

Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Present: Danny Peters, Bill Metz, Deanna Burkart, Ernie Gauck and Kenny Hooten; Melanie Nobbe via remote/zoom

President Peters opened the October 15th Council meeting by welcoming everyone; he then asked Bill Metz 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 Gauck made a motion to approve the September 17th meeting minutes and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Mr Metz moved to approve the transfers requested by the Circuit Court, Area Plan, Animal Control and the Sheriff’s Department; Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Parks and Recreation Director Teresa Kovacich was asked to reduce their 2024 budget by \$42,000 in order to get their 2025 Budget approved by the **Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF)**. Mr Hooten moved to reduce the Parks and Rec 2024 capital outlays appropriation by \$42,000 and Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Changes made in several employees’ exempt and non-exempt status has caused departments’ respective salary and overtime budgets to be depleted, causing some to be in the negative. Mr Peters asked those department heads to submit transfers and if needed request additional appropriations in November.

Mr Gauck volunteered to replace Mrs Burkart on the County’s Health Insurance Committee.

Animal Control Director Minde Myers told Council members the ACO (Animal Control Officer) quit and she has been covering those duties and she asked for a monthly stipend of \$500 until an ACO is hired. Mr Hooten moved to approve the \$500 monthly stipend for 3 months and Mrs Nobbe seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0. Ms Myers is purchasing flea meds out of **Fund 4007 - Animal Shelter Unrestricted Donations** to sell to the public and will receipt that money back into Fund 4007 per the Report of Collections. Ms Myers said the \$3.00 an hour on-call for the ACO, then if he/she was called in they would be reimbursed with comp time. Mr Peters said she would need to bring that back to the Council once an ACO is hired and that would be added to the Salary Ordinance.

Mr Peters read the Adopted 2025 Budget amounts for the County’s Funds:

FUNDS	ADOPTED BUDGET	HOME RULE FUNDS	ADOPTED BUDGET
Casino/Riverboat	\$60,300	Adult Probation	\$139,412
County General	\$12,698,203	Juvenile Probation	\$5,500
Reassessment	\$248,500	Emergency Plan	\$7,215
EDIT (Local Income Tax)	\$981,000	IT Dept	\$659,083
Public Safety Local Income Tax	\$1,093,334	Special Purpose Jail	\$4,179,344
Health Insurance	\$4,887,200	Clerks Record	\$42,148
Conventions & Visitors Bureau	\$374,765	Perpetuation	
Highway	\$3,125,980	Drug Free	
Local Road & Street	\$1,550,000	Community	\$62,410
Cumulative Bridge	\$1,000,000	County Wide 911	\$960,993
Health Department	\$578,335	County Official	\$10,000

Emergency Telephone System	\$448,870	Training
Parks & Recreation	\$1,033,558	
Recreation (Park Activity)	\$92,000	
Cumulative Capital Development	\$759,950	
TOTAL	\$28,931,995	\$6,066,105

Mr Metz moved to approve the part-time pay to be \$17.00 an hour and Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion passes, 4 – 0.

Mr Hooten made a motion to approve the **2025 County Budgets and tax rates** and Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Motion passes, 4 – 0.

County Clerk Janet Howell asked Council to reconsider approving the “up to \$2,500 stipend for the Clerk” since it wasn’t voted on separately at their September meeting. This stipend was approved in this year’s legislative session, giving Council the option to approve. Council said they had voted no on this request at their last meeting; there were no motions to reconsider today’s request.

Circuit Court Judge Tim Day and Juvenile Probation Officer Jeramiah McAdams told Council members they had applied for and was awarded a \$71,906 grant from the **Indiana Criminal Justice Institute** for a juvenile diversion program for 2025 – 2027. Mr McAdams plans to take the current program person to 21 hours a week and this grant would fund her salary, FICA and any needed supplies. She would reach out to all of the schools in the county, the police and work with **DCS**, making her role the prevention side and he would do the probation. She would work with police and the families to create needed services to help keep juveniles out of the system-jail. Mr McAdams does work with **Centerstone Mental Health** in Greensburg and said they have been fantastic. The juvenile supervisor is great and has a drug education program for students caught with drugs. **Centerstone** is the only certified substance abuse program in our area.

