

# THE WATCHDAWG REPORT

## The Fiscal Responsibility Act

Typically, national politics is not mentioned in this newsletter, but the incredible irony of even the name of this bill made me laugh...so I had to.

The **Fiscal Responsibility Act**, which will extend the debt ceiling to 2025 and establish a two-year budget agreement passed June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

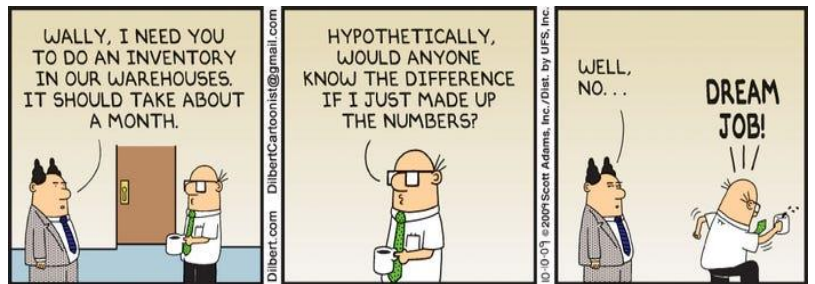
The bill is the result of a deal reached between Speaker Kevin McCarthy and President Joe Biden, which gives conservatives several ideological policy victories in exchange for their votes to raise the debt ceiling beyond next year's presidential election and into 2025. The policy "victories" include a non-defense spending cap, restarting student loan payment which was supposed to happen anyway, cutting IRS funding a little, and clawing back \$30 Billion in unspent COVID funds.

News reports had stated: "Most importantly, the bill would avert a potentially catastrophic U.S. debt default that the Treasury Department said will likely occur if Congress does not act to raise the nation's borrowing limit."

So, the can has officially been kicked down the road, with all the expected BS from both sides of the Uni-party. I do not think there would have been a "catastrophic" result if the Republicans had held firm and missed the deadline, do you? I think it is catastrophic that we don't balance our budget and stop the money laundering known as "foreign aid".

US Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer voted Yes  
No surprise. Who keeps electing him?

US Rep. Mark Alford voted No  
Senator Eric Schmidt voted No  
Senator Josh Hawley voted No  
Well done!



## Camden County

There is an update on the story of homeowners in the Cross Creek area of Linn Creek suffering from proximity to dangerous blasting even after DNR and County permits were pulled from One Source LTD. Commissioner James Gohagan and County Attorney Jeff Green inform that the county filed a preliminary injunction that successfully halted the blasting and other work at the site, and that criminal charges from the Prosecutor may be pending. Well done!

At the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, The Commission approved a contract for deputies to provide security for Shady Gators, apparently similar to the contract with Ozark Amphitheater. This is the security service by the county that Sheriff Helms was so excited about at a previous commission meeting. Apparently, it was possible to provide this extra service via a written contract, eliminating the business paying the officers directly (which never did sound right). It's nice to see that on some things, the county is moving away from "the way we've always done it" model. No one has mentioned if anyplace other than Shady Gators was provided service before.

You can read the full agreement at the county website.  
Go to [Camden.mo.org](http://Camden.mo.org),  
Click on "Commissioner Minutes" in the upper right.  
Choose May 25.  
Scroll past the meeting minutes to see the agreement.

Better agendas and meeting minutes than ever before these days.  
Thank you!

If you read the meeting minutes at [Camdenmo.org](http://Camdenmo.org) and the Gadfly's report at [amongthedogwoods.blog](http://amongthedogwoods.blog), you can get a very good view of Commission meeting activities.

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**The Bollinger Creek/Cemetery Issue** - The county has taken on the task of saving White-Woolery Cemetery from Bollinger Creek. According to our favorite Gadfly, the county approved \$80,000 of ARPA money back in 2022 for this project but the work was never undertaken. Bodies have apparently been washing away into the lake, and all agree that this is a very bad situation. The issue is currently tabled for further attention by the Commission. We hope they are considering these thoughts and questions:

1. The County does not own the land in or around the creek or the cemetery.
2. Why are county taxpayers responsible to pay for this project?
3. Even if it is ARPA \$, what precedent is being set? Will the county fix erosion at all cemeteries inside its borders?
4. What is the responsibility of the Army Corps of Engineers?
5. What is the responsibility of Ameren?
6. What is the responsibility of the Cemetery owners, and the property owners through which Bollinger Creek flows?

**For Federal Firearms License holders in Camden County** – As you may know the County will no longer respond to the ATF directly when requests come in for tax or zoning questions. Here's the steps you can follow to gather the information to provide directly to the ATF. It may also come in handy for other business owners as well:

To find information on taxes paid and proof no tax is owed:

1. Go to [Collector.Camdenmo.org](http://Collector.Camdenmo.org)
2. Follow instructions in the left column to pull up your property
3. Retain information on taxes paid in full.

To find information to fulfill an inquiry about zoning violations, this is suggested:

Send an email to Planning and Zoning Administrator Chase Parker

To: [chase\\_parker@camdenmo.org](mailto:chase_parker@camdenmo.org)  
Subject: Zoning Violation Inquiry

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm requesting information on my property regarding zoning violations. My address is \_\_\_\_\_. My parcel number is \_\_\_\_\_ (optional, found on your tax bill).

Please tell me what my property is zoned and is the zoning acceptable for a business.

Signed, (be sure to include good contact information in case there are questions)

This information allows P&Z to find the property by name, and if the name is not associated with the property, they can find it by the address. Remember, this only applies to zoned areas. Within these areas, businesses that existed before 2004 are grandfathered in, and there are circumstances of pre-existing nonconforming properties (no violation) that have been in place for more than 11 years.

