

Journal of Proceedings
Quorum Court
September 19, 2022

The regular meeting of the Quorum Court met at 5:00 pm on September 19, 2022. The meeting took place at Southern Heights Baptist Church with several elected officials and citizen in attendance. The Press was notified with two members of the Press at the meeting. The meeting was audio recorded with a member of the Press asking for a copy of the recording which was sent via email to the requesting party (KTHS Radio). The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was done, and County Judge Ronda Griffin gavelled the meeting to order. Roll Call was conducted by County Clerk Connie Doss finding one member, JP Chuck Olson, absent. He will be paid in accordance with §14-14-1205 for the meeting as this is the first missed by him in 2022. Tony Rogers, Prosecuting Attorney was present as County Attorney. The Journal of Proceedings from the August 15, 2022, meeting was approved with a motion by JP Jack Deaton, seconded by JP Harrie Farrow. A motion by JP John Howerton and seconded by Larry Swofford to add an ordinance concerning storm damage as letter “e”, moving the discussion to “f”. The agenda was also changed to set aside Resolution 2018-1 for the duration of the meeting so that Clerk Doss would read the Resolutions on the agenda instead of the sponsoring Justice of the Peace. The motion was made by JP Craig Hicks and seconded by Larry Swofford. Both changes were approved. The Budget Committee reported that they would be starting the 2023 Budget process in October. They also discussed the Road Department’s need of a Sany road grader.

Under Public Comments, the following took advantage of the opportunity to speak to the Quorum Court: Corey Spain – Maintenance at the Detention Center/Sheriff’s office who reported that the roof replacement project was completed except for a final inspection by the manufacturer to validate the warranty. JP Deaton thanked Corey for stepping up and seeing the project through and JP Don McNeely echoed the sentiment. JP John Howerton asked about the warranties and was given that the roof has a 25 year manufacturer’s warranty and 15 year Harness Roofing warranty. Suellen Fry – CERT – gave everyone an updated SOP (Standard of Operating Procedure) for CERT along with the most recent minutes. Both have been recorded in the County Clerk’s office. Collector Vicki Hopper wanted to thank the HISS security guards after a couple of encounters by angry taxpayers. She also said that Veterans needed to bring the paperwork each year that they are DAV exempt to take advantage of the tax break.

Bill Nichols with the Arkansas Energy Performance Contracting was able to get to this month’s meeting after having to cancel the previous month. He handed out information concerning the ADAQ program and said that the program was a tool for energy efficiency funds for governments. JP Harrie Farrow asked how he got involved and his reply was that he visited the office and discussed shared concerns so now he volunteers to speak at meetings such as the Quorum Court meeting.

There was no Old Business, so in New Business, Clerk Doss read the Resolution to recognize the 2022-2023 Person of the Year, Suellyn Fry. The Resolution passed with a motion by JP Don McNeely and seconded by JP Matt Phillips. JP Deaton commented that he has been

working with Suellyn for over 40 years and finds her to be an energetic person who had also been named Instructor of the Year. JP Larry Swofford said that she has received little recognition for her work. Those assembled gave her a standing ovation and mums and a plaque commemorated the occasion.

Next, was a Resolution for the Western District Ambulance to acknowledge the work of Connie Deaton and to approve Karen Crawford to finish Connie's term. The motion to accept was made by JP Matt Phillips and seconded by JP Harrie Farrow. It was approved and JP Jack Deaton was given mums to take to Connie as a thank you for her service to the County and to the Western District Ambulance Service.

An Ordinance to appropriate funds to pay tutors hired in compliance with the Juvenile Officer Grant Fund was approved with a motion by JP Craig Hicks and seconded by JP Larry Swofford. There were no comments.

The Berryville and Eureka Springs Libraries were approved to add a part-time library assistant. They did not require additional funds to finish the budget year as adequate funds were available in their salaries and associated line items. Both Julie Hall with the Berryville Library and April Griffith with the Eureka Springs Library were present. JP Harrie Farrow commented that this was just a formality with JP Hicks saying it adds positions, but not money.

An ordinance was added as a change to the agenda concerned storm damage to several county buildings. JP John Howerton sponsored the ordinance and motioned to accept it with a second by JP Larry Swofford. JP Howerton said that this was due to wind damage during a recent mid spring storm. It affected the Airport, Carroll County Solid Waste building and the Search and Rescue building located at the Airport. The funds would be reimbursed with insurance but that work needed to get started immediately. The motion carried.

