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COUNTY & PROBATE COURT CLERK

QUORUM COURT MINUTES

July 8, 2024

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Judge Day called the meeting to order at 5:30pm
Invocation was led by Justice Couch
Assembly and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Justice Pasmore
12 Justices of the Peace were Present, Justice Longmire was absent.

The first order of business was approval of Quorum Court meeting minutes from June 24, 2024. A motion to accept was made by Justice Forrest and seconded by Justice Pasmore. Judge Day took a vote and it passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

2nd reading of an **Ordinance Calling and Setting a Date for a Special Election on the Question of the Issuance by the County of Sales and Use Tax Capital Improvement Bond**. Justice Cline moves to suspend the rules and read by Title only. Justice Couch Seconded the motion. Judge Day too vote by Roll call and all present were in favor. Justice Longmire was absent. The Ordinance was then read by title only.

Judge Day asked if Sheriff Boyd had any comments or questions. Sheriff Boyd stated that he will answer any questions but would likely have more questions during the tour later.

Judge Day asked JP's if they had any questions for the Sheriff at this time. There were none

No NEW BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. JP's and Press will be touring the jail after today's meeting. Last tour of the facility was 5 years ago.
2. Judge Day states that he and Sheriff Boyd are working on jail contracts with various cities and try to have a sit down with them this week.
3. Crisis Stabilization Unit ribbon cutting ceremony for expanded services.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chenoa Summers 6055 Beaver Run Lane Jonesboro. She Asked if there will be an Environmental Impact Study done on the new jail to be built since it is in a very flood-prone area? Will the new jail facility be built to LEADS certification standards?

Judge Day states that any new building that is built in Jonesboro has to do the environmental side. The discussion with the architects has been that we will not continue in the wetland area, we will move up the hill. And for the LEADS portion of it, if we can show the taxpayers that we are saving them money by making it more energy efficient then I'm all for it.

Chenoa Summers- states that with LEADS certification on a new building the building will pay for itself on down the road.

Justice Williams states it's more designed for tax breaks on a company and we are government.

Chenoa Summers- 2nd issue is that the elevator to the Quorum Court meetings is not a public elevator. Her concern is for the disabled.

Judge Day states we can make accommodations for that if we are made aware, and that the new building will be ADA-accessible.

Crystal Bell- 4409 Stonebrook Dr. Jonesboro. Asks how did we come to the \$105 million number for the new jail without having a professional estimate done?

Judge Day- He and Sheriff Boyd have had ongoing discussions with architects and looking at other facilities built recently in Arkansas. Pre-Covid 5years ago you could build for \$80,000 a bed in a jail, but now since covid it would run anywhere from \$125-\$150 thousand a bed. It all varies based on services provided and local codes. He then states that our jail currently holds 385 inmates but ideally 350 beds. Peak this year so far was 426 inmates. When you look at \$150,000/bed at 600 beds or \$125,000/bed at 750 beds that puts you over \$90 million. When we factored in bond cost and interest we chose to go with \$105 million.

Crystal Bell- She understands that we are reluctant to spend the money for estimates but feels it is a disservice to the voters to not have a more specific cost breakdown. Then she asks what other avenues have we looked at for the jail overcrowding?

Judge Day- We have Career Counselors that work with the inmates, grants that help mental health court, drug court, veterans court, and Star Court.

Misty Humway- 3812 S. Culberhouse Jonesboro. Currently running for JP District 4. Regarding the vagueness of this proposed Ordinance, \$105 million is a lot of money. Most people/voters that she has met don't have a lot of extra money. She feels there should've been a more solid foundation to build the Ordinance. When developing this Ordinance what is the working definition of Public Safety?

Judge Day- The attorney wanted a lot of latitude for in particular the Public Safety item. For the Public Safety the potential plans are to expand the Sheriff's Office.

Misty Humway- Will there be any studies done on recidivism rates and keeping the jail population down?

Judge states that those are really things done for prisons not short-term stays in a jail.

Misty Humway- Is there anything being done to help those who have no other choice, no other place to go, or the homeless?

Robin Martin- 5005 Land Lane Jonesboro. In speaking to the JP's she asks that they do their due diligence on this issue of the jail and ask lots of questions and see their constituents in their area and find out what questions they have. Then come back to the next meeting and ask those questions so that if this is placed on the ballot in November the due diligence has been done.

Justice Barnes asks if the county attorney will be present for the 3rd and final reading in 2 weeks?

Judge Day states that he will ask and find out.

Justice Barnes asks that as JP's if this goes to the voters and is approved, what discretion or authority will we still have as JP's throughout the project?

Judge Day replies that they as JP's will have authority over policy and budget.

Motion to adjourn to committees made by Justice Williams and seconded by Justice Rogers. All were in favor for motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm

Road Committee Minutes
July 8, 2024

Justice Cline called the meeting together at 5:56 pm. Those present were Justice Couch, Justice Tennison, Justice Barnes, Road Superintendent John James, Judge Day, and Terry Holaday. Mr. James updated us on roadwork. We then reviewed a plat for Stephanie Cox; Justice Tennison made a motion to approve, 2nd by Justice Barnes and all were in favor. We then reviewed a plat for Terry Holaday for the 3rd phase of Chocho Valley Estates. No action was taken since phases 1 & 2 were not complete. With no other business, Justice Couch motioned to adjourn 2nd by Justice Tennison. The Road Committee adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Public Service Committee
7/8/2024 Minutes

Those in attendance for the meeting:

Committee Members: Chairman Justice Richard Rogers, Justice Linda Allison, Justice Brad Noel, and Justice Kevin Williams. Also attending: Judge Marvin Day.

