

DEKALB COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

May 4, 2020

The following Council Members were present:

President Richard Ring
Vice President William VanWye
Member Eldonna King – ATTENDED ELECTRONICALLY
Member Robert E. Krafft – ATTENDED ELECTRONICALLY
Member Martha Grimm
Member David Yarde
Member Amy Demske – ATTENDED ELECTRONICALLY

Others present: Auditor Jan Bauman
Attorney Donald J Stuckey

Due to the State’s temporary relaxation of meeting rules allowing members to attend the meeting electronically and still be allowed to vote (due to COVID-19), three members chose this option. They are denoted above.

David Yarde opened the meeting with prayer at 8:35 a.m.

MATTER OF MINUTES

Eldonna King made a motion to add the department name, Community Corrections, to the minutes for Transfers. William VanWye seconded, and all approved. Martha Grimm made a motion to approve minutes dated April 6, 2020 as corrected. William VanWye seconded, and all approved.

MATTER OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

William VanWye made a motion to approve the Airport’s \$700,000 additional appropriation request to Infrastructure (1490) within its Rainy Day Fund (245). Seconded by David Yarde. Motion carried.

R. Ring – Aye	M. Grimm - Aye
W. VanWye – Aye	D. Yarde – Aye
E. King – Aye	A. Demske - Aye
R. Krafft - Aye	

Sheriff Cserep explained that he received two quotes for 40 vests. The vests’ warranties expire every 5 years. William VanWye made a motion to approve the Sheriff’s \$43,960 additional appropriation request to Equipment (44430) within County General (1001). Seconded by David Yarde, and all approved.

R. Ring – Aye	M. Grimm - Aye
W. VanWye – Aye	D. Yarde – Aye
E. King – Aye	A. Demske - Aye
R. Krafft - Aye	

Robert Krafft made a motion to approve Highway’s \$62,000 additional appropriation request to Bridge #46 CR 15 (35011) within Cumulative Bridge (1135). Seconded by Amy Demske, and all approved.

R. Ring – Aye	M. Grimm - Aye
W. VanWye – Aye	D. Yarde – Aye
E. King – Aye	A. Demske - Aye
R. Krafft - Aye	

Martha Grimm made a motion to approve Community Corrections' \$7,733.07 additional appropriation request as follows: \$2,346.57 to Safety Supplies (22160), \$5,244.00 to Equipment (44430), and \$142.50 to Other Service Fees (32780) within IPEP (9111). Seconded by William VanWye, and all approved.

R. Ring – Aye	M. Grimm - Aye
W. VanWye – Aye	D. Yarde – Aye
E. King – Aye	A. Demske - Aye
R. Krafft - Aye	

There was discussion about grants in general and whether they will dry up due to the economic downturn.

MATTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Anton King presented a re-cap of 2019, updated the current situation, and the new fee for services agreement.

2019 was a very good year with 21 different deals won that had a focus on industrial expansion and retail development. Total investment in DeKalb County was \$29,207,850. Out of 113 leads received, 72 leads were worked. And 1,254 jobs were retained.

Although the unemployment numbers are high currently, this should come back down. There is no indication from larger employers that lay-offs due to COVID-19 will be on a permanent basis. A COVID resource page has been created on the DCEDP web site that pools data and offers resources to businesses. The DCEDP expects to see a strong 2021.

President Ring commented how Anton King has been a very good lead person to bring business to DeKalb County and to help businesses navigate through the process of agreements. Robert Krafft expressed admiration for the work Mr. King does.

The 2020 fee for services agreement is \$91,097, which is an increase of approximately \$15,000. The rate has not been increased for several years. The Commissioners will enter into this agreement in their regular meeting.

All of the municipalities in DeKalb County are members of the Partnership, as are quite a few businesses, including Steel Dynamics, Parkview DeKalb, Michael Kinder & Sons, Indiana Michigan Power, Noble REMC, 1st Source Bank, DeKalb Molded Plastics, Ambassador Enterprises, Midwest Film Factory, Building Contractors Association of Northeast Indiana, Lake City Bank, KeyBank, Bona Vita Architecture, and the Zacher Company.

