

Decatur County Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 22, 2019, Room 106

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

President Gauck called the October 22, 2019 County Council meeting to order, then asked Bryan Robbins to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.

Mr Gauck asked that the September 17th meeting minutes stating “he is okay with increasing the Public Safety Tax rate...” be corrected to state “he is okay with advertising an increase to the Public Safety Tax rate ...”. Mr Metz moved to approve the September 17th meeting minutes as corrected and Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion carries, 7 – 0.

Mr Gauck had asked **County Prosecutor Nathan Harter** to explain why he has requested another Deputy Prosecutor for a total of 10 employees in his 2020 Budget. Mr Harter cited the increasing number of cases filed in Decatur Courts beginning in 2015. He expects file up to 1800 cases in 2019, which puts Decatur County as one of the highest cases (86) filed per employee ratio. **Superior Court Judge Matthew Bailey** agreed with Mr Harter his Court’s criminal case load has increased tremendously and he expects that to continue. Decatur Courts caseload as ‘rated by the State’ requires 2.98 Judges. Judge Bailey and Adult Probation Officer Matt Hoeing have explored the option of adding a “Drug Court” in Decatur County which requires a ‘consistent drug treatment provider’ and currently there isn’t one in Decatur County. Questions were asked by several people had questions on the costs/expenses of the new jail.

Council’s Financial Advisor Reuben Cummings reminded Council members the proposed 2020 Budget for County General would spend about \$1,000,000 more than estimated revenues; so next year we would spend all of our 2019 cash carried into 2020 leaving no cushion for emergencies. Mr Gauck stated by adopting an increase in one of the **LITs (Local Income Tax) Special Purpose Jail tax or Public Safety Tax** could help County General get back in line with the revenues. Mr Peters suggested lowering the Public Safety Tax from 0.25% to 0.15% and increase the Special Purpose Jail tax from 0.50% to .065%. Council members have the option of reducing either of these two tax rates in the future. Mr Cummings stated the 2020 Budgets are not inflated one bit- there isn’t any place to reduce/cut. He recommended adopting the **2020 Budgets** today and then decide on increasing one of the LITs at the Council’s special meeting on October 31st at 9:00 am. Council answered several questions about employees’ raises, health insurance costs, citing it costs more to lose an employee who has years of experience and knowledge.

Mr Meyer moved to adopt the 2020 Budgets totaling \$26,372,514 and Mr Westhafer seconded the motion. Motion passes by hand vote of 7 – 0.

Mr Metz moved to allow Sheriff Durant’s request for \$16,090 in additional monies in Cumulative Capital Development for the purchase of 2 vehicles. Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Motion passes, 7 – 0. Council’s attorney Lora Williams prepared Decatur County Ordinance 2019-12 to create a Drug Fund and to transfer \$3,000 from the Inmate Phone Fund to the new Drug Fund. Mr Hooten moved to adopt Ordinance 2019-12 and Mr Peters seconded the motion. Motion carries, 6 – 0. Sheriff Durant told Council members he promoted Jamie Bridges to Assistant in Programs and asked the Amended 144 for that promotion be retroactive to September.

Communications Director Erika Free told Council members she had met with **RBSK’s Brian McReynolds** to go over her department’s needs for IT support. Mr McReynolds doesn’t believe RBSK has anything to offer so he will not submit a proposal. Five candidates had submitted resumes for the IT Network Engineer’s position and only two were qualified. Council woman Deanna Burkart, Commissioner Rick Nobbe and **First Financial Bank’s IT Director Malcolm Meyers** sat in on the interviews. Director Free plans to go forward in filling this position once the 2020 Budgets are adopted. Director Free has

written/implemented a more defined personnel policy for her employees concerning the 'time off' policy and the 'grievance- complaint' policy.

After reviewing five requests to transfer monies within departments' budgets, Mr Meyer moved to approve the four corrected requests and Mrs Burkart seconded the motion. Corrected transfers approved, 7 – 0.

Mr Peters moved to approve the requests for additional monies in Cum Bridge, County General, Community Crossings Grant, Highway EDIT and Juvenile Probation User Fees. Mr Metz seconded the motion. Motion carries, 7 – 0.

Mr Gauck signed the 'grant cover sheet' for reimbursement from the State for one-half of the salaries paid out of Emergency Management's 2019 budget. Deputy Auditor Teresa Reiger told Council whenever county departments apply for grants and reimbursements from the State, she will ask the Presidents of the Commissioners and Council to sign required forms keeping/making them aware of funds being received by various county departments.

Council signed the Form 4 for the adoption of the 2020 Budgets, which has to be uploaded into Gateway within five days of adoption.

A "Notice to Taxpayers on Hearing on Proposed Local Income Tax Ordinance 2019-9" was legally advertised on September 27, 2019. The proposed increase to the Public Safety Tax is 0.25% to 0.55%. After a brief discussion, Mr Meyer made a motion not to increase the Public Safety Tax rate and Mr Peters seconded the motion. Motion carries, 7 – 0.

Mr Gauck asked how many Council members will be at the special meeting on October 31st at 9:00 am to consider increasing the Special Purpose Jail tax from 0.50% to 0.65%, as he will not be attending that meeting. They all plan to be there on Thursday.

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

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

Ernest Gauck, President

Attest: _____

Date: _____