

# Decatur County Council Meeting

Date: 2025-11-18 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 November session of the County Council.
- Pledge of Allegiance led by Don Schilling.
- Approval of Minutes:
  - Minutes were emailed prior to the meeting.
  - No additions or corrections noted.
  - Motion to approve the October 21st minutes made by Bill Metz, seconded by Kenny Hooten. Motion passes 6-0.

## Request for Juvenile Fee Payment

- Jeramiah McAdams from Court Services requested approval to pay off outstanding juvenile fees from before 2023.
- The total amount of outstanding fees is \$790.
- The payment would be made from the Circuit Court's existing juvenile fund, as approved by Judge Day.
- This action would bring the account balance to zero and allow for a fresh start on fee collection.
- **Conclusion:** A motion was made by Ashley Hungate, seconded by Deanna Burkart to approve the request. The motion passes 6-0.

## Sheriff's Department Updates

- **Patrol Rifle Purchase:**
  - The department plans to purchase new patrol rifles to standardize equipment for all deputies.
  - The total cost is \$40,300, which will be paid from the commissary fund. The current commissary balance is over \$112,000.
  - The new rifles will be SIG MCX models, a modern, piston-driven platform. The purchase includes optic sights and accounts for trade-ins.
  - **Conclusion:** A motion was made by Bill Metz, seconded by Rick Nobbe to approve the purchase. The motion passes 6-0.
- **Pension and Benefits Report:**
  - As required by Senate Bill 144, the Sheriff reported on the pension and benefits credit.
  - Last year, \$152,120 was paid out in benefits.
  - The current balance is \$5,737,704.
  - The fund is managed by Messer, Rust and Burkert Advisors and is performing well.

## Discussion on Employee Pay and Salary Ordinance

- **Auditor's Request for Part-Time Employee Pay Rate:**
  - Auditor Christy Smiley requested a higher pay rate for a full-time employee moving to a part-time role for personal reasons (reducing hours from 35 to 29 per week).
  - The requested pay is \$22 per hour, higher than the standard \$18 part-time rate, due to the employee's experience and knowledge.

- This change saves the county money on salary (over \$10,000 annually), insurance, and PERF contributions, and avoids the need to hire and train a new full-time person.
- **Conclusion:** A motion was made by Kenny Hooten and seconded by Ashley Hungate to approve the \$22 per hour rate for this part-time position. The motion was put to a hand vote with Ashley Hungate, Rick Nobbe, Bill Metz, Deanna Burkart and Kenny Hooten voting yes; Ernie Gauck voting no. Motion passes 5-1.
- **Salary Ordinance Policy Review:**
  - A discussion was initiated to revisit a previous vote concerning the Park Director and the salary ordinance.
  - The main conflict is the policy stating employees hired after July 1st are not eligible for a pay increase, versus a situation where an employee makes more than their superior.
  - One speaker expressed regret over their previous vote, believing it was inconsistent with past practices.
  - It was clarified that the 3% pay increase is a recommendation from the salary committee, not a fixed part of the salary ordinance.
  - A suggestion was made to amend the policy to exclude department heads from the July 1st rule, allowing their situations to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
  - **Conclusion:** The council agreed to review the ordinance's wording and discuss it at the next meeting.

## Housing and Development

- **Housing Needs Analysis Final Report:**
  - A final report on the housing needs analysis, a collaborative effort between the city, county, and RDCs, was presented.
  - **\*\*Key Findings:\*\***Population growth has stagnated post-2020 due to a lack of housing; the population over 55 has grown by 1,200 in 10 years; the county is a net importer of employees (4,500 daily commuters); housing costs have increased, with 32% of renters being "housing cost burdened"; and the housing stock lacks diversity (83% single-family homes).
  - **\*\*Stakeholder Feedback:\*\***There is a rising demand for varied housing types (townhomes, duplexes) and price points (\$180k-\$350k), a need to address blight, and challenges with permitting and infrastructure.
  - **\*\*Recommended Goals:\*\***Increase housing diversity, address blighted properties, integrate housing with quality-of-life developments, and develop a comprehensive housing strategic plan.

## Reports and Updates

- **RDC Annual Spending Report:**
  - RDC President Don Schilling presented the annual report, stating that excess revenues for the next year will be \$1.7 million.
  - The current account balance is \$5.7 million, with \$600,000 committed to three projects: the Emergency Management Storage Building, the Parks and Rec Baseball Diamond Complex, and the Fairgrounds Community project.
  - Other obligations include payments to the City of Greensburg and debt service on bonds.
- **Solid Waste Project Update:**
  - Solid Waste is planning a permanent site at the old city garage.
  - Architectural drawings are being reviewed, with hopes to start construction by January 1st and be operational by spring.

- The new site will be open three to four days a week, eliminating the need for "Toxaway days" and "shred days," though a tire day will continue.
- **Fairgrounds Fundraiser:**
  - The winter storage event at the fairgrounds on November 1st was a successful fundraiser, collecting \$29,517.
  - Several individuals and groups were thanked for their help.

**Board and Committee Appointments**

- The council reviewed several board appointments.
- Assignments were confirmed for various members to check with individuals about continuing their roles, including Chris Tebbe (lawyer), Russell Wilson, and Jennifer Johnson.
- There was a discussion about the 9-1-1 board, clarifying that some appointments are by position. An update was needed for the volunteer fireman representative.

**Announcements and Recognition**

- Deanna Burkart was congratulated for being elected President of the Indiana County Council Association (ICCA).
- The Ag Day breakfast for 2026 is scheduled for Saturday, February 7th, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. at Next Generation Red Barn.
- The 2026 legislative update for Decatur County will be on Friday, February 20th, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Greensburg City Hall.
- The council meeting schedule for the next year was reviewed, Kenny Hooten made a motion to set for the third Tuesday of every month, Deanna Burkart seconded. Motion passes 6-0.

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

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 Danny Peters, President

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

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