

Journal of Proceedings of the
Quorum Court of Carroll County, AR
November 21, 2022

The regular meeting of the Quorum Court was held at Southern Heights Baptist Church on Monday, November 21, 2022, beginning at 5:00 pm. The meeting was audio recorded with one member of the Press asking for a copy to be sent via FTP drop. Two other members of the Press were present at the meeting. Notification also was sent to all Elected Officials and department heads as was the usual procedure. There was no representation of the Prosecuting Attorney's office at this meeting. There were several elected officials and those who will be taking elected positions in January present. Judge Griffin asked JP Craig Hicks to lead the group in the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to order and roll call was conducted with all members of the Quorum Court present. The Journal of Proceedings from the October 17, 2022, meeting was approved with a motion and second by JP Larry Swofford and JP Duane Coatney.

Under Committee Reports, JP Jack Deaton said that the Budget Committee had met its deadline to have the 2023 budget ready for this meeting. He also commented that a raise of \$1.25 per position was also approved with the Libraries doing a restructuring of their pay scales to be more in keeping with the rest of the County positions. He thanked the Committee for their efforts. There were no other Committee Reports. There were no changes to the agenda.

In Public Comments, Sgt Corey Spain, with the Sheriff's Dept. reported on a severe issue concerning the walk-in freezer at the Detention Center. After a repair that lasted about three days, the freezer had gone out again, however, there was no loss of food stuffs as the food was transferred to personnel's freezers until the unit could be fixed or replaced. Sgt. Spain said that he had contacted Jack Deaton about the problem after conferring with Adkins Refrigeration about the best way forward. The compressor was out which meant that a replacement unit would be needed. The unit was not fully operational as the proposal to replace the system was approved by Judge Griffin at the recommendation of Jack Deaton. Both Jack Deaton and Chuck Olson thanked Sgt. Spain for his efforts and quick response on this project.

Mike McKelvey, OEM, reported to the Quorum Court about the EF1 & 0 tornado that hit Green Forest. He said that data was still coming in about the damage and the tornado's path. He suggested that city leaders needed guidelines for when the storm siren should be sounded and the possibility of area alerts that would go out on landlines and cell phones. He said that the dam used an alert for mass evacuation during flooding.

Robert Anderson with R&R Towing once again came before the Quorum Court to report on his ongoing problems with the Carroll County Sheriff's Department reporting this time that he was told by a patrol officer that they were not allowed to use his business to tow.

JP Harrie Farrow sponsored an update from County Clerk Connie Doss. Connie Doss gave an update concerning the AIS (Apprentice Information Systems) breach that had occurred. She spoke of a Zoom meeting with AIS and other stakeholders that had reported the situation was due to a Russian group that had encrypted AIS systems. She assured the Quorum Court that this breach in no way affected the election as they were on two completely different servers. It was also reported that those counties that had recently updated their systems had the fewest issues with startup and Clerk Doss reported and thanked the Quorum Court for allowing her to upgrade the firewalls to the latest technology and the add of a firewall between the two County servers. The County Clerk's office had been first to be mostly operational with all workstations

working. She also reported that nothing was found on the server or on computers within the two servers and workstations that had been affected in the Treasurer's, Collector's, and Circuit and County Clerk's offices. There were still work arounds that was being done and Clerk Doss pointed out that the Treasurer and County Clerk's computers were still not able to "talk" to one another which meant that thumb drives would be utilized to be sure that bills and payroll was being taken care of. As of the date of the meeting, the November 9th payroll that had been done by hand was being reconciled and that the November 18th payroll had no problems.

Clerk Doss also reported that the 2022 General Election had been certified on November 18th by the Carroll County Election Commission. Commissioner Sharon Hoover was in the audience and was introduced by Clerk Doss. Other stats of the election included a 60% turnout of the 15,156 registered voters. There were 206 absentee voters and 20 of the 89 provisional ballots had been accepted. A total of 9,099 ballots were cast in the election.

