

The LaGrange County Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, December 29, 2025, in their meeting room, County Office Building, 114 W. Michigan Street, LaGrange, Indiana, 46761, at 8:30 a.m., with the following present: Commissioners, Mr. Terry A. Martin, Mr. Peter A. Cook, and Mr. Kevin R. Myers; and LaGrange County Auditor, Kathryn Hopper. Mr. Terry Martin, President, called the meeting to order and led in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to adopt the proposed agenda with flexibility. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

MAJOR MOVES CONSTRUCTION FUND GRANT AGREEMENT

Mr. Kurt Bachman, County Attorney, presented a Major Moves Construction Fund Grant Agreement between the Board of Commissioners and LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation. On April 14, 2025, the Commissioners and County Council awarded the grant from Major Moves in the amount of \$2,200,000. The agreement provides that the LaGrange County Economic Development Corporation will certify that they are complying each time they request a draw of the Major Moves funding. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the agreement. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING LICENSE FEES FOR HORSE-DRAWN VEHICLES WITHIN LAGRANGE COUNTY, INDIANA COUNTY OF LAGRANGE, INDIANA

Mr. Kurt Bachman, County Attorney, presented the following Ordinance for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-12-29

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING LICENSE FEES FOR HORSE-DRAWN VEHICLES WITHIN LAGRANGE COUNTY, INDIANA.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Indiana Code (“IC”) 9-21-1-2(a), a local authority may adopt by ordinance additional traffic regulations with respect to highways under the authority’s jurisdiction to the extent that the ordinance does not conflict with or duplicate a statute;

WHEREAS, pursuant to IC 36-1-3 (“Home Rule”), a unit in the State of Indiana has all powers granted it by statute and all other powers necessary or desirable in the conduct of its affairs, even though not granted by statute, and may exercise such powers to the extent that the power: (i) is not expressly denied by the Indiana Constitution or by statute; and (ii) is not expressly granted to another entity;

WHEREAS, pursuant to IC 36-1-2-9, the Board of Commissioners of the County of LaGrange (“Commissioners”) is the legislative body of LaGrange County, Indiana (“County”);

WHEREAS, the Commissioners have licensed the use of horse-drawn vehicles for reasonable fees since the adoption of an initial resolution to that effect dated September 8, 1953;

WHEREAS, on January 17, 2023, the Commissioners adopted Ordinance 2023-01-17-A, which established a horse-drawn vehicle licensing program (“Program”) with license fees with respect to horse-drawn vehicles that are operated on County highways;

WHEREAS, revenues from the Program are used not only to pay for Program costs but to ensure the equitable long-term protection and reconstruction of the County highways, which can become significantly damaged by extensive horse-drawn vehicle use;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana has determined in *Tomlinson vs. City of Indianapolis* that “the power to regulate implies the power to license and to exact a reasonable fee for such license”; and

WHEREAS, due to increased administrative costs and the costs of highway repairs, the Commissioners have identified a need to increase the license fees for horse-drawn vehicles.

DECEMBER 29, 2025

REGULAR SESSION

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF LAGRANGE, INDIANA THAT:

SECTION I – NAME

The name of this ordinance is the “Horse-Drawn Vehicle Licensing Program Ordinance.”

SECTION II – RECITALS

The foregoing recitals, including all defined terms, are hereby incorporated into and made a part of this ordinance and found to be true, accurate, and correct.

