

**January 22, 2025**

The Board of Public Works and Safety met in regular session in the Council Chambers on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.

**Present:** Mayor Dermody, Jessica Romine, Mark Kosior

**Absent:**

Cole Parthun led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes**

Each member received an advance copy of the minutes. Mayor Dermody asked if there were any additions or corrections.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Public Comment**

None

**Claims Approval**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Payroll from January 17, 2025 in the amount of \$561,791.44.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of January 17, 2025 Payroll**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the January 17, 2025 payroll as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Civil City Claims in the amount of \$1,532,914.42. There are a couple of bond payments included in this docket.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Civil City Claims**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Civil City Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Sewage Claims in the amount of \$84,537.41.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Sewage Claims**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve the Sewage Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Water Claims in the amount of \$98,140.90.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Water Claims**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Water Claims as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Conflict of Interest**

Clerk-Treasurer Parthun presented Conflict of Interest for Jami Francis. Clerk-Treasurer Parthun stated the conflicts of interest are approved by the Board of Works, filed with the County and put on Indiana's Gateway website.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Conflict of Interest**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Conflict of Interest as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Department Head Reports**

**Communications:** Communications Director Jessica Spoljaric reported the city's partnership with Travel Indiana continues and the Staycation issue just came out. This issue includes a full-page itinerary of things to do throughout the year in the City of La Porte. In addition, Mr. Spoljaric reported they are currently working with Travel Indiana on the spring issue, which will hopefully be a two-page spread.

**Wastewater:** Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson reported the treatment plant is doing ok in the cold and they have been to the various lift stations, and so far, nothing is freezing.

**Water:** Mayor Dermody stated Water Superintendent Tim Werner would not be in today due to a leak they are currently working on fixing.

**Engineering:** City Engineer Nick Minich reported they have received a report from the Urban Forester Phil Graf with Great Lakes Forestry and has provided a copy for each board member. Mr. Minich highlighted a net increase of 66 trees in 2024; 134 trees were removed, and 200 new trees were planted. Mr. Minich stated there is more information provided in the report and encouraged the board to review the provided report.

**Code:** Director of Code Jeff Batchelor reminded the public not to throw their garbage in front of their houses. There is not currently a dumpster available, and residents should contact Waste Management for a pickup for large items. Mr. Kosior questioned when the dumpster would be available again. Mr. Batchelor stated the dumpster program typically begins in March or April.

**Police:** Chief Buell reported the digital signs have arrived and they are currently waiting on the permits for these from INDOT. The expectation is to get these signs up once the weather breaks.

**IT:** IT Director Roscoe Hoffman reported he has received communication from the Ivy Tech internship program and there are a couple individuals interested in interning with the City of

La Porte. Mr. Hoffman stated he will be working with Human Resources Director Andrea Smith to move forward with the interested candidates.

**Park:** Parks and Rec Superintendent Mark Schrieber reported this weekend is Winterfest and there are a lot of various activities going on throughout the city.

- Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: free ice skating at the downtown ice rink. Mr. Schrieber encourages everyone to visit [laporteparksandrec.com](http://laporteparksandrec.com) to register ahead of time as slots are expected to fill up.
- Friday: ice sculpting demonstration and Hotel California, an Eagles tribute band, at the Civic Auditorium. Doors will open at 5:45 P.M. and the opening act does start at 6:30 P.M.
- Saturday: Ice fishing derby starts at 5 AM, co-ed softball snowball tournament, sewing class, and family funday at the Civic Auditorium. Doors at the Civic will open at 1 P.M. with bounce houses and a showing of the Chronicles of Narnia the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe playing at 3 P.M. Admission to the Civic for this event is \$5.00 for the entire day. In addition, there will be Frosty's frozen bike ride.
- Sunday: Winterfest will end on Sunday with horsedrawn wagon rides in Soldier's Memorial Park.

Mr. Schrieber reminded everyone that the Civic Auditorium is now cashless and only cards will be accepted at the entrance, concessions, and bar. All events for Winterfest weekend can be found online at [laporteparksandrec.com/Winterfest](http://laporteparksandrec.com/Winterfest).