The discussion period sponsored by JP Harrie Farrow was to be a talk about the idea of purchasing the property located at 613 S. Main, Berryville for \$429,500. Judge Griffin asked for each JP to speak one at a time. JP Kellie Matt said she was torn because a courtroom was needed and the space was needed. It would require renovations. She asked about the Berryville Library space and when it might be available as the county already owned that space. JP Matt Phillips thought that the space should be used for the Circuit Court and that parking could be expanded to the "grassy area". JP Craig Hicks was in favor of the building because the \$73 sf just isn't possible to beat. He said there are many ideas and opportunities for use of the property and that the front, grass lot, and back could be used for parking. He said it was room for a courtroom. He also said it was a "good purchase". JP Larry Swofford said he wasn't going to say much as he was a "lame duck". He could go either way, but he was against the Clerk moving to the space because people would have to go to several places to get their needs taken care of. Offices would also then be asking for mileage and a car! JP Jack Deaton said that \$73 sf vs. \$200+ made this a good business move and a good idea as it was certainly cheaper than new. He also commented that that the design was good to be able to add to for even more use later. JP Harrie Farrow said that this should be used for the election commission space, training of poll workers, and storage of the sensitive equipment. She said it was an important need now

and that ultimately the Judge decides use. She ended with the thought that this space would be much more secure than what is currently being utilized. JP Duane Coatney said that the problem has existed 12-15 years ago and should have been taken care of before now. He said that the County did need the space, but not to jump on this immediately. He said the County should build. JP Roger Hall also said that he was “on the fence” and said that County needed both court space and election space but that the square footage was “cheap” and that he was for the purchase and hoped that the Library space would help when they moved to their new facility. JP Don McNeely thought that the building should be for the courts. He thought “Judge Scott” should be moved there after renovations to save on the lease. He also mentioned about the large court days. Clerk Doss reviewed her opinion that the building was a very good option as a useable open space for meetings, trainings (CERT, SORT, Elections, etc). She also said that she had thought about the space as one for the Circuit Clerk as had been mentioned in the budget committee meeting the previous Friday, but with the amount of records that would have to be moved, the garage space would not be big enough for elections and the records. She also stated concerns with access by others than the election officials. The price was on target even with renovations and regardless of use should be purchased. Judge Griffin said that she was not in favor of the purchase because she wanted all of the County offices in one place and she didn’t think that the taxpayer would be happy. She did, however, concede that the space would be an asset for voting purposes. She expressed that she was appointed to keep the boat steady and that a \$750,000 investment to hand off was not something she liked and that the new Judge should make the decision. Assessor Jeannie Davidson asked if the Senior Center could be moved to that building making the current Senior Center available to expand County offices. JP Swofford said that the large culverts in the front would be easy to fill in. Clerk Doss pointed out that funds to pay for the building were already available through reimbursements of payroll from American Rescue Plan funds and JP Hicks reiterated that County taxpayers would not have to pay for the building. JP Coatney again said that the County should build and use the property next door to the ED Courthouse. He said that another building means more maintenance and yard work. JP Deaton pointed out that the Berryville Library space had already been spoken for by the Collector and Clerk Doss added that she had also asked for the space, too. JP Farrow asked the Julie Hall of the Berryville Library what the timeframe was for their move and Julie thought that 2025 was the goal. They had already collected in 18 months \$1.3M of the \$2.5M goal. JP Swofford thought that a committee was not necessary as stated by JP Hicks and that there just needed to be a yes or no. It was reviewed that the County had 30 days from the 9th of September to make the decision and it would be the Judge’s decision to make. JP Hicks said that he hoped that the future Judge would pursue and bring to the Quorum Court ideas. JP Farrow asked about the \$10,000 earnest money and whether it would be lost if the County decided against this after the funds had been paid and the response around the table was that it would be lost. She also felt that there was not a need to vote. JP Swofford said it was up to the County Judge and JP Coatney thought it should go to Committee to look at other avenues. Judge Griffin said that she had Rick Smith look at the property and he had roughly estimated that it would take \$130,000 to take care of the cosmetic things and that she would insist on a Commercial inspection. JP Deaton said that he agreed with JP Coatney and that they had looked at 10 years ago a 1/2cent sales tax to build but knew it would not pass. JP Hicks said that a vote wasn’t needed and this

discussion was a mute point. JP Farrow said that this was a chance to talk. JP McNeely said he couldn't believe the look of the ED courthouse and said that when the jail was built, JPs lost their jobs over it. With that Judge Griffin concluded the discussion.

In JP Comments, JP Deaton updated everyone on the radios and the situation with the 2nd tower construction and contract. He also said that he, Judge Griffin, and Clerk Doss visited the Senior Center as an option for meetings and reported that it was a decent backup reporting that the acoustics were bad. He also thanked everyone for the flowers for his wife, Connie. JP Harrie Farrow asked the Justices to please look at the material that Mr. Bill Nichols provided and that she'd be hoping to bring it up for discussion in the future.

Judge Griffin reviewed several items that had been removed from inventory including computer(s) at the Treasurer's office, and other items elsewhere as well as the sale through Purple Wave of the 2007 Chevy Tahoe with 184,000 miles for a sales price of \$3,500 which will be put back to County General. The items reviewed for the Quorum Court were from Court Order 2022-16.

With that, a motion by JP John Howerton and seconded by JP Duane Coatney brought the meeting to an end at 6:05 pm.