From there Clerk Doss reviewed the SAFE report that she had requested of CISA. The report said that the Clerk and staff had a proactive mentality regarding threat risk reduction and that the security of the election and office networks were in good shape. On the downside, they also reported that having equipment staggered between different buildings, the storage site and security of this building not being optimal, and its location on the highway were not a long-term situation. They also suggested vehicle barriers, camera system upgrades to the courthouse especially around the Clerk's office and better lighting is necessary moving forward. The situation with space constraints was also documented as not being good for staff or equipment.

There was no old business, so the Quorum Court moved to new business with a Resolution authorizing the County judge to act on a Hazard Mitigation Grant for County Road 818. JP Roger Hall made a motion to accept with a second by JP Larry Swofford. JP Harrie Farrow asked where this county road was located, and several Justices spoke up giving directions saying it was on the NE corner of the county. A roll call vote passed the resolution with voting in the affirmative.

Next was the resolution that would declare a vacancy in the position of Justice of the Peace, District 8, which will be held by JP Don McNeely until December 31, 2022. The Notice of Publication went in the local paper on November 15, 2022. JP Craig Hicks sponsored the resolution saying he wished he didn't have to because he would miss JP McNeely. JP Jack Deaton reiterated the sentiment saying JP McNeely would be missed and thanked him for his hard work throughout his years as a Justice of the Peace. The motion was made by JP Craig Hicks and seconded by JP Matt Phillips. The roll vote was affirmed with all eleven members voting to accept. It was also mentioned that JP McNeely would be taking on the new role as Mayor of Green Forest having won the position in the 2022 General Election.

An appropriation ordinance was approved with a motion and second by JP Jack Deaton and JP Craig Hicks for the funds necessary to replace the walk-in freezer at the Detention Center. JP Deaton said that the budget committee had not met, but gave him some leeway with emergencies like these to make decisions without a meeting. The vote was unanimously approved.

Also, approved unanimously was an appropriation ordinance that allowed for payment of vacation pay in lieu of taking the time off for David Writer with the Road Department. JP Craig Hicks said that the budget committee at a recent meeting had discussed this issue at length and felt it best for the county to pay it out. There were several projects that Mr. Writer would be needed to be present among them the bridge at CR 818. The motion was made by JP Hicks and seconded by JP Roger Hall.

A first reading of an ordinance allowing the collection of delinquent Circuit Court fines, fees, and court costs was approved with a motion made by JP Hicks and seconded by JP Deaton. JP Deaton said in the discussion that this program while not good for some offices of the County was in the best interest for the Circuit Clerk. JP John Howerton further explained how it would work with assistance from County Clerk Connie Doss saying that the Association of AR Counties would be the collecting agent and that letters would go out to the delinquent parties with collection coming from state income tax refunds. JP Larry Swofford reiterated that the AAC would be taking care of the front-end work. The first reading was approved and would be added to the December meeting's agenda.

An ordinance to establish the annual salaries of elected officials for 2023 was approved. A motion was made by JP Matt Phillips for this first reading of the ordinance with a second made by JP Larry Swofford. During discussion it was reported that this was to set the salaries for officials and that the budget committee had compared salaries with other like counties, and these were in the middle of those. The ordinance will be added to the December agenda.

In a rare process, the Quorum Court passed an ordinance with three readings at the same meeting due to a December 15th deadline that would be required of a volunteer fire district asking for the collection of their dues by the County Collector. Clerk Doss read the ordinance in its entirety. JP Chuck Olson made the motion to accept, and JP Matt Phillips seconded the motion. It was explained that there was nothing that could be found in the ordinances that set up standard procedures through a taxation system and this ordinance would do that for all fire districts, etc., asking to have their dues collected on the tax books of the Collector. JP Chuck Olson felt it was fair to all. JP Roger Hall asked if any volunteer fire department could do this. JP Farrow said that there would be "hoops to jump through" and it was agreed that there would be. The vote was unanimously accepted. JP John Howerton made a motion to suspend the rules for a second reading of which JP Larry Swofford offered a second. The Ordinance was read by title only a second time and a roll call vote were once again taken and accepted after a motion to accept was made by JP Matt Phillips and seconded by JP Chuck Olson. JP Chuck Olson made a motion to suspend the rules for a third reading with JP Larry Swofford offering a second. The ordinance was read a third time by title only. JP Matt Phillips made a motion to accept the ordinance the third time with JP Jack Deaton offering a second. The motion carried with a unanimous vote of the Quorum Court.

