan of leasing it for three years for \$25,000.00 or less. At this point I would like to talk about and get approval to advertise pending a loan from the RDC. We have determined in order for us to keep it to the \$25,000.00 or less that we can only lease out the main floor. And having conversations with our facilities director Daniel Sullivan and two of our appraisers that would be \$120,000.00. So essentially what I'm going to propose today is that we vote to advertise this for three years. Actually, I'm not exactly sure what the lease amount is Scott? It was the average of those two numbers.

Atty. McClure, Correct. It was below \$25,000.00.

Com. Regnitz, Pending the loan from the RDC and Scott had a really good suggestion is that when we do advertise it we will advertise it that it will be available on January 1st because we don't want to start any work until we know for sure that we have somebody interested in leasing it? If we do not get that loan from RDC and there are no guarantees that we will then our second option is for us to advertise it as is. In which case they can't do more than \$75,000.00 in improvements over that three year period. But that would now count as their three years as they're doing renovations to make that happen. Any questions on that?

Com. Biggs, Just very quickly because we have a lot on this agenda. Why have you decided that you wanted to pursue this avenue?

Com. Regnitz, This is a building that I think is a beautiful building. We still are maintaining the back part of it, which is the old Jail as a museum and I just hate to see that structure not being used and not being revitalized in any way. I know it is our responsibility but funding is always an issue. And once we have renovated this particular building then we can create a non-reverting fund and have the lease payments going to that non-reverting fund as a perpetual funding mechanism to keep that up to date and in good shape.

Com. Biggs, Right now that building has set vacant for more than three years I believe. It is deteriorating and there just doesn't seem to be another alternative here without spending millions of dollars to renovate it and for what purpose? That purpose would be debated until you know, the end of the year.

Com. Blaney, The alternative is to do our original MOH plan.

Com. Biggs, Right and that was at last projected an \$8.5 million choice.

Com. Regnitz, move to advertise for lease the Sheriff's Residence for three years for the average of the two appraisals that we got pending the loan of \$120,000.00 from the RDC. And not receiving that then I move that we advertise it as is for three years with leaseholder improvements not to exceed \$75,000.00, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Blaney, For discussion. Talking to the Council they had asked me today to ask you two to get a bid for the current MOH expansion so they can compare it to what is proposed. And it seems like all of this needs to happen at the same time to me because if you two are dead set against doing the expansion then it's irrelevant. I don't think the Council is. I think they still are entertaining that and they just want to see what they're looking at. I know Jeremy has talked to you. And I know Jeremy has tried to talk to you but you've been too busy. I'm not ready to vote on this.

Com. Regnitz, I see the Sheriff's residence as independent of the MOH. I don't see that the two are connected (Inaudible).

Com. Blaney, Is there any way...I mean you talked about moving the Opera House employees over to the Courthouse where they can't access their offices in the evening. Why can't they have the upstairs?

Com. Regnitz, It's not finished. I mean we have to renovate it first. It's not even going to be available until we can fix it. And the Courthouse we have the ability to move them in and hopefully we're going to...

Com. Blaney, But that needs to be renovated as well. It's not ready for them.

Com. Regnitz, Well Daniel will be giving a report on that shortly. At any rate I don't see the MOH and the Sheriff's residence connected in any way.

Com. Blaney, The Courthouse and the MOH are certainly not connected in any way. They can't even take their phones in there.

Com. Biggs, Well I've had a couple of discussions with Councilman Jeremy Rivas on the possibility of you know bidding out the Memorial Opera House renovation along with the expansion. I've come to the conclusion that I think that it's a false flag to the contractors that we would be asking for a price when there has been no commitment by at least this board to move forward on that size and scope. And I just want to make clear that my stance on this has not

changed a bit in two years and that is the only reason I am not in favor of doing that project is because of the cost of it. I don't believe given our current circumstances of buildings that need our attention right now, which is the garage, the Jail and this building needs money. The Juvenile Detention Center needs some attention. I just think that you know throwing \$8.5 to \$9 million on a building that we don't utilize to deliver any of our services on is irresponsible. There has been \$5 million of ARP funds set aside by the Council to address what needs to be renovated, repaired or fixed in the Opera House, which I'm certainly willing to support. And I think that is a pretty good deal if you are throwing \$5 million in anyone of our buildings. I don't see that as a booby prize.

Com. Blaney, We have a lot of things we need to work with the Council on and this is important to them.

Com. Biggs, And I believe my stance on supporting \$5 million to be used in that building is stepping out in the middle of the road. What I would appreciate at this point is not being run over when I'm doing it, because I believe that is meeting them half way. That is what I'm trying to do Laura.

Com. Blaney, Okay.

Com. Biggs, That's what I'm trying to do Laura. That's \$5 million.

Com. Blaney, Exactly. That is our responsibility.

Com. Biggs, Yes and that is what I'm trying to address. Our responsibility over there. To fix what's broken. I'm not trying to make a larger program that's already being subsidized by county taxpayers.

Com. Blaney, Well I apologize for having a different opinion than you.

Com. Biggs, You don't have to apologize. We have discussed this issue for the last four years at nausea. We have bigger problems in that building.

Com. Blaney, Opposed.

Skillman – Proposal of Construction Management Services for the Renovation of the Memorial Opera House.

Schmidt Associates - Proposal of Services for the Renovation of the Memorial Opera House.

Com. Regnitz, At our last Commissioners' meeting we voted on a scope for the renovations for the Memorial Opera House. Subsequent to that we've had a meeting with Skillman and Schmidt. They have provided construction management services proposals from both of them. I've asked Scott to represent both Schmidt and Skillman in this discussion in case anyone has questions.

Com. Blaney, What are the additional expenses that we are going to incur with Schmidt since we're changing plans.

Mr. Cherry, I did not see a copy of that proposal. So I'm not sure what their fee is.

Atty. McClure, The proposed fee is \$95,850.00 for the design of the project. Construction administration would be billed hourly not to exceed \$12,000.00. The recommended allowance for reimbursement expenses in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Mr. Cherry, So about \$100,000.00.

Com. Biggs, Since it was brought up \$100,000.00 is nothing to...

Mr. Cherry, Is what?

Com. Biggs, Is \$100,000.00. My point is and I think the reason the question is asked is that if we change direction here it's going to cost us a \$100,000.00. If we don't change direction here it's going to cost us millions. And that is the whole purpose of changing direction. I just wanted to make that clear.

Com. Regnitz, So Scott I was just wondering if you wanted to talk a little bit about the project from your perspective. One of the things we did see if there was a possibility of breaking it up into two separate bid packages because the portion that Schmidt was going to be working on the redesign that was going to take longer. And we did want to get the exterior going as quickly as possible. And the majority of that was already designed. So do you want to talk about that a little bit how they are splitting this up into two different phases so we can get that going and get that exterior buttoned up as quickly as possible?

Mr. Cherry, I did give you a budget based on the last meetings that we've had. A range in costs that included the soft class that will cover both the CM and the architect's fees. We're looking at multiple packages. I haven't really seen the drawings yet for the main scope of the work but you are correct that the exterior work was bid out. I believe about a year ago and that included restoration of the masonry and getting some of the exterior work completed early because it's weather sensitive. So our plan is to do the same thing probably put the same package out and see if there's a couple of things that may have been changed that could affect that, but that is the idea. And that should take Schmidt within the next month or two to put the drawings out. Follow the statutory process for bidding. Open bids and get started here in late summer, early fall which would be enough time to at least get the exterior done. Then we'll follow up a couple months after that with the rest construction. We'll have to coordinate that schedule of course with the events and everything that is going on. Just need to get to work on the design and the planning.

Com. Biggs, There is really no guarantee that just renovating you know, fixing what's broken in the Memorial Opera House structure itself we could exceed the \$5 million. That the bids could come back more than what we have on hand.

Mr. Cherry, We hope that the whole plan is and the whole reason that we go through this process is a series of estimates at various stages of design to make sure that we're designing to the scope and more importantly the budget. And at those times if we see that we're trending over we'll come to you and discuss what's driving those costs over. But with the current scope that is proposed we're confident that the range that was given will cover those costs.

Com. Biggs, I appreciate you continuing to be very diligent and careful about your pursuing that. I mean we all know the building needs repairs and it would be a shame that if we're doing all of this work and it only comes back a little more than what we thought it was going to be because we're on a path to fix what's broken in that building. And we're going to get there. Just make sure that it doesn't come back and surprise us. And you had something about you are preparing different packages.

Mr. Cherry, Two packages. The first package should be to address the exterior similar to what we were doing the last time around those bids. We have a number from about a year ago. We'll have to obviously expect that to be inflated a little bit, but that number is pretty solid. And then the rest of the project will be designed and bid out and scheduled which is really probably the most a precarious part of this project with some of the deliveries on the mechanical equipment and things like that. And again, coordinating that with events that the Opera House currently has.

Com. Biggs, Are we foreseeing any issues about securing the mechanicals and such?

Mr. Cherry, There are issues but they've been around long enough that we know how to handle them. It's not uncommon nowadays. The delivery of the materials or keep an eye on that and that kind of dictates where you're going. How reliable those dates that are given from the vendors are sometimes not too good. You never know what will happen in the future here and how things could be impacted again.

Com. Regnitz, And just to reiterate this was based on the scope that we vote on at our last Commissioners' meeting. And there was nothing added to it and there was nothing subtracted from it.

Mr. Cherry, No.

Com. Biggs, Scott do we need a motion to approve separately or together.

Atty. McClure, Yes, you can do them together. I would just add that they're contingent upon Council appropriation.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Skillman and Schmidt proposals for service at the Memorial Opera House pending the \$5 million allocation from the Council at the June 27th meeting, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Mr. Cherry, Thank you.

FACILITIES – DANIEL SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR

Opening proposals from Architectural Design Professionals. To support the Facilities Director in expanding the Health Department's Main Office at the Admin. Building.

Mr. Sullivan, Good morning Commissioners. Where we are right now our first mini phase was to provide a small space for the high speed voting machine that is what I'll call it, they have a different name for the Voters Registration folks over at the Expo Center. That has been completed. Part of the deal was we would give them a new kitchenette over there because we took out some of their space and those cabinets are being delivered today. That part of the project is almost done as well. The part about the Courthouse creating some office space over there for the offices for the Opera House management team. I have proposals for that. We're ready to go on that whenever we get the word to approve. The cost of that is going to be around \$4,000.00. It's a very small amount of work with our own staff as well to keep that down. We'll probably replace some carpet for instance in some places in there on our own with supplies we already have on hand. The next big if right now is trying to make the Voters Registration move for late July, which is looking a little hazardous. And by hazardous I mean trying to make that deadline. A lot of our local contractors are very busy. It is hard to get them to return calls. Take a look at projects. That sort of thin. We're working with a local contractor as an advisory process for a while and I'm still hoping that he'll be able to come through but I'm not sure of that yet. If not we have about 25 linear feet of walls to be able to put in. We might be able to do that ourselves in a pinch for the most part. Most of the utilities are there. Electrical, HVAC, communication and all that is there.

Mr. Wichlinski, There were three proposals submitted.

- Core Facilities Inc. \$96,850.00
- Shive Hattery Architectural Engineering \$97,800.00
- Cordogan Clark and Associates \$72,500.00 Plus a 2.9% of construction cost for the management fee.

Atty. McClure, My recommendation is the Commissioners' accept these. Take them under advisement so we have an opportunity to review them.

Com. Regnitz, moved to accept the sealed bid proposals for the Health Dept. expansion to take under advisement, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Biggs, Daniel you will take them under advisement and come back to us with your recommendation.

Com. Blaney, I'm sitting here thinking about SB4 whether or not we opt in. We could potentially have more staff and more needs.

Com. Biggs, Great point. I was actually going to bring that up.

