

## **DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING**

January 17, 2023

Commissioners Present: President William L. Hartman  
Vice President Michael Watson  
Vice President Todd Sanderson

Others Present: Auditor Susan Sleeper  
Attorney Andrew Kruse

### **MATTER OF SUNNY MEADOWS**

Angela Brown attended with Bob Krafft to explain that Sunny Meadows needs a new water heater. She obtained quotes from Wagner-Meinert, LLC in the amount of \$10,755 as well as Auburn Heating & Air in the amount of \$11,840 for a comparable unit as WMI quoted. Auburn Heating could do a non-commercial water heater with less than ½ BTUs for \$7800. The current unit is an older unit assumed to be from around 2001 from the stickers that were located. Bob Krafft expressed that he is happy that Angela has come on board and has noticed things very quickly and is putting new procedures and processes in place.

Todd Sanderson made a motion to allow up to \$5,000 for a new water heater to be paid by ARPA funds. Michael Watson seconded and all approved.

### **MATTER OF APEX INSURANCE PRESENTATION**

Apex presented a Co-pay Insurance Plan that included the use of the United Healthcare Company's "Surest" design feature where members have access to clear upfront prices via an app, web or by phone. They discussed how the system worked and the estimated savings to the county employees to be between 12-13%, and the savings to the County paid portions to be between 14-18%.

Todd Sanderson expressed his liking for the app. The 'pot' of money to begin with would include administrative costs, stop-loss costs, organ transplant, clinic costs, and expected/maximum costs. William Hartman suggested that possibly doing an incentive of one free appointment paid by the county to help increase wellness. Michael Watson reminded everyone that we are working on a ticking clock to be ready for a July 1, 2023 renewal.

### **MATTER OF SOLAR DISCUSSION**

The Commissioners went through the Commercial Solar Energy Overlay District proposed changes.

Jake Butler residing at 4937 CR 47 | began mentioned that the animal corridor topic had a lot of time spent on it rather than effects on homes, etc. If Jake were to say he had a permit denied by the Commissioners is it safe to say that if he has agreements with a wildlife preservation team to come in and build an animal sanctuary and the Commissioners deny it, could he then turn around and sue the Commissioners for legal ramifications or are we fear mongering on the Commissioners side to get these items passed. If there are no permits that come through then there should be no ramifications from a legal perspective to the Commissioners. He has watched the meetings unfold with Commissioners and Council and has taken an issue with the retaliation from specific Commissioners, and working with his job and his law enforcement background including several federal agencies there is a process for reporting and one of them is getting with Department of Justice who then involves the Indiana State Police for investigation of those Commissioners doing official misconduct. Jake specified that Commissioners Hartman and

Sanderson have made a great process today through the redlined document, but the time is now to sit down and understand the true ramifications of solar panels and what the 30-year-old mark will look like at the end. He also discussed migratory pattern of cranes as they see the solar panels as bodies of water. He would like the Commissioners to put pause on the plan and to really understand what the result will be.

Trina Roudebush with Sculpin: she acknowledged that there is continuing work happening and that is intentional to be able to answer the questions the commissioners may have. She would like to know what the proper or the correct way to respond to some of the questions brought forth today would be. Commissioner Sanderson feels if they set the ordinance and it is set out properly then there should not be additional discussion, you follow it or you do not. Trina would like to know how to be involved with the formation of the ordinance. Decommissioning/abandonment: question of can they let the panels go on forever, and they cannot so she wants to be involved to help answer items that may not even be a need for deliberation. Commissioner Watson explained the next step would be the suggestions going in front of the Plan Commission, which will then have a public hearing for public comment.

Commissioner Watson takes exception of the characterization of fear mongering and it is deplorable that if you do not agree with the non-solar group you are the enemy and it is just ridiculous. He asked Andrew to talk about vested interested doctrine and the actual potential for lawsuits on private transactions. From legal research, Attorney Kruse spoke about if a company has a completed applications on file, and the ordinance is changed after the full final applications the courts will look at grand fathering in what ordinance was in place when the application was submitted, NOT completed. At this time, there is not any completely submitted applications at this time. Chris Gaumer and Auditor Sleeper will re-write the redlined version and present back to the Commissioners on the 23<sup>rd</sup> for their final approval prior to taking to Plan Commission.

Commissioner Watson wanted to be clear on, from a personal standpoint he is not pro-solar, could not get him in an electric car, whatever is done takes a big combination of many things. As he said before it is just sad that what happens at the National level trickles down to the local level. As a Commissioner they have many other things to consider as well, but he will give the developer both scrutiny and consideration that he would of any developer that would like to come in to DeKalb County. By solar coming to DeKalb County, solar could decrease everyone's taxes by 10%, so if solar does not come then the Commissioners will need to explain to everyone why the taxes are not decreased, or why roadwork done not get done, or why economic development payments are not available to impact the east end of the County. The commissioners are not the enemies here, a year ago Chris Gaumer sat here and said if we do not want solar then we can write the ordinance that way and the Commissioners all agreed to write an ordinance that would be fair to both the developers and citizens, and after 3-4 months the three Commissioners had decided that they had met that goal, things are not always the way they appear to be and there has just been a lot of things said and done and whispered that are not true.

