

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY QUORUM COURT
September 26, 2023

The Quorum Court of Mississippi County, Arkansas, met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. in the Mississippi County Courthouse in Blytheville, Arkansas with Judge John Alan Nelson presiding. Dr. Hanson from 1st United Methodist Church in Blytheville, AR gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following members answered roll call:

Justice Ash
Justice Brown
Justice Burge
Justice Cullom

Justice Hepler
Justice Martin
Justice McClanahan
Justice McDonald

Absent: Justices Jackson, Mangat and White. Also in attendance was County Attorney Jacob Holmes.

In the treasurer's report, County Treasurer Peggy Meatte reported the interest rate at Farmers Bank in Blytheville on a \$100,000.00 CD was 5.30% for one year. She reported the sales tax revenue was down from the previous month but still in good shape. She also reported county general continues to be in good shape.

Justice Ash moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes as copies had been provided to the members. Justice McClanahan seconded the motion and the voice vote was unanimous.

Judge John Alan Nelson announced the retirement of Peggy Meatte, County Treasurer, and read a proclamation honoring her many years of service to Mississippi County, AR.

Committee Meetings:

Personnel Committee: Justice McDonald reported the committee met on 9/6/23 and again on 9/18/23. Topics of discussion were:

- Changing the requirements to allow employees to donate sick time to the catastrophic sick bank.
- Changing the policy to allow an employee to donate sick or vacation to an individual.
- Allowing Assessor Brannah Bibbs to eliminate an appraiser position and give raises to the other employees.
- Making the position of OEM/E-911/ Floodplain Coordinator one position with a 40 hour workweek and an annual salary of \$70,000.00. Overtime would be budgeted for 2024.
- Judge Alexander's request for a Mental Health Coordinator which would be funded by a federal grant.
- Technology Resource Policy (Act 504).

- To create a temporary position in the County Clerk's office to allow adequate training time before next year's election cycle begins.

Finance Committee: Justice Burge reported the committee met on September 18th and discussed:

- Jeremy Thomas came before the committee to request a slot for a salaried employee. Mr. Thomas' salary is funded by the state and the county supplies an office and employees. Mr. Thomas informed the committee he receives \$3,700.00 a month for office expenses and he was currently paying an employee out of that. The committee recommended delaying the matter until 2024 budgeting.
- Expenditures were in good shape. Elected officials were staying within budget. Justice White was concerned about the amount of overtime.
- Landfill has \$1,500,000.00 in CD's purchased this year.
- Personnel Committee recommended the salary of the OEM/E-911/ Flood Plains Coordinator be increased to \$70,000.00.
- County Treasurer Peggy Meatte retiring on October 1st. A vacancy was declared and a replacement appointed.
- Judge Alexander's request for two slots to be created: 1. Mental Health Coordinator and 2. Peer Recovery Specialist. One would be funded by a Federal Grant and the other by a DHS Grant.
- October 2 begins the county's expenditure budgeting process. October 30th is the deadline for all elected officials and department heads to have their budgets turned in.

The clerk was asked to read a resolution titled: A RESOLUTION DECLARING AND FILLING A VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF COUNTY TREASURER OF MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS. Following the reading, Justice Ash moved to adopt, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. R-2023-09 was adopted by the court.

The clerk read an ordinance titled: AN ORDINANCE ADDING PARAGRAPH "M" TO SECTION SIX, SUBSECTION V OF THE EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE HANDBOOK OF MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS. Following the reading, Justice Ash informed the court this ordinance required three readings and moved to suspend the rules and proceed to the second reading by title only, Justice McClanahan seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. Following the second reading by title only, Justice Ash once again moved to suspend the rules and proceed to the third and final reading by title only, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. Following the third reading, Justice McClanahan moved for adoption, Justice Brown seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. O-2023-50 was adopted by the court.

The clerk was asked to read an ordinance titled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION SIX OF THE EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE HANDBOOK OF MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS SO TO ALLOW THE DONATION OF VACATION TIME. After the reading, Justice Ash informed the court this ordinance required three readings and moved to suspend the rules and proceed to the second reading by title only, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald;

Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. Following the second reading by title only, Justice Ash once again moved to suspend the rules and proceed to the third reading by title only, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. Following the third reading, Justice McClanahan moved for adoption, Justice Burge seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. O-2023-51 was adopted by the court.

The clerk read an ordinance titled: AN APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO CLOSE OUT SLOT 8 – APPRAISER 1 UNDER THE ASSESSOR’S COUNTY GENERAL BUDGET. Following the reading, Justice Ash moved to adopt, Justice Burge seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. O-2023-52 was adopted by the court.

