

**DEKALB COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

December 13, 2022

The following Council Members were present:

President Richard Ring  
Vice President William VanWye  
Member Eldonna King, absent  
Member Robert E. Krafft  
Member David Yarde  
Member Amy Demske  
Member Amy Prosser

Others present:

Auditor Susan Sleeper  
First Deputy Carla Winebrenner  
Attorney Donald J Stuckey, absent

Robert Krafft opened the meeting with prayer at 8:32 a.m.

**MATTER OF MINUTES**

David Yarde made a motion to approve minutes dated November 8, 2022. Amy Demske seconded, and all approved.

**MATTER OF NEPOTISM CERTIFICATIONS**

Auditor Sleeper collected the nepotism certifications from Council.

**MATTER OF ADDITIONALS**

No additional for December

**MATTER OF TRANSFERS**

David Yarde made a motion to approve the Coroner's transfer of \$750.00 from Coroner Transportation (33235) to Deputy Coroner (11255) within the General Fund (1001). Robert Krafft seconded and all approved.

William VanWye made a motion to approve Probation's transfer request of \$980.00 from Overtime (11050) to Probation Officer (11509) with in the General Fund (1001). David Yarde seconded and all approved.

David Yarde made a motion to approve Central Communication's transfer request of \$25,000 from Dispatch Trainer (11447) to Overtime (11050) with in the LIT Public Safety Fund (1170). Amy Demske seconded and all approved.

Robert Krafft made a motion to approve the Highway's transfer request of \$7,500 from Overtime (11050) to Equipment Operator (11470) within the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund (1176). William VanWye seconded and all approved.

## **MATTER OF FINANCIAL REPORT BY FUND**

The Council certified that they have received and reviewed the November 2022 Financial Report by Fund.

## **MATTER OF AIRPORT UPDATE**

### **New Business**

- The Grade and Drain portion of the Runway 9/27 Extension Project is complete.
- The tree removal portion of the 2023 Paving and Lighting project was completed in November.
- Sweet Aviation had a very successful opening on November 1. There were not hiccups whatsoever. They are slowly spooling up their flight school at GWB and their maintenance operation will be fully staffed in January of 2023.
- We expect to close on Meese Chapel any day now.
- The storm sewer rehabilitation project is complete with all drainage repaired and seeding/ground stabilization complete.
- All airport snow removal equipment has been serviced and is ready for winter ops and all staff members have been trained and otherwise re-familiarized with the equipment.

### **Old Business**

- The Paving and Lighting phase of the Runway Extension Project is mostly funded with the Certificate of Award and Contract completed with Fleming Construction.
- We continue to work with the Plan Commission on modifications to the Airport Overlay Districts within the UDO.

## **MATTER OF 2023 SHERIFF SALARY CONTRACT**

The Sheriff shall be paid a fixed amount of compensation in place of fee compensation in accordance with I.C. 36-2-13-2.8 in the amount of 70% of the full time Prosecutor's salary which calculates to \$115,693 for the calendar year 2023. The Commissioners approved the contract on December 12, 2022 contingent on DeKalb County Council's approval.

Amy Prosser made a motion to approve the 2023 Sheriff's Salary Contract. Robert Krafft seconded and all approved.

## **MATTER OF 2023 SALARY & HOURLY WAGE ORDINANCE: 2022-OCC-8**

Council President Ring read into the minutes Ordinance; 2022-OCC-8 The 2023 Salary & Hourly Wage Ordinance

**Robert Krafft made a motion to approve The 2023 Salary & Hourly Wage Ordinance: Ordinance 2022-OCC-8 on the FIRST Reading. David Yarde seconded and motion passed (5,1) with Prosser voting against.**

Discussion took place among the Council. Amy Prosser began with asking how the Longevity language was added to the Ordinance. Auditor Sleeper explained it was only added to contain the verbiage but the choice of leaving it on or changing the dollar amount would be up to the Council at this meeting. Councilman Ring reminded the Council of why we are at the position we are due to some employees that

were not getting a raise due to the increase in insurance premiums. Both Amy Prosser and Robert Krafft spoke a little on what was discussed at the Department Head Meeting. Amy Prosser also mentioned that we are trying to compare and raise wages to Private Sector and most the County only works 35 hours per week compared to 40 hours per week. David Yarde added that longevity is a completely new level of transparency and not picking favorites. William VanWye feels they should start at \$350 or \$400 for a year or two and see how things go; he agrees Amy Prosser's points are valid. Councilman Ring asked if longevity

