

## **DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING**

October 23, 2023

Commissioners Present: President William L Hartman, absent  
Vice President Michael Watson  
Vice President Todd Sanderson, acting chairman.

Others Present: Auditor Susan Sleeper  
Deputy Jody Wiedenhoeft  
Attorney Andrew Kruse

### **MATTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

Dotty met with Larry regarding his job description, made a list and updated the description to get that process finalized. There will be an official job offer for the full-time maintenance position. Recruitment around the County was then covered. Dotty is still having bi-weekly meetings and the biggest task is getting the already paid deductibles applied from the prior insurance and the differences in charges between the different Parkview locations. The OSHA 10 class is taking place this Thursday. The EEO4 report is required every other year, Dotty is working with the software system to pull the report needed to meet this requirement. Dotty reminded the Commissioners about the performance evaluations that need to be completed by the first week of December.

### **MATTER OF DEKALB EARLY LEARNING COALITION PRESENTATION**

Councilman Robert Krafft, and CEO of YMCA explained there is a huge problem with childcare in DeKalb County. The YMCA has a childcare program that is always filled with a waiting list of around 240 children at any given time. Allie Sutherland, Director of Northeast Indiana Early Childhood Development gave a presentation on The Childcare Challenge. The lack of affordable and quality childcare options is a real obstacle for working families, which can affect their ability to join or stay in the labor force. In Northeast Indiana there are 40,659 children under the age of 6 that need care. The average infant and toddler cost of care is \$8,777, the average preschool cost of care is \$7,417 with the median income in Northeast Indiana is \$61,380. The coalition is a growing community of parents, nonprofit agencies, employers, healthcare providers, early childhood professionals, educators, and community members organizing to ensure all children in Northeast Indiana have access to quality early learning and childcare. A Regional Coalition dedicated to Ensuring every child in our community reaches their limitless potential would include a Governing Board, Leadership Team, Coalition Committees and Regional Coalition Members. The coalition is applying for a grant to help fund and make the needed changes for childcare in DeKalb County. Allie announced a Proposal for a Tri-Share Program to address the high cost of childcare and reduce the cost of operation by creating a robust Shared Service Network. Tori Searcy, Vice President of DeKalb County Economic Development Partnership explained they would ask for specific funding from the Commissioners they would like to hire an employee to help fill the gaps in the entire DeKalb County. Todd asked for an example of success, Allie explained that in Kosciusko County they have increased by 500 seats. Noble County has joined the share program on a trial basis. The Early Childhood Coalition is under

The Chamber Foundation, and the Chamber is asking for \$50,000 per year from ARPA Funds, that funding will help get the program launched. After the funding for launching the program, the Chamber would go to the public with a plan to request funding from business partners with the hope the County Government would be removed. The business community is ready to put money toward the need for childcare. Commissioner Watson is supportive of the County having participation in the shared program when it is ready to move forward. Commissioner Sanderson asked if this issue has been taken to the State, as there is still going to be a need for funding. Tori explained the Director would be the centralized point person who would gather the information and then be able to push out to legislature. Krafft wanted to clarify that this is not just supporting the YMCA childcare, but he feels so confident in the program that the YMCA is putting money toward the program. Dawn Mason, Butler Community and on the committee wanted to challenge the Commissioners to think about how it will take the entire community to help make this happen.

#### **MATTER OF CLAIMS**

Michael Watson made a motion to approve Special claims in the amount of \$1,780,933.67 consisting of warrant #'s 134686 thru 134688 and wire transfer #'s 26121 thru that were processed on 10/17/2023 and General claims processed on October 23, 2023 in the amount of \$1,688,674 consisting of warrant #'s 134698 thru 134750 and wire transfer #'s 26122 thru 26238. Todd Sanderson seconded and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF MINUTES**

Michael Watson made the motion to approve the minutes dated October 16, 2023. Todd Sanderson seconded and all approved.

#### **MATTER OF COMMERCIAL LEASE AGREEMENT ADDENDUM #1**

Discussion took place on the proposed Addendum to the Commercial Lease Agreement between The County of DeKalb and the City of Auburn regarding the transfer of the Old Iron Bridge from the County of DeKalb to the City of Auburn and the extension of the lease to occupy the premises. Commissioner Sanderson would like to see a compromise from the City with the amount originally agreed upon for the old bridge. Attorney Kruse would like to see what the bridge is worth before agreeing to a compromise.

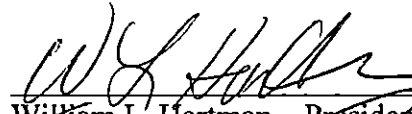
Todd Sanderson would like to amend the contract to accept \$20,000 for the Old Bridge and the City will extend the lease until April 30, 2024. Michael Watson seconded and all approved.

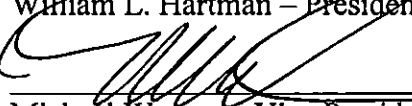
#### **MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION**

Topics include-

**November 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** The Solar Meeting will be held as scheduled at 9:00 am on November 30<sup>th</sup>, and will NOT be continued on to November 6<sup>th</sup>.

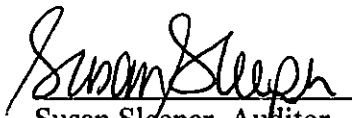
**Jim Miller:** reading about Commissioners put in a shooting range, he would like the Commissioners to please look at those funds for road maintenance and possibly putting off the Wheel Tax for another year. Jim also recommends that Commissioners look seriously at the Childcare Position proposed today as a positive use of ARPA Funds, rather than a shooting range.

  
William L. Hartman – President

  
Michael Watson – Vice President

  
Todd Sanderson – Vice President

Attest:

  
Susan Sleeper, Auditor