

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 20, 2024 1:30 ANNEX BUILDING**

**ATTENDANCE:** Chairman, Justice Michael White; Justice Molly Jackson; Justice Neil Burge; Justice Cecil McDonald; Justice Tobye McClanahan; Justice Rick Ash; Justice Betty Hepler; Treasurer Candace Nichols; Finance Kelli Jones; Collector Susan Short; County Clerk Janice Currie; NEA Town Courier Revis Blaylock.

1. Meeting was called to order by Justice Michael White. Clean up budget for 2023 and adjustments to the 2024 budget would be presented in March. Legal fees were over budget for 2023. 8% of the year. All Elected Officials were below budget. Road Department overtime salaries had paid out 44% in January. 38% for the jail. Holiday pay.
2. Finance Committee had recommended \$1 million to Big River Steel. Ordinance was pulled because of verbiage. Would need to be added to the agenda for Quorum Court.
3. Countertops for Janice Currie and Leslie Mason. Estimates were received. \$13,800.00. Quartz with waterfall sides. The Committee asked Janice Currie to move forward with the countertops.
4. Finance Director, Kelli Jones asked for discussion on outsourcing County payroll. Input from the County was still needed. A local CPA Firm was contacted. HR and Insurance were also in the position. Only payroll would be outsourced. The position now might be able to go to part time. Would be hired at the hourly rate. Start up time April 1, 2024. Motion was made by Justice Neil Burge to outsource payroll based on the bid received and Kelli Jones to hire a part time person to fill the position and could be expanded to a full time person. The motion was amended to go to the outsourcing and leave the position as is. Second was made by Justice Molly Jackson. Motion passed.
5. Health Department gave notice they would vacate the Great River Medical Center on February 26, 2024. \$3,600.00 was asked for data drops to be installed.
6. Discussion for the appropriation for Cranford Co. \$1 million was budgeted thru Economic Development. Cranford did not fall under GREDF but under the Judge's office. Tom Henry came asked for an additional \$200,000.00. An increase of 20% for Cranford. Total \$1.2 million. Chamber of Commerce has asked at their next luncheon if the Cranford Firm would do a presentation of what had been done, where they were going and what the direction was. Justice Burge asked had anyone seen any results from the million dollars spent. The Committee would like to see quarterly reports and involve the Chambers, Clif Chitwood and Mallory Darby. The request was moved to the Planning & Development meeting on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.
7. City of Keiser. Notice of Commitment concerning their \$4.6 million sewer loan. Needed to be finalized by the end of June to secure the 1.75%. The approval documentation to commence had been with ANRC for one month, awaiting their green light. The water tank

bid exceeded their budget and was seeking \$27,100.00 from the Quorum Court to cover the shortfall. Keiser had received \$400,000.00 grant for their water.

8. City of Leachville asked if they could amend the grant agreement to use the money for water/wastewater improvements while the land transfer is being completed. The City of Leachville didn't know if they could finish the land project by June. Final finish date would be in 2026.

9. Aaron Ruby asked if the Energy & Property Committee had decided on a budget range for the Osceola Courthouse. A budget needed to be agreed on. Includes construction, contingencies, design fee, expenses. The Committee had sent a list of things that were priority at the Courthouse. \$1.5 million had been appropriated. Justice Jackson would contact Mr. Ruby.

10. Justice Tobye McClanahan wanted to go on record. Justice McClanahan was for a new building at the landfill and not anti-architect. I am 100% anti-architect for the firm that spoke with the Court the other day. Based on how we relied on the architect for the Blytheville Courthouse would the Court like to work with him when he didn't want to be here in the first place. Justice McClanahan had an engineering firm that she thought would save the county six months and six figures on building the scale house. Some members of the Committee thought he didn't want the job. Justice McClanahan would vote no if it was brought before the Court.

11. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Cindy George