SECTION III – DEFINITIONS

- A. Whenever the following terms are used in this ordinance, they shall have such meanings herein ascribed to them unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.
 - 1. “Administrator” means the person authorized by the Commissioners to supervise the operation and maintenance of the Program and/or this ordinance; the term includes any other County employee or agent to the extent that authority under this ordinance has been delegated thereto.
 - 2. “Agent” means any person who has been designated by the Administrator to collect license fees on behalf of the County.
 - 3. “Highway” means any public highway, street, road, alley, way, driveway, path, or parking lot, including any easement, sidewalk, curb, or shoulder thereof, under the jurisdiction of the County.
 - 4. “Horse-drawn buggy” means any buggy, carriage, dray, or wagon that uses, or is designed to use, one or more horses or other equine animals as motive power; the term does not include a horse-drawn agricultural implement.
 - 5. “Horse-drawn trailer” means any wagon or trailer that is pulled behind or attached to a horse-drawn vehicle; the term does not include any horse-drawn agricultural implement.
 - 6. “Horse-drawn vehicle” means any horse-drawn buggy or horse-drawn trailer.
 - 7. “License” means any unexpired, unrevoked written authorization issued by the County for the operation of a horse-drawn vehicle on a highway, subject to its terms, to any Program rules established by the Administrator, and to this ordinance.
 - 8. “Officer” means any competent authority that enforces this ordinance including the Commissioners, the County Attorney, a prosecutor, the Administrator, an agent, or a law enforcement officer.
 - 9. “Owner” means any person who owns a horse-drawn vehicle; the term includes any such individual or entity that rents, leases, or has exclusive use of a horse-drawn vehicle for a period of at least thirty (30) days in any calendar year.
 - 10. “Program” refers to the Horse-Drawn Vehicle Licensing Program, as established by this ordinance.

SECTION IV – SCOPE

Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to require the licensure of a horse-drawn vehicle that is operated on a highway if none of the owners of such vehicle has any principal place of residence in the County nor owns or operates any business within the County.

SECTION V – PURPOSE

This ordinance seeks to ensure the equitable long-term protection and reconstruction of the County highways, which can become significantly damaged by extensive horse-drawn vehicle use.

SECTION VI – PROGRAM

- A. Establishment. The Horse-Drawn Vehicle Licensing Program is hereby established to ensure the proper licensing of horse-drawn vehicles in accordance with this ordinance.
- B. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Program shall run from July 1 each year to June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.
- C. Administration. The Administrator is hereby established to administer the Program and the provisions of this ordinance. A person appointed as Administrator may have other regular or partial employment with the County.

- D. Ex Officio Appointment. The Auditor shall serve as the default Administrator except to the extent that the Commissioners have assigned (and not revoked) the powers and duties of the position to another person by motion.
- E. Delegation of Powers.
 - 1. The Administrator is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed to take all action necessary and proper to administer the Program, including the creation and execution of Program rules not contrary to this ordinance, subject to applicable law.
 - 2. The Administrator may delegate any power and/or duty under this ordinance or other applicable law relating to the Program to another public servant, as appropriate, while retaining primary responsibility therefor.
 - 3. The Commissioners retain jurisdiction to be the final authority for the management of the Program.

SECTION VII – FORM OF LICENSE

- A. Design. Each license for a horse-drawn vehicle shall consist of a metallic plate, a self-adhesive label, and a registration receipt.
- B. Contents.
 - 1. Each license plate shall bear the legend “LaGrange County, Indiana,” the Program fiscal year of its issue, and a number that is part of a consecutive number series.
 - 2. Each self-adhesive label shall contain the Program fiscal year of its issue.
- C. Plate Fixture.
 - 1. Before operation of a horse-drawn vehicle on a highway, its respective license plate shall be attached thereto by means of placing a screw or nail through the hole provided in the license plate and affixing it to the horse-drawn vehicle.
 - 2. Each self-adhesive label provided shall be affixed to the respective license plate.
 - 3. No affixed license plate shall be covered, even with a transparent covering.
 - 4. No affixed license plate shall be removed as long as the horse-drawn vehicle is operated on a highway; provided, however, that a label with an expired date may be replaced with the current license label.
 - 5. No more than one license plate may be affixed to any horse-drawn vehicle at any time.
- D. Color Scheme.
 - 1. The license plate shall contain a light background with a dark inscription.
 - 2. Each fiscal year, the Administrator shall change the coloring scheme of the self-adhesive label tags.
- E. Registration Receipt.
 - 1. For each license, the Administrator will cause a registration receipt to be issued, which shall be immediately countersigned by the respective owner.
 - 2. The registration receipt shall be carried in or on the respective horse-drawn vehicle at all times during its operation on a highway.

SECTION VIII – LICENSE RULES

- A. Requirement. Each horse-drawn vehicle that is operated on a highway must have a license.
- B. Deadline. Except as allowed by Section IX(F) (initial licenses for horse-drawn vehicles), each license must be applied for within the first two months of the fiscal year; provided, however, that owner requests for licenses after the deadline are acceptable, though a late fee for the license shall be charged.
- C. Expiration. Each license expires at the end of the respective fiscal year.