Com. Blaney, If we opt into Senate Bill 4, which is not on our agenda unfortunately we will have a lot more income. And I know some of the plans the Health Dept. had is for a social worker. I don't have it in front of me, potentially other additional staff and programs. So I think the space needs that we talked about when we put those RFP's out might not apply if we opt in. I think we need to kind of put things on hold.

Com. Regnitz, Well one thing that I had already checked Daniel on as we talked about breaking that up into phases. We know for sure that the Coroner and Veterans is going to be moving out. So we will still continue with that portion of it and then we hold off until we know what we're doing with SB4 and their plans. Then we look at their space needs.

Com. Biggs, If SB4 is to be approved by County government it is going to quintuple their operations budget. It would stand to reason more people are going to bring more employees in or more programming which could change the makeup of how all that is laid out eventually. Very good point. And since we're on that subject matter is the Commissioners will be hearing

SB4 in our July 24th evening meeting. That particular meeting was selected because it is going to be a very light agenda. So we will have the time to sit and discuss this very large request.

Space move update.

Com. Regnitz, Is there anything else you want to give on the space needs update? You were talking about possibly Voters Registration not moving at the end of July. Do we have a new date?

Mr. Sullivan, As far as a revised date. I'm not willing to throw in the date yet. I think we can still try it. I'm just putting the cautionary flag out there that we may have to push it back a little bit. This week will be key if I can get the technology pieces, some people and some interest back we might just be able to make it.

PUBLIC SAFETY – BOB BYRD

Public Safety Presentation.

Mr. Byrd, Good morning my name is Bob Byrd and I'm president and owner of the RBI Group, LLC. I'm a retired police officer and I'm a licensed Indiana a private investigator. I do law enforcement and public safety consulting. First of all I want to salute the Commissioners for addressing the public safety issues here in Porter County. We've talked extensively about that. You've expressed the concern about Porter County's level of emergency services and the preparedness for them. We have 175,000 people currently living in rapidly growing Porter County and a need exists to address the foundation sustainability. And continued quality of public safety. It's a Jim Biggs quote by the way. So I had to throw that in there because it hits right to the heart of what we're facing. We collectively and I got to tell you there's about a dozen members of our working group here in this room today. When we got together and we said what do our emergency services look like today? What will our future demands be for emergency services and how do the cities, towns, townships and County pay for the increased demand for police, fire, EMS, 911, EMA and the coroner's office? Our first meeting was held on Thursday February 16th at the MAAC Center. The Commissioners were seeking feedback and wanting to know the needs of Public Safety leaders. The number of initial participants remained small until we were able to determine a purpose and focus of what this group wanted to do. Some of the meeting topics that we touched on were....and this was collectively gathered from those public safety professionals that were in the room, was volunteer firefighters. There's a concern about the availability of volunteer firefighters to respond to weekday calls when most volunteers are at work. As I spoke and interviewed all the police chiefs and fire chiefs and a number of township trustees and other officials. Chief Rob Huffstadt from the Washington Township Fire Department who's here with us today said the issue regarding volunteer firefighting is an epic issue. It's not only locally but nationally. Hats off to the volunteer firefighters because of the sacrifices they make every day and they do it for free. Volunteerism particularly for emergency services is dwindling because that's just not in the DNA of many people today to volunteer. Particularly in life-saving occupations. Another topic is the ambulance contract that will come up for discussion next year in 2024 renewable in 25 and that's with Northwest Health Hospital. Recruiting and retention is a major issue of course. It is with everything in the national marketplace. Whether it's flight attendants and pilots, police officers, firefighters everyone is hurting. The building trades, the training to get people to fill these job vacancies. Same things applying here in public safety and they're experiencing a problem with recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. Portage Fire Chief Randy Wilkening is here. When I was talking with him he said those issues for the future are here now, today and in a big way. We need to start jumping on this as soon as we can. Another issue we discussed was mental health and how it relates to the public and public safety personnel. We talked about salaries. How our emergency services are understaffed and salaries appear to be a driving force in high stress emergency service careers that demand a 24/7 operation. And then of course we're very familiar with the Porter County Sheriff's Department. The costs continue to climb for them to house inmates and maintain the Porter County Jail. When we looked at all the public safety providers in Porter County we came up with some interesting numbers. There's eight law enforcement agencies in the county that occupied 267 full-time police officers. They have 383 vehicles within their fleets. With the annual operating budget of \$2.73 million. When we look at the fire department we see that there's 17 fire departments in the county. 24 fire stations. 166 career firefighters. And then we have to give a night again to the volunteers they have 357 volunteer firefighters in Porter County. Those fire departments collectively have 39 engines or pumpers, 4 aerial ladder or Pi platform trucks, 19 tankers and 86 other miscellaneous pieces of equipment. They also have 18 ambulances in their fleet with a \$24.5 million annual operating budget. Now what I did not count when I went through doing these things are a number of fire departments have these cumulative funds for the acquisition of fire apparatus and equipment but they also have these other innovative funding

ideas in the form of fundraisers, donations and grants. And that's for the volunteers. And how do they sustain their operations? Northwest Health Porter Hospital runs the EMS for the county. They've got four stations with five front line ambulances that are staffed daily for basically the unincorporated areas of the county. Of course the Portage Fire Department and Valparaiso fire department run their own EMS. And the Town of Burns Harbor has an ambulance. The EMS 5 annual operating budget is \$9.2 million. We also look at the 911 Center at Porter County Central Communications. They have 36 full-time dispatchers. A \$2.9 Million annual operating budget. In last year dispatched almost 187,000 calls for emergency services. Porter County Emergency Management agency they have four full-time employees a \$314,000 annual operating budget. And the EMA supplies personnel and equipment to the other police and fire departments in major catastrophic events. We look at the Porter County coroner's office they get one full-time person, 12 part-time employees, two vehicles, in \$5200.00 annual operating budget. The reason why I put them in there is because they are part and parcel of the whole public safety ecosystem if you will. We call them to the death scenes that the police and fire experience. They take that decedent into their care. They order up autopsies. They draw toxicology and they determine the legal cause of manner and death for the police and the prosecutors. If we look at the final slide and this is what I call the big picture from the county-wide perspective we have 641 full-time employees in public safety in Porter County. The volunteers are 489 with a total public safety personnel count of 1,204 people. They have 560 total pieces of equipment that are located in the county with a total operating budget for 31 Public Safety entities at almost \$65 million. So as we move forward we're hoping that the county establishes formally a public safety commission. It's interesting the dynamic and very forward-thinking viewpoints of all of our law enforcement and fire, EMS, 9-1-1 personnel. Proud of them all. They're very much on the wall and bring a lot to the table. They know what the future holds for all of these professionals that work in a business. And that is my report.

Com. Regnitz, Bob have you done anything just to talk about the changes in like even the last 10 years and how the complexity of public safety has actually increased because of the issues and the increase in population and the difference in training that's needed and the difference in equipment that's needed.

Mr. Bryd, It is and it's demanding a higher caliber of personnel because you know we talk about recruiting and retaining but we have to equip these people with all types of technology. Those technology costs keep climbing. You look at an officer today he carries body armor, he carries a body camera, he has a taser. He has a stop the bleed kit, he has an AED in his police car, he's got Narcan, and he's got everything. And because they're normally the first on the very scene that have to administer these life-saving skill sets. Then comes fire, then comes EMS. It's all hands on board type event. What we see are a large number of retirements that are occurring within public safety. And so how do we fill that void? How do we not only recruit and retain but reward these people for their professions and keep them long term within our agencies. There's this churning if you will within police, fire, EMS where officers, firefighters, EMS personnel will frequently leave to go to another location. Maybe probably many times more money, better benefits, different working conditions. Things like that but we're fortunate here in Porter County that we have the caliber of personnel that we have that make these commitments to protecting our citizens. And potentially risk their lives in doing so.

Com. Biggs, We've we've seen in our own county. I think throughout the years the Council has done a good job of trying to keep up with the costs associated to what the costs are in a 21st century law enforcement agency or Sheriff's Department. You just mentioned the cameras, the vests and all that other stuff that less than 20 years ago most departments if any in this county were carrying all that equipment. That equipment costs money and that equipment. Also because it because it is new equipment, because it has to be operated properly training has to occur. When training occurs there's costs that are occurred there. I think like in our county the Council has done a pretty good job in trying to keep up with it. They haven't been able to keep up with all of it. I mean as we talked about earlier we've got a \$25 million bill waiting for us in the Jail that has to be addressed sooner rather than later. And then as you talked about Bob what's going on in our township volunteer fire departments. Whereas 20 years ago this county from demographic standpoint looked different than it does today. Every time they put a subdivision in the unincorporated area. There's more burden on a fire department to service those areas. In this day and age when insurance and the cost of raising a family is what it is compared to what it was 20 years ago you have of course have less young men and women who are willing to risk their life for no compensation to manage those fire departments. You can see the wall. It's rushing toward. If we don't step in front of it and I mean it's going to hit the wall. I don't know which township will be the first one to do it but it will happen if we do nothing.

Mr. Byrd, Also today's fires they burn because of the materials that they have. The fires are burning much faster, much hotter. The carcinogens that are firefighters are exposed to puts

them at horrific risk long term. So again we welcome the Commissioners resolution to create a Public Safety Commission. I think we have the right personnel to help navigate through what will be the best practices and solutions for Public Safety going forward.

Com. Biggs, Because as you know for the most part I have talked about the availability resources but it's been a long time police chief yourself is that not every problem is solved by throwing more resources at it. That it's just better planning or preparation and that's what we're trying to understand here. What are we doing right and what are we doing wrong. What can we afford to do and what can't we afford to do and why. That is what our residents expect. As an elected official I think public safety has to be our number one concern. I don't care who sits up here. It has to be our number one concern. We know it's growing and what we're trying to do with this Commission is getting front of it and grabbing it before you know it slides off the table. That is why I think our second step here is to create a Public Safety Commission through ordinance where it has some teeth and some more direction. Sort of a blue print if you will for its eventual members. Thank you so much I really appreciate the work you've done.

Com. Blaney, Will you email each of us a copy of what you did today?

Mr. Byrd, Yes, I have copies for a whole bunch of you.

Com. Blaney, Thank you.

MAAC FOUNDATION – CELINA WEATHERWAX

Presentation on how ARPA money will be spent.