Mr. Schrieber introduced the new Civic and Events Director Gregory Pietsch. Mr. Pietsch expressed his excitement and appreciation to be a part of the City of La Porte team. Ms. Romine questioned Mr. Schrieber if there was a code needed for free skating. Mr. Schrieber stated for free skating the code Winterfest should be used online when scheduling your skating slot.

**Planning:** Director of Community Development and Planning Craig Phillips reported they are currently working on the comprehensive and transportation plan and will be having a series of stakeholder and public input meetings in February. The exact dates have not yet been determined. In addition, Mr. Phillips reported that work is continuing on several grants and financing related to infrastructure, housing, etcetera.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Appraisal Invoices (2): 302 Philadelphia St**

City Attorney Nick Otis presented Appraisal Invoices (2): 302 Philadelphia St. Attorney Otis stated two appraisers were hired for the Fire Department to value two vacant lots adjacent to the Daytona Street Fire Department location. The Fire Department is interested in purchasing the vacant lots for the purpose of expanding their training facility. Attorney Otis stated they did a call with the entity that owns the two parcels and there had been a death in the family that changed their intentions for these parcels. Attorney Otis stated they did give a tentative offer of the average of both appraisals that has been accepted pending approval

from the Board of Works. The request today is for approval to pay the appraisal invoices only and a purchase agreement will be brought before the board at a later date.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Appraisal Invoices (2): 302 Philadelphia St**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Appraisal Invoices (2): 302 Philadelphia St as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Commercial Lease Agreement: 809 Washington St**

City Attorney Nick Otis presented Commercial Lease Agreement: 809 Washington St. This agreement is for a short-term lease agreement for the Depot Building. The agreement will go through the end of March for The Nest. The Nest will provide short-term housing for those in need. Attorney Otis stated the lease payment is \$1.00, and The Nest will pay for all major utilities during this time.

Mayor Dermody stated the Depot Building was not winterized well and there was a need for a quick turnaround to get the building functional for this need. He recognized the community and local business that came together to make this happen: Dye Plumbing and Heating, NIPSCO, Geminus, and all the other organizations and individuals that came together to get the building ready to go. In addition, Mayor Dermody recognized Harry Holtcamp and Center Township Trustee Lisa Pierzakowski for all their hard work helping the lives of those in need. Mayor Dermody invited Harry Holtcamp to speak about The Nest. Mr. Holtcamp spoke briefly about his experience with opening and operating shelters over the last 24 years. Mr. Holtcamp emphasized The Nest is not a flop house or a hotel but rather a connection to services with care and compassion on the front end. Mr. Holtcamp stated this is a great partnership between the City of La Porte, the Trustee's Office and The Nest and expressed his appreciation for this. Mr. Holtcamp stated they have received approximately 70 applications for volunteers, but they are always looking for more volunteers as there are many ways to help. Mr. Kosior questioned where someone should go if they would like to volunteer. Mr. Holtcamp stated they can go online to [nestcommunityshelter.org](http://nestcommunityshelter.org). There is a volunteer button and a donation button for those just looking to make a monetary donation.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Commercial Lease Agreement: 809 Washington St**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Commercial Lease Agreement as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**McClung Road Sanitary Change Order #4**

Wastewater Director Jerry Jackson presented McClung Road Sanitary Change Order #4 for TCB Bancroft and is a net deduct in the amount of \$50,869.21. The contract had a bunch of storm sewer work and two additional pump stations that were not done. Mr. Jackson stated this is getting the quantities right at the end of the contract for things that were done and things that were not done. Mr. Jackson recommends approval.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of McClung Road Sanitary Change Order #4**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve McClung Road Sanitary change Order #4 as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**McClung Road Sanitary Pay App #6**

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented McClung Road Sanitary Pay App #6 for TCB in the amount of \$2,999.30. This brings the project to 98% of the contract price with a remaining balance of \$11,380.94. Mr. Jackson stated the remaining balance is retainage and will be paid out at the completion of the project. Mr. Jackson stated they did a walk through, and the only issues found were the tracing stations did not have the right termination and trace where the piping is at but that is being corrected.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of McClung Road Sanitary Pay App #6**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve McClung Road Sanitary Pay App #6 as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**18<sup>th</sup> Street Sanitary Extension Pay Request #1**

