

Journal of Proceedings  
Carroll County Quorum Court  
January 24, 2022

The regular meeting of the Carroll County Quorum Court was held at Southern Heights Baptist Church, Berryville. Notice of the meeting was sent to the press with one member of the Press present. The audio recording of the meeting was sent via email request to Carroll County News and KTHS radio. The recording is also available on the County website under the Quorum Court tab. Judge Barr asked for the Invocation and the Pledge to be recited. The meeting was called to order shortly thereafter at about 5:00pm. All members of the Quorum Court were present. Several of the County's elected officials, department heads, and prospective candidates were also present along with other interested constituents. This would be the last Quorum Court meeting that Judge Sam L. Barr will preside over as he will be retiring effective January 31, 2022.

All three of the previous Journals were approved. JPs Larry Swofford and John Howerton offered the motions for the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. JPs Chuck Olson and John Howerton offered the motions for the December 30<sup>th</sup> meeting and JPs Jack Deaton and Harrie Farrow, the January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. In Committee Reports, JP Olson reported that there would be a meeting with Rick Smith, contractor, and Circuit Judge Scott Jackson to work up a schedule whereby Judge Jackson may still be able to hold court in the Eastern District Courthouse while the lobby area was being remodeled to offer more space and safety. A meeting date was not mentioned. JP Craig Hicks reminded everyone that there would be a meeting of the Judicial Building Steering Committee after the Quorum Court meeting. There were no changes to the agenda nor were there any public comments.

Mrs. Suzi Bell started the trio of speakers and was introduced by her sponsor JP Harrie Farrow. Mrs. Bell, co-founder of Echo Village, expressed concern for the lack of affordable housing in Carroll County. She cited that rentals in the County generally run about \$950 a month. She also expressed that the Quorum Court would ultimately decide on how the American Rescue Plan monies would be spent and asked that part should be invested in housing and an investment in our County.

Lt. Blake Ringberg with the Sheriff's Department, brought the Quorum Court a quote on what it would cost for the County to purchase firearms for its deputies, reserve officers, and transport jail officers. Currently, the department does not supply a County-issued firearm and deputies are expected to purchase their own resulting in several calibers of guns. This creates additional cost of keeping several types of bullets in stock at all times and the possibility interchangeability issues. Lt. Ringberg fielded several questions and the issue will be revisited.

Lastly, County Clerk Connie Doss spoke about the redistricting process and how the new JP district lines would look. She also reminded those prospective candidates present (including the Justices) of the candidate filing period and the times. Mrs. Doss also said that a need in her office was for a full-time human resources person as a vast majority of her day is spent dealing with employee issues and paperwork which would leave her time to devote to other tasks involving her duties with the budget and secretary to the Quorum Court.

In new business, the Quorum Court approved the appointment of Joe Scott to the Carroll County Library Department Board of Trustees with a motion and second. He will serve a 5 year term. A Resolution was introduced to declare the vacancy of the County Judge due to his retirement on January 31<sup>st</sup>. There was some confusion as to the process after the County Clerk

read the resolution as a name was not in the resolution. Clerk Doss clarified saying that a motion needed to be done to insert their candidate's name of which JP Chuck Olson made the motion to add Ronda Griffin, Administrative Assistant to Judge Barr, to the resolution that would make her the County Judge until the end of Judge Barr's term, December 31, 2022. A second was voiced by JP Harrie Farrow and the group gave their informal assent to having Ms. Griffin's name added. With that done, the resolution could be executed and a motion by JP Chuck Olson got the process started with JP Kellie Matt seconding the motion. Judge Barr asked for any discussion which brought several of the Justices speaking positively about the merits of having Ms. Griffin be County Judge until the end of the year. The roll-call vote carried. Ms. Griffin will take the reigns on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The last resolution involved another airport grant in the amount of \$32,000. As with the previous grant, it could be used for Covid-19 concerns and debt service. JP John Howerton who is the liaison with the Carroll County Airport made a motion to accept the resolution. JP Larry Swofford seconded and the roll-call vote approved the measure.

The first of the ordinances concerned replacement of the security camera equipment in the Annex building that houses the Treasurer, Collector, and Assessor. It was noted in the ordinance that the current equipment was over ten years old and had become nonoperational more often. JP Kellie Matt made the motion and JP Roger Hall seconded. The appropriation ordinance was approved.

JP Jack Deaton who represents the Holiday Island area brought an ordinance for the Quorum Court. It formally recognized Holiday Island's status as a city of the second class and therefore entitled to half of the road tax collected within the city boundaries until such time as the city passes a millage of their own. This is current Arkansas code. JP Deaton said that the city was eligible for this money after JP Farrow asked a question about eligibility.

The next ordinance allows for the Treasurer to transfer funds from the American Rescue Plan Fund as reimbursement for eligible public safety payroll and benefits. JP Deaton said during discussion that the Final Rule which will go into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup> of 2022 eased up some of the requirements for use of the funds. JP Harrie Farrow asked for clarification on who public safety included and JP Deaton asked Clerk Doss to respond. Public safety personnel included sheriff deputies, detention center officers, and dispatch. Not included and taken from the numbers were the secretarial staff and maintenance. JP Deaton moved to adopt and JP Matt Phillips seconded the motion. It was adopted.

The last ordinance for the evening will appropriate part of the cost of Phase II and III of a project that had started several years ago. The \$2,862,549.17 project could begin immediately once contracts are signed and the deposit paid. The project would likely take about a year to complete. JP Jack Deaton made the motion to accept and JP Matt Phillips seconded. The vote was unanimously approved.

JP Jack Deaton said that the Budget Committee would be meeting likely Monday to discuss agenda items already for the February meeting. He also expressed his appreciation for the years of service that Judge Barr gave to the County. JP Matt Phillips said that he had been in contact with all of the elected officials to have them come to the next couple of Quorum Court meetings to talk about the happenings in their respective offices. He did note that the Sheriff refused to attend. JP Harrie Farrow expressed pleasure in seeing everyone who had attended the meeting and encouraged them to attend more meetings and to bring someone with them. She also thanked the Judge for his service to the community. JP Don McNeely said that it had been a pleasure to work with the Judge and that he should enjoy his retirement.

Judge Barr told everyone his early days of when he was first thinking about running for Judge and he had thought the job would entail him being able to ride the county roads. He realized that it was also about the desk part of the job and that he was sure to surround himself with people that would help him in his capacity as Carroll County Judge. He said that County comes together as family and thanked everyone for his time as Judge. He was given a standing ovation for his contribution to the County and his accomplishments while Judge.

With that, the Judge looked to JP Phillips to make a motion to adjourn of which JP Phillips did and seconded by JP Deaton. The meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.