Ms. Weatherwax, Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss what we have been up to at the MAAC. Since we were founded in 2016. Essentially today I really just come to you with the message of gratitude. So much support has been demonstrated by the community in support has been demonstrated by the community in support of the first responder community. This latest project is an example of it. This \$3.5 million project was made possible because of the contribution of so many individual donors that supported it but also each and every one of you that supported us with the ARPA non-profit process that was established last year. This is a rendering of what the village looks like. The MAAC was founded in 2016. Our non-profit started with a very small budget of \$300,000.00. We have invested over \$20 million in the first responder community. Here in Porter County we are located in the Mondale Industrial Park. So we are tucked away outside of site and that's also been very intentional on our part. The activities that take place there in the trainees that happen are sometimes a need. You know require privacy and security. Therefore, we have been very deliberate about when we invite the community in so that we don't interfere with the training taking place there. We've also done a really decent job at preparing first responders once they get inside a structure. So either a home or a building but we did not do a good job when designing the campus was the approach. In particular the law enforcement approach. The Village addresses that. We have designed it in such a way that we have designed it in such a way that the streets are wide enough. Typical streets and neighborhoods that you would find or any one of our downtown areas. The overall layout is pictured here. Next slide. This gives you a picture of more of a detail. What this project entails. We have a single story one story house with a fenced backyard and crawl space. Next. The one story home as you can see is set up as you'd expect. When walking into a residential home. Next. The cross base has two access points. A lot of time our canine units will send their dogs through here to either identify or locate the bad guy. We also have built a two-story four bedroom home with a full basement on premise. Here is a rendering of what the inside looks like. There is an additional picture of what the second story looks like. This is the full basement. When we started designing this project we had quite a bit of input from the law enforcement community. We had made significant investment on the fire departments at the fire departments request throughout the campus but our law enforcement community had really indicated that they needed space like this. So we developed and designed it in such a way that they had direct input in everything that happened in this project. So at this point we were even teased for it being a cop training village. It turns out that firefighters are using it equally as much as our law enforcement community. Next. Here it gives you an indication of how the firefighters would use it when they come out and train. There is an incident or a fire that requires them to reach the attic space. This is the space that they would navigate through. We also took the detached garage of one story home and converted it into a classroom so they can also use it to bring in vehicles if they need to or indeed just use it as we have it set up right now with tables and chairs. As you may recall as part of this ARPA process other non-profits that were involved included the Boys and Girls Clubs. Those tables and chairs came from the old Boys and Girls Club. So a lot of collaboration took place amongst the other entities that were involved throughout that entire process. Student canopy that is often used right now especially in the

nicer days. They can do their briefing and their debriefings outside before heading into any one of those structures. Here we have just a little bit more indication of the different features including the breach doors. All of the buildings are capable to take SIM munitions as well as smoke capabilities. We have plans for developing a mobile home. When we started the project we included this as part of the process but as you may recall during COVID the containers not only increased in price but also their ability to find them was challenging as well. So that is something that we do plan on doing. As you've probably noticed we use containers all across the campus and that is also deliberate in our part because our first responders need to be very comfortable in how they train there. We're not too concerned about the wear and tear of the facilities and the containers are very durable and sustainable for us during these trainings. Here is my contact information for anyone that has any questions or would like to tour the campus. I know that you all have been there so thank you for that. I really just want to say thank you for your support. This \$3.5 million project was matched not only through the support of ARPA fund process but also through a number of different community foundations and many, many generous donors. So you made that all happen and as a result we have now offered over 400,000 hours of direct trainings to our first responders. We offer our facility at no cost to them or to any agents in any first responder agency throughout our county and beyond. And as a result our campus is being utilized at a minimum of 15 hours per day for some sort of training. Again, back to our humble beginnings never did we imagine this thing could happen and take off the way it has but clearly the demand for such a facility is driving that. So thank you.

Com. Biggs, The public should understand that before you all existed local agencies would have to very often send their personnel out of area to get that training, which is expensive. To be able to do it in our own backyard for nothing or virtually nothing is just a huge benefit to our county as a whole. So I thank you for that.

Ms. Weatherwax, We are a 24 hour operation, seven days a week. We noticed a lot of the weekends the facility is being booked by our volunteer firefighters, nights and weekends for that matter. And during the day we are heavily being utilized by law enforcement in our career fire departments. So it is a win, win. We have a high school program going for training high school students to become firefighters. So we are just at the beginning. The next phase of the map includes a large expansion and an additional \$12 million investment that we anticipate happening within the next three years. In terms of economic development and the draw that we are having for not only the first responder community but overall is really significant and I encourage you to continue to stay with us and see where this momentum goes.

Com. Biggs, Have you noticed or have you heard and maybe one of the chiefs back here could...before you all existed and you've been up and operating have your departments been able to train more often?

Fire Chief, Absolutely. We're probably out there more than we are in our station anymore. We utilize facilities for a lot of various operations in that some of our guys actually do construction out there. Without this we wouldn't be able to train people to another level that needs to be.

Fire Chief, If we had new hires we would have to send them to a career academy in Arlington Heights for 11 weeks. Now it's right in our backyard. Actually one of our firefighters is the academy commander. So it has worked out nicely.

Com. Biggs, What a huge advantage for us. And it just seems like it is getting better. And thank you for applying for that money and for putting it to such a productive use because that is touching every single one of our residents.

Ms. Weatherwax, Very much so, in a direct and indirect way.

Com. Biggs, Thank you Celina.

E911 – DEBBY GUNN, DIRECTOR

RAVE 911, Alert for Public Safety Service – A Renewal Quote:

- **Option A – 1 Year Renewal \$63,506.22 Annual Cost**
- **Option B – 3 Year Renewal \$59,351.61 Annual Cost Total \$178,054.83**
- **Option C – 5 Year Renewal \$56,384.03 Annual Cost Total \$281,920.15**

Ms. Gunn, You may remember last year I came before you and we had a contract renewal at that time as well. We've been customers of RAVE Mobile Safety now for I would say 12 to 13 years.

Com. Biggs, I think we were one of the original customers.

Ms. Gunn, We were. Flagship County which again we've been chosen as a flagship county in another aspect of RAVE Mobile Safety Alerting but last year I was kind of on the verge of looking into alternatives I felt as though the scope of our notification was limited through smart 911 being it an opt-in choice through RAVE. And there was a rivaling software company that had a broader notification scope. So I was looking into that. I made my intents known and my desires known to both the rival company and RAVE. Since that time we were actually chosen as a flagship county to you'll see on the letter that I sent out, the proposal I sent out we're now an emergency use mobile data agency. Which is really more, how it was described to me it's more of an opt-out function through RAVE. They mine their data through hundreds of different sources. A lot of the times when we have those terms and conditions that we sign up for multiple use of different products, software and apps things like that that's where they're getting their data. This is very significant. Just let you know our safety profiles have grown that's the Smart 9-1-1 aspect, which I am still advocating. We just had an event in Kouts over this past weekend in which we were able to really share Smart 9-1-1 with the community there. I think that that's very beneficial and I want people to continue signing up for that and creating profiles. What's very significant here is the emergency use mobile data option that we've now been given as a flagship county with RAVE. You'll see that the number there we have over 47,000 users now that are part of our platform. We can notify in an emergency situation. That's over a 550% increase in our scope of notification.

Com. Biggs, Since when?

Ms. Gunn, Since last year. This happened because of as know I was I was digging in there for alternatives that I thought would be more beneficial. Basically they didn't want to lose our business. So we were given this opportunity, which I'd like to publicly just tell a quick story. At the end of April there was an elderly female who went missing from the Valparaiso University campus. And a search and rescue was called out and the alert was sent. The radius was a five mile radius of Valparaiso University. And within eight minutes of that alert being set we received a call from someone who is a user who said I think I've seen that female. I think I saw her on North Calumet up by Family Express at Five Points which is a significant distance from Valparaiso University. The first responders searching that area, search and rescue, Valparaiso Police was involved at this time VU PD was involved. They were searching for in the area of Valparaiso University. So when they got this alert they obviously sent units up north and they found the woman at Family Express. That far north. And had it not been for the alert who knows what the outcome would have been. So that's remarkable. A remarkable testimony for the product itself. Also what leads me to stick with RAVE is RAVE was purchased by Motorola and I'm seeing that Motorola is really expanding that platform. I was fortunate enough to attend the Motorola conference this past spring and learned about so many different possibilities that I would like to ultimately have conversations with you in the future regarding the benefits it could provide our community. I am definitely an advocate of this. I'm sold on RAVE and that's why my presentation or my request rather would be for a three-year renewal of the contract as opposed to a single year. It will be cost savings and will also get to familiarize yourself with where Motorola plans on taking this product.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Three-year Renewal for the RAVE Public Safety Services Alert, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Com. Biggs, Thank you and good job with increasing the participation. It's been a concern with the Commissioners.

AUDITOR KAREN MARTIN

An Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Fund for the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) Technology and Equipment Program Invitational Solicitation Grant – 1st Reading.

Mr. Wichlinski, We have been working with the Sheriff's department both Gary Gear and Eric Wiseman to secure these grants. This first one is for about \$400,000.00 and the second one we should hear back on assuming that should be on your agenda next month. This will be the first reading creating that non-reverting fund for us to receipt those monies into.

Com. Biggs, How is this money going to be spent. This is federal funding.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Com. Biggs, Is there anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Second call, anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Third and final call, anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance?

Mr. Cotton, (Inaudible. Speaking from the back of the room.)

Atty. McClure, This ordinance simply creates the fund in which the money from the Community Oriented Police Services Solicitation Grant would be placed assuming we were awarded that grant. And I'm assuming we were that's why we're doing the fund. This ordinance is just creating the actual fund in which this grant would then be placed. Then that would be subject to County Council appropriation I'm assuming at the request of the Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Cotton, I apologize now what I meant was actually to speak more about the terms and circumstances associated with grant funding. As it is federal there will be certain constraints and or expectations. I suppose that's how they feel and I would appreciate some greater understanding of what this all...the active appropriation I get that. Creating the fund that's not what I meant. Again, an agency associated with getting the money at all.

Com. Biggs, Well as the ordinance states Robert it is to purchase technology and equipment associated with doing police work. No doubt there are probably more details than that that need to be talked about. That is why I asked if anyone from the Sheriff's Dept. was here today. We can ask them to be here for the second reading and to provide more information to those who need it okay. Thank you. Anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? Second call, anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? Third and final call, anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve an Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Fund for the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) Technology and Equipment Program Invitational Solicitation Grant on 1st Reading, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

An Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Fund for the Reimbursement of COVID Related Expenses from FEMA Grants – 1st Reading.

Mr. Wichlinski, My understanding is that this was secured by the Health Dept. and that a vast majority of this funding is going to be reimbursed to the Expo Center for services rendered during COVID. We spoke with Jon Pisowicz and nearly all of the \$337,000.00 was approved by FEMA. This ordinance establishes the non-reverting fund to receipt those monies into.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Com. Biggs, Is there anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Second call, anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance?

Ms. Graham, I would like to say I'm very much in favor of this. This is a great thing that is going on and I agree with the previous one. I was a little bit concerned hearing more about it just like Mr. Cotton was before I spoke but I understand both of them now. And I'm very much in favor of both of them. (Inaudible).

Com. Biggs, Thank you Sylvia. Third and final call, anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Com. Regnitz, move to approve an Ordinance Establishing a Non-Reverting Fund for the Reimbursement of COVID Related Expenses from FEMA Grants on 1st Reading, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

US Imaging – A Proposal to scan Auditor Record Books.

Mr. Wichlinski, Lastly in front of you for your proposal that we're very excited to share with you the Auditor's office has been working with U.S. Imaging to get a quote for scanning of our transfer books. We currently have transferred books that go back as far as 1859 from Porter County. There are about 450 of those right now in the Auditor's office. Those are not only a vital piece of history from Porter County but we also use them very often on a day-to-day basis where an individual can trace the lineage of a parcel and how it was created. What this is going to do not only memorializes those but protects them from any sort of destruction and preserves them moving forward. Part of this proposal would allow them to be index accessible. So we would be able to share these online and taxpayers would no longer have to come into the Auditor's office to search through these. This is all from \$400,000.00 in ARPA funding that we were approved for. The total cost of the projects is \$289,000.00. We pay after each phase is complete. The heavy lifting is going to be the scanning portion, where they come in and actually scan all those in. Then Phases two and three consist of cleaning of the images and putting those on hard drives and indexing them. It is going to be a (Inaudible) project and you'll notice that there's a little bit of an increase in the cost of this based upon the fact that we were not comfortable offering 24 hour access to those individuals scanning in there. That did bump up the price up a bit but it does still come under budget.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the U.S. Imagining proposal, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

ITS DEPT. – LEE CHILDRESS, DIRECTOR

A Request to Transfer – Fund #1000 from Acct. #4510 Data Processing Equipment to Acct. #3130 Training and Education in the amount of \$1,790.93. To cover shortage to pay KnowBe4. Shortage caused due to purchasing a 3 year training course for staff rather than a 1 year. The savings was significant.

