

BOC meeting 6 pm 2/17/26

7 on line. All 3 and legal counsel Garrett present. All items passed unanimously. Recessed at 7:08.

A. FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: Opening and Reading of Bids/Letters of Interest on: None

B. REPORTS AND REQUESTS FROM:

COMMISSIONERS:

a) Approval of the Accounts Payable Docket

b) Approval of Resolution R-3-C-2026: Portage Manor Cemetery transfer to Portage township at no cost. Portage Township has the responsibility to care for certain cemeteries already, pursuant to Ind. Code. Portage manor has been re-platted into separate lots, one of which contains a cemetery (Lot 6, 2.52 acres, off Boland Dr)

3 people signed up to speak:

Derek Dieter: thank you for finally getting this done after 803 days. The Eiffel Tower took less time to be done. The count has been doing the mowing; will that continue? Splitting the cost of honoring everyone buried in the cemetery (about 1200, including some mass graves!)

Amanda ?last name-gave a handout: there is probably another cemetery (Whitehall's) in the corner of the ball park. Whitehall began as a poor farm that became Portage Manor property over time. My research proposes that Whitehall / Portage be a state museum in order to be recognized historically. She wants a paranormal aspect to the museum. Dr. Robt. Gross would be able to do the educational parts of this project. The museum would explore early medical treatment and would be private, ethical and medically based.

Dan Caruso: Financing fell through on some other Portage projects, and there remains uncertainty about the costs of maintaining this property, and no markers for people buried there. Get it done!

Mary Countryman: I agree with the previous speakers on getting the Portage Manor projects done with respect to the cemeteries on the properties. It is a fragile place.

c) Approval of Right of Entry Agreement with Portage Township: To take care of the Cemetery, Portage Township is allowed ingress and egress along utility easements in Lots 1, 7, and 2.

AUDITOR: John Murphy

a) Approval of Ratification of Contract Renewal with Forvis Mazars, LLP for 2025 Audit Services. The contract expired on 12/31/2025. Forvis Mazars has been our auditor over the past 5 years. The State Board decides the auditors and contracts out those services. the State Board of accounts pays for this and we reimburse from property taxes. No \$ mentioned.

IPG:

a) Approval of Request to Advertise for R&S 92601 D-

Resurfacing/Rehabilitation on Various Roads Project: The county advertises for bids on 2 dates (Feb 20 and Feb 27) in the SBT and the Mishawaka enterprise with bid opening on March 10.

b) Approval of Consent Agenda: "No Trucks" traffic ordinance for sections of 10 area roads, about 9 miles of road total.

SHERIFF:

a) Approval of Ratification of Master Equity Lease Agreement & Amendments with Enterprise: Goal is to replace 154 high-mileage vehicles within the fleet. Many of the vehicles are no longer under warranty and repairs are costly. Replacement with newer vehicles (all since 2024 and mileage < 5000 miles!) will decrease repair expenses, improve fuel economy, and enhance trade-in value. Enterprise manages the fleet of leased vehicles.

PSAP/911: Teresa Cromartie

a) Approval of Preventative Maintenance Agreement with Dynamic Mechanical Services for HVAC Equipment, some cost savings with this new vendor.

PHYSICAL ASSETS:

a) Approval of Consent Agenda: Darcy Sheets requested ownership of an office chair that would have been trashed.

C. OLD BUSINESS: None

D. NEW BUSINESS: None

E: PUBLIC COMMENTS: (THREE MINUTE LIMIT)

Derek Deiter: to talk about Portage Manor. You previously said you would give Portage Manor to the City of South Bend. Mayor Mueller has no idea of when or if this will occur. There used to be large numbers of homeless camping there; we have hired over 40 trash trailer pick ups. Portage Manor was originally Miami Tribal land. Please do an appraisal for the building and for the 80 acres and put it out for the public to decide how to use it. Giving it to the city is a horrible idea.

John Hamilton: Leave as much of the land at Portage Manor in place and undisturbed. There are hundreds of years of history and 80 acres which could be a natural and educational wonderland. A side project of removing invasive species could be done by several local groups. We need to preserve natural areas.

Debra Durall: Please maintain and preserve the Portage Manor property. There is a good plan for use and a lot of good work done by Steve Sass. Please take into account all the good work already done. Parks staff are already stretched thin. Get written commitments on what will be done.

Stephanie, a chaplain: Trails not Jails. I help mothers and teens who are struggling with financial and behavioral health. As they attempt to navigate life with too few resources. I am a divorced mother of two; I used the green spaces in South Bend to help keep my children healthy. More time outdoors helps people develop better. Maintain the property for education.

Dan Caruso: echo what Dieter said. Keep the building from crumbling further. Also, I want to recognize Bill Schalliol for meeting with Dieter and myself. The main thing that came up is that the Area Management Plan 2.0 must be in place. We want this effort to have citizen involvement.

unknown: we are definitely qualified for grants to preserve this historic property. It would be good for the community. We also have to figure out the other cemetery and how to best honor it. Since 1850, this has been county property but was part of the community prior to that. Portage was registered as an historical site in 2000 with the Historical Society. It needs to be preserved properly.

Mary Countryman: I thought the school was going through with their plan. I can't believe you would even consider paving Portage. The BOC already looks bad that you considered anything that would not maintain Portage. It's very sad for the community when people are not represented.

Steve Sass: the building and property have been idle for years now. There have not been assessments of what this property is worth by getting appraisals done.

Bill Schalliol: TIFS have been discussed. How TIFS would affect Mishawaka Microsoft Project:

County is responsible for traffic management on the Cleveland Road corridor, utility upgrades to the Microsoft site, and intersection improvement at Douglas and Bittersweet. Final MOU with Microsoft is pending. MOU with Mishawaka re: Water and Sewer extensions are done. About 1000 acres of this former farm have been rezoned. Juday Creek crosses the area in question. American Electric will be the provider, NIPSCO will be the natural gas provider. All upgrades will be paid for by Microsoft. Microsoft will use a closed loop system to use less water. Microsoft will not ask for any tax abatement and will pay for utility improvements. A general contractor has not yet been selected, but will use union labor.

The money generated by Microsoft will be put into 5 buckets: Water, Sewer, Parks & Open Space, Douglas Rd Overpass, and other Infrastructure Projects. The money generated will be put into a TIF to cover the cost of these buckets.

The next step is back to the County Council with defined plans then again to the Redevelopment Commission.

The water and sewer improvement : Lochmueller did a study on this 7 years ago. 1.2 MGD sewage in Granger East, 1.9 MGD sewage in Granger West at this time. In the 70's and 80's, Granger was allowed

to develop using septic and wells on property. This is now a huge problem! The state has also changed the rules on what is allowed for home sites.

Septic leachfields hit the aquifer pretty quickly, crossing other peoples' wellfields. In addition, there are remaining nitrates from prior farm fertilizer applications. The goal is to consolidate the water and sewer; we have good partners to do this. There's been no official site plan yet.

This presentation will be made available by posting on the county website.