

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2019 1:30 ANNEX BUILDING**

ATTENDANCE: Chairman, Justice Michael White; Justice, Molly Jackson; Justice, Bill Nelson; Justice, Neil Burge; Justice, Howard Norvell; Justice, Rick Ash; Justice, Alvin Clay; Justice, Jo Ann Henton; Justice, Betty Hepler; Treasurer, Peggy Meatte; County Clerk, Janice Currie; Circuit Clerk, Leslie Mason; Sheriff, Dale Cook; Public Affairs, Steven Savage; Finance, Kelli Jones; NEA Town Courier, Joseph Fondren.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chairman, Justice Michael White. Justice White stated expenditures are on track. Tax collections and revenues are continuing. County general was lower last week. \$600,000.00. Treasurer, Peggy Meatte stated County General balance is now \$2.1 million. \$3.3 million in County General CD. Finishing 2019 in good shape.

2. 2020 budget. Justice Nelson summarized the Insurance Committee Meeting. Justice Nelson stated he would like Kelli to put 22% instead of the 15% for 2020 budget. The Committee will meet next week to agree for I One Benefits Group to be the County's broker. Mr. Davis stated not to go with the Municipal League. The committee learned new definitions on terms used by the brokers. The County should participate in the pharmacy program. The Insurance Committee will suggest to the Finance Committee to enter the 22% increase. Justice Norvell stated if we had the Municipal League insurance and were hospitalized for more than 30 days the employee would then have to pay expenses and that would be devastating. The increase in insurance will probably reduce the raises to nothing to cover the insurance. Financially better for the employee than having to pay a portion of their insurance and then taxes on the raises. Justice White stated a 22% increase in rates is around \$2,100.00 per employee. \$12,000.00 annually per employee. \$400,000.00 total. Sheriff Cook stated the State Police have switched their insurance company. Rates and benefits would not change. Justice White stated with our loses this year a lot of Insurance Companies have declined to give us a quote. We are \$1.1 million over payments against claims. Justice Burge stated there is no better coverage than Medicare with a good supplement and drug card. It is the best coverage you can get anywhere. Medicare pays 80%. Your supplement pays the deductible and 20%. Proposal was made by Justice, Bill Nelson to accept the 22% from I One Benefits Group. Motion passed. Justice Norvell made a motion to accept I One Benefits Group as our broker if we do not have a lower offer. Second was made by Justice, Molly Jackson. Motion passed.

3. Justice White stated there were several requests for part time positions to be full time. Total increase would be \$14,000.00 per position for additional hours and benefits.

4. Collector and Assessor. Change the Leachville/Manila Clerk to Chief Deputy. Payroll split 50/50. \$4,000.00 increase in salary. The salary is \$31,558.00. Justice Jackson stated there would not be an open slot just changing the job description. Justice Nelson stated any new job positions need a job description. Request will go to Personnel and be included in the budget. The Assessor had an additional request. There are 2 appraisers that Mr. Bradley would like to move to a 40 hour week. The reason for the increase. The appraisers need more

hours to get the work done. \$5,740.00 annual increase. Justice Jackson was not in favor of the 40 hour week. Will not do at this time.

5. Election Coordinator. Melissa Logan would like to increase her hours for 2020 because of an Election year. Requesting a 40 hour week for 2020 only. County Clerk, Janice Currie stated she needed more hours but maybe not 40. Melissa gets retirement but is not eligible for insurance benefits. 30 hours a week she becomes eligible for insurance benefits. The hours could be increased 3 hours before insurance benefits would have to be paid. Janice Currie said she would need more than 29 hours a week during voting periods. There will be 4 elections in 2020. Primary, runoff, school and general elections. Justice Burge suggested to give the 3 hours with also getting comp time. Justice Nelson stated you can change someone's position once they are raised up but the salary cannot be changed. Justice Ash stated set her at an hourly rate and average 29 hours a week. During Elections she would average 40 hours a week, but when there are no Elections the average may only be 23 or 24 hours per week. Not to accumulate over 1500 hours. A new job description will be needed and go to Personnel Committee.

6. Juvenile Department. Daryl Turner is asking to take a part time slot that is paid out of line item 3031 to a full time position to be paid from County General. Salary \$24,000.00. Mr. Turner stated he was trying to move some items that are paid by County General to the Juvenile Fund. Justice White asked why a full time position was needed. Mr. Turner stated 4 different assessments are now required by the State. Updating the web site, summons, subpoenas, petitions. \$14,000.00 will be moved from County General to the Juvenile Fund. \$10,000.00 difference not counting possible benefits. Mr. Turner stated he works around 50 hours per week. Justice Norvell stated he didn't think the Juvenile Department would be asking for extra help if they did not need it. Justice Ash stated he was surprised the request had not been made earlier. Justice Burge stated he thought the request was justified. Justice Jackson would like to see numbers before a full time position is funded. Circuit Clerk, Leslie Mason stated the Juvenile and DHS cases getting heavier every day. The Committee will budget for the full time position and it will go to the Personnel Committee for a job description.

7. Public Defender. John Bradley is asking for a full time position. His part time secretary is retiring in 2020. She now works 25 hours per week. The Committee has not received any information from Mr. Bradley on the amount of the salary. Justice Jackson shared information from Eddie Jones. There are two basic revenues to fund the Public Defender. 1. Admin. Of Justice Funds. These pay what is obligated by law. The County can pay for personnel but it is recommended to do that. It recommends we pay for his office expense. Justice Jackson recommends to leave it and over a 12 month period get clarification. Justice Jackson does not recommend to pay for a full time person at this time. Kelli Jones stated we pay Mr. Bradley's office supplies, utilities, rent, postage and internet, part time investigator and full time investigator. Total office expenses \$131,000.00. Will leave it as is now.

8. Sheriff Cook asked for an increase in the food budget. \$180,000.00 to \$210,000.00.

9. Kelli Jones stated minimum wage is increasing. This affects the Senior Citizens Center. Currently \$9.25. Increasing to \$10.00 in 2020, 2021 increasing to \$11.00.

10. Final budget numbers will be presented at the December Quorum Court. Regular Quorum Court Meeting will be November 26, 2019.

11. Justice Nelson moved the Legislative Audit will be presented at the next Quorum Court.

12. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Cindy George