D. Nontransferable. All licenses are nontransferable.

SECTION IX – LICENSE FEES

A. Findings. The Commissioners hereby find that the amount of the license fees set forth in this ordinance are fair and reasonable and commensurate to the services provided, including the costs incurred for reconstruction of the County highways.

B. Collection. Upon receipt of each license application, the Administrator and/or agent shall assess and collect the applicable license fees set forth in this section.

C. Default License Fee Amounts.

1. The fee for each horse-drawn buggy plate and self-adhesive label shall be \$300.00.
2. The fee for each horse-drawn trailer plate and self-adhesive label shall be \$50.00.
3. The fee for each replacement license shall be \$20.00.
4. Example #1. An owner of four (4) horse-drawn buggies that are each operated on the County highways shall be charged an annual license fee in the sum of \$1,200.00, or \$300.00 for each such buggy.
5. Example #2. An owner of four (4) horse-drawn trailers that are each operated on the County highways shall be charged an annual license fee in the sum of \$200.00, or \$50.00 for each such trailer.

D. Late Fee.

1. A late fee shall be imposed in the amount of \$20.00 on any horse-drawn vehicle license requested after the first two months of the respective fiscal year. The Administrator may extend the time period during which a late fee will not be charged for good cause.
2. A late fee in an amount equal to the full fee amount of a respective annual license shall be imposed on any owner who failed to obtain the required license for each year of the then-previous two fiscal years in which the license was not paid.
3. The fees in this subsection are in addition to the standard license fees.

E. Replacement Fee. A replacement license fee in the amount of \$20.00 shall be imposed for the requested replacement of any plate or label with respect to a current license.

F. Partial-Year Fee Reduction. With respect to the initial license for any horse-drawn vehicle, the license fee shall be reduced by fifty percent (50%) if issued after March 1 of the respective fiscal year. There are no license fee reductions with respect to renewal licenses.

G. Processing Fee. A reasonable processing fee or convenience fee may be assessed and collected equal to the costs incurred by the County to process another fee collected pursuant to this ordinance.

H. Prepayment. All license fees must be fully paid in advance before the respective license may be issued.

I. Nonrefundable. All license fees, including late payment fees, are nonrefundable.

SECTION X – TRANSACTION

A. Availability. The Administrator shall ensure that a sufficient amount of numbered metallic plates and self-adhesive labels are available for issue to agents.

B. Application Forms. In the licensing process, the Administrator or an agent may:

1. develop and impose an application form;
2. require evidence of identity;

3. require evidence of agency, if a non-owner applicant should apply for a license on behalf of an owner; *and*
4. require an owner to provide other reasonable information on the application.

C. Payment. The license fees shall be remitted by the owner either to the Administrator, to the agent in the township where the owner resides, or to another agent designated by the Administrator.

D. Rejected Payment. Any payment of license fees that becomes rejected may be subject to the County's Bad Checks Ordinance.

E. Remittance. Each agent shall promptly remit any collected license fees to the Administrator, which shall be by the end of the next business day to the extent that the amount that has been collected and not deposited should exceed \$500.00.

F. Accounting. Any license fees remitted to the Administrator shall be accounted for and deposited into the General Fund no later than the then-next business day.

SECTION XI – REPEAL OF PRIOR LAW

A. Repeal. Ordinance 2023-01-17-A is hereby repealed in its entirety.

B. Continuance.

1. To the extent that the provisions contained in this ordinance substantially restate the provisions of a prior ordinance or resolution, the provisions shall not be deemed a new enactment of the original provisions, but rather shall be deemed to be the continuation of the original provisions.
2. The express or implied repeal or amendment by this ordinance of any other ordinance or part thereof does not affect any rights or liabilities accrued, penalties incurred, authorizations granted, or proceedings begun prior to the effective date of this ordinance. Those rights, liabilities, authorizations, and proceedings are continued, and penalties shall be imposed and enforced under the repealed or amended ordinance as if this ordinance had not been adopted.
3. All rules and regulations adopted under any continued version of this ordinance shall remain in full force and effect except as specifically provided otherwise.

C. Revival Prohibited. The express or implied repeal or amendment by this ordinance of any other ordinance or resolution or part thereof shall not be construed to revive any former ordinance, resolution, section, clause, or provision.

SECTION XII – MISCELLANEOUS

A. References.

1. Except where a specific version or edition is given, reference to another section of this ordinance or to another law, document, fund, department, board, program, public servant, or public office, shall extend and apply to the same, as may be subsequently amended, revised, recodified, renamed, reappointed, or renumbered from time to time.
2. Reference in this ordinance to a law, document, fund, department, board, program, public servant, or public office, either generally or by title, without reference to another jurisdiction, shall be construed as though it were preceded or followed, as appropriate, by the words "(of) LaGrange County (Indiana)."
3. Should a provision of this ordinance require any action to be performed which, by law, an agent or deputy may do instead of the principal, the requirement is satisfied by the performance of the action by the authorized agent or deputy.

- B. Claims Barred. This ordinance is intended only to improve the internal management of the County. Notwithstanding anything in this ordinance to the contrary, nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to: (i) create any new legal duty, right, benefit, or guarantee, whether substantive or procedural, enforceable against the County; nor, (ii) waive or diminish any existing right, protection, immunity, defense, or limitation on liability that may apply to the County or any of its elected or appointed officials, employees, agents, or representatives under any law or regulation.
- C. Conflicts. No part of this ordinance shall be construed to conflict with any applicable local, state, or federal law, and all reasonable efforts should be made to harmonize the same.
- D. Severability. Should any section or part thereof of this ordinance be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the decision shall not affect the validity of this ordinance as a whole, nor any other portion thereof, and for this purpose the provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.
- E. Promulgation. The Auditor is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed to take all action necessary or proper to authenticate, record, publish, promulgate, and/or otherwise make this ordinance effective.
- F. Codification. To the extent a substantive change in meaning does not result, the codifier of ordinances may omit the Name, Recitals, Repeals, Miscellaneous, and Adoption sections of this ordinance from the official code, may renumber, reorder, or reorganize any section of this ordinance, may stipulate definitions, and may alter references to and within this ordinance as appropriate.
- G. Effective Date. This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the Ordinance. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to waive the requirement for second reading. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - HORSE DRAWN VEHICLE LICENSING

Mr. Kurt Bachman, County Attorney, presented a memorandum of understanding Horse-Drawn Vehicle Licensing between LaGrange County and LCUC, Inc. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the Memorandum. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to have the Auditor notify the LaGrange County Trustee by letter notifying them of the termination. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to have Auditor Kathryn Hopper send letters of termination of the agreement to sell horse drawn vehicle plates to the Township Trustees. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

AGREEMENT WITH GOVOLUTION FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

Mrs. Connie Brower, County Treasurer, presented an agreement between LaGrange County and Govolution, LLC (Deluxe) for credit card payments. The system will accept payments at the compost site as well as for the County Treasurer. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the agreement with Govolution and also approve the addendum to the agreement, and to authorize the president to sign. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

ARK ANIMAL RESCUE & ADOPTION, INC. – AMENDMENT TO CONTRACT

Mr. Kurt Bachman, County Attorney, presented an amendment to the contract between the Board of Commissioners of the County of LaGrange and ARK Animal Rescue & Adoption, Inc. The amendment extends the current contract until December 31, 2026 and is for quarterly payments in the amount of \$27,500. Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to approve the amendment and authorize the President to sign the amendment. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

TEEN COURT SERVICES AGREEMENT

Mrs. Kathryn Hopper, County Auditor, presented an Agreement for Teen Court Services with Joanne Gillespie for 2026 for consideration. The agreement will run from January 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the agreement and to authorize the president to sign the agreement. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mrs. Gillespie gave a presentation and reported on the activities of the Teen Court.