Mrs Burkart made a motion to adopt the **2025 Budget of \$767,794 for Decatur County Solid Waste** and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 4 – 0.

Mr Metz moved to approve ARPA Addendum 36, \$100,000 to New Directions and Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0. New Directions may buy land or try to renovate an existing building for their program.

Mrs Hooten moved to approve ARPA Addendum 37, \$450,000 to Parks and Recreations and Mr Gauck seconded the motion. These funds will partially fund putting turf on 4 ball diamonds at the Sports Complex. Motion passes, 4 – 0.

Mr Burkart made a motion to approve ARPA Addendum 38, \$60,300 for matching funds to the Riverboat Gaming for non-profits and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 4 – 0.

Mr Hooten made a motion to approve ARPA Addendum 39, \$86,166 for 8 EMA sirens and Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Sirens will be installed at Burney, Clarksburg, Letts, Millhousen, Westport, Lake Santee; Shelby County put one in at St Paul, so if St Paul will agree that siren will be placed at New Point.

Mrs Burkart moved to approve the **additional for the \$37,500 Best Friends Grant** and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 4 – 0. The \$37,500 will be dispersed to: \$4,000 for fostering cats; \$3,500 for grant writer; \$15,000 for volunteers and \$15,000 for the adoption coordinator.

Mr Hooten made a motion to approve the **additional for the \$27,000 Rachael Ray Save Them All Grant** and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0. This grant will pay for professional services – TNR Program.

Mr Gauck shared his cost study on replacing the existing swimming pool and believes the \$6,500,000 proposal was way too much. He contacted some contractors he knows through his own excavating and concrete business and these are the numbers. The **\$2,500,000** estimate includes: \$80,000 to demolish

the old pool or he said the County could do the demo since the Highway Department has the backhoes, trucks and equipment; \$40,000 to excavate, back fill with sand and compact that; \$300,000 for pool slide, not included in the \$2.5 million; \$246,000 for a 14,400 square feet concrete pool apron and a 12' x 12' filter house; \$128,000 for stone fill under the concrete deck and a Morton Building for the filter house. The mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fencing would be done by others with an estimate of \$200,000. Mr Gauck added \$100,000 should the County opt to hire a project manager. Mr Gauck believes the pool could be constructed for under **\$3,500,000**. Mrs Burkart told Mr Gauck the deadline is gone so there isn't any **READI** funding available, so the County would only have our money to spend on this. **Parks and Rec Board member Bryn Robbins** said there is a Board meeting on October 21st, he said they could check out Mr Gauck's cost study. Mr Hooten suggested letting the Commissioners make the decision on this.

Mr Robbins told Council the **ARI RDA** has spent 65% of its **READI 1.0** which now allows the region to access **READI 2.0** funding. The Fairgrounds project is a big item for our county so he will be asking for more information to more define the project. He also expects to have the **Economic Development Agreement for the Canaan Energy Project** in the next 2 Council meetings. Emma, Mr Robbins associate, is finishing up work on the "opportunity yearbook" which highlights-showcases various businesses and business sectors in Decatur County. The schools offer "career pathways" and this yearbook would be a good resource for job opportunities. Fifty-five businesses so far have written-submitted brief job descriptions showcasing opportunities; he invited any business wanting to be included in the yearbook to submit a write up of your business – it's free.

Greensburg Decatur County Chamber of Commerce Director Dawn Lowe announced there will be a Leaders to Loggers Meet and Greet this afternoon, 4:00 to 6:00 pm, at the TAP with some of their newest members coming on board. Business continues strong in our area with new members. Tickets are available online for the **Chamber's Annual Dinner on November 22nd**.

Highway Superintendent Todd Houk told Council 3 of the 4 'entry level driver program' employees now have their CDL's. Those 4 hired in at \$19.50 an hour and the 3 now move to the lowest truck driver pay of \$20.14 an hour.

The next Council meeting will be November 19th, 2024 at 9:00 am at the Courthouse, Room 106.

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: _____