

**JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS  
CARROLL COUNTY QUORUM COURT  
NOVEMBER 16, 2020**

The Quorum Court held their regular meeting at Southern Heights Baptist Church located at 279 Hwy 221 South, Berryville. The Press was notified and two members of the Press were present. Also present were Treasurer Makita Williams, Sheriff Jim Ross, and Administrative Assistant to the County Judge, Ronda Griffiin as well as County Clerk Connie Doss and Prosecuting Attorney Tony Rogers. The meeting was audio recorded and distributed by request. Social distancing and mask wearing was asked to be observed. No one attended via Zoom or other electronic format. The Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by JP Matt Phillips. The meeting was called to order by JP Larry Swofford who presided over the meeting in the absence of Judge Barr who was still recuperating from surgery. Voice rollcall was taken by the County Clerk with all present except JP Marty Johnson. JP Jack Deaton made a motion to accept the Journal from the previous meeting and JP Chuck Olson seconded the motion. All were in favor of accepting the Journal as presented. Under Changes to the Agenda, sponsored by JP Chuck Olson, and approved by everyone was having the county radio tech, Drew Wood, speak to the group concerning recent radio failures in Central Dispatch. Also added was letter "K" was added as a discussion period added by JP Deaton and approved by all. There was no Old Business.

Added this month was Committee Reports and associated Discussion. JP Deaton reported that the Budget Committee has included the Budget Ordinance for its first reading. He said that the budget added \$600K in revenue, but that amount will also be spent in 2021. JP Harrie Farrow inquired as to whether it was necessary to read the ordinance three times since an emergency clause was listed. The emergency clause would likely cover any 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> readings in the December meeting. JP Olson, who chairs the Buildings/Facilities committee let JPs know that the facia work on the annex will begin soon and that it would need to be completed by year end. Collector Kay Phillips had asked that work not begin until after tax season was done. An inquiry concerning the roof work needed at the Detention Center was in progress. The question was proposed to Sheriff Ross at which JP Farrow noted that the Sheriff was not wearing a mask. He responded that he was adhering to state guidelines and he was at the back of the room. He did don a mask. JP Don McNeely representing the Personnel Committee reported that the committee should have started earlier, but they were working through procedures to declare vacancies for JP Marty Johnson and Circuit Clerk Ramona Wilson. The Circuit Clerk position is filled by the Quorum Court and the Justice of the Peace is filled by the Governor.

There were no Public Comments. Under Miscellaneous, JP Olson introduced Drew Wood to discuss the situation at Central Dispatch. JP Swofford was not going to hold a timer to Mr. Wood as this was information that everyone needed to hear, but that he needed to be brief. The current problem was the failure of a storage device. The system had gone down about a week ago and would shut down at midnight even after determining that the system was going through this process as an encouragement to address the problem. Harris is the manufacturer of much of the equipment. Mr. Wood also noted that the service contract had expired and at one point JP Farrow asked why it had expired. The reason was not known but had expired mid-year 2019. He also was hoping that there might be Cares Act funds that may be available to update/upgrade/fix the system as a whole. The County is currently in Phase I of a three phase plan and Mr. Wood needs to work on what needs to happen to move forward, but that Phase II was about five million. Mr. Woods felt he had some suggestions that would lower the cost. He was given a quote of \$1800 to replace the failing drive and told Harris to get the work done. JP Swofford said there wasn't an ordinance before the Quorum Court and that with a "gentlemen's agreement" it could be approved. Next month there would be an ordinance. There was a voice vote to go ahead with costs of \$1800-2000 and an ordinance would be presented next month.

Under New Business, a resolution read by JP Olson authorizes the County Judge to enter into a grant for elections. The amount of the grant was \$14,129.50 to help with planning and operationalizing a safe and secure election cycle for 2020. JP Olson made the motion to approve and JP Hall seconded. County Clerk Doss added that the majority of the funds was used to add the On-Demand Ballot Printer, supplies, and two more Tablets to be used in the office to assist with the polls on election day as all of the tablets were sent out for this election. A roll call vote was taken and the resolution was passed.

A supplemental appropriation ordinance to allow bonuses to all employees and elected officials was approved after a motion by JP Deaton was made and seconded by JP Matt Phillips. JP Craig Hicks said that this was a great way to let the employees of the county know how much they are appreciated. JP Deaton also said that because there would be no across the board raises in 2021 because they couldn't be sure of what was coming in, this will give employees help in advance and before the holidays. JP Hicks said that the committee decided this included all part and full time employees and elected officials with the exception of the Quorum Court members. There needed to be an adjustment to the ordinance where line item 1006 needed the line item named. JP Farrow asked about the transfers versus appropriations and County Clerk Doss responded that the difference was that the libraries chose to transfer between line items within their current budget instead of what Green Forest did and simply appropriate additional funds. The measure passed by all present.

The next ordinance would do a Treasurer's transfer of \$150,000 from County General to County Courthouse Fund. A motion to accept was made by JP Phillips and seconded by JP Deaton. JP Phillips said that this is for the continued maintenance and upkeep of the Eastern District Courthouse. JP Swofford also said that this was considered a 'rainy day fund' to put funds back in reserve in case it was needed as an emergency. JP Deaton said that \$100,000 was put back last year and used. JP John Howerton said that more was spent this year due to continued problems with the roof and JP Swofford suggested that there might be some work done in the near future concerning the front glass in the lobby that was not stable. The ordinance was passed through roll call vote with no one in opposition.