To complete the process for Grassy Knob Rural Volunteer Fire District, their ordinance to have the dues added to the Collector's tax statement also needed to be read all three times at this meeting. It was explained during the discussion that the previous set up the procedures and this one was specific to the volunteer fire district making the request. The ordinance was read in its entirety the first time and a motion was made by JP Chuck Olson and JP Jack Deaton to accept the ordinance. The first roll call vote was unanimously accepted. JP John Howerton made a motion and it was seconded by JP Jack Deaton to suspend the rules to read the ordinance a second time by title only. The ordinance was read by title only and a motion was made by JP Chuck Olson and seconded by JP Harrie Farrow. The roll call vote for the second reading was accepted. JP Chuck Olson and seconded by JP John Howerton to suspend the rules to read the ordinance a third and final time by title only. A voice vote accepted the suspension of the rules after Clerk Doss noticed that this had not been done. The ordinance was read a third time with a motion to accept by JP Chuck Olson and seconded by JP John Howerton. The roll call vote was once again unanimously accepted.

The 2023 Budget Ordinance was given its first reading with no discussion. A motion was made by JP Matt Phillips and seconded by JP Craig Hicks. The roll call vote had no one vote “nay”. The ordinance will be added to the December meeting.

Lastly, a first reading approving the contribution of local matching funds to the NWAEDD for budget year 2023 was introduced. JP Matt Phillips made a motion to accept and JP Jack Deaton seconded. During discussion, it was asked what the contribution would be and Clerk Doss said that the amount for 2023 would be \$1,440. A letter had been received from NWAEDD with the new amount for 2023. JP John Howerton said that the amount in the ordinance was the membership fee and JP Deaton said that additional funds to them varied depending on the amount of the grant. JP Duane Coatney asked about a grant writer with JP Roger Hall saying that there was a lot of paperwork involved and having NWAEDD do this work saved the county money in the long run. JP Deaton responded to JP Coatney about the grant writer for the county saying that the idea had been discussed but not carried out. Conversation ensued between JP Coatney and JP Hall until Clerk Doss called for point of order. The roll call vote was taken with all except JP Duane Coatney accepting the ordinance. It will be added to the December meeting as old business.

JP Comments included JP Deaton updating the group on the 911 radio towers for Holiday Island and 23South. He said that the Holiday Island tower was waiting on a few parts (bolts?) before construction could begin and that the property on 23 South would be on a \$1 a year lease for 25 years. JP Deaton also reported that the engineers are telling him that the locations are perfect and will work very well. JP Don McNeely thanked the Budget Committee for their work over the past couple of months and JP Larry Swofford thanked JP Jack Deaton for his work on the towers.

Judge Ronda Griffin clarified that the NWAEDD (Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District) actually involved the coalition of nine surrounding counties and that these counties worked together and it was a great resource and an opportunity to see what other counties projects were being worked on. She also reported on the 2021 Legislative Audit report that had been received by her office and had said that all of the Justices should have received their copy. She reported that Carroll County’s report would be reviewed on December 1st in Little Rock. She did not speak to any specific compliance issues that may have been reported simply saying she was thankful to all departments and officials because she would not have to go to Little Rock to speak about reported issues within the county. She said she appreciated everyone’s hard work.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm with a motion made by JP Matt Phillips and seconded by JP Larry Swofford.