

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

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Justice Michael White; Justice Molly Jackson; Justice Neil Burge; Justice Drake Brown; Justice Cecil McDonald; Justice Rick Ash; Justice Betty Hepler; Sheriff Dale Cook; Major Rob Rounsavall; Great River Economic Development Foundation Mike Jacques; Kenny Noble; Circuit Clerk Leslie Mason; Collector Susan Short; County Clerk Janice Currie; NEA Town Courier Revis Blaylock.

1. Meeting was called to order by Justice Michael White. GREDF Board Member Kenny Noble presented the budget for Economic Development. Proposed Change for 2024. \$18,550.00. Proposed for 2024 \$548,550.00. Quarterly \$137,137.50. 5% increase for salaries and benefits. Request last year for \$36,000.00 plus benefits. Total \$50,000.00 for an additional employee was not needed. Salaries decreased \$50,000.00. 3 ½ increase for recruiting, marketing, industrial relations \$50,000.00. Motion was made by Justice Neil Burge to move the proposal for \$548,550.00 for GREDF. forward. Second was made by Justice Molly Jackson. Motion passed.

2. Judge Nelson brought a proposal for a new position. Tom Henry's title has been Public Affairs Director. Judge Nelson wanted to bring Mr. Henry's title and job description in line with what he was doing. Judge Nelson requested a new slot for Chief of Staff and hire another employee for the Public Affairs slot. Judge Nelson suggested along the line of the OEM Director. \$73,528.00. The Personnel committee recommend the title change and carry his present salary across. Public Affairs salary would be addressed when the position was filled. Justice Drake Brown asked how much authority would the Chief of Staff have when Judge Nelson was gone. Justice White stated "none". Justice Jackson thought a separate job description was needed for the Public Affairs position and a new one for Chief of Staff. The Committee thought they could not go with the \$73,528.00 but go with the same salary of \$48,734.40. Justice Michael White recommended to go by the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to create the slot move the salary to \$48,734.40, Public Affairs leave as is or zero it out. Judge Nelson could come back to the Finance to set a salary at that time. Motion was made by Justice Molly Jackson to send the request and job description back to Personnel to review and ask the Judge to revise the job description. Second was made Justice Drake Brown. Motion passed.

3. Assessor's requested to defund a slot and share with her employees. Some Elected Officials considered this was not fair. All Chief Deputies made the same salary on JESAP. Janice Currie didn't want Assessor's Chief Deputy to make more than the other Chief Deputies. Longevity was based on the years worked with the County. Motion was made by Justice Neil Burge to move forward with the request from the Assessor's Office and Collector's Office to reduce the budget by that amount and proceed with the 5% raise. Second was made by Justice Cecil McDonald. Justice Burge amended his motion to take the 2023 Courthouse budget salary figures on an hourly basis and raise the minimum hourly salary for Courthouse employees to \$18.01 per hour. \$30,436.90 salary. Second was made by Justice Cecil McDonald. Motion passed.

4. Sheriff's Department. Justice Burge thought the Court should look at the Sheriff's Department different than other departments. Justice Rick Ash recommended to give the Sheriff's Department an 8% raise. Sheriff Departments were losing deputies to higher paying jobs. Justice Jackson would like to see the raise increased. Motion was made by Justice Neil Burge to move forward with a 10% pay increase for the Sheriff's Department and Jail. Second was made by Justice Drake Brown. Motion passed. Sheriff Cook would present the remainder of his budget next week. SRO Office for Gosnell Schools came from a recommendation from Personnel Committee.

5. Public Defender. John Bradley wanted to close a part-time slot and give his two employees \$2,600.00 each plus the 5% raise. 2024 request \$169,190.68.

6. Additional Motor Fuel Tax. 2024 request \$150,000.00. Across the board.

7. Health Department. Request Osceola \$48,290.00, request Blytheville \$52,632.00. Estimates for paper towel holders and towels for both Blytheville and Osceola were not included in the budget. MJ Movers estimate included.

8. Road Department had 4 older road graders that needed to be replaced. Judge Nelson wanted to replace 2 in 2023. Judge Nelson didn't want to use CD and reserve funds. The Committee recommended to buy two road graders. Replace the 1996 and 1997. Utilize funds available and whatever else was need. Equipment budget increased to \$540,000.00. Justice White and Kelli would look at the other line items. Bridges and Steel adjusted to \$10,000.00.

9. County Judge. \$35,000.00 for professional services. Travel increased to \$11,000.00. SG 360 cleaning service brought a copy of an e-mail. There were no numbers included. The Committee suggested Judge Nelson adjust Bennie Cannon's hours. Justice Jackson suggested the committee change slot 1 to reflect a part time position.

10. Courthouse budget. \$110,000.00 approved to work on the Osceola Courthouse. There was a grant for the cornice work. Construction fund money would be used and then get reimbursed.

11. Other County. Carried over from 2023. \$291,880.00.

12. Veteran's Office. Samuel Bibbs asked for money to be put in the budget for outreach events. 2024 request \$44,057.29.

13. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Cindy George