

Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, December 21, 2021, Room 106

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

The December 21st, 2021 meeting of the Decatur County Council was called to order by President Peters, who welcomed Ashley Hungate to the Council and asked her to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Mrs Burkart moved to approve the November 16th meeting minutes and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0. Minutes are approved.

Rosie Stier and Linda Westrup, Community Healthcare Clinic, thanked Council members for funding needs of their group and for helping each of the non-profit group.

GIS Coordinator Tim Ortman asked Council members to confirm they are/will fund the 2-year **Pictometry Contract** for 2022 and 2023. The contract will cost \$100,000- \$50,000 due in 2022 and the balance due in 2023. Council agreed the **Pictometry Contract** is approved to be funded in 2022 and 2023.

County Sheriff Dave Durant told Council members he uses the dentistry side of the **Community Healthcare Clinic** for inmates, which is providing big savings for his budget. He asked Council to approve paying his part-time help \$15.00 per hour instead of the normal \$13.50 an hour. Mr Metz said Council agreed to allow the \$15.00 hourly rate as long as the monies are in the budget.

EMA Director Brad Speer also asked to be allowed to pay part-time an hourly rate of \$16.00 for his MPG Grant. Council approved his request.

Communications Director Erika Free asked Council for permission to use monies within her 2021 budget to pay dispatchers a COVID Stipend since her department works 24 hours/7 days a week and were short staffed for part of 2021. A vendor was overpaid in 2020, so there are available funds to pay the stipend. She also asked the **911 Board** and they agreed it is reasonable to allow this one-time stipend pay; which includes IT Network Engineer Josh Tressler. Mrs Free said this will not affect any wages in 2022.

Highway Superintendent Mark Mohr had asked the Commissioners at their meeting yesterday (December 20), to define 'essential employees' as he would like to echo Mrs Free's request to pay a COVID stipend. He too would like to reward employees as they also worked short-staffed and this would help keep spirits high. Mr Mohr also has monies within his 2021 budget to pay the one-time \$2,000 stipend per employee. Mr Metz moved to approve the Amended 144 for the \$2,000 each stipend, for the Highway Department. Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

County Recorder Dottie Robbins has also submitted an Amended 144 to pay her staff and herself a \$4,000 stipend and this will not affect her budget as she will use monies in her **Recorder's Perpetuation Fund**. She asked Council not to 'label' her request as a 'stipend' due to using Perpetuation monies. Council members agreed these requests are definitely an item for the new **Salary Committee** to look at since Council sets salaries. **County Assessor Dorene Greiwe** stated the Salary Committee needs to talk to the Township Trustees as nearly 90% of our county employees fall into the 'class' just under 'Poor'. Mr Hooten believes this is an ongoing issue trying to pay and retain staff when the County only has so much money. Mr Gauck suggested listing the pay as a 'one-time COVID stipend' and not a salary. Mr Hooten moved to approve the Recorder's Amended 144 and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Mr Gauck

re-emphasized this is a one-time stipend and may not be done in the following year and suggested waiting to take a vote until the rest of these requests are heard.

Clerk of the Courts Adina Roberts plans to use her **Clerk's Perpetuation Fund** to pay the stipend and has submitted an Amended 144 for 2022 salaries. Mrs Roberts told Council due to her office being the busiest office in the Courthouse, she doesn't have the option of eliminating a position to use those monies to increase salaries for her employees. Mrs Roberts does have the option of using the Clerk's Perpetuation monies anytime during the year.

County Treasurer Diane Wenning said she doesn't have any discretionary funds to use for the stipend. She also has submitted an Amended 144 for 2022 salaries for the stipend.

Council discussed waiting until 2022 should they approve stipends for all county employees, but once salaries are set for elected officials for the next budget year, those salaries cannot be changed in the same year the salaries are received. The Salary Committee will have a difficult task as their 'study' may require reducing salaries for specific positions- different responsibilities, different salaries, varying job qualifications; so, an employee may earn less in 2023 than in 2022.

Parks and Recreation Interim Superintendent Teresa Kovacich asked Council to amend the **Parks Superintendent's 2022 salary** as the Parks Board has hired her to replace Bob Barker. During the 2022 budget workshop, Council approved the new Superintendent's salary to be \$47,000. Mrs Kovacich is requesting the \$700 raise given to all full-time county employees plus \$145 since her current 'interim' salary is \$47,145. Mr Gauck moved to approve the Amended 144, \$47,845, for Mrs Kovacich's 2022 salary and Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

Mr Hooten moved to allow each Department to pay up to \$2,000 as stipends for 2021 if they have monies in their 2021 budget(s). Departments may transfer monies within their 2021 budgets for this stipend. Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0. The December 24th payroll is still being processed, so Deputy Auditor Christy Smiley will include the stipends once Council approves and departments submitted their paperwork. **Mr Peters** has a motion and a second on the floor (paragraph where Recorder Robbins is asking for bonus out of her Perpetuation Fund). He asked for a vote, motion carries 6 – 0. Council agrees departments may go ahead and pay the stipend in the December 24th payroll and submit transfer requests for the Council to approve on December 28th.

Council agreed to set a special meeting for December 28th at 9:00 am for the specific reason to pay the approved stipends.

Council agreed to continue having their monthly meetings on the **3rd Tuesday** of each month with the exception of January. **Council agreed to change their regular January 18th meeting to January 25th at 9:00 am**

Mr Metz moved to approve the coroner's request for an additional of \$10,000 and Mrs Nobbe seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

Mr Hooten moved to approve the Sheriff's additional request of \$36,000 for the COVID stipend (\$1,000 each). Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

Mr Metz moved to approve awarding the **Town of Westport** \$55,000 of **American Recovery Plan** monies for their stormwater study. Mrs Hungate seconded the motion. Motion carries, 4 – 0. Mrs Burkart and Mr Hooten abstained from voting since both are on the ARPA Committee.

Mr Hooten moved to approve the requests for transfers as presented. Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

Board Appointments: County Redevelopment Commission- Matt Miller reappointed; Jennifer Johnson- Jennifer Johnson reappointed; Alcoholic Beverage Commission- Rheadawn Metz reappointed; Vernon Fork- Ashley Hungate appointed.

Mr Peters asked if Council would like to have an election of officers. Mr Hooten made a motion to leave officers as they are and Mr Gauck seconded that motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

The Council's next meeting will be at 9:00 am on January 25th, in Room 106.

With nothing else to come before the Council, Mr Hooten moved to adjourn and Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

Danny Peters, President

Attest: _____

Date: _____