MATTER OF SALARY & HOURLY WAGE AMENDMENT ORDINANCE 2020-OCC-6

This ordinance addresses the Health Department's Assistant Nurse's FLSA status that needs to be changed from hourly to exempt because the position is exempt from overtime.

William VanWye made a motion to approve the 2020 Salary and Hourly Wage Amendment Ordinance 2020-OCC-6 on the FIRST Reading. Eldonna King seconded, and all approved.

R. Ring – Aye	M. Grimm - Aye
W. VanWye – Aye	D. Yarde – Aye
E. King – Aye	A. Demske - Aye
R. Krafft - Aye	

Martha Grimm made a motion to suspend the rules to pass the 2020 Salary and Hourly Wage Amendment Ordinance 2020-OCC-6 and read by title only on the 2nd and 3rd Readings. William VanWye seconded, and all approved.

R. Ring – Aye	M. Grimm - Aye
W. VanWye – Aye	D. Yarde – Aye
E. King – Aye	A. Demske - Aye
R. Krafft - Aye	

David Yarde made a motion to approve the 2020 Salary and Hourly Wage Amendment Ordinance 2020-OCC-6 on the SECOND and THIRD Readings. Martha Grimm seconded, and all approved.

R. Ring – Aye	M. Grimm - Aye
W. VanWye – Aye	D. Yarde – Aye
E. King – Aye	A. Demske - Aye
R. Krafft - Aye	

MATTER OF EFFECT OF ECONOMIC DOWNTURN ON COUNTY FINANCES

Auditor Bauman explained several things to Council so they would have an understanding of the County's fiscal health.

First, property taxes in 2019 brought in approximately \$8 million to County General. Income taxes brought in approximately \$4 million to County General.

Second, the levied funds (funds that depend on property taxes and have a tax rate) are County General, Reassessment, Debt Service, Cumulative Bridge, Health, and Cumulative Capital.

Third, bond payments will not be affected. The Central Communications Building Bond Debt is property tax based. However, it was originally set up to have one payment's worth of cushion. So, there is enough money in the fund right now to pay the June debt service payment even before property taxes are distributed at June settlement. The Community Corrections Bond Debt is income tax based. We won't see an effect from 2020 until 2022. Also, the tax rate was set up at the onset of the debt to collect more than what was needed to make bond payments. This was part of the requirement by the State for this type of income tax rate the County chose to collect. Therefore, the fund balance will continue to grow as long as Council doesn't budget all of it for Community Corrections' operations. Council had decided from the beginning that it would not budget more than \$125,000 for the facility's operating expenses. If this remains the practice, in a few years there will be enough money in the fund to pay the debt early.

Next, it was explained that even though property tax payments are due to the Treasurer by May 11th, the State has allowed penalties for late payments to not apply until after July 10th. The concern is that large businesses may choose to wait until July 10th to pay, but many taxing units have bonds that are due by June 30th. They may need to take on short term loans to assist with those bond payments. Units were notified of this possibility by the Auditor and encouraged to reach out to larger businesses within their taxing district they have relationships with and ask if they could pay by May 11th if they are able.

Finally, the Highway is going to see an immediate decrease in funding from the gasoline tax since travel was restricted due to COVID-19. A 40% drop in revenues is expected. Highway Superintendent Ben Parker had been consulted about this prior to the meeting. He said that this decrease in revenues will not really affect his budget in 2020 since appropriations are set and monies are available to back his budget. However, the Highway's budget for 2021 will be affected for the Highway's Restricted, Unrestricted, and Local Road and Street funds. Mr. Parker is concerned about the "50/50" rule for spending from the

Restricted and Unrestricted funds. He would like County officials reach out to our legislators about reducing the 50% rule or removing it for this year and possibly next year, or ask for 70/30 instead of 50/50. President Ring mentioned that the legislature couldn't do anything until 2021 since they will not be meeting until then. One last thing the Mr. Parker had mentioned was depending on the length of the budget shortage along with the 50/50 rule, his department could be looking at less winter maintenance since that is all from unrestricted and a large cost to the county. Perhaps they may only plow after so many inches of snow or only salt intersections instead of the whole road. He said these are things they may have to consider in the future if this continues.

