

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS
Carroll County Quorum Court
February 28, 2022

The Quorum Court met in regular session on Monday, February 28, 2022 at Southern Heights Baptist Church located at 279 Hwy 221 South, Berryville. Notice was sent to the press of the meeting with one member present. The meeting was audio recorded with two members of the press making a request for a copy. The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was done and the meeting called to order by County Judge Ronda Griffin a little after 5:00pm. This is Judge Griffin's first meeting as Judge having been appointed effective February 1st with the retirement of Judge Sam Barr. Roll Call was done finding all members present. Also present were the deputy prosecutor, several elected officials, and many of the public.

Committee Reports were done by JP Deaton who reported on Budget happenings and thanking County Treasurer Makita Williams and County Clerk Connie Doss for their efforts. JP Craig Hicks reported on the Eastern District Judicial Building Steering Committee and reminded everyone that the intent when seeing about the feasibility of a new Judicial building that Western District would not be closed. He also said that the Judge was looking into RFQs for architects.

The Journal of Proceedings from the January 24th meeting was approved with a motion by JP Larry Swofford and seconded by JP Craig Hicks. JP Deaton made a motion to change the agenda, reversing the order of the firsts two Resolutions and adding several others to the bottom of the agenda. JP Hicks seconded the motion and all approved.

In Public Comments, Judge Griffin asked that two people speak, one for and one against, the Pro-Life Resolution and that instead of the customary 3 minutes, they would have 10 minutes to speak. Connie Burks being "For" the Pro-Life Resolution offered several points including Act 392 and pointed out that several counties have or are ready to pass the Resolution. JP Harrie Farrow asked if Ms. Burks was a Carroll County resident of which she responded that she wasn't. JP Kellie Matt asked why this was being promoted now and the thought was that it would raise awareness before the possible Supreme Court review of Roe v Wade in June. JP Farrow continued her line of questions asking if Ms. Burks worked for an organization like the Family Counsel and Ms. Burks responded that she was speaking as an individual. Margo Elliot was chosen to speak "Against" the Resolution saying that she has been a resident for eleven years and has raised two children. She called the Resolution "Forced Birth" and that the term "Pro-Life" is not an accurate term. She contended that the resolution is not a declaration either way and that pro-life or pro-choice should not be a political view.

Tina Cole with the NWAEDD introduced the Hazard Mitigation Plan to the Quorum Court and it was noted that this was a several year project and would assist the County in being able to get more grants. JP Deaton said that he was impressed with the amount of detail and Ms. Cole said it represented nine counties and 72 cities. There would also be a difference in the amount of matching funds that counties would have to come up with and JP John Howerton asked if that was all grants with Ms. Cole responding that it depended on the project and how it fit in with the Mitigation Plan. JP Larry Swofford asked if any of the plan would affect the rights of property owners and the response was that it would not.

Richard Williams had been asked to speak about his ideas for the Judicial Building by JP Don McNeely. Williams said that he had researched this in 2007. He reminded the Justices that the current courthouse had been condemned by the state jail commission around the 1990s-2000. He had plans that the architect gave permission for him to borrow of the Greene County

courthouse that at the time cost \$4.5 million in 2007. He also mentioned a grant through USDA that had been available at the time. JP John Howerton asked where and if this grant may still be available. JP Harrie Farrow asked if Judge Williams might be able to work with the Steering Committee. JP Hicks reiterated the talking points that the Committee was sticking with when looking at the feasibility of the building. Judge Williams also said that if the building were big enough, then County could rent the space to state offices and JP Hicks asked which offices? Williams also suggested that County sell the hospital to Mercy of which JP Hicks said he would not be in favor of that at all.

Bobby Engles representing the Sheriff's office was next. JP Matt Phillips had asked that the County offices make a report to the Quorum Court about what the offices were doing and any needs that they may have so the Quorum Court could be more proactive to these needs. Bobby's report center around the number of Dispatch calls received in 2021. The number, 39,375, was broken down into several types of calls from drugs to domestic violence calls. He also reported that the Detention Center prepared 106,849 meals at a cost of 70 cents per meal. Officer Engles intends to report to the Quorum Court on a quarterly basis. The Justices asked several questions and thanked Officer Engles for stepping up with the information.

David Writer, Foreman at the Road Department, reported that the recent snow/ice removals cost about \$65,000 in the last two weeks and about \$85,000 so far for 2022. He also reported that there would be some State aid money to improve roads in the form of overlays. Writer reported that the Department purchased a mini excavator (John Deer) for \$117,608. JP Duane Coatney asked whether there would be chip & seal done this year and the response was that there would likely be less because of costs. Several JPs complimented the hard work that was being put in by the Road Department.

Circuit Clerk Marilyn Ferrier reported that the receipting software was being installed soon and that she would be working on a grant through the AAC to get her office set up for e-filing of deeds and mortgages. She is also quite happy with the new internet-based phone system that has been installed at both the Eastern and Western District offices.