Mr. Childress, When I did budgets this last year I planned for a years of training for my employees and then we have the KnowBe4, which is the phishing attacks and (Inaudible) more training for spam mails. My staff is in a training program. The three-year training program was a much bigger savings so I opted to go with the three-year and that left me with a shortfall to my budget of \$1790.00, which I had in another account. I am just asking to transfer that to pay the bill.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Request to Transfer funds, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

NITCO – A quote to provide redundant internet to the E911 Dept. for a 36 month term in the amount of \$109.95 per month.

Mr. Childress, Before you, you have a contract from NITCO. Right now E911 receives it's internet and telephone service through a line connected to the Sheriff's Dept. Should that line go down all of their services go down. This will be another redundant line coming from our building. If one goes down they still have internet and telephones.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the NITCO quote for redundant internet to E911 for 36 months, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

HIGHWAY DEPT. – JIM POLAREK, DIRECTOR

A Request for an Additional Appropriation – Fund #1176 Acct. #2362 Bituminous in the amount of \$500,000.00. 50% of matching funds for 2023 CCMG Grant.

Mr. Polarek, \$500,000.00 which would be half of the matching funds for the CCMG will come out of state, our motor vehicle highway fund. Then next we will be transferring that into the CCMG fund.

Atty. McClure, Com. Biggs you can do one, two and three together.

A Request for an Additional Appropriation – Fund #9400 Acct. #2362 Bituminous in the amount of \$2 million. 2023 CCMG Grant, State and Local Match Funds coming.

Mr. Polarek, We will be getting a check from the state for \$1 million and then the previous half million will go into that fund to be allocated out of there. Along with an additional half million from what the Commissioners and the Council end up coming with.

A Request for an Addition Appropriation – Fund #1169 Acct. #3650 Vehicle Repair in the amount of \$150,000.00. Additional needed due to increased parts cost.

Mr. Polarek, We had to do this last year and again this year. When we do budgets here in a few weeks we will be increasing that for next year so we won't have to do this again. Parts crossed have gone through the roof.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve all three requests for an Additional Appropriations, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

Request for pay increase for the following positions:

- **Mechanic Foreman \$26.91 per hour to \$37.00 per hour**
- **Mechanics \$25.74 per hour to \$35.00 per hour**
- **Asst. Mechanics \$20.00 per hour to \$28.00 per hour**

Mr. Polarek, A couple of weeks ago Mr. Rivas from the Council and then Mr. Biggs asked me to look into what we need to compensate our mechanics in order to keep them and attract new mechanics since we've been short for several years. After doing some research these mechanics are just regular mechanics. They are also heavy equipment mechanics. And scale for a heavy equipment mechanic in this area is \$46.00 an hour to \$56.00 an hour. Obviously, I don't think we're in a position right now to ask the Council to approve \$46.00 an hour salaries but when I go online to the Indeed website. There are all kinds of pages of mechanics up to \$35.00 an hour and they've been open on that site for a while. In order to even have people to look at it and qualify people to apply I believe these are the salaries that we need to increase those positions to \$37.00 for the mechanic foreman, \$35.00 for the mechanics and \$28.00 for mechanics asst.

Com. Biggs, Honestly it is a long time coming. I mean as you know we've had a mechanics position opened for a better part of two years because we can't fill them because we're not paying them what our competition has been.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the pay increase for Highway positions, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Resolution for the Disposition of Property.

Mr. Polarek, The next item is some housekeeping. There are two memos and then an SOP I presented to you.

Atty. McClure, I also put together a resolution.

**RESOLUTION NO. 23-
RESOLUTION PURSUANT TO I.C. 5-22-22-8
DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY**

WHEREAS, The Porter County Commissioners are the Legislative and Executive Body of Government in Porter County, Indiana; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to I.C. Code 5-22-22-8 Property that is deemed worthless may be demolished or junked.

WHEREAS, Pursuant to I.C. 5-22-22-8 Property may be considered worthless or of no market value, if the value of the property is less than the estimated cost of sale and transportation of the property.

WHEREAS, the Porter County Highway Department produces byproducts from normal operations, such as logs and wood chips from tree trimming/removal, soil from ditch cleaning, contaminated stone/slag and asphalt millings.

WHEREAS, the above listed byproducts shall be considered worthless, as they have no market value or if market value, the market value is less than the estimated cost of sale/disposal and transportation of the property.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the undersigned, that the Porter County Highway Superintendent may dispose/donate the above listed byproducts at his discretion.

This resolution passed and adopted this the _____ day of June, 2023

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

Com. Regnitz, Jim also prepared the form for people to complete if they are requesting those material. Did you have a chance to look at that Scott?

Atty. McClure, Yes. This is what the Commissioners need to do and then his SOP's are part of his department on department on how to deal with it.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Resolution for the Disposition of Property, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

DEVELOPMENT & STORM WATER MNGMNT. – BOB THOMPSON, DIRECTOR

A Cooperative Management Agreement between the National Park Service Indiana Dunes National Park and Porter County.

Mr. Novotney, This formalizes the working agreement and arrangement that the county has had with the Park Service over the last several years regarding the planning and design of the Marquette Greenway. As well as well as construction and maintenance of the trail. The department is requesting the Board's approval of this agreement this morning.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Cooperative Management Agreement, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

An LPA Consulting Agreement between the Porter County Commissioners and Lochmueller Group, Inc. for the replacement of Bridge 66 – C.R. 250 W over Phillips Ditch. Not to exceed \$29,255.00.

Mr. Novotney, This is for right-of-way acquisition services associated with that bridge replacement project.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve the Lochmueller Group LPA Consulting Agreement for Bridge 66, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

An LPA Consulting Agreement between the Porter County Board of Commissioners and Lochmueller Group, Inc. for the replacement of Bridge 1 – Structure No. 1 64-00001 – Division Rd. over Hutton Ditch (Crooked Creek). Not to exceed \$25,250.00.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Lochmueller Group LPA Consulting Agreement for Bridge 1, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

A Unified Development Ordinance pertaining to Section 5.69 Telecommunication Facility Standards and 5.70 Telecommunication Facility; Height Limit – 1st Reading.

Mr. Novotney, This is addressing telecommunication facilities particularly towers. This would equate to changes in Section 5.69 of the UDO which addresses telecommunication facility standards and Section 5.70 which addresses height limits associated with telecommunication facilities.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Com. Biggs, Anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone if favor of this ordinance? Third call, anyone wishing to speak in favor of this ordinance? Anyone wishing to

Speak against this ordinance? Anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance? Third call, anyone wishing to speak against this ordinance?

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

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

USI Consultants, Inc. – Supplemental Agreement No. 1 for Bridge 168 replacement – CR 250 E over East Arm Little Calumet River. Not to exceed \$275,000.00.

Mr. Novotney, This would increase the value of the agreement by an additional \$39,500.00. The agenda reads not to exceed \$275,000.00. It is actually \$257,500.00 would be the need not to exceed fees. This is for additional construction observation resident project representative services provided by USI during construction. If you will recall we had delays with getting utilities out of the way which meant that the bridge construction started later. That extended our construction period so USI has spent additional time on site providing these services. And this is the approximated value not to exceed of those additional services.

Com. Biggs, This is the bridge that has caused all the....

Mr. Novotney, This is the bridge that has caused all the rerouting of traffic and concerns about access.

Com. Biggs, Right next to Brummitt School.

Mr. Novotney, Right next to Brummitt Elementary School.

Com. Biggs, I actually went by that the other day. You can you can now see what it is going to be. It looks very nice.

Mr. Novotney, We are probably just about a month away from being able to open that to traffic.

Com. Biggs, We're about a month away, okay because when this story appears in the paper I'm going to get the calls how far, you get that paper? A month away because they'll ask. They'll ask on social media. And what was the not exceed?

Mr. Novotney, The new value of the supplement is \$39,500.00 which brings the new overall not to exceed amount to \$257,500.00.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Supplemental Agreement for USI Consultants for Bridge 168 replacement County Road 250 East over East arm little Calumet River not to exceed \$257,500, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

United Consulting – An LPA Consulting Contract for Bridge 131 – CR 200 W over Damon Run. Not to exceed \$175,200.00.

Mr. Novotney, This is for construction observation resident project representative services. This is a contract in the value of not to exceed \$175,200.00.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the United Consulting LPA Consulting Contract for Bridge 131 – CR 200 W over Damon Run. Not to exceed \$175,200.00, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

United Consulting – An LPA Consulting Contract for Porter County Bridge Inspections for the years 2024 - 2027. Not to exceed \$478,457.19.

Mr. Novotney, This is a 4 year agreement and a result of a consultant selection process that was started late last year. Three consultants responded to our RFQ request for qualifications that was recommended to the Board at your March 14th meeting based on the scoring and evaluation of those submitted letters of interest. The Commissioners accepted our recommendation. Authorized the department to negotiate this contract. This contract that is in front of you is the result of that. The value of the contract is not to exceed \$478,457.19. This is for the 4 year inspection and assessment cycle for the years 2024-2027.

Com. Biggs, Now it's not that all of our bridges are inspected every year. It just takes four years to inspect them all.

Mr. Novotney, Per the federal Highway requirements we have to respect all of our bridges every two years. Those that are in poor condition or fracture critical have to be inspected every year. This will carry through two of those cycles.

Com. Blaney, moved to approve United Consulting LPA Consulting Contract for Porter County Bridge Inspections for the years 2024 - 2027. Not to exceed \$478,457.19, Com. Regnitz, second, motion carried.

Seeking Sealed Bids for Porter County's CCMG 2023 Paving Projects.

Mr. Novotney, We are moving money around to be able to pay for the paving. We expect to open sealed bids at your next morning meeting in July and award the contract for the paving at that time.

VALPO EVENTS – KATIE ABEL

A Request to use the Courthouse grounds on Saturday, October 7th, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for 2023 Autumn Promenade. Various downtown retailers will distribute fall/holiday themed treats. There will be small A-frame signs and a 10 x 10 tent canopy.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the request to use the Courthouse grounds, Com. Blaney, second, motion carried.

HARMONY HANDBELLS – LINDA HADDIX

A Request to use the Courthouse grounds on Sunday, July 9th from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for Ringin' in the Breeze. To make handbell music. Ringers from the Valpo area are invited to play along. They will set up (4) 6' tables and (2) 10 x 10 canopies.

Com. Blaney, moved to the request to use the Courthouse grounds, Com. Regnitz, motion carried.

ABM – ERIC DUSTIN

A Presentation on energy savings of the Porter County buildings.

Master Development Agreement.