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented 18<sup>th</sup> Street Sanitary Extension Pay Request #1 in the amount of \$197,743.81. This is 19% of the total contract. Mr. Jackson stated they have started on Torino Street where there is a pump station and come up through the school property heading north and will be serving the new development on 18<sup>th</sup> Street as well as the additional houses further west that did not have sewer service. Mayor Dermody questioned if we had gotten agreement from all residents in that area. Mr. Jackson stated they have two that are on board currently but not the rest. Mr. Jackson stated another letter saying he will be going out to those homes next week letting them know if they are not a part of the agreement, they will incur all costs in the future to hook up to the sewer line, including placing a grinder pump on their own property. Currently those willing to provide an easement to the city of La Porte can hook up at no cost. Mayor Dermody questioned if they would be required to hook up if their septic fails. Mr. Jackson confirmed and said the County Health Department will not allow them to put in a second septic if sewer service is available and they will be forced to connect in the event their septic fails. The city is working with those individuals that would like to connect and run the line as close to their house as they would like but there will still be hookups for others that have not yet agreed in the future, it will just cost them more to run the line further to hook up. Mr. Jackson stated the future cost to hook up would be approximately \$15,000. Ms. Romine asked if the owners that are not agreeing to hook up now are required to sign anything stating they acknowledge future costs will be on them. Mr. Jackson stated right now the way it is set up is they are requesting easement from the property owner to come onto their property to set up the pump station and if they do not sign the easement we cannot do it. There is not anything for them to opt out, they are just choosing not to give the city access to the property. Mayor Dermody questioned if we were able to have those property owners who are not agreeing to hook up sign something stating they are not agreeing to hook up. City Attorney Nick Otis stated we cannot request the property owners to sign anything unless they are agreeing to hook up. Mr. Jackson stated

he can send certified letters to those property owners that do not agree to connect removing future liability or cost from the city.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of 18<sup>th</sup> Street Sanitary Extension Pay Request #1**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve 18<sup>th</sup> Street Sanitary Extension Pay Request #1 as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Hauled Wastewater Permits and Leachate Hauler Permits**

Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson presented Hauled Wastewater permits and Leachate Hauler Permits for the following: Delta Industrial, Johnson Septic, Jaged Truck Leasing, Dog Tag Septic, Sudlow Excavating, K-Fex Excavating, D & M Excavating and Shankster Brothers.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Hauled Wastewater Permits and Leachate Hauler Permits**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Hauled Wastewater Permits and Leachate Hauler Permits as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Request to Accept Resignation and Permission to Hire**

Chief Buell presented Request to Accept Resignation and Permission to Hire. Chief Buell read the resignation letter presented by Sergeant Nathan Thode in its entirety announcing his retirement and resignation from the City of La Porte. Chief Buell stated his request is for permission to accept the resignation of Sergeant Thode and hire a replacement. Mayor Dermody recognized Sergeant Thode for his years of service and dedication to the City of La Porte.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Request to Accept Resignation and Permission to Hire**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve Request to Accept Resignation and Permission to Hire as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Proposal for Routine Engineering Services**

Mayor Dermody stated Water Superintendent Tim Werner was not able to be present for this, but Executive Assistant Annette Loeffler was able to make contact with Mr. Werner and he would like to push this through. Mayor Dermody stated this is a standard yearly agreement and the City of La Porte has had a long-standing relationship with NIES Engineering. Wastewater Superintendent Jerry Jackson confirmed this is a standard agreement for NIES Engineering to help with small day-to-day items where they need help. Mayor Dermody asked the board if they felt comfortable moving forward with this agreement without the presence of Mr. Werner. Both Ms. Romine and Mr. Kosior agreed they were comfortable moving forward.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Proposal for Routine Engineering Services**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Routine Engineering Services as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Engineering and Code: Leases (4) with La Porte Chrysler**

Mayor Dermody stated they are currently working to explore all options, not only for Engineering and Code, but city wide and requested this item be tabled for a future meeting.