**William VanWye made a motion to amend the ordinance to include longevity pay in \$400 increments beginning at year 5 and increasing at 10, 15, & 20. Robert Krafft seconded and further discussion took place. Amy Prosser stated she is totally against longevity all together.**

**A roll call vote was taken as below and motion passed (5,1)**

**Amy Prosser: nay  
Amy Demske: aye  
David Yarde: aye  
Robert Krafft: aye  
William VanWye: aye  
Rick Ring: aye  
Eldonna King: absent**

**William VanWye made a motion to suspend the rules to pass The 2023 Salary & Hourly Wage Ordinance:2022-OCC-8 with amendments by title only on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Readings. Robert Krafft seconded and all approved.**

**William VanWye made a motion to approve The 2023 Salary & Hourly Wage Ordinance: Ordinance: 2022-OCC-8 with amendments by title only on the SECOND and THIRD Readings. Robert Krafft seconded and motion passed (5,1) with Prosser voting against.**

#### **MATTER OF 2023 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE**

David Yarde made a motion to approve the 2023 Council Meeting Schedule as presented. William VanWye seconded, and all approved.

January 10:	Regular Meeting
February 14:	Regular Meeting
March 14:	Regular Meeting
April 11:	Regular Meeting
May 9:	Regular Meeting
June 13:	Regular Meeting
July 11:	Regular Meeting
August 8:	Regular Meeting
August 16:	Budget Presentations/Workdays
September 12:	Regular Meeting
Sept. 12-13:	Budget Public Hearing to begin after Regular Meeting
September 26:	Regular Meeting, Budget Adoption
November 15:	Regular Meeting
December 12:	Regular Meeting

**MATTER OF LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS**

William VanWye motioned to approve the annual Council Liaison and Appointments for 2023. Robert Krafft seconded, and all approved. They are as follows:

<b>2023 COUNCIL LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS</b>			
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>PERSON APPOINTED</b>	<b>TERM</b>	<b>DATE APPOINTED</b>
Board of Health Soil & Water Conservation Dist Building/Planning/GIS/BZA Surveyor's Office/Drainage Bd.	William VanWye	2023	12/13/2022
County Extension Services Coroner's Office Recorder's Office Airport	Rick Collins	2023	12/13/2022
Commissioners Central Dispatch/E-911 Sheriff's Dept/Jail/Merit Bd. Emergency Management	Richard Ring	2023	12/13/2022
Information Systems Auditor Remonstrance Board Sunny Meadows County Highway	Robert Krafft	2023	12/13/2022
Probation Public Defender Township Trustees Circuit Court Superior Court I & II	David Yarde	2023	12/13/2022
Prosecutor's/Title IV-D Community Corrections Treasurers' Office Clerk's/Voter Reg/Election Courthouse	Amy Demske	2023	12/13/2022
Assessor/Reassessment Weights & Measures NE Solid Waste Mgmt Dist. Veterans Service Office Human Resources	Amy Prosser	2023	12/13/2022

**MATTER OF APPOINTMENTS TO LOCAL BOARDS**

For the PTABOA Board, Assessor Stonebraker has done all she could to find qualified candidates who are Democrats.

William VanWye motioned to waive the political party requirement. Amy Demske seconded, and all approved.

William VanWye motioned to waive the level 2 or 3 certification due to the lack of qualified individuals holding the certification. Robert Krafft seconded, and all approved.

**Amy Demske made a motion to approve the following appointments:**

N.E. Solid Waste Management District: Amy Prosser (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Plan Commission: William VanWye (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Tax Abatement Committee: Amy Demske (Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 2023)

Richard Ring (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

David Yarde (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Jail Committee: William VanWye (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Robert Krafft (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

David Yarde (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Job Classification/ Compensation Committee: Robert Krafft (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Amy Demske (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Amy Prosser (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

N.E. IN Regional Coordinating Council: Richard Ring (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Waterloo-Grant Twp Public Library Board: Mavis Sutton (Jan. 1, 2023 – Dec. 31, 2026)

DeKalb County Redevelopment Commission: John Good (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Rick Walters (Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 2023)

PTABOA Board: Kyle Branscum (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Marcia Seevers (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

Alcohol & Tobacco Commission: Tyler Mckown (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)

**Robert Krafft seconded by and all approved.**

**MATTER OF YEAR END TRANSFER APPROVAL FOR THE AUDITOR**

David Yarde made a motion to approve for the Auditor to make needed end of year transfers within Departments' budgets to bring all accounts into compliance of the State Board of Accounts guidelines at the close of 12/31/2022. William VanWye seconded and all approved.