The main point here is that it's best to pre-empt a request from the ATF if you are in Camden County, and make sure that you take the responsibility to provide what they need to secure or renew your FFL license. County Employees will not be allowed to answer ATF requests that come directly to County Offices.

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### **How to watch Camden County Commission Meetings On-Line**

The Commission meetings are now back inside the Courthouse and are available live on Zoom.

Meetings are typically Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 am

You can receive agendas the day before – send an email to Administrative Assistant Jordan Stanton at [Jordan\\_Stanton@camdenmo.org](mailto:Jordan_Stanton@camdenmo.org) and ask to be put on her distribution list. You'll receive the regular meeting agendas; the “working meeting” agendas that sometimes happen on Wednesdays; and the public meetings to review the newly revised Universal Land Use Code (ULUC) which we should all be interested in.

For the regular Tuesday and Thursday meetings

Go to [camdenmo.org](http://camdenmo.org).

Hover over “Departments” at the top of the page

Click on “Commission”

Scroll down almost to the bottom

To join a meeting live, Click “Watch Online Meeting”

“Zoom” will open in a new window.

If you do not have Zoom Client, look for “Download Now” in the middle of the page below “Launch Meeting”.

Click on “Open Zoom Meetings” at the top of the screen

Input your email

Join the meeting.

To view past meetings – In the same box as “Watch Online Meeting”, click on “View Past Meetings”  
A list of past meetings appears with a button that shows “View” beside each meeting listed.

### **To email your County Commissioners:**

First District Commissioner James Gohagan – [james\\_gohagan@camdenmo.org](mailto:james_gohagan@camdenmo.org)

Second District Commissioner Don Williams – [don\\_williams@camdenmo.org](mailto:don_williams@camdenmo.org)

Presiding Commissioner Ike Skelton – [ike\\_skelton@camdenmo.org](mailto:ike_skelton@camdenmo.org)

**To call your commissioners** – The number to the Commissioner’s office is 573-317-3850, then ask for whichever one you wish to speak with. They tend to take all calls and accept all visitors immediately.

**The Watchdawg Report** is forever and always about voters paying attention to the work performance of those we elect. When the constituency participates with their elected office holders, they have direct control of an agenda that puts focus on the things that are important to them.

In the interest of promoting that involvement, there are some things we need to look after with the 2023 Commission. They have solved some important issues for individual citizens, like the lady who needed her address changed to get mail service and roadway maintenance and giving the deserving citizens of Mack’s Creek back their city park...both very excellent things! What is the role of the commission day to day? What is their fundamental responsibility to constituents? Would you agree that Number One is to practice extreme fiscal responsibility, and demonstrate care and conservation of our tax dollars? This commitment should be evident in all Commission actions.

**Here's some things we taxpayers need to ask about:**

**There was no Lessons Learned documentation developed from the Veregy Courthouse Renovation Project** – no adjustment to county purchasing processes, or Commission review processes that allowed a \$4.7M contract to be awarded on a single bid. “We’re better people in office now, so that won’t happen” is not a professional look. The Commission apparently accepts that over 7 million dollars of our tax dollars is going out the door without investigation, formal reports, documented process improvements or reprimands to those who deserve them. As it is, the County Auditor who corresponded with the contractor about office furniture months before their bid was awarded is enjoying his new office and furniture because he explained that he was only doing what the previous Presiding Commissioner told him to. Apparently, we elected a County Auditor who thinks he reports to the Presiding Commissioner and depends on him for guidance on his job responsibilities. We voters need to be paying attention and taking notes for future elections.

At a recent Commission meeting, I asked about the purchasing process that always seems to result in one or two bids. In one voice, all three Commissioners said, “We have to advertise in the newspaper because of the state statute”. So, here’s the question: Is the goal to have multiple bidders and robust competition, or to follow the minimal guidelines from an antiquated and confusing state statute? Seeking bids directly by only advertising in a local newspaper was used in the past to target single bidders desired by the Commission. This is how Veregy slipped in on a single bid for \$4.7 Million. It’s not ethical or professional.

A full recommendation for the Purchasing Department process was emailed as a gift to two commissioners twice in the last six months, along with an offer to spend volunteer time with the Purchasing Lead to review the process. I doubt the Purchasing Dept head has been given the opportunity to see it. Here’s the highlights:

- Advertisements in newspapers, on-line etc., should be seeking bidders, not bids. It’s impossible to sufficiently capture the scope of work for almost any bid in a newspaper ad.
- Every project/purchase should begin with the development of a scope of work document and developing a qualified bidders list.
- Using a qualified bidders list meets the requirement for robust competition and due diligence. You must always have at least three bid responses. If not, adjust the bidders list and resend the bid package.
- Bid packages that include the scope of work, e.g., professional scope documents for things like the renovation project or a simple one-page description for purchases of office supplies, and a form that each bidder completes to respond.
- Every response should be submitted on identical forms to enable apples to apples comparison. The response form often includes the breakdown of labor and materials, and unit pricing for extras...the complexity depends on the type of project/purchase.
- For projects/purchases that are not straight forward, you should hold a bid meeting where everyone hears the questions asked and answered. This is a large lesson learned with Veregy, who participated in a walk through with the Maintenance Supervisor, but no other bidders were sent a bid package with the scope of work or received the same walk through.

It’s so easy to fix this...if you agree please call or email your Commissioners and ask them to prioritize process improvements that will save our money.

*To receive The Watchdawg Report free via email, contact me (Jennie) at [Contact@watchdawgreport.com](mailto:Contact@watchdawgreport.com), or call 660-238-6514 and leave a message. If you would like to see the print version continued, please donate to help cover costs. Any amount is appreciated. Drop by cash or make your check to Design & Print with note “Watchdawg”. Mail to Design & Print, c/o Jessica Thompson, PO Box 1915., Camdenton, MO 65020.*