

# Decatur County Council Meeting

Date: 2025-12-16 09:00

Location: Room 106

Attendees: Danny Peters, Bill Metz, Rick Nobbe, Ashley Hungate, Deanna Burkart, Ernie Gauck and Kenny Hooten

## Opening Remarks

- President Danny Peters called the meeting to order for the December session of the County Council.
- Pledge of Allegiance led by Bill Metz.
- Approval of Minutes:
  - Minutes were emailed prior to the meeting.
  - No additions or corrections noted.
  - Motion to approve the November 18th minutes made by Rick Nobbe, seconded by Bill Metz. Motion passes 6-0.

## Aquatic Center / Pool Project

- **Project Status & Funding Request:** Commissioner Gabe Nobbe presented an update on the aquatic center project, which has an estimated cost of \$4 million and a budget of \$4.5 million to cover contingencies. The project faces a \$2 million shortfall, with approximately \$2.5 million raised so far (including foundation funds, grants, and private donations). A request was made for the county to approve up to \$2 million to allow the project to proceed.
- **Financial Review & Loan Rates:** The commissioners are on board with moving forward but want to involve Reuben Cummings, an advisor, to review the project's financials, especially concerning financial changes expected in 2027. Recent information indicates loan rates are around 3.98%, lower than the previously anticipated 5.5% to 6%.
- **Project Details & Capacity:** The project includes a four-flume slide, splash pad, new pump house, zero-entry access, a UV sterilization system, and a pool liner with a 15-20 year lifespan. There are concerns about reaching capacity during tournament times, as the new sports complex is expected to draw 350,000-400,000 visitors. The Park and Rec board confirmed they can cover maintenance costs, and the site allows for future expansion to the south and east.
- **Current Work:** Deconstruction is underway at the site, which was a necessary step regardless of the final plan.

## Parks Department & Sports Complex

- **Request for New Food and Beverage Coordinator Position:** A request was made for a new part-time Food and Beverage Coordinator (28 hours/week at \$19/hour) for the sports complex, with an estimated annual cost just under \$30,000. The position would be funded by the complex's revenue, not taxes, and would manage concessions, allowing the recreation coordinator to focus on programming. The complex had a net profit of over \$112,000 this year, with concessions contributing nearly \$60,000. Hiring is planned for early to mid-February.
- **Incentive Proposal for Hotel Bookings:** Erica Gunn proposed a \$7,000 incentive for the Parks and Rec Department to increase Friday and Saturday night hotel bookings for ball diamond tournaments. The goal is to raise hotel stays from the current 25% of room nights. The funds would come from the tourism budget. A formal written proposal with specific metrics is requested for the January meeting.
- **Budget Additional:** Two additional appropriations for the Parks Department were reviewed: \$47,000 for complex concessions and \$111,319.92 for building and structure. It was confirmed the funds are

available in the department's budget. Kenny Hooten made the motion to approve both additional, Bill Metz seconded. Motion passes 6-0.

### **Personnel, Salary, and Staffing**

- **New Personnel and Salary Committee Policy:** A new policy was reviewed to create a personnel and salary committee. This committee will review all requests for new positions, salary changes, and new hires, requiring one month's notice and specific documentation. The goal is to improve consistency and enable better-informed decisions.
- **Salary Ordinance Update:** A new salary ordinance format was reviewed, which lists positions and job descriptions instead of individual names to simplify future changes. It was established that new employees will start at the base rate from 2025. Ashley Hungate made the motion to approve with an addition of adding base rates, Deanna Burkart seconded. Motion passes 6-0.
- **Sheriff's Staffing Query:** The Sheriff requested clarification on the pay rate for a new hire approved for next year, asking if they should be paid at the 2025 or 2026 base rate. The decision was delayed, as salary reviews are planned later in the year. The Sheriff anticipates hiring in mid-February.

### **Funding, Budget, and Financial Reports**

- **Grant Proposal Approval:** A motion to approve a grant proposal presented by Jeramiah McAdams was made by Deanna Burkart, seconded by Ashley Hungate. Motion passes 6-0. The grant, submitted through the Decatur County Community Action Coalition, includes \$7,000 for court services equipment and \$800 for the "Operation Parent" program.
- **Sheriff's Commissary Report:** The quarterly commissary report for July-September was submitted, showing a balance of \$116,000 (not including a pending \$40,000 expenditure). New state rules now require quarterly reports on a new state-approved form.
- **Digital Traffic Sign Service Renewal:** A motion was made by Kenny Hooten to renew the service for four digital traffic signs for three years at a cost of \$9,690. Ernie Gauck seconded. Motion carries 6-0. The council agreed to pay the balance not covered by Emergency Management's budget using interest earned from ARPA funds.
- **Clarksburg Rat Eradication Funding:** A transfer of \$700 from the commissioner's fairgrounds account was requested for supplies to address the Clarksburg rat problem. The total eradication cost is estimated at \$5,000-\$7,000, which the county must cover. A dedicated budget line item for pest control may be considered in the future.
- **End-of-Year Budget Transfers:** A motion for several end-of-year budget transfers was made by Bill Metz, seconded by Ashley Hungate. Motion passes 6-0.

### **Appointments and Officer Elections**

- **Board Appointments** Alcohol Beverage Commission: Rheadawn Metz; Council Attorney: Chris Tebbe; Park and Rec: Russel Wilson; PTABOA: Jennifer Johnson; Solid Waste: Kenny Hooten; SIRPC: Rick Nobbe; Redevelopment Commission: Danny Peters and Matt Miller. Kenny Hooten made a motion to approve all appointments, Ernie Gauck seconded. Motion passes 6-0.
- **Election of 2026 Council Officers:** Kenny Hooten made the motion to appoint Danny Peters as the 2026 Council President, Ashley Hungate seconded. Motion passes 6-0. Danny Peters made the motion to appoint Bill Metz as the 2026 Council Vice President, Ashley Hungate seconded. Motion passes 6-0.

## County and Community Updates

- **Economic Development:** Shepherd Boy Farms is expanding into the American Lifts Building, representing a \$50 million investment and 50 new jobs.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** The first steering committee meeting was held. Public focus groups are planned for mid-January.
- **Grant Award:** Decatur County was awarded \$491,384 from one of its two CCMG applications.
- **Library Director:** The new director of the Decatur County Public Library, Brenda Campbell, introduced herself.
- **Upcoming Events:** Several events were announced, including a "Leaders and Lagers" networking event, the Ag Day Breakfast (Feb. 7th, 2026), a legislative update (Feb. 20th, 2026), and a legislative conference (Jan. 27th-28th).

With nothing else to come before the Council, Kenny Hooten made a motion to adjourn, and Rick Nobbe seconded the motion. Council's regular meeting is adjourned.

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Danny Peters, President

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_