The Public Service committee meeting was called to order at 5:58 p.m. by Chairman Justice Rogers.

Justice Rogers read a resolution where Judge Day is recommending the appointment of Dr. James Phillips to the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library Board, succeeding Janice Griffin.

Judge Day stated that Dr. Phillips expressed an interest in serving on the library board, loves the community and wants to give back. Justice Allison prefaced her question that she doesn't want book censoring, and asked if Dr. Phillips supported parental involvement with the children's book at the library. While Judge Day doesn't know Dr. Phillips personal views on the matter, he reiterated that Dr. Phillips wants to give back to community and has a great willingness to serve on the board.

Justice Noel made a motion to approve, and Justice Williams seconded the motion. The motion passes 4-0 to move to the full court.

Justice Rogers read a resolution where Judge Day is recommending the appointment of Ken Boling and the reappointments of Jessica Johnson and Josh Cureton to the Board of the Cash Fire Protection District for five-year terms. Justice Williams made a motion to approve, and Justice Noel seconded the motion. The motion passes 4-0 to move to the full court.

A resolution was read by Justice Rogers authorizing Judge Day to apply for a \$15,000 grant with the Arkansas Rural Community Grant Program on behalf of the Brookland Fire Protection District. The Brookland Fire Dept has raised \$15,000 and the grant will match their funds. Justice Williams made a motion to approve, and Justice Allison seconded the motion. The motion passes 4-0 to move to the full court.

With no other business, Justice Allison mad a motion to adjourn and Justice Wiliams seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m. to attend a tour of the Craighead County Detention Center.

Minutes submitted by Justice Allison.

Public Service Committee
6/24/2024 Minutes

Those in attendance for the meeting:

Committee Members: Chairman Justice Richard Rogers, Justice Linda Allison, Justice Brad Noel, and Justice Kevin Williams. Also attending: Judge Marvin Day, Justice Garrett Barnes, Chief Deputy Justin Rolland of Craighead Co Sheriff's Office, and guest, David Vance.

The Public Service committee meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Chairman Justice Rogers.

Justice Rogers opened the meeting with discussion regarding an Ordinance calling and setting a date for a special election on the question of the issuance by the county of sales and use tax capital improvement bonds for the purpose of financing all or a portion of the cost of various improvements, renovations and expansions to the Craighead County Detention Center; levying a temporary local sales and use tax at the rate of one-half of one percent. A special election to be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024 for the electors to vote on the question of the issuance of bonds not to exceed \$105 million.

Judge Day stated that sales and use tax would have a sunset clause. The sunset clause time period is not defined because the interest rate could be vastly different between current rates and the rates when the county is ready for the issuance of bonds. Since the bonds are for the construction and related expenses, the tax would end as soon as those obligations are fulfilled. Justice Allison asked if we should determine now what will be useable facilities and determine an estimated cost of construction, so voters will know what to expect for construction costs so the project is not presented as a "blank check". Judge Day stated that it could cost up to \$250,000 for an architect to complete an evaluation, design plans, etc, and this expenditure would not be good use of taxpayer dollars if the bond issuance is not approved by the voters. Justice Barnes asked, if approved, what is the procedure for keeping the public informed of the bonds, interest rate of the bonds, construction costs, etc. Judge Day said we would proceed with hiring an architect for the evaluation, and we could post the information on the county's website and update at meetings like we have done for the court room construction.

Chief Deputy Rolland stated that he has been employed for 32 of the 35 years that the Craighead County Detention Center was built. In the beginning, the detention center met the needs. The detention center is no longer capable of keeping up the pace, and more expansions would be a temporary fix and would not resolve the long-term problems. David Vance agreed that the detention center renovations would not be sustainable. Justice Allison asked if it would be possible to tour the detention center to see the conditions. Judge Day said that he would discuss with Sheriff Boyd and see if arrangements can be made to take a tour of the detention center.

With no other business, Justice Williams made a motion to adjourn and Justice Noel seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Finance Committee Minutes
July 8th, 2024

Justice Forrest convened the Finance Committee meeting at 6:17 p.m. Those present included Committee members Justice Cook, Justice Weinstock, Justice Pasmore, Treasurer McNatt, Collector Eddington, and Circuit Clerk David Vaughn.

Collector Eddington presented the tax collection report, indicating a 2.2% decrease in collections from 2023 to 2024. The collections went down from 2.9 million in 2023 to 2.8 million. Collector Eddington expressed that he was not concerned about the decrease and believed that it would recover in the upcoming months.

During the overview of June's financial reports, Treasurer McNatt highlighted that we finished the month with a balance of \$47,226,540.24 in the general ledger. Additionally, we have \$4.2 million in County Capital funds and \$7.2 million in Road funds. Our turnback money from the state amounted to \$336,730.89. Treasurer McNatt also mentioned that tax receipts decreased from \$2.5 million in June 2023 to \$2.3 million in June 2024. As of June, the county has 65% of the budget left for the fiscal year of 2024.

Justice Cook motioned to adjourn, with no other business. The motion was seconded by Justice Pasmore. All were in favor, and the Finance Committee adjourned at 6:28 p.m.