

Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 21, 2023, Room 106

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

President Peters opened the Council's February 21st meeting and asked Teresa Kovacich 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 Hooten moved to approve the January 17th meeting minutes and the January 24th Executive Session minutes; Mrs Nobbe seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0.

Sheriff Bill Meyerrose has submitted two requests for additional funding- \$110,000: \$53,000 base pay plus \$10,000 for rank pay for the Chief Deputy's position plus benefits. The previous administration did not have a Chief Deputy and Sheriff Meyerrose has hired Eric Blodgett as his Chief Deputy. Council agreed the Sheriff should find monies within his budget for the Chief Deputy's base pay. Sheriff Meyerrose stated he is struggling with the Commissary Fund, so maybe later this year he could use that for salaries. Mr Metz moved to approve the \$10,000 additional for the requested rank pay. Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0. The Sheriff's second request is for the \$15,200 received for a vehicle taken to auction, be appropriated in the vehicle line item in the Cumulative Capital Development Fund to use for a new car. Council tabled this item until their March meeting.

Parks and Recreation Director Teresa Kovacich spoke to the Commissioners at their February 20th meeting and they did vote to close the swimming pool for the 2023 season. The plan to is move forward with the **READI Grants** and **Fairground Study** in hopes of creating an area- park, fairgrounds, swimming pool, ball diamonds- to 'draw' increase visitation. **Economic Development Commission Director Bryan Robbins** stated it will take infrastructure and investing in the pool and ball park area, the **READI and American Recovery Plan Act** monies are not enough so we need to look at all options. **A Food and Beverage Tax** is one option but it does have designated limits for use. The food and beverage tax has to be approved in 'bill' during a legislative session just to enable Decatur County to assess/charge that tax. Decatur County is not required to enact this tax even if the Legislature would pass the that bill. **Financial Consultant Reuben Cummings** stated the food and beverage tax income would be just an estimate and he is in favor of having a 'sundown' to that tax. The costs of building an aquatic center plus operational costs were discussed as well as a solution to offering a family-oriented activity area for folks to come to enjoy the outdoors. Mrs Kovacich said they have applied for grants from Honda for the aquatic center. Future discussions will include bond costs and public funding as this may potentially take up to two years to be a reality.

Treasurer Diane Wenning reported the County earned almost \$358,000 in January.

Michelle Guidice, Lifetime Resources (Catch-a-Ride) shared some updates with their service: in 2022 the COVID requirements were relaxed so masks were not required to be worn; updated their logo; renegotiated the contracts with Medicaid-Medicare; received a grant for back-up cameras for their vehicles. Ms Guidice believes the number of riders is down in part due to the "tell-a-doc" programs so she's planning to do more marketing. The push toward electric vehicles is a concern she shared due to the high purchase costs.

Mr Hooten moved to adopt the **2023 Salary Ordinance** and Mrs Hungate seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0.

Financial Consultant Reuben Cummings told Council he doesn't like to cut the Special Purpose Jail Tax rates since special legislation was required for Decatur County to even use it; so, any reductions must be

done in .5 increments. Council members shared their thoughts on reducing the **Special Purpose Jail** tax from .65 to .60. Council will continue this discussion at their March 21st meeting. Mr Cummings recommended Council increase the **Cumulative Capital Development** tax rate from .0149 to .0333 and also increase the **Cumulative Bridge** tax rate to .0333 from .0283 since both are outside of the levy.

Highway Superintendent Todd Houk told Council he decided to withdraw the application to the State for the Bridge Maintenance Grants as he would need a \$2,000,000 match for a \$10,000,000 grant which would affect only 12 bridges.

Mr Metz moved to approve the transfer of monies submitted and Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0. A majority of the transfers is for budgeted health insurance monies to the non-reverting health insurance fund, done quarterly.

Mrs Burkart moved to approve the \$42,450 additional in the Cumulative Capital Development fund for the equipment, hardware and software. Mrs Nobbse seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0.

Mrs Hungate moved to approve **ARPA Addendum #13, \$18,920**, for E-911 radios and Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0. This is to appropriate monies reimbursed by the City of Greensburg.

Mr Hooten moved to approve **ARPA Addendum #14, \$305,000**, for ARPA EMA Code Red and Mr Gauck seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0. The Code Red is for 8 tornado sirens in rural areas and will replace Nixle.

Mr Metz moved to approve **ARPA Addendum #15, \$110,000**, for body cams for the Sheriff’s Deputies. Mrs Hungate seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0.

Council signed the **Visitor, Recreation and Tourism’s** oath of office for Zane Paulson, who is their appointment to that Board.

Currently there is \$920,000 of ARPA monies left undesignated and ARPA Committee member Mr Hooten is proud of the Committee’s doing a lot of good with those funds. Decatur County has received 2 payments of \$2,579,387 for a total of \$5,158,774.

Mr Gauck thanked the Technology Department for setting up the zoom so he could participate in today’s meeting.

Council held a second reading of **Ordinance 2023-1**, establishing a Regional Development Authority per Economic Development Commission Director Bryan Robbins. Mr Hooten moved to adopt **Ordinance 2023-1** and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 6 – 0.

The next Council meeting is March 21st, at 9:00 am, in Room 106, in the Courthouse.

With nothing else to come before the Council, Mr Hooten to adjourn and Mrs Hungate seconded the motion. Council’s regular meeting is adjourned.

Danny Peters, President

Attest: _____

Date: _____