

Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 15, 2019, Room 106

Present: Ernie Gauck, Danny Peters, Larry Meyer, Bill Metz, Deanna Burkart and Kenny Hooten

Deanna Burkart, Council's newest member, led the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.

Council members took a few minutes to review the meeting minutes for December 18th. Mr Metz moved to approve the minutes, Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

County Sheriff David Durant requested Council's permission to retain a deputy as legal counsel for purposes such as 'hire-fire' an employee- those purposes specific to law enforcement. Sheriff Durant would pay the \$175 per hour fees out of the Commissary Fund. Mr Metz moved to allow the Sheriff to use Commissary Funds to retain a deputy as legal counsel. Mr Meyer seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

Mr Metz asked Sheriff Durant about using the old jail for a Juvenile Center once the new jail is in service. Sheriff Durant said that is the County Commissioners' decision. He believes the County is at a tipping point whether to upgrade/maintain the jail or let it go. The new jail holds up to five juveniles and Bartholomew County, which is thirty minutes away does have a juvenile center. Sheriff Durant invited Council members to visit the current jail to see what condition it's in. Mr Metz believes it's easier to rehabilitate a juvenile over an adult. There are presently 15 – 20 juveniles in the system.

Sheriff Durant presented his "**State of the Sheriff's Office**" report and advised he is not asking for anything today; just presenting information because need sometimes turns into crisis management. He believes things at the jail happened slowly- over time and folks weren't seeing the bigger picture- what he calls 'erosion'. Sheriff Durant cited his department of 14 officers covers 370 square miles in the county plus various additional duties including being responsible for 1200 kids in four school buildings. He then offered a '**glance at 2019**', moving forward: goals include disrupting criminal activity and partnering with faith-based programs to rehabilitate convicted offenders; he's received requests from several elected officials to strengthen security in the Courthouse; foster a high-performing team including increased pay and retirement benefits; optimize agency funding including grant writing/applying for available grants; funding when payout to separated employee prevents immediately hiring replacement; new shift staffing and at some point bring SROs back to investigate, making a 20-man department doing 10 hour shifts.

Erin Thomas, Director of Catch A Ride Program, presented an update on this program supported by six counties including Decatur County. The number of trips per month, per year was 980 on average, which is down some from the previous year. There are 28 clients using **Catch A Ride** who work at **Developmental Services Inc.** Experiencing cuts in funding, **Catch A Ride (Life Time Resources)** is reaching out to **Decatur County Memorial Hospital, Rural Works and Margaret Mary Health (Batesville)** hoping to partner/serve transportation needs for those clients.

Philip Deiwert, Director of Visitors Recreation and Tourism, presented two requests for additional monies: increasing the director's salary from \$38,000 to \$42,000 and adding three standing-line grants, each for \$12,000, going to **Main Street Greensburg, Decatur County Fair Board and Decatur County Parks Department.** These three grants will be reviewed annually insuring monies are spent on what was stated in grant applications. The requests for additional monies will be legally advertised and Council members will act on at their February 19th meeting. Mr Gauck asked why the **Decatur County Visitors and Recreation** hasn't been eliminated as promised. Mr Deiwert cited the benefits to keeping the **DCVR** since it is a **501C3** (not for profit) entity such as applying for grants which Tourism can't do. A concern of the Council is monies collected through the **Innkeepers' Tax** aren't effectively being used to bring people to Decatur County. Ms Burkart believes an event center to accommodate larger activities would be one avenue in bringing visitors to our community.

Mr Peters moved to approve the transfer of insurance monies, in Cumulative Capital Development Fund, for the August 25th hail damage: Highway (43450) \$83,533.13; Health (43101) \$20,744.55 and Parks (43800) \$20,594.97 and Courthouse (43000) \$740. Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

Mr Metz moved to approve transfer of quarterly health insurance monies, from each department, to the Non-Reverting Health Insurance Fund and to approve the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarterly transfers to be done by the Auditor's office, without bringing before the Council. Ms Burkart seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

At the Council's May meeting in 2018, **Bryan Robbins, Executive Director for EDC and Hunter Austin, Manager of NCT Technologies Group** had submitted a **State of Benefits-1/Personal Property** requesting a five-year abatement. At that time Council members agreed to approve the request, but only for four years due to the SB-1/PP not being submitted in a timely manner. The abatement would be at 80% for the 2018 pay 2019 tax year. The Resolution establishing this abatement was emailed to the Auditor's office on January 7, 2019 for the Council to act on at this meeting. Mr Hooten moved to approve **Decatur County Council's Resolution 2019-1** approving personal property abatement to **NCT Technologies Group** for four years, beginning at 80% for 2018 pay 2019 and ending at 20% for 2021 pay 2022. Mr Peters seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0.

Mr Gauck asked Council members if they had thought about his suggestion for a 'wall of fame' plaque to honor any elected official, present or past, nominated by the Council; starting with Tom Carroll. Members agreed it is something they want to do. This plaque would be in control of the Council; so each January members would nominate/select who to honor with a name plate placed on the plaque.

Ms Burkart agreed to take Mr Peters' seat on the **EMA Board** for 2019 and to replace James Tomson on the **Economic Development Commission** .

Council decided to tour the jail on January 23rd at 10:00 am and asked the Auditor to send out a reminder on it.

Council shared opinions on re-using the Jail PODS once the new jail is at capacity.

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

The Council's next meeting is February 19th, 2019 at 9:00 am.

