

## **DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING**

September 18, 2023

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

Others Present:             Deputy Jody Wiedenhoeft  
                                  Attorney Andrew Kruse

### **MATTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

Dotty Miller began by speaking about Recruitment around the County. Dotty gave a brief overview of the Council Budget Meetings she attended last week. The Sunny Meadows/Community Corrections/Central Dispatch Maintenance position was approved by Council, and she has started to recruit for that position with Larry Lane's help as he will be the Supervisor. Dotty then spoke about two open positions, one within the Assessor's Office, and one in the Auditor's Office, and stated that at this time, we are not actively recruiting for those positions. Commissioner Sanderson questioned why the Department Heads are not actively recruiting, and Dotty explained that unfortunately, those Department Heads have not had time. She went over a few departments that had specific requests, such as IT, Public Defender, Health, and Highway, and went into further detail. Commissioner Hartman asked about the Public Defender, specifically if they could hire additional attorneys to cut down on the hours of other Public Defender's to help offset the work hours for current Attorney's. The Public Defender's Office had requested in their budget to offer benefits to all current Public Defender's, and Dotty explained that was not approved by Council. Mark Olivero was present, and stated the biggest issue is a shortage on Attorney's, and that most of the Public Defender's put over 30 hours of work in each week, and went into further detail regarding wages. And finally, the Sheriff's Office and Central Communications each have a few positions open, and the job postings have since expired and both Brian Humbarger, as well as Sheriff Brady Thomas are reviewing the submitted applications.

Dotty updated the Commissioners regarding the Safety Committee Meeting, and explained that she is waiting for about 50% of Department Heads to get back with her to set-up training, and working on an evacuation plan set with updated all County offices including the Jail. Dotty finished with updating the Commissioners on the WIS job classifications for several departments.

### **MATTER OF 2024 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

Leta Hullinger, DeKalb County Recorder was present and asked to give input regarding the amended 2024 Holiday Schedule revised by the Commissioners. She stated that when the Commissioners removed Martin Luther King Day, and combined it with President's Day, it will lower the moral of the employees, and went further to explain that employees are County Tax Payers as well. She stated that this does not affect Elected Officials, or part-time employees, and

that she feels the Commissioners should not compare our employees/jobs to the private sector. Leta then went further to explain how many holidays the surrounding counties offer to their employees, and then provided details into why/when certain holidays were added with dates. Leta closed by stating that she is requesting our 2024 previous holiday schedule be reinstated.

Commissioner Sanderson specifically wanted to address the issue regarding morale. He feels that morale could go both ways and starts with leadership, and that there is so much negativity by employees as well as elected officials, starting with Department Heads sitting through 2 days of Council meetings that do not pertain their individual departments. Todd then stated he would like all departments to try harder to work together. Leta responded to Todd by stating that this used to be the place to work, and that you could not get a job in the courthouse. Todd rebutted that her comments are exactly what he is talking about, and that the negativity is the only thing brought up to the Commissioners. He feels that with the county employing 237 people, and we only have approximately 10 open positions because our department heads are too busy to recruit. He said that if you go anywhere in our county, employers cannot fill their open positions and that is a pretty good ratio in regard to retention. Discussion took place in regards to the self-funded insurance from both Leta, as well as Commissioner Sanderson.

Commissioner Hartman brought up MLK Day to say he had to call a special meeting to fill the gap of missing 3 out of 4 weeks, and that 2024 will have the same issue, and that his thought was to get another work session in for the Commissioners and in no way did he mean anything disparaging to Martin Luther King, Jr., or negatively with what the day truly stands for.

Commissioner Watson began by explaining that he feels that the taxpayers of DeKalb County would much rather offer the same holiday schedule to ensure we can retain our employees, whom are experienced and knowledgeable, rather than new employees that can't offer the same level of service.

Leta explained that she feels that 13 paid holidays seem fair to keep our employees happy. Commissioner Hartman offered to make a deal that he would agree to pay three holidays if the County employees went to a 40-hour work week. Commissioner Watson stated that only about a 1/3 of our employees work 35 hours, and that the rest, about 80 out of the 237 employees actually work a 35-hour work week.

