

## Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, June 20th, 2023, Room 106

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

President Peters opened the June 20<sup>th</sup> Council meeting by welcoming everyone and asked Randy Frye 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 Peters asked to make a correction to the May 16<sup>th</sup> minutes by correcting Mr Hungate to Mrs Hungate. Mrs Hungate made a motion to approve the May 16<sup>th</sup> minutes with the correction and Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

**Mr Frye, State Representative- District 67**, told Council members **House Enrolled Act 1454** includes a local option tax which Council may adopt to add funding to the **County's Volunteer Fire Departments**. VFDs save the State about four billion dollars a year. VFDs hold a lot of fundraising events in an effort to pay for equipment, gear and liability insurance for the fire house and vehicles since the **Township Trustees** offer minimal funding (i.e., \$1000 per year). **HEA 1454** becomes effective July 1, 2023 and includes ten million dollars to help offset VFD operating costs. Mr Frye emphasized the importance of the VFD fire fighters because of their proximity to rural areas reducing response time which equals survivability. Volunteer fireman are required to meet training standards before 'going on a call/run'. HEA 1454 also includes six million dollars to fund training. This local option tax is specific for fire protection and Mr Frye asked Council members to save the VFDs. Council may adopt a tax rate from .01% to .05% per assessed values less farm ground: .01% would raise \$750,000 a year and .05% would be \$4,000,000. Council does budget \$86,000 which is annually divided between **8 VFDs, in the Public Safety Fund**. Council will discuss this at budget time as it be effective January 1, 2024.

**Linda Westrup, President of the Board of Directors for Community Healthcare Clinic of Decatur County and Clinical Director/Nurse Practitioner Emily Verseman**, asked Council members for their continued financial support by requesting \$22,500 of the County's share of the **Riverboat Shared Gaming**, in 2024. The Community Healthcare Clinic offers medical and dental services to low-income residents to help keep residents healthy; it also provides dental services to the Detention Center's inmates. The financial support from the **United Fund** and the Council are the main sources of income for the Clinic. Mr Peters reminded her Council only approved 75% of requests submitted by non-profits due to the uncertainty of the amount the County receives each year.

**Kelli Jette, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Southeastern Indiana**, presented her 2024 funding request to the Council in the amount of \$10,000. The **CACSEI** has 3 locations- Dillsboro, Greensburg and Madison- which are open 365 days a year, 24/7- served 19 counties in 2022. The CAC launched education programs for schools (K-12) and communities across the region to help recognize cases in need of reporting. Currently there are 2 trained staffers for the **School Education Prevention Program** which limits how many schools they can present this program to.

**Clerk of the Courts Janet Howell** told Council members per statute the **Clerk** is entitled to appoint one *First Deputy or Chief Deputy* without the approval of the Board of Commissioners. The **Election Deputy's** job is not a daily, 8 am to 4 pm job and she needs to retain someone once they are trained. Mrs Howell reiterated she expects to reduce paying **MicroVote** for some election services as Election Deputy Patricia Louagie assumes/has learned to perform those tasks. Mrs Howell has over \$134,000 in the **Clerk's Record Perpetuation Fund** which she may use to pay employees for the preservation of records in her office. She is asking to annual pay \$4,000 to Mrs Louagie for tasks related to Elections. Mr Hooten made a motion to use Perpetuation Funds to permanently pay Mrs Louagie \$4,000 annually as long as she is an employee of the Clerk's Office; Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

**County Prosecutor Nate Harter** is looking to replace Deputy Prosecutor Brian Clark who resigned in order to accept a higher paying position outside of Decatur County. The position has been advertised but so far, no applicants. He would like to take the 3 deputy prosecutors' positions, with salaries of \$86,000,

\$74,000 and \$68,000, to pay each of those \$82,000 while waiting for the salary study by **Waggoner, Irwin and Scheele**, with no additional raises in 2024. (Mr Clark’s salary was the \$86,000) Mr Harter’s 2023 Prosecutor’s Budget is \$781,951 and he will be asking for about \$1,400,000 which includes increasing the number of Deputy Prosecutors to 8 as a moderate approach so as not to overstaff. **Brock Patterson, Counsel and Director of Legislative Services for the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council**, told Council **IPAC** used **Waggoner, Irwin and Scheele’s** study for the **Public Defender Commissions**, laid it over the Prosecutors’ information which shows Decatur County should have 10 attorneys in the **Criminal Law side**. Council has concerns about the big leap to 10 attorneys plus concern of facility office space for these attorneys. Mr Patterson also stated **Senate Enrolled Act 417** sets up a new local option tax specifically as revenue for Prosecutors and there’s no sharing with the municipalities. Mr Harter agreed to leave the \$82,000 for 3 Deputy Prosecutor positions for the 2024 Budgets since that is a raise for the current two. Auditor Chadwell requested an amended 144 for the change in these 2023 salaries. Mr Hooten moved to approve the 3 positions at \$82,000 each to the end of 2023 and not carry into 2024 until Council reviews the 2024 budgets. Mrs Hungate seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

**County Treasurer Diane Wenning** reported the *Spring Tax Settlement* disbursements totaled \$27,812,594.79. County monies as well as the American Recovery Plan Act funds have interest earned of \$416,442.47 so far this year. Courtesy Letters have been sent out reminding taxpayers who owe delinquent taxes as well as those eligible for the 2023 Tax Sale, scheduled for September 22.

Mr Metz made a motion to approve three departments’ requests to transfer monies and Mrs Nobbe seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Mr Metz moved to approve the \$250,000 additional appropriation in the **EDIT** for the water line construction to the new Highway Department and Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Mr Hooten made a motion to approve the **Health Department’s** request for additional monies of **\$2,200** for truck maintenance and Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0. (This was presented at the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting but had not been advertised timely)

Mr Hooten moved to appoint **Chris Ramey** to complete Bill Rethlake’s term on the **Greensburg Public Library Board** and Mrs Nobbe seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0.

Mr Metz moved to appoint Megan Lanning Bodden to the Health Board and Mrs Hungate seconded the motion. Motion passes, 5 – 0. (Health Board President James Howell had emailed names of 4 board member who currently serve on the Board and are members from the general public.)

**The next Council meeting is July 18<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 am, in Room 106, in the Courthouse.**

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

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Danny Peters, President

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

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

