

MISSISSIPPI COUNTY QUORUM COURT

August 25, 2020

The Quorum Court of Mississippi County, Arkansas, met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. in the Circuit Courtroom of the Osceola Courthouse with County Judge John Alan Nelson presiding. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Justice Neal Burge gave the invocation.

The following members answered roll call:

Justice Burge  
Justice Henton  
Justice Hepler  
Justice Jackson

Justice Nelson  
Justice Norvell  
Justice White

Absent: Justices Ash, Belcher, Clay and Fleeman. Also in attendance: County Attorney Jeremy Thomas.

Justice White moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes as copies had been provided to the members. Justice Norvell seconded the motion and the voice vote was unanimous.

In the treasurer's report, County Treasurer Peggy Meatte reported the interest rate at 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank of eastern Arkansas was .55% on \$100,000.00 for one year. She also reported the sale tax revenue was down but was about average for the month of July in previous years. She also reported the county general funds would be sufficient to cover payroll and the county would not need to cash in a CD.

**Committee Reports:**

***Energy and Property:*** Justice Jackson reported the committee met on August 11, 2020. Topics of discussion were:

- Asbestos removal is currently underway.
- The Emergency Squad building has been removed.
- Additional \$37,000.00 needed to complete the Osceola Courthouse Project.
- The appropriation of \$400,000.00 for the upcoming month to cover expenses for the Blytheville Courthouse project.

***Personnel Committee:*** Justice Nelson reported the committee met on August 12, 2020 and discussed:

- The county clerk's request for permission to hire Martha Best as part-time to help to get her through the election cycle. The committee voted to send on to Finance Committee.
- The county attorney's involvement in the lawsuit against the Quorum Court. The committee was concerned about this being a conflict of interest.
- The appropriation of \$5,000.00 to pay the county's legal fees.

***Personnel Committee:*** Justice Nelson reported the committee met again on August 17, 2020. Topics of discussion were:

- Rivercrest School District's request of a School Resource Officer to replace the officer who was terminated. The total cost would be about \$52,418.59 which the school district would reimburse the county for.
- The county attorney's involvement in the lawsuit against the county quorum court.
- Insurance update.

***Finance Committee:*** Justice White stated the committee met on August 17, 2020 and discussed:

- Review of expenditures to date. The county was currently at about 58% in expenditures. The Road Department had budgeted \$250,000.00 but has spent \$320,480.00. \$500,000.00 had been budgeted for Bridges and Steel and less than \$5,000.00 has been spent. Funds will be transferred from Bridges and Steel to the Road Department.
- County General was down to \$300,000.00 and it was feared the county would need to cash in a CD to make the next payroll but thought the county would be fine.
- A report from Justice Jackson regarding the Energy and Properties request of an appropriation of \$400,000.00 for the Blytheville Courthouse Project.
- Personnel Committee's report of:
  1. \$5,000.00 appropriation to pay the legal fees for an attorney to represent the county in the lawsuit against them.
  2. \$2,500.00 appropriation for County Clerk's request to keep Martha Best on as part-time help to get her through the General Election.
  3. Sheriff Cook's request for a SRO for Rivercrest School District.
  4. Rivercrest School District's request for \$11,000.00 to pay for internet service to assist in virtual schooling.
- Will begin the budgeting process on September 14, 2020 and asking all elected officials and department heads to prepare. Would like to have completed budget requests by October 1, 2020.

The clerk was asked to read a resolution titled: A RESOLUTION HONORING MARTHA BEST FOR HER MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS. Following the reading by the clerk, Justice White moved for adoption, Justice Norvell seconded and the vote was: Aye --- Burge, Henton, Hepler, Jackson, Nelson, Norvell and White; Nay --- None: Absent--- Ash, Belcher, Clay, and Fleeman. R-2020-12 was adopted by the court.

The clerk was asked to read a resolution titled: A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE MISSISSIPPI COUNTY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK TO INCLUDE A MANDATE FOR ALL NEW HIRES TO BE ON DIRECT DEPOSIT WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JANUARY 01, 2021, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Following the reading by the clerk, Justice Burge moved for adoption, Justice Hepler seconded and the vote was: Aye --- Burge, Henton, Hepler, Jackson, Nelson, Norvell and White; Nay --- None: Absent--- Ash, Belcher, Clay, and Fleeman. R-2020-13 was adopted by the court.

Judge Nelson informed the court that due to the lack of a quorum for the passage of ordinances, the court could not proceed to the ordinances and he would entertain a motion to call a special session of Quorum Court to allow the ordinances to come before the court. Justice White recommended a special session be called as soon as possible.

There being no further business to come before the court, Justice White moved to adjourn, Justice Norvell seconded and the voice vote was unanimous. The August session of Quorum Court adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Janice Currie  
County Clerk/Secretary