

DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

March 17, 2025

Commissioners Present: President William L Hartman
Vice President James Miller
Vice President Kellen Dooley

Others Present: Auditor Susan Sleeper
Attorney Andrew Kruse

MATTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Dotty began with the Travel request questions that stemmed from the department head meeting. Michelle Hausbach, Title IV-D Director, spoke on the possibility of having meals reimbursed for travel, she is asking if they could have the meal reimbursed for their trip to Fort Wayne as the conference does not provide lunch. Commissioner Miller explained that the consensus from the department head meeting was to allow reimbursement for meals that do not require an overnight stay.

James Miller made a motion to allow the Department Heads/Elected Officials to pay the employees at a rate of \$21 for meal reimbursement of day trip travel. Kellen Dooley seconded for further discussion.

Auditor Sleeper explained that when there was a Federal IRS audit done the County was found to not be following what the IRS refers to as the 'overnight rule' meaning overnight travel away from an employee's ordinary place of business for a business purpose. The IRS states "When an employer pays an employee's meals while on business travel that does not meet the overnight rule, in the form of actual cost reimbursement or a per meal per diem, the payment is deemed to be a payment of an employee's personal living expenses and thus a taxable fringe benefit".

William Hartman explained that he would not be in favor of the motion as the reason they went to a per diem was to simplify the process and would not want to complicate the process for the Auditor's office. Kellen Dooley would like to reach out to the City of Auburn for their process as it has been said that the city reimburses their employees, but the county does not.

James Miller rescinded his motion.

Dotty went on to discuss work comp. claims. Morgan then discussed recruitment around the County departments.

MATTER OF LETA HULLINGER

Laredo Contract: Recorder Hullinger brought the Fidler Contract before the commissioners, explaining that the only thing that has changed is the user fees section. Hullinger explained the service that Fidler does for the County.

Kellen Dooley made a motion to approve the Laredo User Access Subscription Agreement with the increased fees. James Miller seconded and all approved.

New Record books: 35 books were sent out during the fair week, and 71 have just come back. The books are now fireproof and waterproof, they removed tape and lamination, treated the paper and placed them in mylar for preservation. The company took 28 books back with them for the next batch.

MATTER OF 2026 ADULT IDOC GRANT

Michelle Fosnaugh discussed the FY 2026 Budget that she is getting ready to submit for DCCC. Currently, as she understands the legislation, the Department of Corrections is receiving additional funding, but the Community Corrections division is not receiving more. She is submitting a budget with an increased request of 1.26% overall from FY 2025. DCCC was able to find areas where they could save money and have moved the saving into the personal services category to be able to increase wages.

Kellen Dooley made a motion to approve the CY 2026 DeKalb County Community Corrections and Probation Grant Application Letter of Support. James Miller seconded and all approved.

James Miller made a motion to acknowledge receipt of the 2024 DCCC Annual Report, 2024 Disciplinary Hearing Report and the 2024 Grievance Report. Kellen Dooley seconded and all approved.

MATTER OF INSURANCE UPDATE-KYLE PEARSON

Kyle Pearson attended to announce that late last week they received a favorable renew terms from Hamilton and they have also sent out to 28 other carriers to see if there is anything out there that would be comparable for now or in the future. Renewal will be a flat amount from last year, just over \$30,000.

MATTER OF EASTERSEALS

Jason Meyer began by thanking the Commissioners for the support with funding sent to Easter-Seals. Jason Meyer explained they have gone through a rebranding and also explained what Easter-Seals does and who they work for and how the funding works. Jason Meyer is formally requesting from the Commissioners \$45,000 in support for the 2026 calendar year. The purpose of the request is to enrich education, enhance health, expand employment and elevate community with the intended use of the funds to enhance existing programs, expand outreach efforts and improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

MATTER OF HIGHWAY

CR 35, S of 12 Pipe: Unexpected pipe to be purchased, Ben brought two quotes from St. Regis Culvert and Metal Culverts for the pipe. Ben would like to go with Metal Culverts because it is a riveted pipe and much stronger for where the pipe will be laid.

James Miller made a motion to approve Ben to move forward and approve the Metal Culvert quote for the pipe in the amount of \$43,484. Kellen Dooley seconded and all approved.

Covered Bridge Request for Bids:

Kellen Dooley made a motion to approve and all to sign the request for bids document. James Miller seconded and all approved.

Covered Bridge DNR Letter for support of fascia:

James Miller made a motion to approve and all to sign the Support Letter and for Ben Parker to forward on to DNR. Kellen Dooley seconded and all approved.

Misc: Ben will be heading to Road School for the week but will have his phone if needed.

William Hartman was made aware of a sink hole on CR 17, Kellen Dooley asked if there was a schedule on railroad closings

Heron/Wayne Asphalt LOC Mutual Release Agreement: Attorney Kruse explained the issues that have come forward due to Heron's bankruptcy and the Wayne Asphalt Letter of Credit that the Commissioners already voted that they are not going to pursue collecting on the LOC.

Wayne Asphalt would like the Commissioners to sign the Mutual Release Agreement as well as provide the original letter of credit as Wayne has requested.

