

**FILED**

**JUN 13 2023**

COUNTY & PROBATE COURT CLERK

# **QUORUM COURT MINUTES**

**MAY 22, 2023**

## QUORUM COURT MINUTES MAY 22, 2023

Judge Day called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

The Invocation was led by Rodney Reeves, pastor, First Baptist Church, Jonesboro.

The Assembly and Pledge of Allegiance was led by special guest, Jackson Longmire.

The roll was called, and all Justices were present.

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The first order of business was the approval of Quorum Court Minutes from May 8, 2023. A motion to accept the minutes as prepared was made by Justice Weinstock and seconded by Justice Pasmore. With no questions or comments Judge Day called for a vote, and it passed unanimously.

The Road Committee report was read by Justice Cline. The Public Service report was read by Justice Rogers, and the Finance report was read by Justice Longmire.

No **OLD BUSINESS**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Resolution to reappoint Bob Holloway to the Equalization Board.** Motion to accept was made by Justice Williams and seconded by both Justice Forrest and Justice Longmire. With no questions or comments Judge Day called for a vote, and it passed unanimously.

**Resolution to reappoint Barry Kirby to the Equalization Board.** Motion to accept was made by Justice Couch and seconded by Justice Longmire. Judge Day asked for questions and comments. Justice Cline asked why there were two appointments with staggering terms guessing we're not sure how it was before? Justice Cook asked how many members there are? Judge Day comments those are good questions, and there are 5 members. Justice Cline responds that being three-year terms might explain why there were two appointments this year. Judge Day agrees with Justice Cline that the three-year terms would reason why there were two appointments. Justice Weinstock asked if the Equalization Board members were term limited and Judge Day answered no. Justice Weinstock asked if they could stay on as long as they wanted to, and Judge Day responded yes, if they were reappointed and approved. With no other comments or questions Judge Day called for a vote, and it passed unanimously.

**Appropriation Ordinance to add Line 1011 to Fund 3031 amending the 2023 Annual Operating Budget to allow for unemployment compensation to correctly record charges in the fund.** Judge Day asked for a motion to accept. Justice Allison made motion and it was seconded by Justice Tennison. With no questions or comments, roll was called, and it passed unanimously.

**Appropriation Ordinance amending the 2023 Annual Operating Budget to add Fund 3591, Rural Community Grant Fund for Brookland Fire Department.** Justice Rogers made the motion to accept, and Justice Pasmore seconded the motion. Judge Day asked if there were any comments or questions. Justice

Allison asked if the Brookland Fire District had already paid the \$15,000.00 to the county? Judge Day responded that you'll see these grant opportunities for rural fire departments every year. The way this process works is once the account is set up and the money becomes available, we won't spend the money until their money is deposited to make the purchases. They must pay ahead of time. Judge Day asked for any further comments or questions, and then asked for the roll to be called. The Ordinance passed unanimously.

**Ordinance to sell belly dump trailer to Poinsett County per A.C.A. 14-16-116.** Motion to accept was made by Justice Cline and seconded by Justice Tennison and Justice Williams. Judge Day asked for any comments or questions. Justice Longmire asked if we included a COVID surcharge. Judge Day responded that we did not. Judge Day said so that everyone knows how this came to be, the Poinsett County Judge contacted Judge Day and said he was in a bind and needing to haul some gravel and asked if we had a spare. Judge Day talked to the road guys, and everyone was comfortable as they had not been using the trailer in quite some time. Judge Day proceeded and called an auction house to research the fair market value for the piece of equipment and they came to an agreement. Justice Longmire asked what we paid for it when purchased in 2009? Judge Day didn't know but took a guess at maybe \$20-25,000 back then. Justice Barnes asked if the Poinsett County Quorum Court had to pass this to consummate the deal. Judge Day responded not necessarily. The statute is in place for the normal methods of disposing property like trading it in or selling it at auction or you have the assessor declare it as junk and that it has no value at all. But then when you sell to another party you have to have the seller agree to that. So, if he's got it in his budget already like I do with a line item to purchase equipment then he can buy it without specifically having to authorize. Judge Day asked for other comments or questions. The roll was called, and the ordinance passed unanimously.

First reading for **Ordinance to amend Ordinance 2022-33 for Policies and Procedures for Appropriated Exempt Positions set out in the budget of the Quorum Court of Craighead County and for other matters.** Judge Day asked if there were any questions or comments on this ordinance at this time? There were none.

**Ordinance to authorize HVAC repair and service from Garth Willard and A. Able Services.** Judge Day asked for a motion to accept. Justice Weinstock made the motion and Justice Cline seconded. Judge Day commented that the sheriff's office took bids on this. A. Able Services was the low bid but happened to be an employee's spouse, so part of the protocol we have is that the Quorum Court needs to acknowledge that we know of the potential conflict but hopefully don't see that there is a problem. Judge Day asks for any comments or questions. Justice Allison asked about the language on this as an emergency. Is that just part of the language? Judge Day said yes, just part of the language, and this is for part of the training area at our shooting range where they don't have heat or air and would like to have it now instead of 6 weeks from now. Judge Day asked for any other comments or questions and for the roll to be called. The ordinance passed unanimously.