The clerk read an ordinance titled: IN THE MATTER OF AMENDMENT TO COUNTY EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL POLICIES RESPECTING TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES. Following the reading, Justice Ash informed the court this ordinance also required three readings and moved to suspend the rules and proceed to the second reading by title only, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. Following the second reading by title only, Justice Ash once again moved to suspend the rules and proceed to the third and final reading by title only, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. Following the third reading, Justice Burge moved for adoption, Justice McClanahan seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. O-2023-53 was adopted by the court.

The clerk was asked to read an ordinance titled: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATIONS TO CREATE A SLOT FOR MENTAL HEALTH COURT COORDINATOR. Following the reading, Justice Burge moved to adopt, Justice Ash seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. O-2023-54 was adopted by the court.

The clerk was asked to read an ordinance titled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE OEM/E-911/FLOODPLAIN COORDINATOR POSITION. Following the reading, Justice McClanahan moved to adopt, Justice Ash seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. O-2023-55 was adopted by the court.

The clerk read an ordinance titled: AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO CREATE A TEMPORARY POSITION IN COUNTY CLERK’S OFFICE. Following the reading, Justice Burge moved for adoption, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White. O-2023-56 was adopted by the court.

One last order of business, Justice McClanahan made a motion to amend O-2023-52 and O-2023-53 to correct scrivener errors, Justice Ash seconded and the vote was: Aye--- Ash, Brown, Burge, Cullom, Hepler, Martin, McClanahan, and McDonald; Nay--- None; Absent: Jackson, Mangat and White.

There being no further business to come before the court, Justice Ash moved to adjourn, Justice McClanahan seconded and the voice vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Janice Currie
County Clerk/Secretary

**QUORUM COURT
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS
Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Blytheville, Arkansas**

**6:00 p.m. REGULAR SESSION OF QUORUM COURT IN THE CIRCUIT COURTROOM OF THE
BLYTHEVILLE COURTHOUSE**

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Prayer –**
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 4. Roll Call**
- 5. Treasurer’s Report**
- 6. Reading & Approving Minutes**
- 7. Committee Reports**
 - Finance Committee October 2, 2023 Chairman Justice Michael White**
 - Finance Committee October 9, 2023 Chairman Justice Michael White**
 - Finance Committee Octobe 16, 2023 Chairman Justice Michael White**
- 8. Resolutions:**
 - Supporting The Reactivation of the Former Eaker Air Force Base**
- 9. Ordinances:**
 - Doing Business with Robertson Brothers Furniture**
- 10. New Business**
- 11. Old Business**
- 12. Announcements**
- 13. Adjourn**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2023 1:30 ANNEX BUILDING**

ATTENDNCE: Chairman, Justice Michael White; Justice Molly Jackson; Justice Neil Burge; Justice Cecil McDonald; Justice Tobbye McClanahan; Justice Rick Ash; Treasurer Candance Nichols; County Clerk Janice Currie; Assessor Brannah Bibbs; NEA Town Courier Revis Blaylock.

1. Meeting was called to order by Justice Michael White. Expenditure budgets were reviewed. Tax collections increased the past year.
2. Employee Insurance Account. Request down \$500.00. Request for 2024. \$13,000.00.
3. Adult Drug Court. 2023 \$2,800.00. 2024 Request \$5,500.00. Travel had doubled.
4. County Hospital Fund. 2023 \$3,545,784.00. 2024 request \$4,201,495.20. Pass thru.
5. Boating Safety. 2023 \$1,800.00 2024 request \$1,764.00. Pass thru.
6. Cooperative Extension. 2023 \$128,000.00. 2024 request \$128,550.00. The county paid four employees @ \$30,000.00.
7. Finance Department. 2023 \$\$256,982.52. 2024 request \$295,362.67. Insurance meeting was scheduled for October 19th. Software, public records and photos were higher.
8. Treasurer. 2023 \$178,218.17. 2024 request \$183,055.43. Increased costs. Treasurer Automation \$105,418.84. 2024 request \$118,538.92.
9. Tribal Consistency Fund. Balance \$81,000.00. Used for the Hyper-Reach Software. \$10,000.00. Justice McDonald asked how effective the Hyper-Reach program was and would like to use the money somewhere else.
10. County Library. 2023 \$882,000.00. 2024 request \$1,323,000.00. Pass thru. Included in the budget per request of auditors.
11. Quorum Court. 2023 \$229,542.08. 2024 request \$233,531.34. Minimum per diem had to be paid. Current per diem \$350.00 per meeting.
12. Assessor. 2023 \$742,615.95. 2024 request \$730,859.42. Assessor Amendment 79. 2023 \$9,000.00. 2024 request \$16,500.00. Salaries based on Assessor's request to spread the closed slot between her employees. 5% annual salary raise from the county was not included. Uncertainties were the Chief Deputy positions. Agreement was all Chief Deputies were paid the same. In the Assessor's request the Chief Deputies were at different salary per responsibilities performed.