James Miller made a motion to give back the original letter of credit and to sign the Mutual Release Agreement for Wayne Asphalt. Kellen Dooley seconded and all approved.

MATTER OF APEX HEALTH PLAN RENEWAL

APEX Benefits came to discuss the renewal plan for the County's health insurance. The renewal projection is based on 70% of the January to December 2024 experience and 30% of the January to December 2023 experience. APEX explained that due to large variations in copays, the lack of a deductible, and the lack of co-insurance, there is a large amount of uncertainty relating to the cost of the projected years claims costs. The projected 2025-2026 cost funded at maximum cost is 20.4%. The medical and prescription claims for DeKalb County are on the high side and when compared to other municipalities that APEX handles DeKalb is the highest cost per employee per year by around \$3,000 per employee.

MATTER OF PAYROLL

James Miller made a motion to approve payroll for the period of February 23 to March 8, 2025. Kellen Dooley seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF CLAIMS

Kellen Dooley made a motion to approve General Claims consisting of warrant #135895 thru 135908 in the amount of \$85,765.05, and wire transfer # 31678 thru 31813 in the amount of \$805,970.91. James Miller seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF MINUTES

James Miller made a motion to approve the minutes dated March 10, 2025. Kellen Dooley seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION

DART De-Obligation:

Kellen Dooley made a motion to approve and for the president to sign the INDOT Notification of De-Obligation of Federal and State Transit Funds for DART in the following amounts. James Miller seconded and all approved.

FTA 5311 Operating Funds for 2023: \$0.00

FTA 5311 Operating Funds for 2024: \$52,830 (INDOT purchase order #20100853)

FTA 5339 Capital Vehicle for 2024: \$0.00

State PMTF for 2024: \$0.00

Blue Heron Ministries:

James Miller made a motion to approve the Proposal for Professional Prescribed Fire Services at Doc Coleman Landing for a controlled burn of the pollinator prairie ground. Kellen Dooley seconded and all approved.

Maxwell Elementary School:

Kellen Dooley motioned to approve and all to sign the letter to Mrs. Murphy's Class at Maxwell Elementary School in response to a research project from one of the students. James Miller seconded and all approved.

Prisoner Reimbursement:

Auditor Sleeper provided IC 36-2-13-15 to the Commissioners for their review as requested by Judge Grimm. Discussion took place.

Award Plaques:

Kellen Dooley would like to investigate giving a years of service plaque for employees vs. a paper certificate and holder. He has found that you can get a plaque for around \$20 compared to around \$3-\$5 for the paper version. Kellen feels that the employees would be apt to hang up the plaque, he is thinking of doing a paper certificate at 3 years and plaque at the next levels. Jim Miller would like to think about the request. William Hartman would be more in favor of giving a paper certificate at 3 years, 5 years, 15 years, 25 years and give a plaque at the 10-year, 20-year, 30 years, etc.

Septic Tank

Bernie Sukala from the Health Department reached out to the Commissioners for assistance on a rental property of Micheal Girod with a septic system that is discharging sewage onto the property of Jerry and Kim Landis. This has been an ongoing issue for two years. Mr. Girod is Amish and lives in Allen County and they believe they should be allowed to spread their feces in the field along with the livestock manure. James Miller is in favor of Attorney Kruse sending a strong letter and possibly condemning the property.

Space Study:

Kellen Dooley is slammed with other duties (Sunny Meadows) now, but we need to get an RFP put together, but first the Commissioners need to decide what they want the scope of the project to be and how in depth to go with this project. James Miller has been thinking about this and agrees that Kellen needs to focus on Sunny Meadows, William Hartman is busy with the comprehensive plan of the entire county and so Jim is willing to take on the project and bring back to the full Board.

Baymont/Country Inn & Suites:

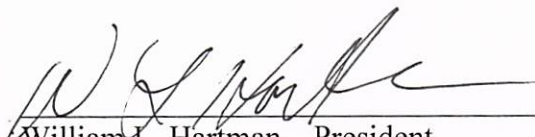
The county filed a suit against Baymont, and Baymont did not respond. Ganesh the gentleman that heads the Baymont portion sent an email basically saying the County is not being patient and they have been paying, etc. Attorney Kruse responded back to him, explaining that the County has been quite patient considering he is not paying money that does not belong to him. This is pushing through to a default judgement.

Country Inn & Suites lawsuit will be moving forward also.

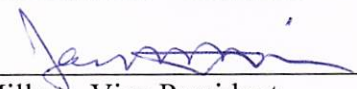
Jail Update: Kellen spoke with the Council and feels they do not plan to pay off the DCCC bond early and plan to start around 2027 for the jail build.

Sunny Meadows Committee: Kellen also talked to the Council and Robert Krafft will be the Council representative and he plans to get the committee together very soon to begin the plans.

Sunny Meadows Bedbugs: Discussion took place on the ongoing issue and Kellen will contact Arrow Pest control this week.



William L. Hartman – President



James Miller – Vice President

Attest:



Susan Sleeper, Auditor

Kellen Dooley – Vice President