

MINUTES

SEVIER COUNTY QUORUM COURT MEETING

2:00 P.M., Monday, April 10, 2023

The Sevier County Quorum Court met at 2:00 P.M., Monday, April 10, 2023, in the Sevier County Courthouse Conference Room with County Judge Sandra Dunn presiding. The roll was called with the following Justices present: Michael Barnes, Kenneth Currence, Callie Efird, Scottie Morris, Walter Smith, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, Greg Wright. Absent – None. Upon a motion by Roxy Stephens and second by Angie Walker, the Quorum Court voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and to approve the minutes as emailed.

Committee and Other Reports –

1. Lori House, CEO of Sevier County Medical Center was present to report on the month of March's patient load and financials. The hospital had 22 inpatients, 23 observation patients for a total 942 outpatients with 470 of those were emergency room patients. Mrs. House stated the origin of patients seen from Sevier County was 1,424, 193 from Polk County, and then you start going down. That leaves us with a total of about 70.6% of those are from here in Sevier County, and the 10% that we're seeing from Polk County, is the very, very tip of Polk that's next to our county. As far as billable accounts at the end of March, which they do run a couple of weeks behind, but the hospital had right under \$2.3 million of billable accounts at the end of March. Mrs. House stated that as of this morning they were able to get as the actual financial statement through the end of February. The hospital is still having some trouble with the computer system and can't download and send it to the accountant until the end of the month till everything was closed out and it wasn't closed out till Friday. So, the hospital won't have March's financials for a few more days, but as soon as they have those, Mrs. House will go ahead and e-mail those out. Mrs. House stated that hopefully by next month, the hospital will be all caught up on the financial statements. The hospital did have our survey week before last, it was an unannounced survey. The hospital did exceptional and normally for a brand-new hospital you are going to have anywhere upwards of 30 items that they find the hospital had five. So, it was exceptional and the hospital got that report late on Thursday afternoon. At this point, the hospital is going back and writing corrective action plans. All of those that they found were the lowest findings. There are three levels. One is the most minor and then there's a second and third. All of hospitals were on minor, so they were very, very complementary to the hospital. They had the hospital to invite the board, and we had the majority of our board members there. They just really bragged on how prepared everyone was for the survey. Mrs. House stated that the hospital also found out last week that Farmers Bank did approve the \$3.5 million loan they are working with the attorney Ryan Bowen to get all of the language finalized and the hospital hopes to hear back from farmers today or tomorrow so that can be published. Judge Sandra Dunn spoke up and wanted to remind the Quorum that there's a 30-day waiting period after everything has been executed. Judge Dunn asked the if there are any other questions. Citizen Sandra Jackson asked what do y'all calculating the cost, you know the public has been told that we're going to get 101% of the reimbursement cost. What exactly is figured in that that we will be reimbursed for? Mrs. House stated it's all the Medicare allowable for that patient. So, if it's a Medicare patient, it's 101% of the cost that it

took us to take care of that patient. Mrs. Jackson stated so it's the allowable. Mrs. House stated that it's not for any other patients, but Medicare and everything that it takes us to take care of that Medicare patient we're going to get 101% of that cost. Mrs. Jackson asked what about for the Insurance could they kind of match that also? Mrs. House stated no that insurances are contractual so; they're not based on that. Mrs. Jackson then asked if the hospital had the contracts with some of them? Mrs. House replied no, ma'am that the hospital is not allowed to even start contracting with them until we have our Medicare number. Mrs. Jackson went on to ask where are we on the Medicare Number? Mrs. House stated that is what we had to have our survey for week before last. They got the hospital the report on Thursday evening, so I have to respond to that report, which we have a lot of things to do but it'll be turned in today. Once they get their report, they'll review it to make sure that we've corrected everything the way we should and then they will send a letter to Medicare saying you should issue their Medicare number they have met all the requirements. For Medicaid, it's a little bit different, but it's still everything that we took to take care of that Medicaid patient we'll be reimbursed for that at cost as well. Mrs. Jackson stated so if it was like \$9000 for the patient to be seen, then the hospital is going to be back \$9090. Mrs. House said that was correct. Judge Dunn asked if there are any other questions? Justice of the Peace Roxy Stephens stated that it won't be long until the hospital should get their number. Mrs. house said that is correct. They told her that it would take two weeks for them to get us our report. It didn't, it took six actually 5 business days which they said that it could take up to 14 business days so they know and understand where we are. As soon as they get our response, they took a legal holiday on Friday, so it didn't matter if the hospital turned in the response on Friday or not, they weren't going to view it right away. So, they'll get our response this afternoon and then they said that they would put it on a rush to go through to Medicare. The hospital already has connections at Medicare through our attorney and our accounting office that are going to call as soon as they as soon as we know that it's sent, that says, hey, you guys be looking for this we need it to go through as quickly as possible. Mrs. Jackson asked what percentage of this 76 is actually Medicare? Mrs. House stated that of our inpatients 51% was Medicare, 11% was Medicare Advantage and 4% was Medicaid. Of the observations it was 41% Medicare, 20% Medicare Advantage and 6% Medicaid. Lori stated that is what the outpatients are also reflecting as well. Mrs. house went on to tell Mrs. Jackson "That you are more than welcome to come to the hospital board meeting on Thursday and ask questions there as well". Lori also encouraged all in attendance, because she knew most of the folks in this room have not even been out to the hospital. So, she encourages you to come. Citizen Gary Hall asked how the hospital was looking financially with the money that was given to them a month ago in relation to not being able to invoice for insurance money yet and still waiting on the \$3.5 million. Mrs. House stated the hospital has enough money to make it through, but we would not have had it if the County had not have given them the money. The hospital would not have been able to make it through now, it has just enough to make it through till we get the loan. So, the hospital is doing very well.

2. Scott Simmons of the Sevier County Airport Board was present to present an update on the Airport. Simmons stated they are still working on some of our other grants that the board is going to discuss a little bit more. Doctor Walker was able to find the filters for our fuel system out there that that the board got ordered. The fertilizer planes are back, they got back over the weekend. So, if you see really low flying airplanes, it's going to be them fertilizing Weyerhaeuser. Justice of the Peace Angie Walker stated total fuel sales for the month of March were 8065.91. She said that was 27 independent encounters. The Airport is seeing flights for the hospital, until they can have their spot. Angie stated she knew Angel One actually lands there and that's where the ambulance takes the kids out to get them shipped out. So, I

think you're still seeing the ER group from the hospital, Arkansas Heart Hospital, you've got some Tysons, some pilgrims, some Weyerhaeuser and a lot of Hochatown. Simmons stated that at one time there was four jets sitting on the Thursday. He went on to say that as long as the weather holds out the 99 are going to finish the compass rose project. They will start on it Friday, paint it on Saturday and dedicate it to Jody McCarroll.

3. County Judge Sandra Dunn wanted to advise the quorum court there's a Department of Transportation project that's going to be taking place sometime in the future of West of Dequeen on one of the bridges. We have the paperwork where they, the Department of Transportation proposes to buy a very small amount of property. It would be off of the airport property and it looks like from the pictures it would take in the very Western Access Rd. into the airport a secondary that I believe some of the tankers use. Judge Dunn asked him about that if that was going to take in that area because they were only going to give us \$250 for it. But we would need to build in either another access or they'd need to give us an easement so that we can cross that. So that's just in the works.