Mr. Dustin, Thank you everyone. I really appreciate the time we've been working with the county to do what we call a preliminary assessment of the facilities throughout the county. And also I do have with me here Dan Roth I want to introduce him. He was our developer on the project. He's walked all of the facilities with Daniel here and his team as well. So really appreciate the support. And of course of the Commission allowing us and again for the time today to present. So with that I'd like to kind of dive in. We looked at seven buildings over the course of again the past few months. And what the facilities and things we can do. So some of the key takeaways is you know using the current buildings as a means of revenue to fund the changes from an energy perspective maintenance and operational savings and things of that nature. Also a big takeaway is going to be to reduce the risk to the county. So capital volatility over the years and whether equipment fails. Windows leaking, things of that nature. Really everything that we looked at throughout our scope. And also just improving the facilities. Not only from of course the efficiency perspective of it but as well as the people that are using those Facilities. One big thing too when we do talk about this and when you know we move towards a proposal throughout full development as the results are guaranteed from the energy savings. And as well the project's scope when we come and the price I know earlier was mentioned. Change orders, we guarantee there are no change orders when we deliver a proposal to the county. Unless they're county initiated change orders are very specific requests we do not do that. Once we give a price that is guaranteed. So with that we'll I think we'll dive in and again just to reiterate the funding there's going to be a pretty significant pie that is energy savings. As you'll see when we look at all the buildings and again that capital avoidance and major repairs as well are just a few that we will highlight? You'll see some reoccurring themes as we jump into the buildings that we're going to look at. Next slide please. So the first one I really wanted to highlight was the Juvenile Detention Center. I know we've already talked about that a little bit today. I've got to tell a little bit of a story. As I pulled up there into the back of the JDC and we saw that cooling tower it looked like a waterfall. It was one of the first warm days when we were

doing our site walk and I think it had recently been turned on and it was leaking significant. Now I would say almost approaching the point of catastrophic failure where there would not be cooling for the JDC. I do have to give Daniel and his team incredible props there. They did a fantastic job in making sure that they have repaired it for the time being. It is temporary repairs but it is working and they've made sure that they still do have cooling. But those are some of the things we saw. So when we went through JDC both the inside and the outside of the building a few things. The boiler plant is old. I believe it is original. Well over 20 years old and the controls are outdated as well. So we would recommend redoing the controls. Recommissioning along with the entire building automation system. There's also some room for indoor air quality improvements, which would be there's a potential to look at what bipolar ionization is the technology that ultimately cleans the air in the environment. I mean another aspect would be reducing that outside air so that's (Inaudible) we're providing clean air you can again reduce the cost and just operate the equipment much more efficiently. Repair, replace heat pumps make up air again very old. Original equipment through all of the mechanical I would say. Another key scope item that you'll see is kind of recurring through theme throughout all the buildings is the building envelope. So what that is going to be is your windows, your doors any place where there's air and water infiltration. So now we've conditioned the spare air. It can come in and out and we've got some pictures that do a great job of showing exactly what we're talking about with that. I think really here you'll see another thing is lighting that top left. We've got some aged lighting where we have some opportunity to really convert that over to LED. On the lower left. I won't go through everyone. You'll see the cracks at the doors. A lot of the doors are like that where their seams are just not sealed very well or they're off center. So there's some room for replacements there or some work. And again just to highlight way over on the right that is the cooling tower and you can kind of see all the water pouring down those pillars. It really was all around that cooling tower too. I mean it was a substantial amount of water and that's energy that's waste. That's the conditioned water, etc. And then again if it has catastrophic failure there is no cooling to that JDC. So that unit is quite old and needs to be replaced.

Com. Biggs, Yes because the building itself is not 20 it's 30 years old.

Mr. Dustin, Yes and a lot of the equipment is original. And the controls especially are original. So that's one of the key things by optimizing you know demand based ventilation. We deliver cool there for example as needed as opposed to you know schedule base. Let's go to the next. So this building was another one. Actually I forgot to highlight I guess on the JDC but it was right around the same we are over \$3.00 a square foot. I do want to point that out in the orange right there the Admin. Building where we are right now you'll see the annual utility is just shy of \$250,000 and \$3.21 per square foot. And the JDC was right around there as well. So again from the Admin. Building we have boiler again aged HVAC equipment. The boiler is very old the boiler system is very old. The controls are incredibly old. This building specifically we're actually, still using pneumatic controls, which is a very old and inefficient technology. We would recommend completely upgrading that building automation system to direct digital control and getting rid of the pneumatics. That's going to provide us again a lot of efficiencies. A lot of flexibility in how we operate the building. There's some opportunity for what we call coil coating on the HVAC and that's just going to extend that life expectancy of the equipment. Reduce some of that maintenance and that operational drain on it. Again, indoor air quality, lighting upgrades throughout this building. Probably 50% of them seem to be upgraded. Whereas that other 50% there's some significant potential for savings. Really getting to that LED technology. Again, building an envelope and you'll see some on the next slide and again HVAC VFD's so those are variable frequency drives. Right now the system is either on, kind of full blast or it's off. For the pumps and the chilled water we would recommend going to variable frequency drives. You can again save a significant amount of energy when you use that type of technology so we would install things of that nature for the pumping and also water conservation. A lot of the fixtures are not low flow fixtures, efficient valves things of that nature. So there's again room for not only the electricity but water conservation as well. You'll see one picture on the printer room. The perfect transition. You see the red arrow in the kind of the third on the top? That is on a cooling unit for the printer room that is running independently but what we're really drawing the line to is water is going right to the drain rather than recycling it. That is I would say a gallon a minute and I don't know the exact measurement but it's pretty significant where it is just consistently when it is cooling it is dumping the conditioned water into the drain. Again, so you'll see on the door. Some pretty significant gaps for that air infiltration. See some of the old lighting versus the LED lighting? There's a picture of that pump right there where we could do the VFD's for that variable frequency drive. Some of those very old outdated or in some instances controls that simply aren't working. Go to the next one. The Memorial Opera House. I know we've talked quite a bit about this today. We did look at the Memorial Opera House as well. Not from the exterior perspective necessarily or the bricks as I know were mentioned but really we focus on the building envelope and the HVAC on this building. This was an interesting one when we got there the condensing unit outside was actually completely

inoperable. It's a four compressor condenser and again a Daniel and his crew I understand. So there was no cooling at all when we first arrived and did that side walk. His team again has done a great job of getting it up and running for the time being. I know they were able to get some used equipment and kind of patch that and get some of the cooling. So again well done there. That's something where we would recommend replacing the boilers, the controls and the water heater. A lot of it is actually complete inoperable at this point or some of the controls on the boiler system.

Com. Biggs, Any idea how old those are?

Mr. Dustin, Oh goodness. I'm going to lean on Dan here.

Mr. Roth, Boiler and the condensers they're in the 20-year age.

Mr. Dustin, Okay so 20 plus years on those as well. And the condenser outside and the air handler in the basement, the coils I mean all of it. There's pinhole leaks throughout some of the piping which is where there was no cooling fluid. Again, Daniel and his team had to refill that and kind of get that running so we had something for the summer. These are all things we found again indoor air quality you'll see some of the infiltration, LED the lighting again and controls upgrades or opportunities there. I've got a few pictures on the next slide as well and just a note real quick that building is actually at \$6.60 a square foot last year is what it's operating at. And you'll see where we would like to go to at the end here on some of these buildings. And again the doors with the cracks. That picture in the basement is the air handling unit they were working on it because it was inoperable at the time. Some of the old lighting again, controls, doors and really a full HVAC renovation.

Com. Biggs, For a building of that size the figure that you tossed out is that high?

Mr. Dustin, Incredibly high.

Mr. Roth, Five or six times high.

Com. Blaney, But it needs new windows.

Mr. Dustin, Please don't hold me to this but I mean to Dan's point five to six times high you should be low, \$1.00 to \$1.50 I would say.

Mr. Sullivan, If I remember right the North County Building was a \$1.50 per square.

Mr. Dustin, Yes I have that on here and we'll show that as well for kind of where we would hope to be from our cost per square foot. Now some of the buildings are going to be different.

Com. Regnitz, In this building were over \$3.00 or \$3.25 quarter per square foot.

Mr. Dustin, Correct.

Com. Regnitz, We're higher than you'd like to see us.

Mr. Dustin, Absolutely.

Com. Biggs, What were we in JDC?

Mr. Dustin, It's right around \$3.50 a square foot. So it's very old equipment and the controls have not been updated. It's operating very inefficiently.

Mr. Roth, The type of use for the building makes a difference too. The 24-hour facilities are going to have different than a 12-hour facility.

Com. Biggs, You didn't go in the Jail correct?

Mr. Dustin, We did. That's coming up. I think we saved the best one of the best for last. Moving on to the Courthouse and you'll see even the Courthouse is at \$3.07 a square foot. Again, same theme. We do have an age boiler plant. VFD's again so that is operating as well at constant speed is what I would call it. Building automation controls, indoor air quality, recommissioning the HVAC system. Also, lighting in the Courthouse again that was probably 50% of the lighting has been done in the Courthouse. There's still some pretty significant opportunity for those energy savings and the return on investment of LED lights is pretty good.

It really has. So we want to leverage those types of technologies that ultimately generate that return. Building envelope again some of the access entry points you'll see have gaps all over the place. They're just really not covered up. Some of the windows not specifically the Courthouse but you'll see are leaking. There's significant water damage. Electrical upgrades, replacing some of the transformers with high efficiency transformers. Water conservation.

Atty. McClure, The windows in the Courthouse are new.

Mr. Dustin, The windows in the Courthouse are good.

Com. Biggs, I panicked there for a second.

Mr. Dustin, No sorry. It was the annex has leaking windows. Some pictures of the Courthouse. Clearly you can see daylight under the doors right there.

Com. Blaney, Are you talking about the annex in Valpo, 157?

Mr. Dustin, 157 yes. The lights you can see there's some pretty significant density of the lights in the courtrooms as well. Some of them some of them are LEDs and some of them are not LEDs. There's different colors, different power usage. It's somewhat sporadic I guess for lack of better term. Again you can see some of the old pneumatic controls there in the top right and there is a picture again as you said I believe it's been repaired now but where some of the water damage has been in the past and the pumps as well. Traditional faucets so room for energy as well as again water conservation.

Mr. Sullivan, There's some building envelope incursion of water outside of the windows as well with it to the point (Inaudible).

Mr. Dustin, Yes. So we would want to find out exactly what is causing that and prevent it before it gets beyond repair.

Com. Biggs, We have had some minor damage of water getting in there in unusual storm surges.

Mr. Sullivan, So for instance I know of one in particular we haven't identified the exact source yet above the main entrance from Indiana Avenue. It does come down into their into the custodial space right there that that entrance. The door is new the windows above are new but it's getting in probably between the vertical and horizontal sections of the stone.

Mr. Dustin, Thank you Daniel. So and that's something we would want to look at for that as well. Again that building envelope is critical to the life of that building. So moving to the Annex building and here's where we see the county has done some work on the Annex building. Now what I want to point out too as we talk about this one this is actually down to \$1.91 per square foot. So you can see this is quite a bit better than \$3.50 or the over \$6.00 at the Opera House. This is getting more in line with where we generally would shoot for a building. So I believe there's some things we could do here to further improve that even. That's highlighted with I'd say the building automation system recommissioned that. That HVAC coil coating gets us a few efficiency points so to speak. Reducing that outside air for that indoor air quality with the bipolar ionization and then again some of that building envelope and highlighting the windows there's some glazing the sealants and repairing and replacing some of the windows where again they are leaking. As well as just kind of a final scope item would be. Replacing some of the transformers with high efficiency transformers. Here again a few pictures of the Annex building. This was some newer HVAC equipment up on the roof and you can see the impact that has on the utility cost. I know it's hard to see but on that lower left window you can see there's been some brickwork and repair work there but some of the other ones have not been done and they are leaking. Again around that door right there you can see daylight almost around the entire thing. We're losing our air and also there's the risk of water. All right so this is North border County. We went there and this is this is a great example of where we should be. This has been recently redone and again that shows in your annual utility spend we're down to a \$1.14 per square foot. That just kind of sets the stage of what we can do and what we would hope to do. Kind of the goal. Very minor things there. We really want to highlight some of the pictures here. Again you can see all of the HVAC. There's VFDs which I've mentioned on and out there of a number of things. So everything is low flow fixtures for the most part, variable frequency drives, high efficient boilers, controls, etc. and that's really how we get down to that \$1.14 square foot. The one thing I will highlight is on that lower right. There are still some building envelopes, some windows where the seals are broken. The flashing on the roof that was what that picture was. That was a potential for water damage. The best for last or the worst for last I guess you

could say. I heard this mentioned already Com. Biggs is the County Jail. We did go there, we looked at that. Now this we expect to be a little higher because it is a 24-hour facility as Dan mentioned but it is all the way up to just shy you know of \$4.48 per square foot which is incredibly high. It really is. From here you'll see similar themes. The boiler is are very old. I want to say 22 years

Old. Just inefficient over time. The technology was different and as time progresses they lose their efficiency. So we would look at the boilers again. The automation system, the controls throughout the entire building are old. The HVAC, balancing the water and the air. Again there's some opportunity for indoor air quality improvements. Optimizing and modernizing the air handler units. They're all original. I think almost everything in the Jail is original so it is all around 22 years old. Complete LED lighting upgrade and controls. Significant opportunity for savings there. Building envelope, windows, doors, lights. Really there's a lot of opportunity that's where I say the best for the last for savings. The prison aspect as well. The transformers and water conservation. Just a few of the pictures again. You can see the old lighting. You can see patch jobs on the roof. There's quite a bit of leakage I understand. As well as even the skylight right there. You can see on the lower right it's completely cracked. Water is coming in. The faucets are old. There's no low flow controls. There's just a lot of opportunity for savings and good upgrades to that mechanical equipment all the way around.

