

Finance Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 12, 2019 @ 1:30 pm – Blytheville Annex

Attendance: Finance Chairman - Justice Michael White, Justice Molly Jackson, Justice Howard Norvell, Justice Alvin Clay, Justice JoAnne Henton, Justice Betty Hepler, Joseph Fondren – NEA Town Courier, Kelli Jones – Finance Director, Daryl Turner – Juvenile, Steven Savage – Public Affairs, Leslie Lawrence – Payroll/Accounts Payable, County Judge John Alan Nelson, his wife Angie Nelson, Collector – Susan McCormick, Treasurer – Peggy Meatte, County Clerk – Janice Currie.

Justice White called the meeting to order and announced that there were not enough committee members present to make a quorum. Justice White made note that the fund balance for County General was @ \$627,072.70. Treasurer, Peggy Meatte, stated that the Jail had recently paid a bill for a little over \$300k for the new camera system. That money was not available in jail funds and had to be transferred from County General. Peggy mentioned that she had received PILOT money from the City of Osceola for Plum Point. She also noted that there was a large amount of tax money receipted last week and would be distributed sometime this week. County General should receive approx. \$1 million. Hannah Freeman will be completing the final tax settlement for Mississippi County again this year.

Justice White noted that Kelli Jones had emailed out to everyone a copy of expenditure and revenue budget numbers for 2020. A few changes that were discussed:

- Collector & Assessor is requesting to change their Leachville/Manila clerk to a chief deputy and for the pay to reflect the change.
- Assessor is requesting one of his Appraisers be changed to 40 hours per week from 32.5 hours per week.
- Quorum Court is receiving a cost of living adjustment and the max annual is being changed to \$10,125. Per diem rates will be changed to \$350.00.
- Election Coordinator is requesting to work 40 hours per week in 2020. In 2021, her plans are to change back to 26 hours per week. Election equipment should be in next week.
- Financial Management is requesting a part-time clerk to help with job duties. There has been a part-time clerk in the department in past years.
- Juvenile is wanting to close the part-time secretary slot that is currently being paid from 3031 and open a full-time secretary slot with an annual max of \$24k to be paid out of 1000.0415. Daryl Turner noted that fund 3031 could not pay for full-time salaries. Daryl would like to use funds from 3031 to pay for more of the office supplies, etc.
- Public Defender, John Bradley, will be needing to replace his current secretary in 2020. He would like to change the position to full-time hours and increase the salary. He feels that he will need the increases to help find a replacement. Justice

Jackson mentioned that AAC consultant, Mr. Eddie Jones, recommends that counties do not pay for salaries for the offices of the Public Defender and the Prosecuting Attorney. Justice Hepler mentioned starting a new secretary at the current hours and rate of pay. If that doesn't meet the needs of the office, the issue can be revisited.

- Sheriff has proposed an increase in his food budget since he presented his budget. Sheriff has changed his food line item from \$184k to \$210k.
- Justice Nelson asked Kelli Jones to change the proposed insurance increase from 12% to 15%. All numbers were updated and included in today's reports. Judge Nelson noted that 15% would not be enough to cover the increase. Judge Nelson also stated that our current plan fell under ERISA laws and that he had concerns about continuing with that type of plan. Judge Nelson stated that Justice Nelson and the insurance committee may want to move forward with finding a fully-insured policy. Justice Norvell agreed and felt that we needed to find a different insurance company and that he was not for passing the cost of insurance on to our employees.

Justice White noted that the revenue report was showing \$24,094,019 and the expense report was showing \$23,951,678. However, this is before the revenues for County General have been adjusted by 10%. Justice White would like to have the budget approved in the November meeting but, we could move it to December if necessary. Insurance is holding the numbers up. Judge Nelson said that he didn't think we would have insurance numbers available by Monday and that he would like to see what BCBS, AAC and the Municipal League has to offer. Justice White asked Kelli to call and check on the status of getting our claims information.

Judge Nelson stated that everything was moving right along with the courthouse projects. He has hired a person to follow the construction for compliance, etc. Construction bids were opened last Tuesday and they were now clarifying bid specifics. The next step would be to sign a letter of intent and go over bid details. Judge Nelson hopes to have the General Contractor in a week. Construction Company for the Osceola Courthouse roof has already been hired. Pre-construction meeting has already been set.

Judge Nelson mentioned to the committee that the salaries for the janitors needed to be adjusted. Janice Currie stated that she didn't feel that the pay for the janitors should be lowered. Kelli Jones stated that the ordinance that was passed for the new janitors sets the annual salary at \$23,834 with annual hours at 2080. This gives the janitors an hourly rate of \$11.46. The payroll clerk had their hourly rate entered incorrectly in the payroll system. They had been receiving pay at \$14.10 per hour since their hire dates. Committee discussed and agreed that the pay needed to be changed to the correct amount of \$11.46 per hour and that this issue would be revisited next week.

Judge Nelson explained to the committee that County Attorney, Jeremy Thomas, has been having to take dispositions for the Brandon Bryan case and felt that he should be compensated for the extra time he has had to spend on this case. The committee discussed and agreed. Judge

Nelson stated that he would consult with Judge Dan Ritchey on how this has been handled in the past and get back with Jeremy Thomas.

There was no other business and Justice White adjourned the meeting.

Minutes submitted by Kelli Jones.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelli Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "K" and "J".