**MATTER OF COMMISSIONER-COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

**ARPA Plan:** Commissioner Watson presented the ARPA plan that was put together and approved by the ARPA Committee on Dec. 2, 2022 and approved by DeKalb County Commissioners on Dec. 5, 2022.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> proposal coming before the Council is as followed:

Commissioner Proposal #2:	
PROJECT	COST
	Awarded Amount \$8,430,000.00
Motioned by Pam Howard, 2nd by Mike Hartman all approved	
Highway Dept. Project	\$1,250,000.00
Broadband	\$2,000,000.00
Spillman Server Upgrade	\$88,000.00
Watchguard Cloud Conversion (1st year only out of 5 years)	\$63,106.00
Sunny Meadows addl. Funding	\$600,000.00
Solar Installation @ Community Corrections	\$500,000.00
Cisco Phone/network switches	\$78,000.00

DeKalb County Housing Study	\$26,000.00
Health Dept. COVID pay for exempt staff	\$15,000.00
Courthouse Generator	\$250,000.00
Waterloo Sewer Project	\$200,000.00
Drain/Ditch Engineering	\$600,000.00
Motioned by Brent Shull, 2nd by Robert Krafft all approved	
Highway Dept. Construction Contingency	\$461,127.00
County Dispatch Tower Upgrades	\$500,000.00
IT Dept. upgrades/cybersecurity	\$200,000.00
	<u>\$6,831,233.00</u>
<b>PROJECTS ALREADY APPROVED</b>	
Ashley/Steuben/DeKalb Sewer & Water Feasibility Study	\$21,667.00
Conditional Trails Grant Match & Engineering Fees	\$177,500.00
AV equipment for Commissioners Courtroom	\$39,600.00
Health Dept. Flu Vaccine for 2022	\$10,000.00
Sunny Meadows	\$150,000.00
Volunteer Fire Departments (10 @ \$75k)	\$750,000.00
	<u>\$1,148,767.00</u>
	subtotal
	Ending Balance
	\$450,000.00
<b>RESERVE FOR KNOWN EXPENSES</b>	
State Board Audits (5% of total, SBOA still suggesting 10%)	\$400,000.00
Baker Tilley Fees	\$50,000.00
	<u>\$0.00</u>
	Ending Balance including the Reserve S
	\$0.00

Robert Krafft made a motion to approve the ARPA Plan as presented by the Commissioners. David Yarde seconded and all approved.

A member of the public asked for clarification on what the Baker Tilly Fees line item consisted of and it was explained, due to the engaging of their services to be sure the County meets all the ARPA requirements.

**Highway Plan:** Commissioner Hartman announced that Elevatus would explain the plan. Tyler Wolfe with FCI construction is presenting the GMP to the Commissioners today, along with Carson Dick and Greg Martz. Tyler handed out a copy of the GMP to the Council that shows the scope of the design/project that compiles the Guaranteed Maximum Plan Price. The GMP came in at \$8,749,342.59 for a Total Contract Estimate and is broken down by \$8,710,000.56 of Estimated Construction Cost plus \$522,642.03 of Construction Contingency carried out by the County. Commissioner Ring reminded the Council and Public that they had directed the Commissioners to come in at or below \$10,000,000 and he feels the Commissioners have done a very fine job. Carson passed out the preliminary schedule assuming the project is approved this year and the plan is estimated to be done around October 2023. Councilman Krafft clarified from the Commissioners that the land use is all cleared up and good to go, and it is. Councilwoman Demske asked about utility prices and vendors in the location. Councilman Ring clarified what the Council actually needed to be approved to move forward. Greg Martz explained they are presenting the budget for the Council and the public to share information and see if the Council agrees and then will move forward with financing and come back, first with a public hearing in front of the Commissioners and then they will come back in front of the Council if they receive Commissioner approval. Councilman Krafft asked if there were any increase of cost figured in the estimate and FCI explained the method on how they arrived at the rates and they do factor in cost changes, they also explained the lead times are the bigger issue at this time. After clarification, Commissioner Watson explained that the \$1,250,000 that was just approved under the ARPA plan will come off of the total contract estimate. Commissioner Watson also mentioned that there could be a different financing option.