MATTER OF ABATEMENT DEADLINE EXTENSION BY STATE

The State has extended the deadline for CF-1's to be submitted. They are now not due by the property owner to the Designating Body and to the Auditor's Office until June 15th. Council has 45 days from the June 15th due date to deem a company in compliance or not in compliance, which would be July 30th. On the 46th day, or July 31st, the CF-1 is deemed to be in compliance if a designating body has not acted on it. The Abatement Committee would like a list of companies they visit annually before deciding whether they are in compliance.

MATTER OF COMMISSIONERS-COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Historic Bridge: The County is going to be responsible to repay the federal government \$62,882.13 for its portion of removing the bridge from County Road 75 over the CSX Railroad several years ago. This is because the County has not found a way to repurpose the bridge in a timely manner. This is the bridge that the City of Auburn would like to use as a walking bridge. The Commissioners are paying for this out of their LITED budget. The money may be able to be offset by the sale of a portion of it to the City, selling it for trail use, and outright selling it. The bridge will no longer deemed historic once payment gets made.

Joint Steuben-DeKalb Commissioners' Meeting: The intersection is angled. Highway has debrushed that corner. Three signs have been taken down. Visibility at the intersection is much better and is a temporary fix. Eventually, the hill will be dropped, and the intersection will either be realigned or a roundabout will be installed. These will be the responsibility of Steuben County. They intend to seek a grant to help with the cost.

Protocols for Reopening County Buildings: County buildings are open by appointment only beginning May 4th. Patrons are required to wear their own mask upon entry into the building. Patrons are required to clean their hands with sanitizer immediately after entering the building. Social distancing is required when working with patrons. Employees who work with patrons at the counter must wear a mask. This is for the two-week period beginning May 4, 2020. Richard Ring said he believes plexiglass should be permanently installed on all of the counters. The only two departments that will not be taking appointments are the Treasurer and Assessor's Offices. Community Corrections is bringing some staff back today and has its own reopening plan in place.

MATTER OF DEKALB COUNTY AIRPORT UPDATE

Although no one from the Airport Board was present for the meeting, a brief was sent to Council members.

The Airport should be closing on the Dickmeyer home within the next week or two. They will be installing a new roof on the Terminal this year. It is a roof system that adds insulation and will extend the life at least 20-years. Between the wetland purchase and the home purchase they will be seeking an

additional appropriation to their Rainy Day Fund this month. The Airport has submitted the final draft of the CR62 Road Extension Project for Ben Parker to review and then it will go to the Commissioners for review. They are still expecting federal grant money this year to complete the project. They will be receiving \$69,000 in CARES Act funding. The Board will be determining how to use the funds at their May meeting. The May meeting will most likely be held virtually via telephone and teleconference. Finally, DCAA staff is working from home to the extent possible. We come in to handle items that require them to be here. Maintenance staff are on-call for pop-up issues and have been coming in to make the summer changeover and to start mowing. A mask is worn when they cannot work independently. The FBO is remaining open though the stay-at-home order but the Airport is extremely slow with little to no corporate flying occurring. They have abated all rents for May and abated rents for commercial operators in April as well. Parkview continues to fly regularly, Paratus is readying for their flying season and has added multiple aircraft to their fleet to include a light twin, another helicopter and a small jet.

MATTER OF ADJOURNMENT

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

DEKALB COUNTY COUNCIL:

Richard Ring, President

William VanWye, Vice President

Eldonna King

Robert E. Krafft

Martha Grimm

David Yarde

Amy Demske

ATTEST:

Jan Bauman
DeKalb County Auditor