HIGHWAY – REQUEST TO PURCHASE TRUCK

Mr. Aaron Fugate, Highway Supervisor, requested permission to purchase a new 2026 Chevrolet 2500 pickup. He presented a quote from Kelley Automotive Group in the amount of \$66,946.00, which includes a snowplow and the installation. Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to approve the purchase. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

DRAINAGE PROJECTS

Mrs. Tharon Morgan, County Engineer, would like to do two drainage projects. One project is at Westler Lake. The lowest quote received is from Stoney Acres Farm, LLC in the amount of \$8,885. The other project is at east 600 South and 5900 East. The lowest quote received is from Stoney Acres Farm, LLC in the amount of \$8,620. The Highway department would pay for the portion that is in the right of way, and the Surveyor and landowner would split the remaining cost. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

PARK – PERMISSION TO PURCHASE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Mrs. Mary Franke, Park Director, requested permission to purchase new playground equipment for Delt Church Park. She presented a quote from Miracle Recreation Equipment Co., in the amount of \$6,316.38. Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to approve the purchase. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

PARK –

Mrs. Mary Franke, Park Director, requested permission to spend up to \$20,000 for limestone for Delt Church Park and Maple Wood Park. Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to approve the purchase. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

LOCAL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE BOARD APPOINTMENT

Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to appoint Thomas Tribbett to the Local Alcoholic Beverage Board. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

LAGRANGE COUNTY HEALTH BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to appoint Amanda Sherck and David Merrifield to the LaGrange County Board of Health. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

PLAN COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to appoint Ethan Prough to the Plan Commission. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS APPOINTMENT

Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to appoint Nicholas Wilson to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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LAGRANGE COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to appoint Robert Bond, Peter Cook, Jonas Miller, and Milan Yoder, to the LaGrange County Redevelopment Commission. Mr. Terry Martin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

CONVENTION, RECREATION & VISITOR INDUSTRY COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to appoint Phil Heyerly and Ryan Riegsecker to the Convention, Recreation and Visitor Industry Commission. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT BOARD OF APPEALS APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to appoint Jennifer Beechy and Debra Notestine to the Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

LAGRANGE COUNTY CITIZEN DRAINAGE BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to appoint Glen Bontrager and Terry Bontrager to the LaGrange County Citizen Drainage Board. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

OFFICIAL BONDS

Mrs. Kathryn Hopper, County Auditor, presented 2026 individual bonds for the Treasurer and Clerk of Courts, and the blanket bond for approval. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHERS

Mrs. Kathryn Hopper, County Auditor, presented the Accounts Payable Vouchers. Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the vouchers. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

MINUTES

Mr. Peter Cook made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2025 regular session. Mr. Kevin Myers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

LaGrange County Code Enforcement – 2025 year-end report

D & B Environmental Consulting, LLC – Permit Level and Source Determination Application

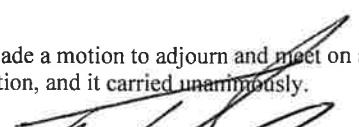
Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Receipt of Air Permit Application, Nishikawa Cooper LLC,
324 Morrow St, Topeka, Indiana, Permit Number 087-9873-00031

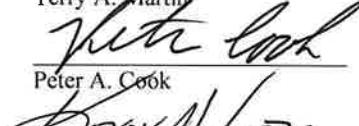
Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Notice of Public Comment, Spectrum Finishing LTD,
LaGrange County, Significant Source Modification No: 087-49664-00060

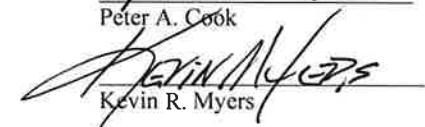
Indiana Department of Environmental Management – Notice of Public Comment, EKO Powder Coating Inc,
LaGrange County, Minor Source Operation Permit No: M087-49857-00744

ADJOURNMENT

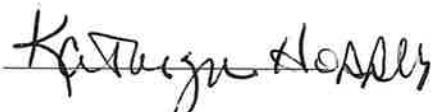
There being nothing further to come before the Board at this time, Mr. Kevin Myers made a motion to adjourn and meet on any subsequent day necessary to carry on the business of the Board. Mr. Peter Cook seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.


Terry A. Martin


Peter A. Cook


Kevin R. Myers

ATTEST:


Kathryn Hopper

DECEMBER 29, 2025

Kathryn Hopper
LaGrange County Auditor

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