## **MATTER OF PUBLIC COMMENT ON ABATEMENTS ON SOLAR FIELDS**

Councilman Ring explained the solar abatements have not been granted as of now, and today the Council would be either direct or not to direct Attorney Stuckey to move forward on the

**Andrew Provines:** Thanked the Council for allowing them to speak and that they do school him every time he comes in and he appreciates the learning as well. Today he is talking about Economic Revitalization Area and what he has heard at the Tax Abatement Committee Meetings. He asked why the County would give an abatement to these companies when they clearly are going to come whether they get an abatement or not. He turned to the crowd and stated, "Solar is coming, why not get all our money and use it appropriately".

Councilman Ring explained with the economic development payment it would be in its own fund and they can direct it to specific projects and not to Highway. He also explained that part of the economic money can also be split and those units affected by the abatement can receive some of the money that they would have lost on the abated taxes.

**Jessica Shull:** Discussed the companies would come whether they received the tax abatement or not, and she cannot believe the County would make a business decision and leave millions on the table to get money to do what the County wants to do with it. She also discussed the need for housing and losing housing with solar and the comparison is not the same and does not make sense to her. She also asked where the money is going and states there is no budget yet, and no a plan.

**Jim Finan:** Deputy Director for Hoosiers for Renewables thanked for the opportunity to speak and gave the County credit for what they have done and will be doing in renewable energy. Jim shared that one thing that should not be lost in all of this is that there are jobs created, yes mostly construction related, but nonetheless these jobs infuse an economic uptick in the communities where these projects are being built and certainly in most counties where these projects are taking place the significant capital investment is making a measurable impact on the assessed valuation thus increasing the property tax base and reducing the property tax liability for those residents in the development counties. Jim's other point was to remind the Council and Public as you consider establishing an economic revitalization area for purposes of examining the financial impact and considerations for such renewable projects, please know that as Indiana makes access to renewable energy easier and readily available, it will make the Hoosier State more attractive to new businesses and existing businesses wishing to expand as these operations seek a renewable energy friendly business climate.

**Reed Davis:** Speaking on behalf of the Indiana Land and Liberty Coalition, that is a grassroots coalition consisting of farmers, landowners, private property rights advocates, and most importantly, conservatives. They travel the state attending local meetings advocating for the private property rights of our members and ensuring those rights are protected from government encroachment. Reed specifically wanted to speak on record in support of the Economic Revitalization Area in front of the Council today, as this is a preliminary but crucial first step in a long process and one that must not be overlooked. The Land and Liberty Coalition believe the Council should approve the ERA resolution. By passing the ERA resolution and having an economic development agreement is the best way to ensure that the County can take full advantage and have full control over the financial proceeds from this project. Reed expressed this is a unique opportunity that is critical for the County to leverage, if we don't, another county will and DeKalb may be at risk of missing out. The land that has been discussed as being 'lost land' is land that can come back after the end of the project. However, all the land that we see disappearing every day to become another subdivision is never coming back. Reed urges the Council to take full advantage and capitalize on these unique circumstances before us.

**Ginger Miller:** paraphrased what an economic revitalization area is in statute: an area which has become undesirable for, or impossible of, normal development and occupancy because of lack of

development, cessation of growth, or other factors which prevent a normal development (of property) or use of property from IC 6-1.1-12.1-1. The term also includes an area of land classified as agricultural land for property tax purposes that, as a condition of being designated an economic revitalization area, will be predominately used for agricultural purposes. Ginger expressed that property that is being considered and ERA is currently productive farmland, so how can it be considered undesirable or impossible of normal development? Ginger feels this boils down to HOW can DeKalb county farm ground be designated as an ERA when it is the polar opposite of the ERA definition. With the farm ground being able to have normal development and occupancy, why do we have state codes and local ordinances if they are not going to be followed? Ginger ended her time with asking the following three questions:

- 1) Are any of the 3,000 acres initially being considered for ERA any less desirable than the other 160,000 acres of farmland in the county?
- 2) If you are willing to set a precedent by voting for an ERA for these 3,000 acres, are you willing to vote the same, for another 10-30 thousand acres for industrial solar development? This is a valid question since we do not have a ca for solar in DeKalb County.
- 3) Why did the County abandon the approach of designating the entire county as an ERA?