Com. Regnitz, Can I ask you a question? We know in conversations with the architect and so forth that you need very specialized equipment that's more durable for jails. Does that sort of low flow and all that sort of kind of preferred. Do they do you have a version that's for jails?

Mr. Dustin, We do, absolutely and I don't know if Dan wants to speak a lot about it but there are specific even from a lighting perspective. There are different lighting requirements for prisons. There are different water requirements. So absolutely as we do a project and go into full development everything will be specified for the environment of a prison, absolutely. So those are all the buildings we've looked at and here's kind of a summary of what we've put together, a utility profile. You can see all the buildings are listed. They're gross square foot. What your annual utility spend is and then we break that down to a cost per square foot. So overall these seven buildings of county is at \$ 3.37 a square foot. We would target \$2.40 a square foot at a first pass essentially without really going into the development. What does that mean? It is \$382,000.00 approximately per year. 29% savings of your current utilities. I believe we are being conservative on some of these. I think we're going to get more on some buildings. I really do as we hopefully dive into full development. You'll see really again I mentioned earlier on that that funding aspect and where we get...there another thing I want to show is when we move into there. I know very early on Daniel you and I talked about the need for understanding exactly what the county has from its assets and kind of the risk or the exposure potential over time. We do a capital planning tool or a capital volatility analysis so we actually go through. We get every asset, the manufacturer, the model, the serial number when it was installed. Exactly what that consumption is. The useful life expectancy and really important we grade every single one of them. And when we come with our development we put the recommendations on which one we would have. We would replace exactly what we would replace it with and then you get your assets and what your exposure is zero to five years, six to ten years and eleven to five. So it really enables the county to plan better for the future ultimately and what is that potential risk.

Com. Regnitz, So that's something basically for each asset you would project its life expectancy and its expected year of replacement need or some sort of maintenance need.

Mr. Dustin, Yes and I know Barb you had mentioned that too that that was something that you guys were looking at an Initiative for the county so that is you know as we go through development we do that through our development process. When we look at all that so you can see you know on the pie chart I mentioned earlier the kind of where the buckets so to speak for funding a project like this. We've identified that approximate \$382,000 of energy on an annual basis and today's dollars without escalation, etc. And I think again very conservative we put probably \$30,000 just for kind of the maintenance and operations. That's whether its labor its repair parts things of that nature. I think that's very conservative but if we look at those numbers and we do a 20-year term and escalate that we have you know \$13.6 million approximately of an estimated savings over 20 years. And we did do a I believe a 5% escalation on that. So even that escalation is below the current market conditions. There's some pretty significant funding ultimately is what we're saying where when we look at the projects a different way and leveraging the energy leveraging those current assets and the utility savings and the maintenance and operational savings it can ultimately create a self-funding project.

Com. Biggs, Well thank you very informative. I mean if you're in and out of these buildings

as much as you know that many of us are I mean it's some of it's obvious. You don't have to be an architect or an engineer or HVAC technician to understand that. I mean the question of it is as you so well pointed out I mean every day these buildings are costing us more to operate than they should be costing us.

Mr. Dustin, Absolutely.

Com. Biggs, So the question is how do we do it. You touched on that you know how do we address without you know dipping into money that we may not have?

Mr. Dustin, I love that question and I believe we have sent over what we would call a MDA or a master development agreement. The way we've structured that for the county is there is a development fee. However, that development fee we don't ask for that until we would go in good faith and develop this project. We would develop a scope and make recommendations with everything and we would deliver a proposal to the Commission. If the Commission chooses to move forward. We ultimately that development fee is a part of that project. So the only time that development fee even comes into question so to speak would be if we present everything to you. We give you the options. We give you the proposals and you say thank you but no thanks. So we are we would actually development in good faith and we are not asking for money up front. We did send that over for you guys to review.

Com. Biggs, That's something that has been given to you Scott?

Atty. McClure, I have not seen that.

Com. Biggs, You need to get him a copy and let him look at it and then go from there I guess.

Mr. Dustin, Excellent.

Com. Biggs, I mean again there's no doubt it's going to cost us money to move on this stuff but it has to be done. I mean there's just some stuff that is not going to....

Mr. Dustin, It does and that's I think again...JDC, the Memorial Opera House and a few of the buildings.

Atty. McClure, I guess before I review it I don't know why we would be doing MOH at this point. And I don't know why we'd be doing the Jail at this point. So I think we would need to look at an agreement that took those two out.

Com. Regnitz, Do we not want to keep the Jail in it?

Com. Biggs, No I think that they if you read that a study by Skillman, is he still here? It gets into the (Inaudible) and everything that you guys have brought up. You guys looked at. I mean they're aware of it. Again it's just an issue of you know how much do you want to spend.

Mr. Dustin, For the prison for example I think an opportunity from us looking at it now is it doesn't take away from the scope of if you move forward with something else in two three years. I think the opportunity is to get the energy savings now and it's not going to change what's done in in two or three years. It's just getting it done now so you capitalize on those savings for the next two/three years before rather than waiting so to speak.

Atty. McClure, My only apprehension would be since we know we're doing something at the Jail but we don't know what it is yet. It's hard to say let's go replace the HVAC and the water heaters and some of that's the reason why it's a project to begin with. The roof, HVAC, water heaters. They are making the right point. I mean they're spot on and if we didn't have a Jail project in the on the horizon I think it would make a lot of sense.

Com. Biggs, No I don't disagree with you at all. The same with the Memorial Opera House.

Atty. McClure, Like JDC is a perfect building to take a look at and see.

Com. Biggs, JDC, this building, 157 Franklin, the Courthouse. I think we can start moving forward to you know determine whether or not we're going to commit to this. I'll have Scott look at the agreement and the proposal and we'll call you back when we're ready.

Mr. Dustin, Okay, excellent, thank you.

Com. Biggs, Thank you very much.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Com. Biggs, How are you doing Dawn?

Ms. Miller, Good how are you? I actually have two topics that I wanted to touch on. I guess I'll touch on the MOH first. When was the last time the Sheriff's residence had been renovated?

Com Biggs, I don't think Sheriff's residence has ever been renovated.

Ms. Miller, Because people at the Museum moved in there. Before the Museum had taken over there was a renovation. So I was just curious.

Com. Biggs, You are saying there was a renovation?

Ms. Miller, Yes. How come the Museum was moved out of that building to the Aster and Gray, the old?

Com. Biggs, I don't know I wasn't a part of that conversation.

Ms. Miller, Okay. When Skillman Schmidt Builders came up here they were talking about the exterior work but they didn't give the amount. What am I looking at as far as like the masonry and all that? The outside work.

Com. Regnitz, The amount of what the bid is or the amount for them to do the bid package?

Ms. Miller, To do the exterior work.

Com. Regnitz, That's why we're putting it out to bid. They're going to put together the bid package and then we put it out to bid. Then the bids come back and at that point in time then we know.

Com. Biggs, Because honestly if Skillman we're here or anyone of the Commissioners could tell could give you a figure Dawn we don't know.

Com. Regnitz, And by the way Dawn if you send me an email I can send you the range that Skillman said for each of those components of the exterior work but all it is, is a range at this point and because none of it's been bid out we really don't know what they actual.....

Ms. Miller, It just kind of bothered me when it said that it could go above like this \$5 million all this project. (Inaudible) so that kind of concerns me.

Com. Biggs, I'm not an architect and engineer but the reason I said that if you're around this stuff a long time you see this stuff. Nobody really knows until you get that information back. And just to be as openly and transparent with the public as possible I'm saying it is not out of the out of the possibility for that to come back at a larger cost than what we currently have targeted to address it.

Ms. Miller, So what happens then?

Com. Biggs, You know that that's a financial one. That's really a question that the County Council needs to answer. The Commissioners are bringing them a building that we own that we know needs repair. We're currently allowing public in and out of it or currently operating a theater operation as we just talked about. From my understanding now there's they're doing some kind of children's programming in it as well. So it is you know it is absolutely necessary for us if we're going to continue to do that to fix what's broken over there.

Ms. Miller, I agree with you, but the issues that I have I guess is the old Sheriff's residence. I'm kind of leaning towards changing my opinion as why not have the extension? Why not do that now? I mean if you're if you're taking a separate project and you're going to be putting another \$120,000.00 in to the Sheriff's residence why not.....

Com. Biggs, That renters would pay for improvement. Currently we have a building sitting there for over three years that it's just wasting away.

Ms. Miller, Well that's why I was wondering how come the Museum was actually moved out of the building.

Com. Biggs, I have no idea. For all I know they wanted out of there.

Ms. Miller, They paid a lot of money to renovate that building.

Com. Blaney, They didn't want out of there. It's not climate controlled. There is a lot of the same kind of problems that we saw with these other buildings. And the artifacts don't keep well so they wanted to get out. They wanted to get into a business model that would allow them to travel around the county more and have more pop-ups. They're right across the street now as their main base and it's got HVAC. I mean that building didn't even have air conditioning.

Com. Biggs, And as Barb pointed out they're still occupying some square footage in there in the way in the back.

Com. Regnitz, The old jail portion. Not the Sheriff's residence part. They plan to do guided tours.

Ms. Miller, Well I'm just surprised that it got moved from that building to where Aster and Gray used to be because if that building wasn't big enough because it at one point that's what was stated that it was not big enough how was the building that they moved it to big enough to hold the artifacts? I saw behind...

Com. Blaney, They were not looking for a larger space. I always heard it was about climate control. They weren't looking for a larger space.

Ms. Miller, Okay.

Com. Biggs, The thing is Dawn had they not moved out. (Inaudible) they've been in there right now. (Inaudible) very well would be sitting in that audience saying thank God something is finally going to get done. Our choice is either to renovate and add on to the Memorial Opera House which the old Sheriff's residence was part of that. That price tag is going to be somewhere up around \$9 million. We already know that and it could be higher or....

Ms. Miller, The same could be said with what you're getting ready to do with fixing the MOH. I mean you guys said it could go up beyond the \$5 million. So why not why not just do what the proposed plan?

Com. Biggs, Well because there's many....

Ms. Miller, I'm just saying.

Com. Biggs, If just fixing the Memorial Opera House is more than \$5 million can you imagine what extending it, the square footage connecting it you know building the connector and all that what it would. The issue here is not and I speak for myself. I never disliked the actual connector looking at it from the schematic drawings that I saw. That was beautiful. My issue from day one has always been about the expense. When I look at other buildings in our inventory that we're responsible for. Why are you going to spend all this money outside of just fixing what's wrong with that main building before you're doing anything with things like the garage or the jail or the JDC center or this building? We just sat here with a presentation and found you know almost all of our buildings so an exception of a couple we're running very expensively. How do I explain that to the taxpayers that we're going to put in could be \$9/\$10 million into a project that we don't deliver any of our services out of before we give any attention to what else we're responsible for. I don't know how to sell that.