**Motion/Vote – Table Engineering and Code: Leases (4) with La Porte Chrysler**

Ms. Romine made a motion to table Engineering and Code: Leases (4) with La Porte Chrysler; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Change Orders #1-3 & Final Acceptance – Chessie Trail Phase 2**

City Engineer Nick Minich presented Change Orders #1-3 & Final Acceptance – Chessie Trail Phase 2. Change order #1 is for removal of the green thermoplastic to be consistent with what INDOT is doing at their intersections and will remove approximately \$30,000 from the total project cost. Change Order #2 is a time extension and there is no additional cost. Change Order #3 is a final revision of quantities and brings the original contract price approximately \$33,000 less than originally anticipated. Mr. Minich stated because this is a Federal Aid project, we will receive a check as we have already paid our portion of this project. In addition, Mr. Minich noted this does include final Acceptance of Chessie Trail Phase 2.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of Change Orders #1-3 & Final Acceptance – Chessie Trail Phase 2**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Change Orders #1-3 & Final Acceptance – Chessie Trail Phase 2 as presented; motion seconded by Ms. Romine and unanimously carried.

**Recommendation for Consultant Selection Des. No. 2401594 HSIP Sign**

City Engineer Nick Minich stated this is for highway safety improvement, placing signage throughout the city. Mr. Minich stated they have received three proposals, and they are currently scoring them. Mr. Minich stated he had hoped to have all the scoring done before this meeting for approval of a recommendation, however he is still waiting on the scoring for one proposal and is therefore requesting this agenda item be tabled until the next meeting. Mayor Dermody questioned who is scoring this project. Mr. Minich stated it is the Engineering personnel and Park personnel because they are involved in the projects.

**Motion/Vote – Table Recommendation for Consultant Selection Des. No. 2401594**

Ms. Romine made a motion to table Recommendation for Consultant Selection Des. No. 2401594; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Recommendation for Consultant Selection Des. No. 2401595 HSIP Crossing**

City Engineer Nick Minich stated this item is for highway safety improvement for pedestrian crossing on Pine Lake. Mr. Minich requested this agenda item also be tabled until the next meeting.

**Motion/Vote – Table Recommendation for Consultant Selection Des. No. 2401595 HSIP Crossing**

Ms. Romine made a motion to table Recommendation for Consultant Selection Des. No. 2401595 HSIP Crossing; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

### **MOU – Mass Prophylaxis Clinic Site Agreement**

Chief Snyder presented MOU - Mass Prophylaxis Clinic Site Agreement with the Health Department. Chief Snyder stated the Health Department has reached out to all the fire departments in the county and has asked that this agreement be signed. This is something that was established during COVID in order to get immunizations out to everyone. These agreements were put in place with certain entities to ensure the ability to set up in their facilities and give a pretty broad reach to utilize all of the fire departments throughout the county. In addition, this agreement covers other things such as the use of these facilities during a mass incident or something of that nature. Mayor Dermody questioned if this is something that is done annually. Chief Snyder stated this is the first time the Health Department has requested a formal agreement, but we do have other annual agreements with the Health Department.

### **Motion/Vote – Approval of MOU – Mass Prophylaxis Clinic Site Agreement**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve MOU - Mass Prophylaxis Clinic Site Agreement as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

### **Request too Trade-in Department Property**

Chief Snyder presented Request too Trade-in Department Property. Chief Snyder stated they had requested a quote from Harborside Manufacturing for a new dock for the rescue boat, which is located at Unity Park. The current dock is a roll-a-dock and once it is in the lake it is set at that with a lot of work to move it up and down. With the fluctuations in the lake's levels, they have learned this is not necessarily the best thing to have. Chief Snyder stated the purchase of a new dock is appropriated within their budget and the quote received from Harborside includes a trade-in value of \$1,800 and requests permission from the Board of Works to trade in the old dock with the purchase of the new one. The new dock is a floating dock and will alleviate the issues of the fluctuating lake levels.