It was also approved that the Resolutions would be read by title only with JP Kellie Matt making the motion and JP Chuck Olson seconding with everyone in agreement. A resolution affirming the commitment of Carroll County to be a Pro-Life County. JP Kellie Matt who sponsored the resolution made a motion to accept and JP Don McNeely seconded the motion. In discussion, JP Deaton asked if the house bill information that was passed out during public comments and the resolution before them would encourage more signs to be put up and many of the JPs expressed that they represented their constituents. JP Harrie Farrow said that she appreciated that the Quorum Court was doing the work of the County and not bringing in outside issues. She continued that she was disappointed to see the resolution on the agenda and that outside influencers had nothing to do with what the Quorum Court did. It was asked if the measure should be tabled and no one wanted to do that as the public came to see the vote and why put this off to the next meeting. JP Coatney said that he had more calls on this one topic than any other since being appointed. JP Farrow reiterated that the resolution had nothing to do with Quorum Court. Judge Griffin called for the roll call vote with a final vote of ten "for" and one "against".

The resolution to adopt the Carroll County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan was passed with a motion by JP Jack Deaton and seconded by JP John Howerton. JP Deaton said that the plan would save lives. The Quorum Court voted in favor of adopting the Plan.

JP Don McNeely made a motion to accept Erick Diaz as a Board Member to the Berryville Library Board of Trustees saying that Erick was a fine person who had been through quite a lot having come from Guatemala. JP Roger Hall seconded the motion. The roll call vote was unanimously adopted.

Also confirming appointments through resolution was a Commissioner to the Mundell Heights SSD. JP Larry Swofford made the motion to accept the appointment of the Commissioners with JP Chuck Olson seconding saying it was a routine rotation of members.

Something that had slipped through the cracks during budget discussions was appropriating funds for a storage cabinet to hold flammable liquids as well as a much-needed ladder for the maintenance team explained JP Deaton. JP Deaton made the motion and JP Matt Phillips seconded. The measure passed.

SORT (Search and Rescue)'s building was in much need of electrical work. The appropriation ordinance would pay for those repairs. JP Jack Deaton and JP Matt Phillips made the motion and second with the vote passing the measure.

David Writer who is the foreman for the road department had requested that a full-time equipment operator position be changed to two part-time positions and that the part-time position of Mechanic be rescinded to add a third part-time equipment operator. Each would have 39 hours per pay period. He had reported to the budget committee that there were retired men who want to still work, but not work a full-time job, reported JP Deaton. JP Hicks seconded JP Deaton's motion with a vote accepting the changes in positions at the road department.

Funds needed to be appropriated to the Senior Center Budget for their property insurance that was usually done through a Treasurer's check, but had been added to accounts payable instead. The amount on the ordinance needed to be corrected and a motion by JP Hicks and seconded by JP Swofford made the change. With that, JP Swofford and JP Hicks again made motion and second to accept the appropriation with all Justices voting in favor of the measure.

JP Deaton made a motion to accept the ordinance that would allow for the temporary full-time status of the OEM. JP Duane Coatney asked if this was the same ordinance that had been looked at three months or so ago and JP Hicks said that it wasn't because this one had an end date on it. The person in the position would also be assisting the County Judge when not working on OEM business and be paid from a different department for that work. JP John Howerton said that "Ronda can't do it all." The measure was seconded by JP Hicks and the roll call voted in favor of the temporary status change of the OEM and moving the money in Part-time to Full-time, salaries.

JP Kellie Matt made the motion and JP Jack Deaton seconded the establishment of Fund 1006 that ARP funds would be transferred to with the next ordinance. The measure was accepted by all of the Justices.

The next ordinance rescinded a couple of ordinances that would have made bookkeeping more cumbersome with the Final Rule of the American Rescue Plan being established. With those being rescinded all of the funds transferred would go back to Fund 3046 and then the balance would be moved to the unrestricted Fund 1006, because the amount allocated to Carroll County was under \$10Million.

The final appropriation ordinance will make possible the payment of the required contracted deposit to begin work on the \$3.3 million Emergency Radio Project. Funds would go between the ARP Fund 1006 to fund 4800, the Central Dispatch Project fund. JP Deaton said with the changes that had been made from the bid of several years ago, it was felt that a new bid and process was necessary. JP Hicks thought it would be a good idea for Ka-Comm, Inc., the

winning (& only) bidder to reach out to the cities about the costs of the upgrades that they would need to do. JP Olson was concerned that not enough hand-held radios were being made available to the rural fire departments and he wanted to know how many they would get so that the department he volunteered for could start budgeting. JP Harrie Farrow pointed out that cities also received ARP funds.

JP Hicks wanted to again thank Southern Heights Baptist Church for the use of their building. He pointed out that the courtroom would not have been nearly big enough for the crowd that had gathered for the meeting. JP McNeely echoed JP Hicks' sentiment and added his appreciation for the work of the Budget Committee.

Judge Ronda Griffin thanked the Sheriff's department and Berryville Police for being in attendance to assist with crowd control had it been needed. She invited those assembled to please return to more meetings. JP John Howerton quickly made a motion to adjourn which JP Roger Hall seconded. The meeting ended at 6:30pm.