

DEKALB COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

June 7, 2021

The following Council Members were present:

President Richard Ring
Member Eldonna King
Member David Yarde
Member Amy Demske
Member Amy Prosser

Others present:

Auditor Jan Bauman
First Deputy Auditor Susan Sleeper
Attorney Donald J Stuckey

Absent:

Member Robert E. Krafft – attended electronically
Vice President William VanWye

Although Councilman Krafft attended electronically, he did not vote. All of the references to voting in the minutes are for the five Council members who were present in Commissioners Court.

MATTER OF MINUTES

David Yarde made a motion to approve minutes dated May 3, 2021. Amy Prosser seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

David Yarde made a motion to approve Human Resources' \$1,000 additional appropriation request to Other Service Fees (32780) and \$5,000 request to Consultant Fees (32840) within the County General Fund (1001). Second by Eldonna King. There was discussion about the services WIS provides and expected needs for this year. A vote was taken. With 4 ayes and 1 nay, motion passed.

MATTER OF TRANSFERS

Eldonna King made a motion to approve the Commissioners' request to transfer \$3,000 from Courthouse Part Time (10750) to Grounds Maintenance (33600) within the County General Fund (1001). David Yarde seconded, and all approved.

Eldonna King made the motion to approve Superior Court I's request to transfer \$54.54 from Food Supplies (22250) to Lodging, Meals for Jurors (33190) within the County General Fund (1001). Amy Demske seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF FINANCIAL REPORT BY FUND

The Council certified that they have received and reviewed the May 2021 Financial Report by Fund.

MATTER OF FY 21-22 JUVENILE GRANT BUDGET

Director Kellie Knauer explained her Juvenile Grant budget. It runs on a fiscal year basis. At this point, no wage increases have been given to anyone. She is waiting for guidance from Council.

This will most likely be the last year for Community Corrections to administer the Change Academy. The Change Academy will transition to school based program after this year.

MATTER OF DEKALB COUNTY AIRPORT UPDATE

There was no report for this meeting.

MATTER OF SALARY & HOURLY WAGE AMENDMENT ORDINANCE 2021-OCC-12

This is to establish a part time position for the Veterans Service Office.

Amy Prosser made a motion to approve the 2021 Salary and Hourly Wage Amendment Ordinance 2021-OCC-12 on the FIRST Reading. David Yarde seconded, and all approved.

David Yarde made a motion to suspend the rules to pass the 2021 Salary and Hourly Wage Amendment Ordinance 2021-OCC-12 and read by title only on the 2nd and 3rd Readings. Amy Prosser seconded, and all approved.

Amy Prosser made a motion to approve the 2021 Salary and Hourly Wage Amendment Ordinance 2021-OCC-12 on the SECOND and THIRD Readings. Eldonna King seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF ATTENDING MEETINGS ELECTRONICALLY

President Ring introduced a sample resolution which would allow members of the County Council to participate in meetings by electronic means of communication. If a member attends via Zoom, votes would have to be taken as roll call votes. At least 50% of the members must s must be physically present for any given meeting. A member may attend two consecutive meetings electronically, but the third meeting could not be attended electronically. Other restrictions in the resolution per statute were brought to Council's attention. And, the public must be able to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting, but the ability to comment is not a stipulation.

President Ring mentioned that he would like to have Council's meetings live streamed for the public and that the I.S. Department can look at the best way to accomplish this. Council would like Attorney Stuckey to prepare a resolution for Council to consider at the July meeting. The resolution can be in place for when the technological aspect of streaming the meetings comes together.

MATTER OF REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY CF-1 ABATEMENT FORMS

The Abatement Committee met this morning at 8:17 a.m. All companies were visited, and all are in compliance with regard to the site visits. The committee reviewed the CF-1 forms for companies requesting abatements for pay 2022. Amy Demske made a motion that the Committee recommend approval for the companies that submitted their CF-1 on a timely basis. Eldonna King seconded, and all approved. Paragon Steel, Techo-Bloc, and MCP Investments (personal property) were in compliance as far as their site visit is concerned, but they did not file their forms in a timely manner and will need to file a request for a waiver of non-compliance before their abatement deduction can be applied to their personal property for pay 2022. Eldonna King moved to adjourn at 8:22 a.m. Second by Amy Demske, and all approved.

