

DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

April 12, 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 ELECTRONICALLY

MATTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The Plan Commission had disputed the UDO change that the Commissioners instituted March 29th, taking back the authority to hire the Zoning Administrator. Attorney McCanna has since learned case law that doesn't allow the Commissioners to have that authority. It is because the DeKalb County Plan Commission is considered an "advisory" Plan Commission as opposed to an "area" Plan Commission. An advisory Plan Commission by statute has the authority to hire the Zoning Administrator. President Hartman said that the Commissioners will need to rescind the March 29 ordinance. He stressed the responsibility and liability the Plan Commission will have hiring the Zoning Administrator.

AFLAC is looking to open enrollment time and wants to find the best place and times to meet with employees to cause the least amount of disruption as possible for departments. Trustmark will handle open enrollments online this year.

Health Insurance premiums average about \$150,000 per month. PHP paid \$270,000 more in claims than what the premiums were. The County is not in a position to become self-insured at this time.

The Commissioners would like to post the Code Enforcement Officer position now. The new Zoning Administrator will need to be involved in hiring the Code Enforcement Officer.

Other HR topics discussed: and open and filled positions; and planning for open enrollment with AFLAC and Trustmark.

MATTER OF MINUTES

Todd Sanderson made a motion to approve Commissioners' minutes dated April 5, 2021. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF CLAIMS

Michael Watson made a motion to approve Special Claims for the week of April 12, 2021. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF TRAVEL REQUESTS

Todd Sanderson made a motion to approve the following travel request:

- 1) Ben Parker, Mark Goodrich, and Dusty Bock (Highway) to travel to Miami County on April 14 for a site visit for the new Highway. No expenses will be claimed.

Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF LOYAL ENERGY CLAIMS

There was discussion about the spike in charges for Loyal Energy Trading accounts. Bradd Davidson spoke with President Hartman and explained the reasons. He will be coming to a meeting soon to talk to all the Commissioners. Todd Sanderson made a motion to pay the Loyal Energy Trading claims that were held from payment last week. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF BULK USER AGREEMENT

A new bulk user agreement is needed due to the increase in cost per image to 13 cents. The Recorder receives 10 cents per image. Michael Watson made a motion to approve the updated Bulk User Agreement. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF AIRPORT BOARD APPOINTMENT

John Chalmers is interested in getting back on the Airport Board to complete Mr. Starkey's remaining term. Russ Couchman said he and the Board worked very well with Mr. Chalmers when he was on the Board and would be happy to have him back. The Commissioners like the fact that he has good experience. Michael Watson made a motion to appoint John Chalmers to the Airport Board to fill Donn Starkey's remaining term. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF FEASIBILITY FOR ADDITION TO ANNEX BUILDING

Todd Sanderson made a motion to engage the services of Jeremy Bowers for \$3,500 to draft an engineering plan for adding a second floor to the Annex Building entry area. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF TRAVEL COSTS FOR NATIONAL DRUG CONFERENCE (PROBATION)

Ryan Hull explained to the Commissioners that the Family Restoration Court and Veterans Court are anticipating traveling to Washington DC August 13-18 for a conference. Some team members would like to stay longer in DC and are wanting to pay for their flight and be reimbursed for the difference had they flown on the same dates as the rest of the team members. Judge Grimm was going to do the same last year had the team gone to California before it was canceled due to COVID. Is it ok for the team members to purchase the flight and then be reimbursed this way? None of this travel will be out of the County's general fund. It will be funded by grants and user fees. Michael Watson made a motion to allow team members to purchase the flights to Washington DC for an extended period but be reimbursed only for the portion it costs for the required flights that will be scheduled for the rest of the team members. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF CREDIT APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Todd Sanderson made a motion to sign the credit application for Community Corrections for Kendall Electric. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF PHONE FOR PUBLIC IN OFFICES

After last week's appointment with Treasurer Wilcox, the Commissioners wished to speak to I.S. Director Jack Smith about the logistics of adding a phone line for the public in offices. He explained that most of the offices are not equipped to support adding a phone line, and many do not want a phone line due to the disruption it would cause. If a phone were made available in the rotunda, he would recommend a hard wired phone as opposed to a wireless. The courthouse used to have a pay phone in the rotunda.

However, anymore, most people don't know the phone numbers of people who are in their contact list on their cell phones. And, many patrons who need to use their phone are looking something up rather than making phone calls. How would you handle long distance calls?