Ms. Miller, How do we sell the idea of taking the people from the MOH and putting them in the Courthouse and doing whatever little renovations that needs to be done there? I mean just curious. Would it not make sense for them to be in the building next door?

Com. Regnitz, The reason that we suggested the Courthouse is because that space will be ready sometime this summer. And if we are able to start those renovations they're going to need a place where it's quiet and it's not dusty. The renovations of the Sheriff's residence aren't going to be done until theoretically the end of the year. They're going to need a place to be

during the renovations. It doesn't make sense for them to go into the Sheriff's residence. It's not cool there's no air conditioning in there. They don't have a lot of visitors. So the fact that you know people coming to visit them at the Courthouse that's not really an issue.

Com. Biggs, The upstairs of that building is huge. We're going occupy an entire level of a building of that size for two people, three people. That's not smart. We'd have to move walls around we have to correct, we'd have to build walls.

Ms. Miller, Are you actually going to be doing that at some point?

Com. Regnitz, Not at this point.

Ms. Miller, There was a proposal for \$120,000.00 for the lower and then \$150,000.00 for the upper.

Com. Regnitz, If we did all of it would be \$150,000.00 but we're only going to do the first floor. We're only going to do the main level for \$120,000.00.

Ms. Miller, And I understand that but what he was saying is we'd have to move walls and this and that and at some point you're going to be doing that anyway. I mean if you're going to be advertising...

Com. Regnitz, We have no idea what we're going to be doing at some point in time in the future with that. We don't know, we don't know.

Com. Biggs, That's a fair statement. I don't disagree with it but everything's about a priority. Does it need to be done, yes? Should it jump in front of everything else that we need to do at this point? No absolutely not.

Ms. Miller, Well my opinion is the \$5 million could be used for something much greater than this obviously. I've said that many a times.

Com. Biggs, And you can make that argument. I'm not you know we have that building. As long as we're going to operate out of it and allow the public inside of it whether they're paying to get in it or not we have to make sure that it's in in good repair.

Ms. Miller, I agree.

Com. Biggs, There's a huge degree of liability that we take on if we don't. We already know what's wrong with it. We've already been told you know a dozen times what's wrong with it. So it is our responsibility at that point to do one or two things. Either move forward to getting it fixed or move everybody out of it and close it.

Ms. Miller, What were the plans to get it fixed monetarily wise before the ARPA money came in?

Com. Blaney, We didn't have a funding source yet. That was part of the issue.

Ms. Miller, So that's where it seems just you know really hard to take when this was proposed in 2018 I believe.

Com. Biggs, Originally I believe.

Com. Blaney, That was the original (Inaudible).

Ms. Miller, I mean there was never any I mean I know there's a foundation and I mean there's no way to get grants. There's no way to get donations. I mean I've looked all of this stuff up. I know there is.

Com. Biggs, Well we have applied for a grant.

Ms. Miller, You what?

Com. Biggs, We have applied for a grant.

Ms. Miller, I was talking about you know the ARPA money. How you were going to fund this project before the ARPA money became available.

Com. Biggs, Well you know look I mean I see your point there. Is there other things we could be using \$5 million on and the answer to that is yes? Yes there are but again we have a building there that has a lot of activity going on in. A lot of public going in and out of it that has to be fixed. We've come to a fork in the road. We're either going to sit there and pontificate on spending another \$4 or \$5 million on a build out and use money that we really don't have to use because of other responsibilities that we have. Or do we close it.

Ms. Miller, Like I said my opinion has changed. Do the build out because if we're putting all this money and that you're going to do all this other work to that Sheriff's residence anyway why not? Why not, why not?

Com. Regnitz, We're hardly doing anything to the Sheriff residence.

Com. Biggs, Dawn that's silly. I don't mean that to insult you. That's a silly stance to take.

Ms. Miller, I don't feel it is silly.

Com. Biggs, There is a big difference between \$5 million and \$9.5 million dollars

Ms. Miller, And I understand that. The \$5 million should have never come into play. So my point is since your guy that just was sitting up here Schmidt Builders is saying that this out...just the exterior work, the masonry can be over \$5 million.

Com. Regnitz, No no no no no no no no. Dawn I will send you, send me an email and I'll send you the range for all of the different things that were agreed upon.

Ms. Miller, So if it does go above what then?

Com. Regnitz, The bids come back to us and at that point in time we have to vote.

Com. Biggs, The Commissioners need to discuss that. The Council needs to consider that. Because at the end of the day the Council is the one that's going to decide because of the work that we've done up to this point whether that's going to get renovated or not. Not the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners are sending that project to them to renovate. They will decide whether or not they want to renovate.

Ms. Miller, And you know when I was here during the last Commissioner and Porter County Council meeting there was on the agenda on the Porter County Council \$90,000.00. This is separate from the \$5 million for the HVAC for the MOH. And I had spoke to you as you were out here and you said they have no air. Well I went there. I believe it was Memorial Day...

Atty. McClure, (Inaudible).

Ms. Miller, (Interrupted) excuse me can I finish please. There was an event going on I walked in people were you know people were leaving it was comfortable. I did go inside.

Com. Regnitz, It got fixed Dawn. The reason the \$90,000.00 was on the Council agenda is because we were in a meeting and we were informed that there was an emergency need that there was no air. It happened to be the day that the deadline was to get something on the Council agenda. Without any other information at hand we asked that for that to be on the council agenda so it was on the Council agenda. In the meantime Daniel had some time to research and get people over there and to see what they could do to fix that to the best of their ability. And they did so. We have a new lease on life for two seasons he believes.

Ms. Miller, My other thing was I did walk in and I did go into the women's bathroom. I did see the handicap stall. I mean yeah the bathroom's small, but I did see the handicap stall and you know when Greg Simms gave the sob story that you know an elderly lady could not get her wheelchair in there shouldn't that have been addressed a long time ago. If this is an issue with the ADA, I mean if somebody can't, if it's not wheelchair accessible shouldn't that have been something that should have been addressed a long time ago. I mean for over an hour and 20 minutes you guys fought for over a bathroom. \$5 million and it was a fight about a bathroom. I mean the ADA I was just curious about that.

Com. Blaney, The need for the bathrooms we disagree about this but that's why we wanted to do the connector. So we had somewhere to put new bigger ADA accessible

bathrooms. They just don't work in that kind of space. The whole project it's a domino effect. You move the bathrooms out, you put the bar in there. You put the box office...it changes everything. Now that we're not using the bathrooms we're kind of stuck in that space.

Com. Regnitz, We did have a proposal to add restrooms additional restrooms ADA accessible restrooms.

Com. Blaney, And you two decided you didn't want to do it.

Com. Regnitz, Unfortunately that added potentially \$2 million to the proposal which kicked that dollar amount above \$5 million to close to \$7 million. And we don't have more than \$5 million available in ARP fund.

Ms. Miller, Didn't someone say that they were actually going to kick in that \$2 million?

Com. Regnitz, No.

Ms. Miller, Wasn't it the foundation?

Com. Blaney, The foundation did if we were doing the entire expansion but they didn't want to do it.....

Com. Biggs, And they wanted five years to collect the money and that that that opens up a whole can of....again on its cover it looks great you know \$2 million. I can tell you right now there's no foundation around that's going to give us \$2 million that's not going to want some kind of an agreement from us, Memorandum of Understanding of what they now can do. Who's going to hand us \$2 million you know?

Com. Blaney, They said they would.

Ms. Miller, Well the other thing that bothered me was that the MOH never went in front of the any of the Committees. Just like everyone else that came up for the ARPA funds. They never did come up in front of you know anyone. So that was just. Another point real quick it is on the SB4. I just wanted to ask a question for the Commissioners. How can you guys guarantee these funds to be used in a responsible manner from what was presented at the Health Board meeting. There are only ideas of how to spend SB4 money and that is not a responsible way to handle over \$4.5 million of taxpayer money. Also, what a disappointment (Inaudible) to endorse attaining more than quadruple the money without a plan in place of how to spend it. Can you do an ordinance or something to approve the plans of how the money is spent if we opt in as a county which I hope we don't.

Com. Biggs, Well quite honestly that's why the County Council exists. They are the fiduciary body of County Government. And that budget like any budget that they've had will to come up in front of them they review it. And they decide what they're going to allow them to spend and where.

Ms. Miller, So are you guys leaning towards opting in then?

Com. Regnitz, We don't know. We haven't had any presentation here yet.

Com. Blaney, I am.

Com. Biggs, Barb I don't mind telling you yes I am. Yes I am leaning toward why because it's a lot of money that can make a lot of difference. If it's managed properly.

Ms. Miller, But you just mentioned about strings attached. Wouldn't you think that this would have something with strings attached?

Com. Biggs, I'm as smart as anything down there to pass that bill so I'm not worried about me signing on to something there's going to be strings attached there's going to a handcuff county taxpayers in the future. I'll make sure that. I am not worried about that, but I yes I am leaning toward it because again I think there it has the opportunity to do a lot of good if it's managed properly. I have a couple of questions. One is very quickly what happens when all this is rolled out the term surplus was used? These are surplus funds.

Com. Blaney, They're not surplus funds.

Com. Biggs, Okay Com. Blaney says they are not. I feel a little better about that. Okay so we get confirmation on that that they're not going to go away. The second issue I have is that we don't build something that then becomes a burden to the rest of County government. If you work in government and whether its town, city or it doesn't take you very long to understand it if you quintuple somebody's agency's budget it is not going to look the same in 24 to 36 months. It's just not. Unless you're giving all the money away. So we have to be prepared what we're willing to take on at that point because the unmitigated truth is legislation created that money to be given to us.

Ms. Miller, By the federal government.

Com. Biggs, No by the state government.

Ms. Miller, Okay state government.

Com. Biggs, But the state government can create legislation to take it away. It can.

Ms. Miller, So why not wait to see what happens with the other counties that have opted in. I mean we did that with the opioid.

Com. Biggs, Well because look we have a lot of smart people that work here. A lot of intelligent people. I don't need to watch other counties do their thing while we sit back and you know.... we don't need to do that. If we do our work here this will be a boom to us. A boom to our residents. If we don't do our work here it'll end up being a huge mistake.

Ms. Miller, And if it is a huge mistake when we opt in who's going to take care for that?

Com. Biggs, That's why they have elections. The onus is on the elected officials. It's on the Board of Commissioners and the County Council.

Ms. Miller, That doesn't really help those of us that you know....

Com. Biggs, I wish I had a better answer Dawn but it's our fault. It's our fault.

Ms. Miller, Okay, thank you so much.

Com. Biggs, You're welcome.

Mr. Pulard, My name is Johannes Pulard and I ran for Indiana State Senate last year in the Republican primary and I plan to run again in 2026. I have a huge concern about SB4 because I've been researching this law and I've been working together with Ashley Grogg who runs Hoosiers for Medical Liberty. What happens when the counties opt into SB4 you lose the local control of the health department and it merges with the state. This to me is very disturbing because I've seen a lot of things going on with COVID which is what got me involved politically. First of all the one thing that really disturbed me when all of this started was I'm one of those kids that drove the teachers up the wall because I always learned above my grade level. When I was in sixth grade I read pre-med and college level books on virology and epidemiology because the subject interested me. And of course being brought up by two college professors with PHDs my parents always encouraged me to do that but my teachers for some reason never wanted me to learn above my grade level. I didn't figure out why until COVID. Then when I started seeing the news and they're telling me that you can spread the disease when you're asymptomatic and when the books on virology said the opposite I'm like wait a minute here there's something wrong with that picture. When I look at what they wanted to do and on top of that there was a lot of opposition in the State of Indiana against SB4. We had people calling the Senate and the House of Representatives. Then there was there was a collusion between the Governor Eric Holcomb and House Speaker Todd Houston and Senate President Roderick Bray. They decided to vote for the bill behind closed doors not allowing anybody to testify knowing the opposition in the state. So you might want to take serious look at this bill before it before you think about passing it because it could be a serious threat to our liberties. Once I do get elected I will draft legislation to repeal SB4 at the state level. I'm really concerned about her medical liberties. I'm against the COVID vaccine because of all the health problems it causes. Even my dad had health problems when he got it. I was very against the mask mandate and all these other mandates the lockdowns destroyed 40 percent of Indiana small business including mine. I would say just take a serious look and think twice before you ratify this because this could be really hurting our liberties.

