

**FIRE, POLICE & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 13, 1:00 P.M. ANNEX BUILDING**

**ATTENDANCE: Chairman Justice Rick Ash, Justice Neil Burge, Justice Molly Jackson, Justice Betty Hepler, Justice Aaron Fleeman, Justice Michael White, Justice Cecil McDonald, Justice Tobye McClanahan, Justice Harbans Mangat, Sheriff Dale Cook, Major Robb Rounsavall, Public Affairs Director Tom Henry, County Judge John Alan Nelson, County Clerk Janice Currie and Denise Williams of the Juvenile Office.**

1. Meeting was called to order by Chairman Rick Ash. Order of business today. Sheriff Dale Cook delivered a plan that would close the juvenile jail, reduce the number of payroll positions within the Sheriff's Department/Jail and offer pay raises in order to be more competitive with surrounding law enforcement agencies while avoiding a new one-cent sales tax like Poinsett County recently passed. Sheriff Dale Cook said, "We are trying to use our ingenuity to get our people a raise without another tax increase ... we've got to do something or I'm going to continue to lose people."

2. The plan will reduce the number of payroll positions within the Sheriff's Department/Jail from 103 down to 86. The Sheriff said no one will be terminated as a result of the plan, plus one retirement. The Sheriff stated the juvenile jail averaged 1.5 inmates a day, while last year it was 3.6. Operating the juvenile jail required at least eight people at all times (both male and female jailors). It was estimated the closing would save the county a little over \$400,000 in payroll costs. The Sheriff's plan would use those savings for raises (including a \$4,500 across the board raise). Justice Rick Ash stated that Poinsett County now starts new deputies at \$39,000 a year, \$41,500 if they have already completed the academy, plus \$200 for every year of experience. He added that Blytheville pays academy graduates \$37,000 and Osceola pays a little more than \$40,000. Mississippi County now pays \$35,000. Sheriff Dale Cook stated there are 13 juvenile detention centers in Arkansas. In Northeast Arkansas there are three. The Sheriff added that we can hold 13, (averaging 1.4), Craighead County's capacity is 60 (averaging 40-45) and Crittenden County's is 30 (averaging 6). Justice Ash added that money is already in the budget to house prisoners at other jails. The Sheriff estimated the cost for housing each juvenile elsewhere at \$65 per day. He also added it would be the most effective way. Denise Williams of the Juvenile Office said the jail will benefit the county and that numbers are low is because when they house juveniles charged as an adult, they can't take regular juvenile prisoners. Justice Ash stated that even if the juvenile jail was full, it would still be a lot cheaper to send them out than to keep them here. The committee also discussed possible uses for that facility in the future. The sheriff mentioned the possibility of getting "309's" from the state in the future.

3. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Tom Henry