

DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

September 27, 2021

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

Others Present: Auditor Jan Bauman
Attorney James P McCanna – ATTENDED BY TELEPHONE

MATTER OF HIGHWAY

Ben Parker provided two quotes to install a 5" sidewalk by DeKalb High School at Metzger Park. Webb Concrete submitted a quote of \$7,990. Henderson Construction submitted a quote of \$9,780. Todd Sanderson made a motion to go with Webb Concrete for an 8 foot sidewalk for \$7,990 and to pay for it out of LITED #38. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

Other Highway topics discussed: Property on CR 37 that will not be able to get a driveway permit; State Road 8 road project is done but it is not opened back up yet.

MATTER OF CLAIMS

Michael Watson made a motion to approve General Claims consisting of warrant #132380 through 132410 in the amount of \$13,079.36, and wire transfer #18982 through 19085 in the amount of \$403069.95 as presented. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF MINUTES

Todd Sanderson made the motion to approve the minutes from September 20, 2021, as presented. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF TRAVEL REQUESTS

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

- 1) Dotty Miller (HR) to travel to Fort Wayne for the NIHRA November meeting on November 1st. Estimated cost of \$17.34 to be paid from Commissioners' travel.
- 2) Ronda Hunkler (VSO) to travel to Indianapolis for Background Check training on October 6. Estimated cost of \$127.60 to be paid out of department travel.
- 3) Holly Albright, Karen Bishop, Tara Lilly, & Suzanne Davis (Clerk) to travel to Indianapolis December 13-15 for the 2022 Election Administrators Conference. Estimated cost of \$2,571.08 to be paid from State Called Meetings.

Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF SUNNY MEADOWS' KITCHEN FLOOR & CORN CRIB

Sunny Meadows' kitchen floor recently failed an inspection. It needs to be replaced. A contract with Jimelle, Flooring, has been submitted to the Commissioners. It requires 50% down for work to begin and the remaining 50% upon completion. The Commissioners wanted to get quotes from West and Roth before proceeding, but Roth has closed its business, and West is very busy and hasn't been able to quote.

Todd Sanderson made a motion to accept the agreement with Jimelle, Inc. for \$7,937.32, and to pay a deposit of \$3,950 down and the balance upon completion, and for the President to sign. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

Next, the corn crib that was irreparably damaged in a wind storm a few weeks ago needs to come down. A couple of quotes were obtained to tear it down. One was for \$10,984.41 and a second for \$9,500. Todd Sanderson made the motion to accept the S.E. Construction LLC quote for \$9,500 to tear down and haul away the corn crib at the County Farm. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved. The insurance adjuster looked at it this weekend, so our claim should be processed soon. This will be paid for out of courthouse building maintenance line item, and our insurance will reimburse the account.

MATTER OF PART TIME POSITION IN VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

Ronda Hunkler said Dotty Miller had told her last week that the Commissioners did not want to replace Travis Holcomb but may in a couple of months. She came to ask if the Commissioners would reconsider. His last day will be at the end of October. Ms. Hunkler redistributed slides from a presentation she did a few months ago on the growth and development of the department and the need for the part time position. The part time position allows for outreach to veterans who can't get into the office and for education at the American Legion and many other locations. The position also covers Ms. Hunkler in her times of absence for training or PTO time so that the office doesn't come to a halt. Ms. Hunkler explained that it is the veterans who will suffer in the long run because they will have to wait longer to get an appointment, or the outreach will have to be scaled back. The Commissioners said their decision not to replace Mr. Holcomb right away was so they could wait and see what would happen. They had hoped the other counties would start picking up the slack and servicing more of their own veterans. They were also disappointed that Mr. Holcomb had so strongly advocated for the position but after such a short period of time he is leaving. Building the relationship with other veterans is very important. If the position is filled again, somehow this needs to be stressed to the incoming person.

Mr. Holcomb's pay is \$22.56, and it was based on his experience. The pay for a new person with no experience should be lowered to \$18 per hour. Todd Sanderson made a motion to allow a part time position for the Veterans Office with a starting pay of \$18 per hour. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF AUGUST 2021 COUNTY HOME REPORT

Todd Sanderson made the motion that the Commissioners acknowledge receipt of the August 2021 County Home Report. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF FLOORS AND LIGHT FIXTURES AT COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

The Commissioners visited Community Corrections last week after the Commissioners' meeting to look at the lights that are coming out of the ceiling. The light fixtures were made to be framed in prior to dry walling. Not all of the light fixtures were inspected, but there were light fixtures seen that are not framed in, so the weight of them is either causing them to pull through the drywall or will cause them to pull through. As of today, Mosaic is working on the flooring and lights. Mosaic has four days left until the deadline. At that point, most likely the Commissioners will decide to withhold a portion of the final payment to Mosaic.