Next on the agenda was an ordinance to appropriate funds received by the Treasurer for the Sheriff's office. JP Deaton said that the STEP Grant was a good program and helped with traffic issues during busier times of the year (IE: July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, etc.). He also commented to the Sheriff that he should lump these together better because the cost to publish the ordinance was almost what was being asked to be appropriated so the one officer could get the payment. It didn't make good sense. JP Deaton made the motion to approve and JP Phillips seconded with all in favor.

The detention center had several leaks that needed to be taken care of immediately. JP Deaton made a motion to accept the ordinance to appropriate funds for roof repair and JP Howerton seconded the motion. JP Deaton said that when JP Olson heard of the roof leaks he "jumped right on it". He also said that the roof is approaching 20 years old and will likely need to be replaced possibly even in 2021. The measure was approved.

The grant of \$14,129.50 received from the Center for Tech and Civic Life needed to be put into a fund on the Treasurer's side. Fund 1900-0109 will be established as "Elections Covid Response Grant Fund" and funds would be deposited to it and then at the end of the year transferred to County General to reimburse qualified expenditures. No funds were to be reappropriated in to the 2020 Budget. Treasurer Makita Williams was asked to explain how this would work. The motion was made by JP Deaton and seconded by JP Farrow who had alerted County Clerk Doss to this grant. The roll call vote passed the ordinance.

JP Matt Phillips moved to adopt and JP John Howerton seconded the motion for the establishment of salaries of the elected officials for Budget Year 2021. JP Farrow asked if there were any changes and the response was that there was not. The ordinance was approved.

Another annual ordinance was approved after the motion was made by JP Deaton and seconded by JP Phillips. The ordinance establishes a contribution already included in the 2021 budget ordinance

to pay funds to the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. who helps the county with grants.

An ordinance to create a new part-time position was approved by roll call vote after a motion was made by JP Deaton and seconded by JP Kellie Matt. JP Deaton said an explanation was given by the department head about how the part-time position was needed and the committee said it would be added to the 2021 budget for the Eastern District Court. JP Hicks commented that they were told at the budget committee meeting that the number of citations had definitely increased and the position was needed. JP Swofford commented that everyone has noticed that the court days were longer with JP Matt agreeing that this was also due to a growing community. JP Swofford called for the vote after the discussion.

Lastly, the Ordinance to establish the 2021 Budget went through its first of three readings. A motion was made by JP John Howerton to accept and JP Matt Phillips seconded the motion. It was read by title only. JP Don McNeely asked if there was any significant changes and JP Howerton said it came in very much like it had for 2020. JP Hicks said that the budget will take care of an immediate need in the salaries of twenty-two positions in the Detention Center was done. It would be a 65 cent raise per hour. JP Deaton also said that this budget included five new, turn-key vehicles for the Sheriff's Department. JP Farrow inquired if the Eureka Springs Library got everything it needed. JP Deaton said that they did and the situation with them lies in the mentality of their board to spend everything they have unlike the other two libraries that have considerable carry-overs so they have funds in reserve when they need it. She also noted that there were different needs for different libraries. She also asked for clarification on the accounting language in Section 2. County Clerk Doss explained that this meant that funds could be moved around within a group but not between groups without an ordinance. She also explained that anything having to do with personnel must be done through ordinance. JP Deaton said that they tried to get this out to everyone in November so that everyone had a chance to read it. JPs Farrow & Swofford both thanked the committee for their work. The first reading of the 2021 Budget Ordinance was passed.

Added item "K" was approved as Discussion of several items that JP Deaton wanted to bring to the attention of the Justices. First among the topics concerned the January 4, 2021 meeting to establish date and time for meetings for the next two years. Prosecuting Attorney Tony Rogers asked to Court to change their meeting time to another day other than Mondays as that has routinely been a long docket day with Circuit Court. He asked them to consider Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday. He also noted that a representative of the Prosecuting Attorney's office needed to be present for the meetings. JP Deaton reminded everyone that there would be the two meetings in January.

JP Deaton also brought of the topic that other counties were going paperless with respect to Quorum Court meetings and this county needed to do the same to save money in the long-run with paper, toner, postage, and time. He suggested that the Court move to notepads or laptops purchased by the county. All paperwork & correspondences could be done on the county issued equipment and it would make it easier on Clerk Doss when assisting with setting up for virtual meetings should the need arise again. JP Olson & JP McNeely expressed that they were fairly paperless already and JP McNeely had his tablet with him. JP Farrow expressed concern over malfunctioning devices, internet problems, or something not working. JP Roger Hall said that they would still have paper and that he gets his agenda on his cell phone. JP Hicks thought this was a good idea to pursue. JP Swofford thought that the budget committee should bring it on an ordinance next month and it will either pass or it won't.

Act 749, 14-14-1205 A(2)b allowed for a Justice to miss one meeting a year and still get paid for the meeting. There was the notion that a motion needed to be made for the Quorum Court to allow for this absence under law. Several members remembered seeing it in their book and JP Swofford commented that it was already state law so why make the motion. JP Phillips and Deaton thought that a verbal vote was a good idea that they would be following the law. Prosecuting Attorney Rogers said it was already state law so a vote was not necessary. JP Farrow said that the Quorum Court shouldn't

have authority over state law. JP Chuck Olson said that a verbal agreement would not be a bad idea. Prosecuting Attorney Rogers said it was up to each Justice as to whether they wanted payment for a missed meeting under the law.

JP Comments brought an update from JP Phillips that Lisa Holt with the Health Department would be signing her grants for updating the facility this week. JP Deaton reported that 2,703 hours have been used for Covid-19 illnesses. JP Swofford acting as presider commented that Judge Barr was still quite sore from surgery and that it would likely be a long healing time.

JP Swofford asked for a motion to adjourn of which JP Matt and JP Farrow made the motion and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm.