

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 18, 2021, 1:30 P.M.
ANNEX BUILDING**

ATTENDANCE: Chairman Justice Michael White, Justice Molly Jackson, Justice Neil Burge, Justice Harbans Mangat, Justice Ceell McDonald, Justice Tobye McClanahan, Justice Betty Hepler, Justice Reggie Cullom, Justice Rick Ash, County Judge John Alan Nelson, County Treasurer Peggy Meatte, County Clerk Janice Currie, County Collector Susan McCormick, Circuit Clerk Leslie Mason, Ashley McGuirt (Circuit Clerk's Office), Public Affairs Director Tom Henry, Amanda Adams (Sr. Citizens Center), Barbara Mitchell (Sr. Citizens Center), Chip Barnes (Crittenden County Juvenile Office Supervisor), Lewis Davis (Craighead County Juvenile Office Supervisor), Darryl Turner (Juvenile Office), Finance Director Kelli Jones (via Zoom) and Rena Adams of Brooks Jeffrey (via Zoom)

1. Justice White called the meeting to order. Judge Nelson introduced Renea Adams from Brooks Jeffrey Marketing, who was attending the meeting via Zoom and announced that her company has built and hosts the majority of county website in Arkansas, as well as our current one. He also said that he was asking for the appropriation of a one time setup fee of \$22,425 and an annual hosting fee of \$2,995 for a newly designed county website. Justice White said that with the county's economic development advancing and with all the projects currently underway, the website is extremely important. Nelson concurred, saying that online service and information has proven very efficient and well received by the public, especially since the temporary move to Burdette by the Blytheville Courthouse -- he specifically cited the successful increase in online tax collections. Justice Burge also agreed that the world we live in today requires a good website. Justice Burge made the motion, it was seconded and passed. Justice Mangat asked if this would change the emails addresses as well and Mr. Henry said that we will have to move email servers later this year, but that email was not a part of this.

2. Justice White told the committee that the county's regular monthly expenditures were tracking pretty well and that nothing really stood out to him. He then explained that the county is scheduled to receive a little over \$7.8 million from the American Rescue Plan. He explained that there are over 150 pages of restrictions on the use of those funds, but that the federal government also provided a revenue loss calculator so that the county could determine how much revenue was lost in 2020, as compared to 2019, due to COVID. He said that the county had a loss of \$1,434,917 and that he proposed to transfer that amount to a new fund named, "ARPA Revenue Replacement Fund". The purpose of doing so, he said, was that it eased restrictions on how it could be used, but it would also allow for tracking of those funds as required by federal law. Justice Jackson made a motion that \$1,434,917 be transferred into the new fund. Mr. Henry said that Eddie Jones, with the Arkansas Association of Counties, sent out a memo stating that setting up the new fund was the standard thing that Arkansas Counties were doing now. The motion passed.

3. In other business, Justice Jackson said, pertaining to ARP funds, that Architect Aaron Ruby had discussed the county health units, and that he feels that if there is any way to do renovations, that may be the way to go. She added that the Blytheville unit is about 10,000 square feet and that building costs would run somewhere around \$200 per square foot.

4. Next the committee moved into continuing the budgeting process, discussing budgets from the Circuit Clerk, County Clerk, County Collector, County Treasurer, Financial Management, Landfill, Senior Citizens, County Assessor and the Juvenile Office.

5. Lastly, Justice White handed out a one-page handout and held a short discussion about possible raises for county employees. He said the handout was just to let them know what kind of numbers they were looking at so they could be thinking about the topic.

6. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Tom Henry