MATTER OF MORATORIUM ON SOLAR FARMS EXPIRING

Auditor Bauman asked whether the moratorium on solar farms needs to be extended since it will be expiring when the ordinance on solar farms passes. The Commissioners have been creating an economic development agreement for solar companies doing solar projects in the County's jurisdiction. The Commissioners and Attorney McCanna believe that there is no need to extend the moratorium. Attorney McCanna and Chris Gaumer had talked about this earlier, and there is no problem allowing a project application to be submitted to Development Services and have its approval be contingent upon reaching a satisfactory economic development agreement. No action was taken.

MATTER OF SOLAR ORDINANCE ADOPTION

Development Services Director Chris Gaumer was present for the solar ordinance adoption. President Hartman brought up some changes that he would like to propose be made to the solar ordinance.

First is the height restriction, changing it from 15 feet to not higher than 20 feet since the solar panel could be higher than 15 feet at its maximum tilt during the day as it follows the sun. Excluded would be the lightning rod, light post, and substation.

Next would be changing the setback minimum of 400 feet to 200 feet with a 30 foot wide landscape barrier that will completely screen the panels of view 12 months out of the year of the non-participating property owner. Otherwise it could be a point of contention between landowners. There was discussion about what could be defined as a "barrier."

Mr. Gaumer then commented that he was under the impression on Friday that the Commissioners were going to provide the proposed changes to him so he could pose them to the Plan Commission. President Hartman said that he missed that. By statute, any proposed changes and the reasons for the rejection or the amendment must be submitted in writing to the Plan Commission by the Commissioners. President Hartman thought the proposed changes had to be decided today in session.

The Commissioners concluded that a change on height restriction to 18 feet would be proposed. The exemption would be everything but the panels. The Commissioners then also decided that setbacks should be reduced to 200' if a 30' wide landscape buffer that completely screens the solar panels from view of the non-participating property owner is utilized. The Commissioners have proposed to remove the part about written acceptance received by the adjacent non-participating property owners. Finally, the Commissioners want to add access roads and internal drives to the exemptions to setbacks.

These proposed changes and the reasons for them will be typed up and signed by President Hartman for the Plan Commission meeting on Wednesday, September 29, 2021.

Michael Watson made a motion to amend the Resolution 2021-R-21, UDO #71, An Ordinance Amending the DeKalb County Unified Development Ordinance to add a Commercial Solar Energy Systems Overlay District, with changes to height restriction and setback restrictions. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved. If the Plan Commission accepts the amendments to the UDO, then the Ordinance is in place with the changes. If the Plan Commission does not accept the amendments or rejects the amendments, then the original ordinance (without the amendments) will come back before the Commissioners.

MATTER OF BUILDING DEPARTMENT ORDINANCE WITH FEE SCHEDULE

Michael Watson made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-R-22, DCC 32-3-2, DeKalb County Development Services-Building Department, on first reading. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved. This resolution includes Appendix A: Fee Schedule. This ordinance is a recodification of all

prior County Building Department Ordinances (i.e., the 2021 Building Code) and includes the updated fee schedule.

MATTER OF QUOTES FOR TRASH SERVICE

Last week the Commissioners made the motion to switch to Noble County Disposal for trash service because the cost for trash service through Washler is going up substantially. The County was not given any prior notice. When Commissioner Sanderson asked Noble County Disposal and Washler for quotes, only Noble County Disposal responded. Washler has since been in contact with the Commissioners and explained why they had not responded, and they provided a quote. The Noble County Disposal quote was \$250 lower than Washler's, and their customer service seems to be better. The Commissioners affirmed their decision to switch to Noble County Disposal for trash and recycling services.

MATTER OF OLD HOMELAND SECURITY COPY MACHINE TO BE DONATED

Michael Watson made a motion to donate the old copy machine from Homeland Security to Inspiration Ministries. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION

Other discussion topics included: insurance adjuster inspected the damaged corn crib at Sunny Meadows; lean-to sky lights and west end window of barn at Sunny Meadows need replaced; anticipated closing date on Henderson property is the first week of October; redistricting Council and Commissioners' districts by January 4th; Broadband Ready Community application has been submitted to state; ARP calculation of lost revenue needs to be done; and 207-209 to possibly have certificates assigned to City of Butler after 2021 tax sale.

William L. Hartman – President

Michael Watson – Vice President

Todd Sanderson – Vice President

Attest:

Jan Bauman, Auditor