

Draft

Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 18, 2016, Room 106

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

President Gauck called the meeting to order

Deputy Sheriff Eric Blodgett led the pledge of allegiance.

Mr Gauck asked Auditor Janet Chadwell to read the September 20th meeting minutes. Mr Owens moved to approve the minutes and Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion carries 6 – 0.

Bryan Robbins, President of the Main Street Greensburg, asked for the Council's justification for 'cutting' the requested \$20,000 in the Commissioners' Budget for **Main Street Greensburg** to only \$1,000 which he stated is a 95% cut which is one-third to one-quarter of their budget. He stated this organization is a City-County venture. The **City of Greensburg EDIT** monies are used to support **Main Street Greensburg**. He asked if there is 2% in the **County's EDIT funds** which would completely fund **Main Street Greensburg**. Mr Gauck answered the Council is hoping the **Visitors, Recreation and Tourism** would help fund **Main Street Greensburg**. **Tourism Director Gary Herbert** said Tourism funds can support any event/project directly related to tourism. Mr Gauck explained county monies are 'tight' and the Council is looking for other avenues to fund the non-profits. Stephanie Kress, **Main Street Greensburg Advocate**, asked Mr Herbert about the \$2,000 cap on grants from the **Visitors, Rec and Tourism Board**. He said they are working to change those caps for certain activities/project. **Greensburg Mayor Dan Manus** he has a problem with the County cutting **Main Street Greensburg** \$19,000 because he believes **Main Street Greensburg** is a joint city-county endeavor to keep downtown Greensburg 'full' of merchants and patrons. Should the City of Greensburg cut **Main Street Greensburg** \$19,000? Currently the City of Greensburg pays **Main Street Greensburg** \$30,000. Resident Charity Wilder asked Council members what their plans are for the future funding for **Main Street Greensburg**. Mr Gauck explained should additional funding become available they would revisit funds for the non-profit organizations. **New Directions Director Rojeanna Pank** asked why a courtesy letter or phone call wasn't sent/made to her informing them of the budget cuts involving their organization because the Council has always given her the same amount of money. She stated she heard the news on the radio. She asked if the Council was trying to hide the budget. Mr Gauck stated they are not trying to hide anything as the Auditor has all of the information which the public only has to request to see. He further stated the County only has so much money, so cuts had to be made and no one spoke up at the "Public Hearing" for the Proposed 2017 Budgets on September 20th. Mr Herbert shared how the City of Greensburg sets 2017 Budgets, then in January the 'non-profits' attend the City Council meeting to apply for funding stating what their goals are in 2017 and what their accomplishments have been. The City Council then decides what funding to award the non-profits. **Greensburg Mayor Dan Manus** said the City uses **EDIT funds** for **Main Street Greensburg** and other non-profits as that is not tax money; therefore it is not budgeted. Local resident Gail Snyder asked if the Council plans to use **EDIT (Economic Development Income Tax)** funds to help fund **County General** and how much in 2017. Mr Gauck answered yes-\$600,000. She also asked the dollar amount the County expects to lose due to tax caps? The **Department of Local Government Finance** estimates the loss to be around \$260,000 for the Decatur County taxing unit which includes **County General, Health Dept, Parks and Rec Dept, Reassessment, Cumulative Capital Development and Cumulative Bridge**. **Government Financial Consultant Kay Schwade** explained how these 'property tax caps' have affected all local government budgets- the difference in 2017 is those budgets have to 'account' (deduct) for the property taxes not charged to collect. Those tax dollars are 'gone'; it's a funding mechanism local governments no longer have; trying to provide the same services with less money. Ms Snyder agreed with Ms Schwade who believes those tax caps will go higher and higher. Ms Schwade encouraged all to talk to their legislators as this is a result of an amendment to our **State Constitution**. Most all of the counties are trying to figure out how to make up this 'lost revenue'.

Decatur County Coroner Doug Banks explained he has a need for additional monies in his budget for autopsies. There isn't any way to plan, budget-wise, year-to-year. As of today, 13 out of 43 calls have required autopsies. He has discussed options with the Auditor's Office who recommended asking the County Commissioners, who have monies in their budget, to help 'cover those costs' this year. Mr Banks wants the Council to understand he knows there isn't 'cash' to request additional funds. He does have some revenue coming for the Coroner's Dept due to our fine facilities which neighboring counties do not have. He is charging those counties \$200 to use our facility- which isn't a money maker, but it covers our costs. Rush County is building a new jail and has visited his facility to get some measurements, etc, for designing/setting up theirs.