Amy Demske motioned to approve the abatements for the 2021 pay 2022 tax year and for the President to sign. Second by Eldonna King, and all approved. *Real property abatements* were approved for the

following companies: Jeremy & Jennifer Lutter, MCP Investments, LLC, Nucor Fastener Division of Nucor, and Steel Dynamics, Inc. **Personal property abatements** were approved for the following companies: Magic Coil Products, LLC, Nucor Fastener Division of Nucor, Rhinehart Development Corporation, Rhinehart Finishing, and Steel Dynamics, Inc.

MATTER OF COMMISSIONERS-COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Henderson property: Commissioner Sanderson informed Council that Todd Bower with Foresight will be helping with the development plan. Closing on the Henderson property won't happen until everything is settled and development plans have been approved by Waterloo.

Sale of East Ensley (Highway Dept): The Commissioners are waiting to close on the property until they know the development plans have been approved by Waterloo for the Henderson property.

Covered bridge: The Commissioners are hoping to have a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 26th, but due to the contractor's trailer having been stolen which held the contractor's tools and the historic marker, there is a possibility that the bridge will not be ready in time. The guardrail will be installed soon, however.

New Jail: Elevatus is going to do the jail design to 95% completion.

Railroad Bridge: The City of Auburn is going to purchase the old railroad bridge for \$50,000. They are going to do some additional checking to make sure the "historic" designation no longer applies and won't affect what they want to do with the bridge.

Employee Health Insurance: The Commissioners have changed from PHP to Anthem through Insurance Trustees. Anthem will now do the dental and vision coverage as well.

ARP Fiscal Recovery Funds - The Commissioners are putting together a committee made up of a cross-section of the County to help the Commissioners come up with the best ways to spend the \$8.4 million. The deadline to spend the money is the end of 2024.

Appreciation dinner for COVID vaccine clinic workers: This was held on June 1st. The leadership at the clinic was fantastic, and the clinic was a top notch operation. President Ring commended Cheryl Lynch and Jason Meek. Councilwoman King added that high quality of our County employees are saving the taxpayers' dollars. The taxpayers did not pay for anything related to this dinner. All expenses were paid through donations.

60-day moratorium on commercial solar fields: The Commissioners are putting together a solar farm ordinance to protect the citizens. Reasonable setbacks will be incorporated into the ordinance.

MATTER OF FISCAL PLAN UPDATE

Jeff Peters presented his fiscal plan to Council. He began by explaining that the State distributed the full amount of income taxes in 2021 based on 2019's income tax collections. They have not accounted for income loss from 2020 as of yet. In the Fiscal Plan again this year, Mr. Peters has applied the "worst case scenario" to 2022 through 2025 figures. The State is probably underestimating the revenue for the Highway and Local Road and Street.

Regarding the American Rescue Plan Act, when the federal guidelines came out, they indicated that you should look at revenue losses for the unit as a whole rather than each revenue stream as the State Board of

Accounts had originally explained. State Board of Accounts is going to make the County spend everything directly from the American Rescue Plan fund.

The County is in a much better cash position now than in years past. Mr. Peters explained various pages of the Fiscal Plan. He said that in 2025, the County may need to consider a wheel tax to assist with Highway revenue.

President Ring asked Mr. Peters if a 2% or 2.5% increase to budgets would be reasonable for department heads this year. He said that type of increase is. His implemented a 3% increase in the Fiscal Plan.

Mr. Peters was asked whether any of the new Highway Department buildings could be used from the Rescue Plan monies. He said most likely not, unless the new buildings can be cleanly tied to a COVID related reason for adding them.

President Ring informed Mr. Peters that employee pay rates need to be the focus for the 2022 budget. Mr. Peters would like to know if by doing this there will be a sustained change in the percentage of unexpended budgets at the end of the year so he can build it into future fiscal plans.

