

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 17, 2020 ANNEX BUILDING**

ATTENDANCE: Chairman, Justice Michael White; Justice, Molly Jackson; Justice, Bill Nelson; Justice, Neil Burge; Justice, Fred Fleeman; Justice, Rick Ash; Justice, Alvin Clay; Justice, Jo Ann Henton; Justice, Betty Hepler; County Clerk, Janice Currie; Sheriff, Dale Cook; Rivercrest School District, Sally Bennett; Finance, Kelli Jones; Treasurer, Peggy Meatte; Assessor, Harley Bradley; Harban Mangat; County Attorney, Jeremy Thomas; Collector, Susan Short; Public Affairs, Steven Savage; NEA Town Crier, Revis Blaylock.

1. Meeting was called to order by Justice, Michal White. July 31st 58.33% of the year. County figures weren't bad but slipping. Total County General balance 57% of the budget. Elected Officials around budget. County Judge 60%, County Clerk 55%, Circuit Clerk 57%, Treasurer 56%, Collector 52%, Assessor 57%, Sheriff 61%, Courthouses 77%, other county 75%, Prosecuting Attorney 62%, transfer to jails shy \$1 million, County Roads 47%. Road department gravel/dirt/sand/slag \$250,000.00 was appropriated. \$320,480 has been spent. Bridges and steel \$500,000.00 had been appropriated. Less than \$5,000.00 had been spent. \$71,000.00 short in gravel/dirt/sand/slag. Funds can be transferred from bridges & steel. Justice White asked Finance Director, Kelli Jones if the auditors would need the transfer now or in the clean up budget. Mrs. Jones stated the auditors would look it but would be up to the Committee and the Judge to transfer now. Justice Burge stated it was a matter of transferring line items. Gravel has been stockpiled around the county. Road Department is funded by a dedicated tax. Justice Jackson stated none of the \$500,000.00 for bridges was used last year. County general \$301,571.66. August 19, 2019 \$1,462,600.00. \$1.1 million behind. Payroll every two weeks over \$200,000.00. CD may be cashed in. Justice Burge asked how the revenue was coming in. Revenue was above what was projected and expenditures have increased somewhere. COVID-19 has contributed and the Courthouse located in Burdette. Personnel had been increased. Assessor, Harley Bradley asked about the Big River check that should be in the next 30 days. City of Osceola needs to be contacted. Courthouse renovation was within budget. Energy & Property asked for a \$400,000.00 appropriation. Justice Burge stated landfill is like all other offices. Running behind. \$95,000.00 on revenues. Expenses up \$32,000.00. Some vendors have not paid their bills. None were over 90 days. \$48,000.00 was paid for the 10% holdback. Justice White asked the Elected Officials to use some of their automation funds.

2. Appropriation Ordinance for Courthouse project. Justice Jackson stated Energy & Property met last week. The committee had been appropriating what CNI expenditure was. The committee looked at overall expenses. Four or five bills were reviewed that were not in the budget. \$1.4 million in appropriated money for next month. Pay applications came from the contractor. Aaron Ruby and Porter Brownlee reviewed the applications. Most expenditures are not seen until after they are paid. Motion was made by Justice, Molly Jackson to appropriate \$400,00000 to the Courthouse fund. Second was made by Justice, Neil Burge. Motion passed and will go to Quorum Court.

3. Personnel Committee. Legal action between Judge Nelson and the Quorum Court. County Attorney, Jeremy Thomas pointed out the Judge had an attorney and the Quorum

Court had their attorney. Money had not been appropriated for the Quorum Court to pay their attorney. \$200.00 an hour. Personnel Committee recommend \$5,000.00 to be appropriated to pay the attorney fees. Money would go under the Quorum Court budget and add a line for professional services/legal advisor. Motion was made by Justice, Neil Burge to appropriate the \$5,000.00 into a new line item professional services/legal advisor to pay attorney fees. Second was made by Justice, Bill Nelson. Motion passed and will go to Quorum Court.