**Lynn Reinhart:** Lynn was scheduled to speak but was unable to attend and sent an emailed letter to be included into the record of the meeting, this letter is included below:

Good morning Councilmen and Councilwomen,

I would like to take this time to ask you to take whatever action is necessary to proceed to move forward with conducting a public hearing in regards to determining some areas of Stafford and Wilmington Townships as Economic Revitalization Areas. I can't imagine any reason why you wouldn't take that step and welcome all of the information that would be presented to you so that you could make an informed decision at that time. From there you would ultimately be faced with making the decision to approve or deny any tax abatement requests. That, however, is not where you are at today.

You will most likely be encouraged to deny and stop this process by the "Stop Solar Farms DeKalb County" Facebook group. Whatever their claims are, as to whether solar is or isn't a viable alternative energy source, along with all of the other anti-solar rhetoric is irrelevant to the decision you need to make today, and even with the ultimate decision you will make in regards tax abatements sometime in the future. The decisions you need to make are fiscal, financially responsible decisions that you need to make in the best interest of every DeKalb county citizen that you represent.

There are multiple success stories from counties across Indiana that originally capitalized on the wind energy farms, and are still seeing the benefits today. Benefits from lower property tax rates for everyone because of the substantial increases in assessed values even in light of tax abatements on personal property to begin with. The big windfall, however, came from the huge Economic Development Agreements that were negotiated between the counties and the companies that were developing the projects. These are all entirely new funds that can be used by the communities to provide things that could have never happened otherwise. Things like high-speed broadband services that could serve the whole counties, not just the cities and business districts and leaving the rural communities behind. Funds for schools and fire departments/fire responders that they could only dream about before.

I believe that you were involved in the first Economic Development Agreement that brought new resources to DeKalb County as part of the Auburn Renewables solar installation. Continue to make the bold decisions that others before you have to improve the lifestyle of every citizen in DeKalb county. From the first plow to turn the soil by an early settler, to the railroads crossing our landscape to carry passengers and goods across this country, to the automotive heyday witnessed right here in Auburn, and the Interstate highway here on the outskirts of town, DeKalb county has been on the forefront of growth and development in the Midwest. Let's continue that vision which has brought us to where we are today, and see where it takes us in the future.

I could share many facts, details, and numbers with you, but I believe there will be plenty of additional opportunities to do that going forward in this process, so I won't take any more of your time today. I urge you to proceed with having a public hearing to classify the proposed areas as Economic Revitalization Areas.

Thank you for your time, and sorry that I couldn't be here today.

Lynn Reinhart  
4224 CR 71  
Butler, IN 46721



**MATTER OF COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AREA FOR SCULPIN AND THALASSA SOLAR PROJECTS**

Councilman Ring explained the Council has two projects in front of them that have both been in front of the Tax Abatement Committee. The Council needs to decide whether to ask their Attorney to move forward or not to move forward with the ERA Resolutions

Amy Prosser made a motion to delay the vote on whether to have the attorney move forward with the ERA Resolutions because she just got the score sheets. William VanWye seconded and motion passed (4,2) to delay

Prosser: aye	Krafft: nay
Demske: aye	VanWye: aye
Yarde: aye	Ring: nay

**Council Discussion:**

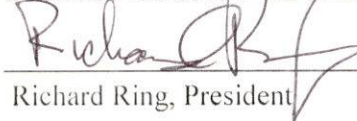
Tax Abatement: Rick announced that there is at least two if not more solar tax abatements coming down the pike as well as the farmers will now be able to apply for tax abatement.

Commissioner Watson stated a local farmer has just requested an SB-1 and tax abatement application and the process will be the same

**MATTER OF ADJOURNMENT**

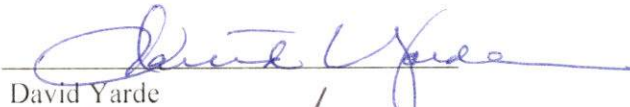
Amy Prosser made a motion to adjourn at 11:39 a.m. Second by Amy Demske, and all approved.

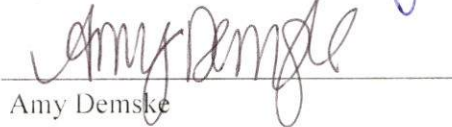
DEKALB COUNTY COUNCIL:

  
Richard Ring, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
William VanWye, Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert E. Krafft

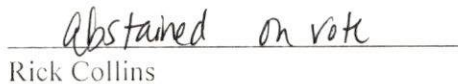
  
David Yarde

  
Amy Demske

  
Amy Prosser

ATTEST:

  
Susan Sleeper, DeKalb County Auditor

  
Rick Collins