MATTER OF ORDINANCE 2021-OCC-11, LOCAL INCOME TAX RATE MODIFICATION

President Ring read proposed Ordinance No. 2021-OCC-11, County Council Ordinance Modifying Local Income Tax Rates Imposed in DeKalb County. This would raise the Correctional Facilities Local Income Tax from .13% to .20%. The money could accumulate and be used in anticipation of building the jail. He explained again that the clock is ticking on the Correctional Facilities Local Income Tax. Council will not do anything regarding a jail, however, until the Commissioners bring them a plan. President Ring said he would entertain a motion. There were no comments by any of the Council members, and the matter died for lack of a motion.

MATTER OF LIFESAVING AWARD FOR SERGEANT DEREK BERGDALL

Sheriff Cserep presented a Lifesaving Award to Sergeant Derek Bergdall. The Citation accompanying the award read as follows:

On May 5th 2021 at approximately 08:30 am, DeKalb County Sheriff Sergeant responded to the 1100 block of County Road 5 Corunna Indiana where a 911 call was placed of a female down. Sergeant Bergdall arrived on scene with his AED defibrillator. Sergeant Bergdall along with EMT's and Corunna Firefighters performed CPR on the victim, administering oxygen, and AED defibrillation. The first responder efforts lasted over an hour until a pulse had been established. The victim was rushed to Parkview Regional Medical Center and then to the Heart Institute. The victim, Cheryl Hitzemann lived for another two days, until May 7th, 2021, where her husband and sister could say goodbye to Cheryl.

Thanks to the efforts of Sergeant Derek Bergdall, Cheryl Hitzemann was able to be with her family for two more days before passing, surrounded by her family.

Deputy Bergdall demonstrated those values of selfless service, unhesitating courage, and decisive actions which are consistent with

the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office and played a pivotal role in saving the life of Cheryl Hitzemann to say goodbye to her family before passing several days later. Sergeant Bergdall's actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of community service and reflect distinct credit up on himself, this Command, and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office.

MATTER OF SHERIFF'S PENSION FUND

The Sheriff's pension fund is doing very well. Sheriff Cserep thanked the Council for allowing the money to be put into the pension fund early last year so it can earn interest. He introduced Ron Dicke who is on the Merit Board. He was the one who had suggested the money be put in early. By doing what we did in 2020, the fund earned 30%. This is so beneficial because the result is that less contributions are needed.

Mr. Dicke talked about how important being competitive with benefits is to attract good job candidates. Some counties have adopted a retirement age of 52 instead of 55. The Merit Board would like to explore this for DeKalb County. The initial rough estimate for cost would be \$4,000 more per year total (not per employee). Attorney Stuckey said that the Commissioners would need to make the decision about retirement age, and then Council would need to make the decision about the funding. No action was taken.

MATTER OF JAIL INSPECTION REPORT

David Yarde made a motion that the Council has received the 2021 Jail Inspection Report. Amy Prosser seconded, and all approved.

GUIDANCE TO DEPARTMENT HEADS REGARDING 2022 BUDGET PREPARATION

Council's guidance to departments for their 2022 budgets is to increase their 2021 budget by no more than 2.5% to the budget's bottom line. If departments can cut back on operating expenses in favor of wages and stay within the 2.5%, they may do so. They still need to stay within the wage range of each employee's job classification category, and Council will have final determination of wages. Councilwoman King added that departments should not create such a low operating balance that would force them to come back in 2022 with additional appropriations requests because too much was cut out. President Ring would like Council to keep in mind the premiums that employees need to pay for their health insurance. Benefits are very important, and wages should not be eaten up by higher and higher premiums. Finally, he said that Council really needs to work on getting wages increased for positions that are still lagging from what the WIS study had recommended a couple of years ago.

MATTER OF ADJOURNMENT

President Ring mentioned the passing of Dr. William Hathaway and how his contributions to the community over the years were appreciated.

Amy Prosser made a motion to adjourn at 10:55 a.m. Second by Amy Demske, and all approved.

DEKALB COUNTY COUNCIL:

Richard Ring, President

William VanWye, Vice President

Eldonna King

Robert E. Krafft

David Yarde

Amy Demske

Amy Prosser

ATTEST:

Jan Bauman
DeKalb County Auditor