Before courthouse security was in place, cell phones had been used in violation of court rules by recording jurors and children. Sheriff Cserep said if the Commissioners decide to allow cell phones in the courthouse, he would like them to put it in writing that they are taking on the liability.

People outside a courtroom or outside of the courthouse can just as easily take pictures of jurors when they have left the courtroom. Is banning cell phones truly the answer? Commissioner Watson believes there's a fine line between providing a convenience for patrons and courthouse security.

Later in the meeting, Treasurer Wilcox requested to talk further about this issue. She said the public terminal that used to be in the Treasurer's Office was only used for credit card transactions, and it did not work very well because patrons needed assistance. There was further discussion about cell phone availability vs. security for the courts. The Commissioners are on the fence about this and agree that there needs to be more discussion. No action was taken.

MATTER OF CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS

Brian Humbarger first updated the Commissioners on the Motorola radio project. The Motorola system has been installed. Mr. Humbarger would like to wait a month or so before having the Commissioners sign off on the project. One nice feature that they didn't realize until just recently is that this system has a cellular back-up line which means they have greater redundancy.

Second, the City would like to take down their 160 foot tower due to age, bird traffic, and to relocate resources. Mr. Humbarger understands that the City of Auburn would like to exchange their tower for the railroad bridge. He explained that the tower rusts from the inside out, and you don't know what kind of condition it may be in until it is dismantled. The Sheriff and the Highway are both going to need to have their towers relocated. It would cost approximately \$50,000 to relocate each. Mr. Humbarger proposes that either the County or the City and County combine their resources for one 180 foot tower at Central Communications. It would cost \$300,000-\$500,000 to do this. Could some of the Rescue Bill money be used for this since it would be considered infrastructure? It would save the \$710 per month Central Communications currently pays to the City of Auburn for tower rent. And, having the tower would provide more redundancy. It would save the \$50,000 relocation cost for the Highway and Sheriff, saving the County approximately \$100,000.

Mr. Humbarger was asked what the back-up plan is if the tower crashes? He said Central Communications would be able to still use the tower at State Route 8 and County Road 35.

The Commissioners are interested in pursuing this idea. No action was taken.

MATTER OF RESCINDING 2021-R-10

Todd Sanderson made the motion to rescind 2021-R-10 (UDO 69) and restore 1.26 and 1.27 of the UDO to what they were prior to the passage of 2021-R-10. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved. Authority to hire the Zoning Administrator will remain with the Plan Commission.

MATTER OF HIGHWAY

The Covered Bridge has incurred extra costs as various problems have been uncovered during the restoration project. There were two, 10-foot lateral rods that were unsalvageable and needed to be replaced for \$1,930. After some discussion as to where this should be paid from, and it was decided that this can be paid for out of the Covered Bridge Maintenance Fund 1134.

The Holiday Lakes paving project is set, and the lower section in the flood fringe will be paved. Todd Sanderson made a motion to sign the Invitation to Quote for the Holiday Lakes Addition Paving Project. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

Other Highway discussion topics: Henderson property wetland delineation services; mower help; and summer hours;

MATTER OF PART TIME POSITION FOR RECORDER’S OFFICE

Recorder Leta Hullinger requested another part time position for her office. Her first deputy is going to be out of the office for a significant amount of time due to personal circumstances. This leaves only one other employee to handle the counter and phone calls besides the Recorder. She is concerned about having to close the office when she doesn’t have adequate coverage. Ms. Hullinger is going to need to be out of the office periodically this year in order to get her training hours in. Also, there is a possibility of the first deputy retiring, so having another person trained would be helpful. The job description for this position is that of the second deputy’s with indexing records added to it. The job description has been sent to the Council’s sub-committee for their review. Ms. Hullinger has a part time position already, but duties are limited to indexing records only.

Michael Watson made a motion to approve the hiring of another part time person for the Recorder’s Office. Todd Sanderson seconded, and all approved. Ms. Hullinger will pay this person out of her perpetuation fund through the end of 2021. She will get this position in her County General budget for 2022.

MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION

Other discussion topics included: solar ordinance; Loyal Energy Trading vs. NIPSCO; waiting another month before making drinking fountains available to public again; setting up Commissioners’ portal on the intranet; and possible uses of Rescue Bill money.

William L. Hartman – President

Michael Watson – Vice President

Todd Sanderson – Vice President

Attest:

Jan Bauman, Auditor