

DEKALB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

May 24, 2021

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

Others Present: Auditor Jan Bauman
Attorney James P McCanna

Absent: Vice President Todd Sanderson – ATTENDED BY PHONE

Although Commissioner Sanderson was absent, he called in to participate by phone. Commissioner Sanderson did not vote. Votes recorded during the meeting were for Commissioner Watson and President Hartman only.

MATTER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The main topic of conversation was the employee health insurance renewal. The Commissioners had narrowed their decision to three choices: stay with AJ Gallagher and PHP, stay with AJ Gallagher and switch to Anthem, or switch to both Insurance Trustees and Anthem.

Going with Insurance Trustee and Anthem would save the county \$140,000 compared to staying with AJ Gallagher and PHP. Commissioner Watson said cost is only part of the equation. Commissioner Watson gave his perspective that Gallagher has been a good partner for the County. He is concerned about what it takes to switch over to a new broker, new company, and new plan. Gallagher has been great with customer service with a proven track record. Changing everything entirely would result in a lot of work logistically to make a smooth transition. After receiving our business will Anthem increase the cost in the second year unrelated to the County's actual claims?

Commissioner Sanderson said PHP, Gallagher, Anthem and Insurance Trustees all are reputable and would do well for the County. He doesn't think we can make decisions based on the amount of work it may cause for some people. For those who are worried about Anthem coming back and gouging us next year, Anthem risks harming their reputation in the industry if they do that. PHP charges more per employee for their fee. Insurance Trustees is a DeKalb County company that pays taxes in DeKalb County and employs people in DeKalb County. We can always go back to Gallagher and PHP if we are not happy with the change.

President Hartman noted that by going with Insurance Trustees, we would have a local agent that would go to bat for us. Who would absorb the \$140,000 price tag if we stayed with PHP? He believes that cost should be absorbed by the employees.

Ms. Miller mentioned that Delta Dental and medical are bundled with the Insurance Trustees quote. Our vision plan does not come due for renewal until next year. She doesn't think we can cancel the contract, so we may need to have vision coverage with both carriers for one year.

There was discussion about the current tough insurance market and that some companies have declined on bidding health insurance for the County and may decline next year as well.

Ms. Miller said she would expect a new broker to provide the same stellar service that Gallagher has provided.

Another potential problem is what happens if Anthem and Parkview have another falling out?

Commissioner Watson asked whether the employees would get credit for the deductibles they have paid through June of this year if the County changes to Anthem? Yes, they would.

Michael Watson made a motion to switch the County employee health insurance to Anthem but to stay with Gallagher. The County would pick up the increase from last year's premiums to this year's premiums, and he would be open to discussing how the \$11 difference in administrative fee per employee would be allocated. Continuity with employees and with the administrative side are extremely important. After a long period of discussion, President Hartman declined to second the motion. He would second a motion to stay with Gallagher and PHP and pass along the \$140,000 cost difference to the employees, however. Motion failed.

Commissioner Watson said he does not think a complete change is in the best interest of the County and the employees, but he also knows that time is of the essence, and waiting another two weeks before a decision is made would require a scramble to meet the deadline. Reluctantly, Michael Watson made the motion to change to Insurance Trustees and Anthem and for the County to absorb the increase in costs so employee premiums can remain unchanged. He is not comfortable with the move. William Hartman seconded the motion, and all approved.

Other HR topics discussed: open and filled positions.

MATTER OF MINUTES

Michael Watson made the motion to approve the minutes from May 17, 2021. William Hartman seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF CLAIMS

Michael Watson made the motion to approve General Claims consisting of warrant #131904 through 131909 in the amount of \$12,496.14, and wire transfer #17906 through 18022 in the amount of \$402,893.37. William Hartman seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF TRAVEL REQUESTS

Michael Watson made a motion to approve the following travel requests as presented:

- 1) Mike Watson (Commissioner) to attend the IACC ARP Fund Seminar on June 10th in Plainfield. Estimated cost of \$182.56 to be paid from Commissioners' travel.
- 2) Ben Parker and Mark Goodrich (Highway) to travel to Carmel on June 3 for the IADHES Conference/LTAP Awards. No expenses will be claimed.
- 3) Matt Tamez and Thomas Elliott (Sheriff) to travel to Kendallville July 14-15 for Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement Training. No expenses to be claimed.

