

**FIRE, POLICE & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 1 P.M. ANNEX BUILDING**

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Justice Rick Ash, Justice Neil Burge, Justice Molly Jackson, Justice Betty Hepler, Justice Tobby McClanahan, Justice Cecil McDonald, Justice Harbans Mangat, Justice Michael White, Treasurer Peggy Meatte, County Clerk Janice Currie, Public Affairs Tom Henry, Sheriff Dale Cook, Captain Bo McCullum, Juvenile Officer Daryl Turner, Juvenile District Supervisor D.C. Barnes and *NEA Town Courier* Marcus McClain.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chairman Rick Ash. Order of business today. The committee further discussed and forward to the Personnel Committee with recommendation, the Sheriff's plan to close the Juvenile Jail and to make personnel changes that would ultimately reduce the number of employees at the Sheriff's Department/Jail, using the savings to give a raise to employees. Motion passed.

2. Justice Ash handed out an updated worksheet of reductions and savings. He announced that it would cost the county \$65 per day to send juvenile inmates elsewhere, but would cost \$100 per day to keep them here. It was reiterated that no one would lose their job as a result of the plan, because all existing employees would be moved to open positions, plus a couple of people that are retiring. Justice Betty Hepler asked who was going to take our juveniles. Sheriff Dale Cook answered that he had talked to the sheriffs of Crittenden and Craighead counties and that they agreed to help. He then added, if those facilities are ever full, Mr. Daryl Turner of the Juvenile office will have to reach out to the other nine facilities in the state to find a place to take them. Sheriff Cook also said that the Sheriff's Department will be doing the transporting but he asked for assistance from the Juvenile Office for non-violent offenders, since the Quorum Court had given the Juvenile Office two vehicles for that purpose. Captain Bo McCollum stated that they had not been housing female juveniles because the jail was not constructed in a way to allow for it. The committee discussed the trend of reduced jail population due to both population, COVID and new thoughts on juvenile detention criteria (no longer jailing for truancy). Justice Rick Ash said that their decision was "all about the business side of it" at this point. Justice Betty Hepler asked what happens to the juvenile if nobody agrees to take them. Sheriff Dale Cook referred the question to Daryl Turner of the Juvenile Office who said it would then require a sign and release of the prisoner. Justice Tobby McClanahan said it would be a case-by-case basis and that the judge assignment would play a part, but that the likeliness of all eleven facilities being full was very slim. She also added that it would be fiscally irresponsible to keep the jail open. Justice Molly Jackson make a motion to send, with recommendation, the plan to the Personnel Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Tom Henry