

## Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Present:** Danny Peters, Bill Metz, Ashley Hungate, Deanna Burkart, Ernie Gauck and Kenny Hooten

President Peters welcomed everyone to the Council's July 16<sup>th</sup> meeting; he then asked Eric Blodgett to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

(Meeting minutes and agendas are emailed to Council members the Friday before their Tuesday meeting)

Mr Peters had one correction for the June 18<sup>th</sup> minutes: the 6 – 0 vote approving May's meeting minutes should state 4 – 0 since there were only 5 Council members present. Mrs Hungate made a motion to approve the minutes with the change and Mr Metz seconded the motion.

**Michelle Guidace – Life Time Resources/Catch A Ride** – presented a funding request of \$10,000 for 2025. The federal grants Life Time applies for require 100% match monies and Ms Guidace stated local sources of funding is limited to the United Fund, the City of Greensburg and Decatur County. Mr Peters asked if there are enough drivers to drive the routes; Ms Guidace said there are always 2 drivers for Decatur County which may short other counties. Catch A Ride has 2 routes starting in Decatur County plus 6 routes that run through our county. They will continue to run some buses in Decatur County due to the number transported to jobs-industry. The cost for replacement buses increased to \$116,000, up from \$56,000 requiring a \$23-24,000 match, while replacing a minivan only \$13-14,000 match is required. Ms Guidace said they did receive a marketing grant from Bathany Legacy Foundation in Jefferson County to help with marketing materials to better advertise Catch A Ride's services.

**Patrick Graue, President of the Board of Directors for the Champions of Youth**, presented their request of \$10,700 for funding in 2025. Champions of Youth offer a community based and school based '1 on 1' mentoring program for school age, at-risk youth where they are matched with an adult or a school-aged student because of their current environment or situation. In 2023, Champions served 262 youth, matched 26 new kids with their core program having 74 matches. There were 6,773 contacts with families, schools, mentors and counselors and Mr Graue believes Champions has a proven success in the last 44 years in the community.

**Sarah Fry, Greensburg Adult Center Director**, presented her request of \$9,900 for funding in 2025. The Center's immediate need is for a copier to continue printing 440 newsletters to send out each month.

**Area Plan Director Krista Duvall** told Council she receives phone call every week reporting blighted properties. She introduced (via zoom) **Marie Shepherd, Executive Director for the Department of Code Enforcement for Jennings County Area Plan Commission**. Ms Shepherd told Council members there was about \$50,000 in the "**Fines and Fees**" (Unsafe Building non-reverting fund) and now there is over \$300,000 in that fund. An Unsafe Building Fund is limited by statute, so the Fines and Fees Fund better serves the purpose. The Area Plan goes through the Courts, putting/adding clean-up fees as a lien on property taxes; once those fees are collected, they go into the Fines and Fees Fund. Jennings County Area Plan added levels of violations to improve their **Unsafe Building Ordinance** plus started enforcing payment of those fines. The Area Plan initiates the process; law enforcement may go with the AP to/on the property. The Judge sets 1 day a month for those Hearings and they are seeing progress in reducing the blighted properties over the last 8 years. The Jennings County Commissioners adopted ordinances for the Area Plan Commission which required several public hearings, then their County Council approved using monies from their Rainy Day Fund to 'start up' the Fines and Fees fund. Washington Township Trustee Beverly Rivera spoke in support of Ms Duvall's request for funding to clean up blighted properties. She has spoken to some property owners at Lake McCoy, personal visits to properties and suggested doing steps including fines to give folks a chance to show they're willing to clean up their property and keep it cleaned up. Ms Duvall said Building Inspector Kenny Buening sends

letters to property owners who need to clean-up/remove trash, old vehicles, etc and maybe 50% of those receiving letters do clean up the property while others ignore him/the letters. She would like for the small towns to 'come back' and attract people to want to live there. She put together a flow-chart which will take up to a year to get this program going and tweaking existing ordinances which are enforceable; she is hoping for \$50,000 in her budget in 2025. Burney resident Patty Tatman told Council she has been fighting for 5 years with the Commissioners and things are out of control. She is frustrated that just a few ruins it for those who do take pride in keeping their properties looking nice.

Mrs Hungate moved to approve the transfers of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter budgeted health insurance premiums from each department's budget to the Non-reverting Health Insurance Fund and also the County's 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter MOU portion for Communications and IT. Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Mr Metz made a motion to approve the \$540.18 request for additional monies in the Statewide 911 Fund to the dispatchers' overtime appropriation – 1222.13200.000.0320. Mrs Hungate seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0. The additional money was received from a VSET Grant for the Statewide 911 Fund. Mr Hooten moved to approve the \$1,098 request for additional monies in the Countywide 911 Fund – 4930.36500.000.0911 -- to purchase 2 standard refrigerators for the Dispatch Department. Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Economic Development Commission Director Bryan Robbins invited Council members to the EDC's Annual Meeting on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 to 1:00 pm, includes free lunch. He continues working with an interested party looking to expand in focusing on childcare.

**The next Council meeting will be August 20<sup>th</sup> , 2024 at 9:00 am at the Courthouse, Room 106. The 2025 Budget Workshop will begin immediately following their regular meeting.**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Danny Peters, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

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