Councilman Rick Ring stepped up to the podium and Commissioner Hartman stated he is not allowed to speak right now. Rick stated that he feels it is wrong to not allow the public to speak right now, and that a lot of the employees are listening. Additional discussion took place between the Commissioners. Commissioner Watson feels that with the Council trying to adjust wages to where the study shows they should be to recruit and retain, that it seems counter-productive to change the holiday schedule now. Commissioner Hartman feels that everyone wants more pay, and less hours. He stated that it does cost the taxpayers more money. He then opened comments to the public.

Rick Ring stepped up to the podium, and stated that if we compare county to county, and moved employees from 35 to 37.5 hours a week, and stated that originally, the county offered the 35-

hour work week because they could not afford raises. Rick stated that if the Council and Commissioners don't visit the departments as managers, they are not doing our job, and that it is not the employees' job to come to them. He went on to feel that there are no issues going to the 11 Federal holidays, and if they would like to add Fair day, or other additional days, he would be in support of that. Additional discussion took place between Rick and the Commissioners regarding self-insurance, overall cash balance, etc., and how important it is to have a good broker to continue to improve.

Sandi Wilcox asked to speak about a few things. The first is that her duty as an Elected Official is to advocate for the employees, and that the industry standard for holidays is basically the schedule we had been following. The second topic she asked to discuss is the insurance plan, and that it truly is affecting the morale of the employees, and that communication is lacking on the Commissioners with the employees. Sandi went on to say that this plan is not a 50% savings for most employees, and when you add the removal of the Christmas Dinner, nothing for holidays, increased insurance changes, and now removing potential holidays. She finished by stating she chooses to sit in on the budget meetings to advocate and understand what is happening in those meetings to educate herself as to what is going to happen to her employees. Commissioner Sanderson explained he feels that it is unnecessary for a group of 4 Elected Officials to sit through the budget sessions and not listen to the meetings as other employees do online unless it specifically is regarding their individual departments.

Sheriff Thomas added to the conversation and stated that there would be increased traffic if we choose to open Fair Friday, and knows that the Courthouse is a public building and it is the right of every member of the public to use the restroom during regular working hours. Sheriff Thomas stated he would advocate for the holiday schedule to stay the same, and feels that this would be going in the wrong direction for employees, making them feel that they are receiving a pay cut.

William Hartman and Todd Sanderson requested that we table the 2024 Holiday discussion until next week. All agreed, with Michael Watson adding he feels that this discussion needs to be finalized next week, as there is a significant amount of planning that goes into the Holiday schedule for all employees and departments.

#### **MATTER OF RESOLUTION 2023-R-16 | DCC 4-1-10 - DEKALB COUNTY NO TRESPASS POLICY**

Michael Watson made a motion to approve on FIRST Reading and all to sign Resolution 2023-R-16: DCC 4-1-10 | An Ordinance Providing for Procedure for County Office to be able to Issue a No Trespass Order. Todd Sanderson seconded and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF PAYROLL**

Michael Watson made a motion to approve payroll for the period of August 27<sup>th</sup> – September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

### **MATTER OF MINUTES**

Todd Sanderson made the motion to approve the minutes dated September 11, 2023. Michael Watson seconded and all approved.

### **MATTER OF ST. JOE SPENCERVILLE REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT-OCRA GRANT FUNDING**

As part of our OCRA grant we have to do an environmental review. The environmental review packages are complete and ready to be sent out. The State Historic Preservation Office requires that we get approval on the County's letterhead to submit on the County's behalf.

Todd Sanderson made a motion to approve and for the President to sign the Environmental Review Letter for approval by the County. Michael Watson seconded and all approved.


### **MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION**

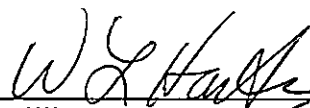
Topics include- Highway Funding; Wheel-Tax; Surplus; Budget

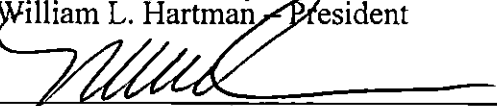
### **EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGAN AT 10:30 A.M.; as noticed**

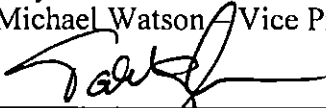
The Commissioners met in Executive Session as noticed beginning at 10:56 a.m., in accordance with IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(4)(I). There were no decisions made and no other matters discussed. The Executive Session concluded at 11:28 a.m.

Attest:

  
Susan Sleeper, Auditor

  
William L. Hartman – President

  
Michael Watson – Vice President

  
Todd Sanderson – Vice President