

Journal of Proceedings
Carroll County Quorum Court
February 21, 2023

The monthly meeting of the Carroll County Quorum Court began with the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, both led by JP Craig Hicks. The meeting was held in the Eastern District Courthouse, Berryville, AR and was audio recorded. The Press was notified of the meeting with members of the Press present. Two members of the Press requested the audio file which was sent the next day. The meeting was called to order a few minutes after 5:00pm by County Judge David Writer. Judge Writer asked County Clerk Connie Doss to conduct roll call. All members of the Quorum Court were present with the exception of Justice of the Peace, District 8, which is still awaiting appointment from the Governor's office. The Quorum Court approved the Journal of Proceedings from the Jan 17th meeting after a motion to accept was made by JP Jack Deaton and seconded by JP Matt Phillips.

Under Committee Reports, it was reported that the Eastern District Judicial Building Steering Committee would be meeting with three architectural firms over the next few weeks. Chair JP John Howerton said that he "positively thinks this will happen".

JP Jack Deaton asked to have an appropriation ordinance "k" added to the agenda which was approved.

Public Comments brought Robert with R&R Towing back to further discuss his situation with the previous Sheriff's administration. Mr. Steven Simmons, Deputy Prosecutor/County Attorney said that Robert had been in touch with the PA's office about his allegations and that the PA's office has discharged the situation and that Mr. Craig Parker had responded to Robert via letter.

Sara Huffman, Circuit Clerk, gave the Quorum Court an update on what has been happening in her office saying that she is now fully staffed. She is also introducing two new software programs to her office one of which would be to assist with the collection of criminal fines and the other would be a banking manager program to reconcile her accounts as that has seemed to be an item that Legislative Audit wanted improvement with. This program would also take care of jury payments and taking it out of the County Clerk's office. She was also working on getting e-recording instituted in her office and working on a grant to help fund the equipment. After fielding a couple of questions from the Justices, the meeting moved to Alejandra Calvillo.

Alejandra Calvillo is the president of the Student Council at Berryville Schools, Jr. Chamber member, and FBLA member. She said that she is 12 weeks from graduation and her concern is with housing deficiencies in the county as well as job opportunities that would keep graduating seniors in the county instead of them moving away for jobs. JP Roger Hall commented that 70% of skill trades stayed close to home, while 75% of those going the academic route left. After comments from JPs Hicks and Farrow who said that the perspective from young persons was important and thanked her for her input.

A motion, second, and voice vote were taken to read the resolutions on the agenda by title only for the meeting. The vote was approved. A resolution declaring Carroll County to be a "Pro-Second Amendment County" was introduced by its sponsor, JP Hunter Rivett. A motion to accept was made by JP Rivett and seconded by JP Jerry King. In discussion, JP Harrie Farrow said that while she appreciated his enthusiasm, she felt that this resolution politicized the Quorum Court and was outside its purview. She continued to say that the Justices of the Peace through their oaths of office already said that they supported the Constitution of both the State of

Arkansas as well as the United States of America which include the second Amendment. JP Farrow spoke further about gun violence and lax gun control in relationship to the historical nature of the Second Amendment (ie: muskets vs. AR 15s) and that perhaps an anti-gun violence resolution may have been better. The roll call vote was called with all members voting in favor except JP Farrow who voted “present”.

A resolution confirming the appointment of Dr. Charles Horton to the Mercy Hospital Community Board of Directors was passed with a motion by JP Matt Phillips and seconded by JP Roger Hall. JP Phillips told the group that this had been missed, but was caught and is now being updated.

A resolution for the Carroll County Historical Society’s grant from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program was approved. The motion to approve came from JP John Howerton and seconded by JP Harrie Farrow.

A resolution authorizing the County Judge to enter into a grant called the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program was also approved with a motion by JP Howerton and seconded by JP Bruce Wright.

The Quorum Court approved an appropriation ordinance to fund a mass notification service was approved. The motion was made by JP Jack Deaton and seconded by JP Harrie Farrow. JP Deaton said that the Office of Emergency Management had looked at systems to help with community emergencies. OEM Mike McKelvey was asked to give a bit more detail on the software which was done. After several questions were fielded the vote was taken and the measure approved.

An appropriation ordinance was on the agenda that would allow for funds received by the County from DFA for the Act 224 of 2022 Law Enforcement Stipend. The motion was made by JP Jerry King and seconded by JP John Howerton. While JP Craig Hicks said that the county would not be out any funds, the county does have to pay the matching retirement that is not part of the Act 224. He told the Justices that this was the same stipend that had been given out last year. The measure was successful.

Sponsoring an ordinance to establish seasonal part-time employees for the purpose of training for retiring employees was JP Jack Deaton. The motion was made by JP Deaton and seconded by JP Matt Phillips. JP Deaton then made a motion to correct a typo in the title which was seconded by JP John Howerton. JP Deaton said that the employee handbook prescribed the proposed position as “part-time and seasonal” in nature and would be available for up to 90 days to the department. JP Farrow said that the need was up to the department head and that it was only up to the 90 days, but didn’t have to be for the full amount of time. The ordinance was passed with no dissent.

The road department has requested to add a full-time equipment operator back to its roster of positions. In place of the full-time position, fund for the two part-time positions added last year will be transferred to the full-time position and remain unfunded for the duration of 2023. JP Craig Hicks stated that the part-time position would be looked at during the budget process to see if they would be needed. JP Hicks made the motion to accept the change with JP Roger Hall seconding the motion. It passed.

The final appropriation for the meeting concerned an insurance claim payout to the county for a Ford Explorer (vin #8440) that was totaled by the county’s insurance. It was explained that the totaled vehicle was pretty new with very few miles so the Sheriff’s office purchased it back as part of the insurance settlement to use for parts. JP Hunter Rivett did inquire of the Sheriff who was present the nature of the accident and he said the officer was

responding to a medical emergency, the light on the square had turned yellow and the other car did not see the officer going through and pulled in the path of the officer. There were no serious injuries and the building that was said to have been struck was fine. JP Deaton also said that the county would retain the title of the car. The balance of the total insurance settlement was being appropriated in order to purchase another car to replace the totaled vehicle. JP Deaton made the motion to accept and JP Matt Phillips seconded the motion. It was passed.

In JP Comments, JP John Howerton said that he had received information from retired County Judge Richard Williams about windmills that might be going up in the county and that if anyone wanted a copy, he had them to hand out after the meeting. JP Deaton said that a budget meeting would be set and the County Judge did not have any additional comments to make. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm with a motion from JP John Howerton and seconded by JP Jack Deaton. The meeting was adjourned.