### **Motion/Vote – Approval of Request too Trade-in Department Property**

Mr. Kosior made a motion to approve Request too Trade-in Department Property as presented; motion seconded by Mayor Dermody. Member Romine abstained.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Tabled 01-07-2025 La Porte Water Line Agreement**

### **Motion/Vote – Untable La Porte Water Line Agreement**

Ms. Romine made a motion to untable La Porte Water Line Agreement; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

### **La Porte Water Line Agreement**

Mayor Dermody stated that he does not believe we have another option at this time other than to move forward with this agreement but wants to make it very clear that in the future using plastic pipe materials cannot be an option moving forward. We want to partner with



developers that want to do the right thing to build for the future and avoid unnecessary issues in the future. Attorney Otis questioned if changing our design standard is necessary or what options do we have to address these types of issues in the future. City Engineer Nick Minich stated we will be limited in what we can do in the future because it is hard to require specific materials on private property or with private development. We may be able to push for certain things based on where their access is for fire and things like that, but we cannot specify whether they use specific materials, that is more on the state side. Mayor Dermody stated he had a conversation with Water Superintendent Tim Werner about this and he is uncomfortable with developers coming in here and doing things the cheapest they can do them and then issues occur down the road. He believes a discussion needs to take place and a standard set for our expectations as a city. Attorney Otis stated they agree to have this agreement recorded and therefore the city will not have any responsibility for future issues that may occur. Attorney Otis stated he would like to see further discussion on this to learn exactly what our limitations are as far as what we can require. City Engineer Nick Minich emphasized we are limited on what we can require when development is on private property, however we can dictate what is required if that infrastructure is intended to become part of the city's infrastructure and ultimately owned and maintained by the city. The City's standards are for infrastructure that is owned and maintained by the City of La Porte. Mr. Minich does believe this agreement is appropriate in this case because it does signify they are using a product that we would not want to operate in the future should they want to grow and develop that property into something other than it is, it is known that it will be their responsibility to repair and maintain and not the responsibility of the city. Attorney Otis reiterated by having this agreement recorded with the County no one can come back in any amount of time and require the city to be financially responsible for any issues that may come up. Mr. Kosior questioned if there was any way, whether it be with a future City Council or Board of Works or even the state, that a potential future buyer would be required to be notified of this agreement and made to understand that if there are issues they cannot come to the city and state they were unaware of such an agreement and request help at the city's expense. Mayor Dermody stated that we are certainly not going to incentivize developers if they are not willing to adhere to our standards, even on their private property. Mayor Dermody believes we should be notified if someone is trying to do something on their private property that doesn't adhere to our standards and at least have the opportunity to discuss it with them. Attorney Otis questioned if there is a significant cost difference between what they did and what we would have liked them to do. Mr. Minich stated there is a significant cost difference, but there are other factors that go into these construction decisions as well such as time restrictions. He stated he has seen where contractors have used plastic because it is what was available, and he has also seen contractors that have used ductile because it was what is readily available, even though it wasn't the cheapest option. Attorney Otis questioned what materials are being utilized in the Hunter's Run development. Mr. Minich stated the city is partnering on that project and therefore they are utilizing the ductile iron that the city recommends. Attorney Otis stated he has spoken in length with Mr. Werner about this and he is supportive of this agreement to protect the city in the future.

**Motion/Vote – Approval of La Porte Water Line Agreement**

Ms. Romine made a motion to approve La Porte Water Line Agreement as presented; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Other Business:**

Next regularly scheduled meeting: Tuesday February 4, 2025 at 9 A.M. Mayor Dermody reminded the public that The Nest is open to those who need it and if you see someone in need, let them know about The Nest. Mayor Dermody stated you can reach out to the Police Department if you are in need of a ride to The Nest.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, Ms. Romine made a motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Mr. Kosior and unanimously carried.

**Approve:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Thomas P. Dermody, Mayor**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Courtney Parthun, Clerk-Treasurer**

**Approved: February 4, 2025**