Com. Biggs, I'm curious who won your election?

Mr. Pulard, Jeff Larson did but I got 20 percent of the vote which is not bad for the first time.

Com. Biggs, And then Jeff lost to...

Mr. Pulard, Senator Pol.

Com. Biggs, Senator Pol voted for this bill.

Mr. Pulard, I know he did and his assistant Tyler said he wasn't going to vote for it. Then I checked the voting record.

Com. Biggs, There's a lot of fear and skepticism that has been created over the last three or four years. Especially if you work in it you understand it. That's why it is it is really incumbent on us to very carefully consider this. And if we do move and move forward with it that we're that we don't let go of it right and continue to hang on to it and manage it very carefully.

Mr. Pulard, And one of the reasons why I came to this Commissioner's meeting was because Northern Porter County is part of District Four. It's actually a large part of District Four. The part of LaPorte County where I live in is a small part of District Four but you know since I'd be representing the whole District if I do win. It would be in my interest.

Com. Biggs, That's a big office to take on first time out of the gate. Maybe you need to consider something a little smaller first. Get your feet wet because you see you seem like you got your heart in the right place.

Mr. Pulard, I don't know it was it was my calling and I don't intend to be in there long I just intend to be there to correct things that need to be corrected. I'm very against all the corruption that I've discovered was going on.

Ms. Graham, My hat is off to you Dawn hearing you speak today. My name is Sylvia Graham. I live at 178 West 150 North, Valparaiso, Indiana. I'm a long time Porter County resident. 15 years on the Porter County Council and a total of 38 years in the health field as an RN and a family nurse practitioner. As you know Senator Charbonneau our senator in this area wrote the bill. It was passed by a republican-controlled Senate and the House. I have faith in it. I feel that there is much that we can gain as a County by opting in. And I appreciate you saying that you're willing to listen. I think that the Board of Health has asked you to please opt in. The Porter County Health Department has said they need the money to develop equipment to get data and a plan. From what I heard the other day part of their problem is they want to create a grant program or like you say if they can give away some of the money to other non-profits or even the county things. Such as people that are hit with high cost of septic systems that suddenly fail or go out. They're hit with a \$35,000 bill and that's hard for most people to handle on a day-to-day basis. So I feel like there's a big advantage that we need to look at. I'm for it. I strongly urge you to listen to it and to opt in. Thank you.

Com. Blaney, Thank you Sylvia.

Ms. Zygowicz, Kelly Zygowicz. Hi I just had a couple questions and concerns regarding SB4. I was at the Health Board meeting where the Health Board approved SB4 just last week and my biggest concern is the lack of statistics to make recommendations. I feel like you should have the data first for Porter County specifically before you make recommendations with so much money. And I feel like the recommendations have already been made. They've already been thought out but there's nothing to show or correlate like a cause and effect to me. I didn't see anything presented like that which I was disappointed to see from a Health Board. So that's my biggest concern. I want to know why things like that. There was a lot about obesity and smoking. I want to know the underlying causes. There was nothing discussed on that level like the why? So that is another thing that I feel like we should have. There has to be some kind of statistics somewhere. Do you know that if we have those kinds of statistics?

Com. Biggs, I'm not aware but it's one of those things that I spoke about earlier. Once you approve this, if it's going to be approved you don't let go of it. You set high expectations amongst those who are managing these programs and this money it's. It's going to be important for the Board of Commissioners for us to explain the three of us what those expectations are. The same with the County Council. You know the other advantage. We can opt out of this. What was the word you used the other day?

Com. Regnitz, Provisional.

Com. Biggs, Provisional. Voting for this doesn't mean its forever. Make no mistake about that. Yes we're going to going to weigh in on this and because it looks like it can be something really beneficial for our residents. That's all going to depend on us. On how closely we monitor it. The County Council management and the health department. If you're not doing that if we're not all doing our job this whole thing could spin out of control very quickly. To where you wake up one morning and all we have is something bigger than what we got downstairs that's really not any more beneficial than it's already been without that money. More money, more people, more space for those people to work out of. We're service oriented. 99.9% of what we do is done by human beings it's not done by a machine. If we think we're going to take that money spend it on us that could be a huge, huge problem. Because this means more employees, more space. Within two years or less they'd have to move out of this building. We'd have to find a new building or build one for them. I don't think that's what the people want. I don't think the State of Indiana has in mind. I think what they want us to do is to take those funds and work with neighboring agencies and to really understand what's causing the problem as you just touched on We all know there's a problem. What's causing that right? We have a certain kind of cancer here in Northwest Indiana. We know that there's a high content of iron in the wildlife that is tested throughout Northwest Indiana. We have problems with the air. We have accidental dumps into the tributaries or Lake Michigan itself where many of us get our water. How do we stop that sort of thing or figure out what's really causing it all. That's where that money could really be beneficial to us. We know we got a problem. I don't need to spend more money to figure out we got a problem. It has to be smartly spent and quite honestly I am really surprised that the state has not put more restrictions on it. Now that's not to say a year from now there may not there may be more restrictions on it moving forward.

Ms. Zigowicz, So they can add restrictions once you accept it.

Com. Biggs, Well sure they can it's by State law, absolutely.

Ms. Zigowicz, That's why it's concerning.

Com. Biggs, Well look again that's why we hold elections. If me or anybody else sitting up here or anybody on the County Council is wanting to let the State of Indiana or any other governmental agency come in here and run things for us then that's our fault. We need to be taken out of our seats of responsibility. If we do our job and I have not read anything and I know there's going to be a lot of people disagree with me I have not read anything in that bill that makes me believe that. I just don't see it. There is a clear opt out of this, clear.

Ms. Zigowicz, But once you're in they can add restrictions.

Com. Biggs, Well certainly. Truthfully yes, yes. Any year they're down there they can write restrictions out of the money spent.

Com. Blaney, There would be a political repercussion for the people that voted to do that. That would be very upsetting at the local level.

Com. Biggs, Yes I mean that's why this bill doesn't look anything like it did when it was originally put in front of everybody. That they heard the political repercussions and then the rewrites start. Whether it's \$10.00 or \$10 million. How responsible we are with spending any of it stops right here and with the County Council. They don't need to blame it on state officials. They know we got a problem statewide. They're trying to figure it out. So they're going to throw money at us and actually what they're saying to us figure it out. And if we don't figure it out throughout the State of Indiana it's not figured out I can guarantee you that money is not going to keep coming.

Ms. Zigowicz, Are you going to be having a public hearing prior to the day you're voting on it on July 24th?

Com. Biggs, No I mean I'm only one person here. The only thing this seat gives me is the right to run this meeting. I don't make all the decisions though. We're going to dedicate that meeting to that issue. It's not going to compete with something else like we've had here today. We've all had plenty of time to look at this. We've had you had two or three months now and we've got another month in front of us that we can take a look at it. If we're not ready on the 24th I don't know if we'll ever be ready.

Ms. Zigowicz, Okay I guess again I go back to my biggest concern which is there's nothing at the Health Board meeting that was brought up how we've been doing so far on our health initiatives. How we performed nothing. I just I feel like.

Com. Biggs, I don't disagree. I was stunned to see that they voted when they had only a third of their board wasn't there wasn't present. I was shocked that they would do something like that. With an issue of this size and scope. That board is not there for window dressing. Those seven people they're not engineers, they're not plumbers. They all have medical backgrounds or medical administrative backgrounds. They're there for a reason and they need to they need to be right from the very beginning of planning their programming of how that money is going to be spent. They have to play a pivotal role. I could make a case they should be playing the primary role and not the management. That's why they are there they're. They're not created by ordinance. That is a state law that that board exists and the people on that board need to wake up to that they've taken on a lot of responsibility and they need to flex their muscle.

Ms. Zigowicz, They have but I was very disappointed in the PowerPoint presentation. I feel like there should have been more information and like what have we what have we been doing then if we don't have like basic statistics on things.

Com. Blaney, We haven't had the money. I mean it costs a lot of money to do studies and get those kind of statistics. I mean we're spending...

Ms. Zigowicz, But we have the COVID cases coming in every day, every second on the TV for our County and everything. I just feel like if it matters then it should be there. We should have that information.

Com. Biggs, Well from my understanding you need to then we're going to really get into the weeds on this on the 24th is that what they approved the other night was that they approved, they want to accept it. There wasn't a plan approved. The plan has not been formulated yet and that needs to be made clear to everybody.

Ms. Zigowicz, So will the plan be presented then on the 24th.

Com. Biggs, No.

Ms. Zigowicz, But we're going to vote for it and then talk about the plan?

Com. Biggs, Yes.

Ms. Zigowicz, That seems kind of....

Com. Biggs, I'm not going to argue with it. You can make a case that that's sort of like backing into the garage. I get it. It's the cards that we were dealt with. We can either say no to it this year and then have them formulate a plan and then bring it forward to the Board of Commissioners and the County Council for them to approve to opt into it the next year.

Com. Blaney, Or we can have \$2 million to do some studies and get the answers to your questions.

Ms. Zigowicz, I feel like that's a good point. Like you said it doesn't have to be black and white right? We can have some kind of limitations come to some kind of agreement. So why can't we just get the percentage towards the data first. Get the data we need to make the right recommendations. Like slow down the carriage a little bit you know what I mean before it goes out of control. Making recommendations that don't make sense where we could get later on you know more provisions added to us and get no I can't think of any better word but get screwed later.

Com. Biggs, You have to remember that when that that money comes into County government it is it is automatically managed by the County Council. If they come up in front of the County Council and say they we'd like to take \$300,000.00 of this money and put it toward that effort and four members of the Council go what no. Just because we have don't mean it gets spent.

Ms. Zigowicz, Like you said it makes more sense to have a plan and have the numbers first. The statistics of the actual causes which we don't have right now. I keep asking for it and it's nowhere. So I feel like we need that data first before we can present a solution that makes

sense for us. Maybe just a suggestion fraction off a percentage of that. Maybe not the whole package just fraction and get the data first so we can make the right recommendations.

Com. Biggs, You know what the County Council could very well do that if they choose to do. We're only releasing this amount for you to collect the data that we need to release the rest.

Ms. Zigowicz, So that is all on the County Council?

Com. Biggs, Well they are they hold the purse strings.

Ms. Zigowicz, Okay, all right. Thank you.

Com. Regnitz, The other thing too is I would suggest that you if it sounds like this is something you're really passionate about I would continue attending the Health Board meetings and reaching out to the Health Board itself and just make your recommendations known to them.

Ms. Zigowicz, I have been very vocal and thank you. I feel like certain...it just you know... it seems like it, seems like certain people are willing to help on the Health Board so I will continue to do that. You know like you said with the purse strings it looks like the money part it goes through the County Council. So I'll continue to do that as well. Thank you.

Com. Biggs, Like I said we're going to do a deep dive on this on the 24th. So I encourage you to show up and ask your question because you ask some pretty good questions. And I want to hear out of the Health Department how they plan on....

Com. Regnitz, Well I'm hoping the board will attend also.

Ms. Zigowicz, I'm hoping so too.

Com. Biggs, Anyone else? Thank you very much. That was a marathon meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

Jim Biggs

Barb Regnitz

Laura Blaney

Attest: _____
Karen Martin, Auditor