**Resolution for the Quorum Court of Craighead County to award the bid for the construction of the Addition of the Saferoom and Courtroom Expansion to the Craighead County Annex.** A motion to accept was made by Justice Barnes and seconded by Justice Williams. Judge Day commented that we currently have in our budget 10 million dollars to cover this expense. The bid was more than what he wanted to spend, and we're going to work and see what areas we can reduce those costs to get it down into budget. Our engineer's estimate last fall was closer to 12 and a half million dollars, and we are going

to work and see what we can do to tweak and change the project and get that down into a more manageable range. The biggest thing here is anytime we make a big decision and sign a big contract I would like the Court to know what's going on and be brought in with it. That is the biggest reason currently, as it is a big event, and I want to make sure everyone is good with that. Judge Day opened the floor for any questions or comments. Justice Rogers asked his thoughts on why we only had one company to bid on the project. Judge Day's response was that we had a non-mandatory pre-bid conference and there were 4 contractors looking at the project, three Craighead County base contractors and one from central Arkansas. From the feedback we got from the general contractor's side, they already had too much work and didn't feel comfortable. We heard from one they didn't have a superintendent to man the job. Another prospective bidder picked up two jobs the week before the bid and couldn't staff it. Other comments received where they couldn't hire enough people to work, whether brick masons or HVAC technicians. Lastly, is getting in supply. In the preconstruction part of this they talked about the purchase of the brick a year ahead of time and how hard it is to plan. Supply is very limited. Judge Day believes it was just a combination of all these factors as to why there was just one bid. Justice Longmire asked the estimated completion date. Judge Day responds with February 2025. Judge Day asks for any other questions or comments from anyone, any from the public. Justice Allison states that the resolution says estimated costs and asks if we would go into a full contract and then work from that to reduce the price potentially. Judge Day explains that we put out a bid package and they submitted a price. In the contract there are some allowances for different components that may cost us nothing and could help the price come down some, but there is always a possibility of unexpected things causing the price to go up. Assuming we reach a comfort level with the price we would sign a contract with a change order in place just to be able to change certain aspects of the job. Light fixtures, wood finishes, just to save some costs. Judge Day is hopeful we can get the number down. Justice Allison asked if we were going to be able to take our jail door with us and keep a little of the history on a side note. With no other questions or comments, a vote was taken, and the resolution passed unanimously.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Judge Day mentioned he was going to Hot Springs to accept the grant for Brookland Fire on Thursday.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

James Elwin Hines wants to comment on the idea of a Regional Airport. He believes if Craighead County invests in the NEA Regional Airport, it will be the biggest black hole they've ever put money into. If you look at the 19 counties in our region to compare to the two counties for the NWA Regional Airport, Washington and Benton Counties, you'll see that they have four of the largest cities in the State of Arkansas, two of those cities larger than Jonesboro he believes within 20 miles of their airport. The NWA Regional Airport has businesses like JB Hunt, Tysons, and Wal-Mart to back and support them. We don't have anyone like that to invest in the airport here. Even with Wal-Mart backing them, they have also had to raise local taxes because of expenses incurred by their airport. Next is the matter of location, one problem is that to get federal funding for an airport you must be 210 miles from the nearest airport. And to get 210 miles from Memphis there is no reason for this. Within our 19 counties in NEA, for example, Crittenden County, where most of the residents live in West Memphis, they would go to Memphis with no reason to use an airport here and in White County residents would likely go to Little Rock to use an airport. Mr. Hines states that the airport idea is mostly for the counties west of Crowley's Ridge. The

problem with this is that most people in Northeast Arkansas live on or east of Crowley's Ridge, asking those of us east of Crowley's Ridge to fund this. Another concern is the essential service provision that Jonesboro Airport has is because when they changed the laws it was grandfathered in and would risk ruining the service that we currently have.

With no other comments, Judge Days asks for a motion to adjourn. Justice Williams made the motion and Justice Rogers seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.

Special Finance Committee Minutes  
May 22, 2023

Chairman Longmire was called the special Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:05 pm. Present were committee members Justice Pasmore, Justice Weinstock, Justice Forrest, and Justice Cook. Also present were Judge Marvin Day and Justice Williams.

Chairman Longmire presented the Ordinance allowing the county to do business with Garth Willard and A. Able Services, disclosing his marriage to a county employee. A motion to pass was made by Justice Pasmore and seconded by Justice Forrest. The committee asked who the other quotes were from. Judge Day called Sheriff Boyd and he said Steve Treadway, Garth Willard and a third that he couldn't remember. Chairman Longmire took a vote and the motion passed. The Ordinance will be heard by the full court.

Chairman Longmire read the Resolution to accept the Ramson's bid for Courtroom Expansion. Justice Weinstock made the motion to approve, seconded by Justice Pasmore. Judge Day wanted the court to be aware of what is going on and he is committed to getting the costs down as much as he can. Justice Cook asked about how much would be paid to the architect. Judge Day said it's a sliding scale, but 6% of the total cost of the building. There was a concern about why only 1 bid was submitted. Justice Forrest said he called some friends and construction companies don't have superintendents or staff for a large job. A vote was taken, the motion passed, and the Ordinance will be heard by the full court.

With no other business, Justice Forrest made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Justice Cook. All were in favor and the Finance Committee adjourned at 5:20 pm.