Mr Herbert shared **Tourism's** financial reports with the Council. He stated there is a need for a 'place for meetings' such as a 'Meeting Center' which would help 'fill our local hotels- heads in beds'. There is still funds in **Visit Decatur County Inc's** account and Mr Herbert will meet with **VDCI Board** on October 19th to discuss any 'obligations' they still need to pay. In addition to increasing the 'grant levels, there are several projects (updating electric service at Fair Grounds for parking travel trailers/RV's; portable bleachers) which may qualify under State Statute to use those **Inkeepers Tax** funds. Mr Herbert has ordered banners to be displayed on all of **Tourism's** supported projects stating "...this event made possible by the **Decatur County Visitors, Recreation and Tourism...**"

Greensburg, Decatur County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jeff Emsweller told Council members there will be a video (**Cross Point Studios**) to be released early next spring telling the story of Decatur County. Most of the filming was done with a 'drone' and it shows a 'vibrant downtown' which will be downloaded on the **Chamber's** website as well as other websites. Mr Herbert stated **Tourism** supported this project with a \$2,500 donation as did **VDCI** also donated \$2,500. Mr Emsweller stated that **Honda** is their biggest donator; **Decatur County Memorial Hospital** donated \$5,000 and **Economic Development Corporation** also donated \$5,000.

Health Dept Office Manager Carol Beck asked Council members for a possible loan to be paid back over the next few years due to the 'deep cuts' to their 2017 Budgets. The **Health Dept** spent \$314,000 more than revenues in 2014 and 2015. Two part-time nurses and one full time office assistant have been cut from the **2017 Budget**. Ms Beck stated the **Health Dept** may close one day a week to 'catch up on office work', hoping to reduce some costs. The **Board of Health** did raise their 2017 fees, but the amount of money those fees may bring in are not 'real numbers'. Ms Schwade suggested increasing the 'estimated misc revenues'(in **Gateway-DLGF**) to a conservative \$60,000 to \$70,000, make more reductions in the **Health** budget and if you see those revenues are coming in above the estimates, you could do a 'request for additional monies' in 2017. If the **2017 Proposed Health Dept Budget** is submitted without being fully funded, the **DLGF** will reduce/cut it and the **Board of Health** will still need to balance their expenditures with the revenues. **Gilliland-Howe Funeral Home Director Leslie Thackery** asked if the **Health Dept** could be relocated in the **County Courthouse** and sell that office building to reduce overhead. Ms Thackery also questioned the recently adopted \$25 death certificate fee for 2017.

Main Street Greensburg Advocate Stephanie Kress asked the Council why a new non-profit, **Advocates for Children**, was approved for \$10,000 for 2017 while other non-profits' funding in the Commissioners' budget was reduced. Ms Kress asked Council members if they know who this new group is, what services they offer and where they exist. Mr Gauck stated the County Commissioners had included funding for the **CAC** in their 2017 Budget request and a **CAC** spokesperson had attended one of the Council's regular meetings to ask for consideration of funding in the County's 2017 Budgets.

The Highway Superintendent's and Assistant Highway Superintendent's salaries fall below the threshold- \$47,476- cited in the **Department of Labor's Final Overtime Rule, effective 12/1/16**. It would cost less to increase the salaries for these two positions, give them 'exempt status' (doesn't earn comp nor overtime pay) than paying overtime monies. Exempt status entails 'doing the job until it is completed at no additional pay.' Mr Metz moved to increase the two Highway positions due to the **Final Overtime Rule** and Mr Peters seconded the motion. Motion carried 6 – 0.

Mr Gauck thanked Council members for their time and work and he also thanked those attending today's meeting- this is what we'd like to see in August. We try to do the best with the money we have.

Mr Peters moved to adopt the **2017 Budgets** and Mr Meyer seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0 with one absent.

Mr Owens moved to approve **Solid Waste Management/s 2017 Budget** and Mr Hooten seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0, with one absent.

After Council members reviewed several department transfer requests, Mr Meyer moved to approve those requests and Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 - 0.

After being informed by Cynthia Bowen in July, 2016, the **Decatur County Area Plan Commission** does not conform to State Statute. Ms Bowen is contracted by the Commissioners to oversee the drafting and adoption of a new county comprehensive plan. The County Council now has two appointments to make. Mr Owens moved to appoint Vincent Smith to the **Area Plan Board** and Mr Owens seconded the motion. Motion carried 6 – 0. Mr Metz moved to appoint Bill Dieckmann to the **Area Plan Board** and Mr Peters seconded the motion. Motion carries 6 – 0.

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

The next County Council meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on November 15th, 2016.

Ernest Gauck, President

Attest: _____

Date: _____