

BOC 9/22/26

Commissioner Hazen absent today. Except for the tabled item, all agenda items were approved unanimously. 5 on line. Adjourned 12:02. My personal comments are in *italics*.

A. FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS: Opening and Reading of Bids/Letters of Interest on:

B. REPORTS AND REQUESTS FROM:

COMMISSIONERS:

a) Approval of the Accounts Payable Docket

b) Portage Township Financial Assistance Appeal Hearing for citizen S.D.: Rent assistance of \$310 and Utility assistance of \$13.54 was denied for 90 days based on violence, threats of violence or abusive language in or around the township office or premises. Appeal of a denial of township services goes through the BOC and requires the petitioner to appear at a public meeting. The appeal was denied, but the person can apply again soon.

c) TABLED: Approval of Annual Partnership Agreement with GreatNews.Life (Ideas In Motion, Inc.) for Partner Profile on Michiana.Life Website. This website attracts 157,500 unique visitors to their sites each month. 6,000 subscribers to their newsletter. Total annual cost is \$4,840 for a Partner Profile. This will help SCJ amplify message and allow guidance on structuring social media posts.

(www.GreatNews.Life is a media company based in Valparaiso, dedicated to sharing only positive news in the region. It has media outlets for Valpo, Portage, LaPorte NWI and Michiana. Critics and former staff assert that the company operates more like a paid PR/marketing firm for corporate partners than a traditional, independent news outlet. A review on Glassdoor gave this site an employee rating of 2.9 out of 5 stars and indeed rated employee pay and benefits as a 2.3 out of 5 stars.

When I looked at the GreatNews.Life website, ALL of the people in the "Who We Are" video were caucasian, although there were some POC faces in the "All About the Girls" Spotify podcast section. The site stresses a core principle of "Local" and "Good" in a blatant, deliberate way.

There are ads on the Michiana site. There is a 2026 Good Life Awards presentation on Wednesday, October 7th at 11 am at the Indiana Welcome Center, Tickets can be purchased online.

"Good morning, commissioners. Cynthia Heckman-Davis, Walkerton. Even though it is "only \$4,840", I am a little surprised that the BoC is considering this optional expenditure of becoming a Partner of GreatNewsLife at a time when our county finances are pretty tight. You -quite rightly-have been choosing lowest-cost bidders for projects and express gratitude to anyone saving the county money.

Also, GreatNewsLife is NOT an independent or traditional news outlet. It seems to be more of a PR firm or a marketing firm. I had never heard of this business before today, although I HAVE checked the county website for events. While we all appreciate good news, I don't understand spending this amount of money at this time. Thank you.)

d) Per Kristin Garvey, application for approval started in August. Approval of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Certificate of Consistency with the Consolidate Plan for St. Joseph County for Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project at Works Wonders (a 16-hour curriculum and 6 private sessions to help prepare homeless youth for employment). This is required reporting to HUD to receive block grants from HUD. There is no financial costs to the county. Financial benefit would go from FUD through the state to the Works Wonder's program.

IPG DEPARTMENT: Sky Medors

a) Approval of Contract Change Order No. 2 with Rieth Riley for R&S 92601-D Resurfacing/Rehabilitation on Various County Roads Community Crossings Matching Grant. Needed due to damages incurred after July 4th weekend heavy rain storms.Adds \$175,349 to the contract amount, now totalling \$2,439,825. (Despite both commissioners stating that accountability was needed due to public scrutiny, this was approved.)

b) Approval of Contract Change Order No. 2 with Milestone Contractors for R&S 92602-D Resurfacing/Rehabilitation on Various County Roads: Adds \$38,179 to the contract now totaling \$3,316,736. This is for solar-powered signs and striping at St. Pius School. Since this is for safety in a school zone, this was approved.

c) Approval of Grant Application Request for Community Crossings Matching Grant for Road Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Financial Commitment Letter. SJC has applied and successfully received the maximum grant funding since the program began in 2016. This year, SJC is eligible for \$333,929 in funding. More paperwork is required now to get this grant. SJC has the funds required for this matching grant.

d) Approval of ArcGIS Enterprise Migration Support Scope of Work with ESRI for Data from MACOG Server Project: Cost is not to exceed \$69,190 to migrate hundreds of layers of data are successfully moved without interruption or alteration of data. Funds for this were appropriated by the County Council. MACOG requested this change of servers. Apparently ESRI is the only "game in town", per Baxmeyer.

e) Approval of ArcGIS Velocity Standard & Online Professional Plus Subscription Agreement with ESRI for Winter Weather Operations Platform Software Licensing. Annual cost is \$21,225 and will provide a public-facing source of current information regarding plowing activity and route service status. This will allow GPS info in plows and trucks onto the county website.

f) Approval of ArcGIS Deployment & Configuration Purchase Agreement with ESRI for Winter Weather Operations Platform Implementation. One-time cost is \$20,350 for ESRI to make the GPS info accessible to the county site.

PHYSICAL ASSETS: Bree Roberts

a) Approval of Master Service Agreement Addendum No. 2 with CINTAS for Location Additions to Rental Program of uniforms and floor mat rentals to 2 SJC buildings in addition to 5 other SJC buildings. Cost will come out of each building's budget. This is part of a State of Indiana contract approved June 9th 2026.

IT: Richard Warfield

a) Approval of Purchase Proposal with Elevate Technology for Netmotion an Absolute Secure Access Edge (SaaS) Subscription Renewal: Cost is \$36,000 and is already budgeted.

C. OLD BUSINESS:

D. NEW BUSINESS:

E: PUBLIC COMMENTS: (THREE MINUTE LIMIT)

Steve Francis: 2 items: TIF proposal being withdrawn from the Microsoft project tonight is a good move. The whole thing needs to be reworked.

Second, the prohibition against data centers on the County Council agenda tonight is appropriate. All but one on the Council and ALL of the candidates for Council are against more data centers. I encourage you to consider the shifting sands in the county, with bipartisan opposition to building more data centers. This appears to the public to be an election move. Commissioners, please express your support for the process of prohibition tonight. Tonight is NOT a final vote on this, but rather goes to the Area Planning Commission.