13. Employee raises. A 5%, 6% & 7% raise were figured. 5% would be a cost of \$575,321.63. 6% cost to the county. \$678,216.64. 7% cost to the county \$780,611.51. Would be a permanent cost to the county. Justice White asked the Justices to start thinking about what the county could afford. Justice Jackson thought a longevity bonus may be possible and paid one time a year. \$100.00 per year with the county.

14. Finance meeting. Monday, October 9th. 1:30 Annex building.

15. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Cindy George

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2023 1:30 ANNEX BUILDING**

ATTENDANCE: Justice Neil Burge; Justice Molly Jackson; Justice Cecil McDonald; Justice Tobye McClanahan; Justice Rick Ash; Justice Betty Hepler; Circuit Clerk Leslie Mason; Deputy Clerk Ashley McGuirt; Treasurer Candia Nichols; Finance Kelli Jones; Sheriff Dale Cook; Collector Susan Short; Coroner Karen Ash Crane; Senior Citizens Center; NEA Town Courier Joseph Fondren.

- 1. Circuit Judge Dan Ritchey. 2023 \$11,450.00. 2024 request \$11,400.00. Carry over.**
- 2. Coroner. 2023 \$50,053.96. 2024 request \$60,090.91. Increase on professional services was up. Coroner Karen Ash Crane would like to see an increase of \$10.00 per deputy.**
- 3. Collector. 2023 \$367,848.70. 2024 request \$386,183.71. 5% raise and \$6% insurance. Included. Closed one slot and also disbursed the funds. Collector Automation \$2023 \$107,118.00. 2024 request. \$101,800.00.**
- 4. Senior Citizens Center. 2023 \$664,414.29. 2024 request \$700,983.55. Senior Citizens Equipment Fund. 2023 \$42,015.43. 2024 request \$28,090.22. \$2,733.78. Food, supplies, service contracts and maintenance had increased. \$1,000.00 per month rent was paid to NEAR. Gas and internet were paid by the center for Osceola. Equipment was in good shape. Vehicle repair was down.**
- 5. Circuit Clerk. 2024 \$445,023.14. 2024 request \$1,212,484.15. Increase was for the books being repaired. Circuit Clerk BLY Recorder 25%. 2023 \$36,511.60. 2024 request \$12,700.00. Circuit Clerk Recorder 75. 2023 \$67,935.79. 2024 request \$109,387.30. Circuit Clerk Child Support. 2023 \$37.50. 2024 request \$900.00. Circuit Clerk Commissioner's Fee Fund. 2023 \$8,745.00. 2024 request \$7,000.00. Circuit Clerk OSC Recorder 25%. 2023 \$10,000.00. 2024 request \$18,000.00. E-filing had not started. E-recording was being used.**
- 6. Chief Deputy's salary needed to be discussed on how to disburse funds when a slot was closed. All Chief Deputies were paid the same now. No decision was made.**
- 7. Meeting adjourned.**
Minutes submitted by: Cindy George

1 Resolution No. R-2023 - _____

2 Page Two

3

4 **WHEREAS**, heroic missions such as Operation Linebacker II and Hulk 46, as well as the
5 efforts of educating current and future generations regarding the lessons learned by the Cold War
6 are currently honored and undertaken by this community; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the long-time residents of Mississippi County remember fondly the decades
8 when the base was active here; and

9 **WHEREAS**, reactivation of the air base in Mississippi County would be a “win, win” for
10 both the United States Air Force and for the residents of Mississippi County.

11 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE QUORUM COURT OF MISSISSIPPI**
12 **COUNTY, ARKANSAS:**

13 That the Quorum Court of Mississippi County, Arkansas, supports, welcomes and invites
14 the reactivation of the former Eaker Air Force Base and pledges full cooperation with the United
15 States Department of Defense. Furthermore, Mississippi County pledges to be a hospitable host
16 county that will continue its long history of mission centric support should reactivation occur.

17

18

19 DATE: _____

APPROVED:

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JOHN ALAN NELSON, COUNTY JUDGE

24

25

26

27 ATTEST:

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31 _____
JANICE CURRIE, COUNTY CLERK

32 & SECRETARY

OFFICE OF COUNTY JUDGE
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY
ARKANSAS

October 16, 2023

Secretary Frank Kendall, III
Secretary of the Air Force
Department of the Air Force
1690 Air Force Pentagon,
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Kendall:

Thank you for all that you do in defense of our great nation. We thank you and the more than 320,000 other U.S. Air Force personnel for keeping us safe in an everchanging and increasingly dangerous world.