#### **MATTER OF MINUTES**

Michael Watson made the motion to approve the minutes as amended dated January 9, 2023. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF TRAVEL REQUESTS**

Michael Watson made a motion to approve the following travel requests:

- 1) Elysia Rodgers to attend Northern Indiana Grazing Conference held at Michiana Event Center on February 2-4, 2023. Estimated cost of \$118.50 paid by department travel.

- 2) Susan Sleeper to attend 2023 AIC Legislative Conference & AIC Education Class held at Hilton, Indy on February 7-8. Estimated cost of \$618.00 paid by Elected Officials Training Fund.
- 3) Mike Watson to attend 2023 AIC Legislative Conference held at Hilton, Indy on February 7-8. Estimated cost of \$501.00 paid by department travel.
- 4) Rick Collins to attend 2023 AIC Legislative Conference & AIC Education Class held at Hilton, Indy on February 7-8. Estimated cost of \$822.00 paid by department travel.

William Hartman seconded, and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF CLAIMS**

Todd Sanderson made a motion to approve Special Claims as submitted. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF KNOW BE 4 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

I.T. would like to see the Commissioners make the Know Be 4 training a mandatory process, as there are still many instances that are still being clicked on and there have already been a few attempted data breaches. This will also help with our Cyber Security Insurance. William Hartman does do the training and likes the reminders. There are several department heads that already require this for their departments. Todd Sanderson understands the training, but if people would just pick up the phone and call if they are unsure of the email received, he feels a lot of issues would resolve themselves. Dotty Miller explained that there is some resistance from some departments that feel they are State employees and do not have to take the training, as well as non-employees that have access to the County System, so she wanted to be sure the wording in any document made includes the appropriate language. Attorney Kruse stated that the cyber training has come out on the legal standpoint as well. The commissioners will be in contact with Insurance Trustees on the outside vendors connecting to our system before deciding the language for change/amendment.

#### **MATTER OF COMMISSARY REPORT FOR JULY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022**

Michael Watson made a motion to acknowledge receipt of receiving the Commissary Report from the Sheriff. Todd Sanderson seconded and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF ORDINANCE 2023-R-1: AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A POLICY TO WRITE OFF DEBT**

Michael Watson motioned to pass on FIRST Reading Ordinance 2023-R-1: An Ordinance Establishing a Policy to Write off Debt. Todd Sanderson seconded and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF SHERIFF PTO POLICY**

Commissioner Hartman asked his fellow commissioners what their feelings are on the policy. Commissioner Watson feels that something is definitely needed to increase recruitment, he had talked with other counties and there is some kind of incentive for lateral transfers, but the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office cannot operate six deputies short. Commissioner Sanderson feels if a PTO change would happen that the officer coming needs to be coming directly from law enforcement not private sector. Commissioner Hartman feels we should give them the PTO they come with, but maybe not start them out at the highest pay, for example if they have 4 years of tenure then come with 4 years in counting toward the PTO accrual. Commissioner Sanderson explained that other departments would need to bring forth proof they cannot staff their departments. The commissioners feel this should be reviewed yearly as situations change.

Todd Sanderson made a motion for a lateral move officer to accept their years of service as tenure to count toward the current PTO accrual time, and the lateral move officer shall come from another law enforcement agency or within one year of having worked for a law enforcement agency, and to revisit this scenario each year. Michael Watson seconded and all approved.

**MATTER OF 2023 COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS CLEAN-UP**

Michael Watson made a motion to re-appoint Frank Pulver to Board of Zoning Appeals for the year of 2023 term. Todd Sanderson seconded and all approved.

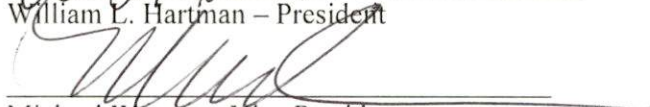
**MATTER OF ARP AGREEMENT WITH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION DEKALB CO.**

Todd Sanderson made a motion to have the president sign the agreement between the Community Foundation DeKalb County and the DeKalb County Commissioners to receive their ARPA award amount for the Next Level Trails Match in the amount of \$172,515. Michael Watson seconded and all approved.

**MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION**

Topics Include: HB1174 | SB74 to change the percentages for MVH and MVH Restricted split, petition to vacate next steps, future meeting procedure policies, governors health commission bill going through legislation currently- changed to an opt-in, state and local tax review commission proposed in legislation

  
William L. Hartman – President

  
Michael Watson – Vice President

  
Todd Sanderson – Vice President

Attest:

  
Susan Sleeper, Auditor