4. Personnel Committee. County Clerk, Janice Currie requested to hire a part time position to work during the election. Personnel committee recommended to appropriate \$2,500.00 for the position. Janice stated she needed the position until another employee could be trained for the election. Motion was made by Justice, Neil Burge to appropriate \$2,500.00 for a part time position in the County Clerk's office. Second was made by Justice, Bill Nelson. Motion passed and will go to Quorum Court.

5. Request SRO Rivercrest School District. Personnel Committee recommend the slot for the SRO in the Rivercrest School District. Salary \$34,121.00, Social security Medicare \$2,610.26, retirement \$5,227.34, insurance \$10,460.00. Total \$52,418.59. Rivercrest is paying thru their budget. Pass thru for the County. Identified the SRO as a county deputy under the supervision of the county Sheriff. Insurance paid by the county but reimbursed from the school. Motion was made by Justice, Molly Jackson to appropriate \$52,418.59 for the SRO for Rivercrest. Second was made by Justice, Bill Nelson. Motion passed and will go to Quorum Court.

6. Tabled request for assistance for providing wi-fi hot spots. Justice White stated Mrs. Bennett would like to pursue the request. Mrs. Bennet spoke at a press conference at the request of the Governor. At the conference the Governor announced a hot spot project. The Rivercrest district received 65 spots. Mississippi County Library system will meet with Mrs. Bennett. Mississippi County is a hot spot and scheduled to start school Monday. We have to be prepared. An agreement had been drafted to take to the Mayors that addressed concerns from the Court. Justice White read the agreement. \$789.86 per city. Five city halls. \$3,949.30 one time fee. Recurring monthly fee for nine months. \$149.98. \$6,750.00 per month for five city halls. Justice White had been contacted by other school districts to help them. All have rural areas. Schools received 80% tax, county 10% and cities 10%. Justice Norvell was in favor of the program for all school districts that present a program. Justice Nelson spoke against the program and has not changed his mind. The schools received more money than the county. Superintendent received a Federal Grant that could have been spent on the internet. The request was a small amount of money for the school districts. The choice was not the right choice at the time. A bad expenditure of our money at the time. Justice Burge made a motion in the beginning to send to the full Court. I agreed with what Justice Nelson has said however under the circumstances we are in a different world. If this was an emergency and needs to be done quickly I would move to the full Court and let them decide. Justice Jackson stated she agreed with Justice Nelson and Justice Burge. If we do for one we will have to do for the other. County grants and aid was a line item the County had in the past. This fund supported rural fire departments, youth organizations, boys and girls clubs. The fund was closed because of the cost. Justice Nelson asked Steven Savage if he

would go to the libraries to see what was available to high school students. Justice Ash stated we would be dealing with the virus for several years. Was the school prepared to carry the monthly charge in their budget. Will the students be able to get to the wi-fi hot spots. That State gave \$10 million for the hot spots. 75 Counties. Justice Henton agreed with Justice Ash that the virus will probably not go away in a year's time. If we do for one we need to do for all that ask. Justice Hepler stated this was an emergency. A time limit could be set. Motion was made by Justice, Neil Burge to take the request to Quorum Court for consideration. Second was made by Justice, Molly Jackson. Justice Nelson voted no. Motion passed and will go to Quorum Court.

7. Brooks Jeffrey. Justice Burge asked what the e-mail service was. Kelli Jones stated Brooks Jeffrey was the vendor that does our web site and e-mails. Yearly fee was charged for e-mail and websites. This is the month the charge was due.

8. September 14, 2020 budget starts. First meetings were for revenues. Justice White asked the Elected Officials start considering what was needed for next years budget. Submit budgets by Oct. 1, 2020. We have received the JESAP report. Bonuses and raises in the past years have not moved up as far in the quartiles as expected. Most employees were in the 2nd or 3rd quartile. 3% raise was going to be around \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00.

9. Justice Nelson asked Jeremy Thomas if his law firm worked for Commercial Collections. Mr. Thomas stated yes since around 2006. Justice Nelson wanted it on the record.

10. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Cindy George