I am the County Judge of Mississippi County, Arkansas. My elected office is the chief executive officer of our county. I grew up on a family farm, mere yards from the fence line at the former Eaker Air Force Base near Blytheville, Arkansas. I grew up in the heights of the Cold War and watched as our Strategic Air Command's B-52Gs and KC-135A's circled our skies and stood on high alert should the former Soviet Union attack.

At one time that air base was the county's largest employer. We were proud to be the home of SAC and we swelled with both pride and tears as a result of Operation Linebacker II and Hulk-46. Being a host community, ever mindful of being the mission-centric support for thousands of air force personnel, whether during their most happy times (i.e. birth of children, marriages, etcetera) or the most trying of times (i.e. when family members deployed, were killed or were taken captive), we miss having the base here and invite its reactivation.

We know this is possible because it's been done before. The Blytheville Army Airfield was activated by the Southeastern Air Command during World War II, when our nation was in such great need of trained pilots. What caught the Defense Department's attention, regarding our location was a simple letter that our local Chamber of Commerce had sent prior to America's entry into the war and an invitation, very much like this one today, to locate a base in our county. However, today's invitation makes even more sense.

At the end of World War II, the airfield was deactivated for a time. Our community lobbied to have it reopened and showed such commitment to our flying men and women, that soon the Tactical Air Command decided to reactivate and expand the base. Next, Strategic Air Command saw the wisdom of locating a portion of their “tip of the spear” nuclear triad here. The base had a very long and proud history.

With the “end of the Cold War”, BRAC closed a lot of military installations and unfortunately Eaker Air Force Base was one of them.

- With the world “heating up” with increased threats to our nation from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, as well as from increased threats of terrorism, it makes sense to once again spread our military (especially nuclear response) assets out geographically like they once were.
- I have heard from at least one congressperson and congressional staffers that Washington is beginning to reexamine the wise strategy of deconcentrating our military assets to better protect our homeland and to assure timely and complete responses, should one be needed.
- Mississippi County still remembers how to support the U.S. Air Force. Our county has a large veteran population and hundreds of former Eaker Air Force Base personnel have made Mississippi County their forever home.
- Our geographical location, transportation outlets and infrastructure would make reactivation a success...and much more speedily than at other locations.
- The Arkansas International Airport, the former runway of the airbase, is still functioning and is large enough to accommodate any aircraft (including the space shuttle). It has a concrete surface of 11,602’ x 300’ and runway markings of 11,602’ x 150’ (3,536 x 46 m)

I invite you to visit and put myself and my office at your service. Anything that we can do to assist you, don’t hesitate to let me know. Once again, thank you for your service!

Sincerely,



John Alan Nelson
County Judge

1 **MISSISSIPPI COUNTY QUORUM COURT**
2 **ORDINANCE NO. O-2023-_____**

3
4 *AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING MISSISSIPPI COUNTY TO CONDUCT BUSINESS*
5 *WITH ROBERTSON BROTHERS FURNITURE OF LEACHVILLE, ARKANSAS.*

6
7 **WHEREAS**, Mississippi County desires to conduct business with Robertson Brothers Furniture,
8 a business located in Leachville, Mississippi County, Arkansas; and

9
10 **WHEREAS**, the business is owned and operated by Rodney Robertson – the father of County
11 Assessor Brannah Bibbs; and

12
13 **WHEREAS**, Arkansas Code Annotated 14-14-1202 permits the county to purchase goods,
14 services, commodities, or real property directly or indirectly from a Quorum Court member, a county
15 officer, or a county employee due to unusual circumstances; and

16
17 **WHEREAS**, the unusual circumstances present in this specific instance are that there are very
18 few other local providers and the services tendered by Robertson Brothers Furniture are absolutely
19 necessary for regular operation; and

20
21 **WHEREAS**, it is preferred to buy goods and services locally, when possible, to support the local
22 economy and to minimize unnecessary transportation carbon emissions; and

23
24 **WHEREAS**, the grant of this authority shall remain in place as long as this condition exists; and

25
26 **WHEREAS**, the County is in immediate need of the furniture it wishes to purchase from
27 Robertson Brthers Furniture, therefore the inclusion of an emergency clause is hereby justified.

28 **NOW, THEREFORE, be it enacted by the Quorum Court of Mississippi County, Arkansas:**

29 Section One: Circumstances are found to exist, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §14-14-1202,
30 permitting the County to conduct business with Robertson Brothers Furniture of Leachville, Arkansas.

31
32 Section Two: The Quorum Court finds that the immediate implementation of this ordinance is
33 necessary in order to enable the County Government to conduct operations, therefore an emergency is
34 declared to exist and this ordinance shall be in effect immediately upon its passage.

35
36
37 DATE: _____

APPROVED:

38 _____
39 JOHN ALAN NELSON, COUNTY JUDGE

40 ATTEST:

41 _____
42 JANICE CURRIE, COUNTY CLERK & SECRETARY