William Hartman seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

HVAC system is complicated and software based. Her staff is needing to reach out to the company quite often. She doesn't want to pay for a service call every time. The Commissioners are frustrated that the complexity of the system ends up costing the County more because we need assistance to use the system. They feel the building may have been over-engineered than what was really necessary.

Michael Watson made a motion to approve the 3-year inspection agreement with Innovative Control Systems, LLC for the net sum of \$5,983. William Hartman seconded, and all approved. The contract term is May 1, 2021-April 30, 2024.

Michael Watson made a motion to sign the Innovative Control Systems proposal of a not-to-exceed amount of \$820 for a larger damper actuator installation on RTU-1. Michael Watson seconded, and all approved.

Ms. Knauer would like permission to install 2 power outlets on the backside of the observation deck in the residential housing area to accommodate vending machines. Community Corrections is required to provide on-demand items to the residential participants, and it is included in the new Memorandum of Understanding with the Sheriff who will provide oversight of Commissary programs in our building. The Commissioners would like to know how much the installation of outlets will cost before she proceeds with the actual work. No action was taken.

Ms. Knauer gave a brief overview of HB 1068 which passed this year. More information will be forthcoming.

MATTER OF RESOLUTION 2021-R-14 APPROVING TRANSFER OF REAL ESTATE

Michael Watson made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-R-14, A Resolution of the Commissioners of DeKalb County Approving the Transfer of Real Estate from the County of DeKalb to the City of Auburn, Indiana. William Hartman seconded. A roll vote was taken. Michael Watson – Aye. William Hartman – Aye. Motion passed. This is for the County Highway property located on East Ensley for an amount of \$305,000. Closing on the sale is not anticipated until the end of 2021. The Commissioners want to make sure they that the purchase of the Henderson property in Waterloo is definite. They are also mindful of the fact that after the sale is complete with the City of Auburn, the clock starts ticking on the 24-month rent-free clause in the resolution.

MATTER OF COUNTY BUILDINGS

The Commissioners gave their consensus to uncover the drinking fountains after receiving guidance from Dr. Souder.

Precision Graphics quoted \$225 to do a 22" x 6' sign for the south side of 220 building and \$250 to do a 20" x 77" sign for the east side of the 220 building. Michael Watson made a motion to accept the Precision Graphics quote of \$475 to do signage for the south and east sides of the 220 East 7th Street building. William Hartman seconded, and all approved. This will be paid out of LITED #62.

MATTER OF SOLAR FARM ORDINANCE

The Commissioners briefly discussed some of the issues surrounding solar farm ordinances. These include setbacks from residences, setbacks from property lines, setbacks for fences, toxic waste, and woods and wetlands that may be affected. A couple of these issues may be considered overreach and not included in the County's ordinance.

Dennis Brink of 5581 County Road 72 brought has researched solar farms and brought some articles that he had read. The biggest concern for him personally is the toxic waste disposal at the end of the life cycle. Some of the highlights from these articles included bankruptcies of solar companies, more sources of energy sources on the transmission lines and peaks and valleys associated with solar energy, property values, microclimate underneath the solar panels, pollinators, and wasted energy.

The Commissioners appreciated the information brought forth by Mr. Brink. The Commissioners are not anti-solar, but they need to keep the protection of the citizens as a priority.

MATTER OF HIGHWAY

Ben Parker said a small wooden structure on Center Street is on the County's inventory that really is under the jurisdiction of the governing body where it is located, which would be the City of Auburn. Why it is on the County's inventory is unknown. Maintenance of the structure is the responsibility of Auburn City.

Projects: Microsealing will start June 14 on County Road 40. Pipes at Holiday Lakes are getting replaced to fix drainage issues; mid-to late June is when the road work in Holiday Lakes will begin. The Community Crossings project probably won't start now until July. The guardrails are coming along at the covered bridge. Work is resuming on the County Road 62 extension project; they have 80 days to complete it.

MATTER OF OTHER DISCUSSION

Other discussion topics included: ARP committee; moving forward with bidding process for CR 61 property;

William L. Hartman – President

Michael Watson – Vice President

Todd Sanderson – Vice President

Attest:

Jan Bauman, Auditor