New Business –

1. The first agenda item was an appropriation ordinance to amend the annual operating budget for calendar year 2023. This appropriation is to move monies within multiple funds, appropriation A is to add the monthly sales tax revenues to the budget, so that fund will not run in the red. Treasurer Barnes and Clerk Bailey figured the amount off of 3-month average and calculated it for 10 months and will look at the fund again in October. Appropriation B is to add funds to the County Clerk paid medical for retired Clerk Debbie Akin's Dental and Vision. Clerk Bailey stated that Mrs. Akin pays for the services on a monthly basis to keep her coverage, that the county just had to add these funds to that line item. Appropriation C is to add funds to the County Assessors Amendment 79 Fund. Clerk Bailey told the Quorum that the Assessor is requesting these funds to change their IT vendor from Apprentice to ACT. Clerk Bailey informed the Quorum that the Assessors has these Funds in her Amendment 79 Fund that she just needed to add it to her budget. Appropriation D was adding funds to the Hospital Construction fund for the Helipad Grant discussed in the February meeting. Appropriation E is to add funds to the Solid Waste fund to reinstate the position of part time gate attendant. Judge Dunn informed the Quorum that this was a previous position that was done away with after covid, but the Solid Waste foreman says we have a need for that position again. Judge Dunn read the appropriation ordinance. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Greg Wright. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Barnes, Kenneth Currence, Callie Efird, Scottie Morris, Walter Smith, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, and Greg Wright., No – None. The motion passed.
2. The second agenda is a proposal to use Erin Hunter as the Sevier County attorney. Justice of the Peace Michael Barnes presented the proposal stating that he knows that the Owens law firm is hard to get in touch with, and that the county pays them \$833.33 a month and he doesn't see the point in paying someone when the County can get these services for free here locally. Barnes stated that in the four months that he has been position he has felt that in some of our meetings that an attorney should have been present and could have helped. Judge Dunn addressed Mrs. Hunter saying that the county has questions from time to time that pop up, and sometimes they're time sensitive. Do you feel like you have the time to devote to that research? And answering those questions? Mrs. Hunter stated yes, I do. and I

feel that I've done municipal law for quite a long time. I know this is county law, so it's a little different, but they're very similar and I'm across the street, so y'all can always right over there and grab me. This is part of our job description as prosecutors, it's default where we are required to do this under the law anyway. I just had never and y'all had already had an attorney and I didn't really understand why y'all were spending that money on that. But I'm happy to do it. After further discussion a motion was made by Michael Barnes and seconded by Scottie Morris. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Barnes, Kenneth Currence, Callie Efird, Scottie Morris, Walter Smith, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, and Greg Wright., No – None. The motion passed.

3. There were no further agenda items. Judge Dunn asked if the court would entertain a motion to hear a non-agenda item from Sevier County Sheriff on Opioid grant money. A motion was made by Greg Wright and seconded by Angie Walker. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Barnes, Kenneth Currence, Callie Efird, Scottie Morris, Walter Smith, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, and Greg Wright., No – None. The motion passed. Sheriff Gentry presented the Quorum Court with the new Arkansas Opioid Recover Partnership Grant. Sheriff Gentry stated as you all know we our RSAT program which have been scrutinized two or three different times looking past 7-8 years for seven years. I get that funding from the Department of Finance and Administration. It's federal funding and a lot of that funding they won't cover like their health insurance. They won't cover a full month with the employee health insurance. So, I reached out to Kirk Lane, who is now over the Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership Fund. Which this is the money from the opioid lawsuit that the state of Arkansas receiving. It's going to be like \$23 million or billion dollars it's a bunch of money. I would like to combine our RSAT program and the Community Outreach Center, because the Community Outreach Center grant ran out last month. It combines both of these programs into one check, and I've been called and told to be in Little Rock Friday. They're going to give me a check for \$372,739.00, and the DF and A grant actual grant funding was \$167,000 and then the outreach grant was a \$50,000 grant, so I've got a little extra and the counties always have to pay that extra for health insurance. There are a few requirements that we'd have to meet for this money, but this is for secured for three years for a total of \$1,118,217.00, but we'll get a check every year for \$372,739. Sheriff Gentry said he will need a place for that check to go, so the county can keep up with it, and then of course at this time next year, they will come down and audit. Sheriff Gentry stated we have to keep all the invoices and things together, just like we've had to do for the RSAT program. The only requirement is for the peer recovery specialist and the coordinators, Mr. Lane said, we need to pay them \$17.00 an hour, so that's going to be a little more of a pay boost for the two program coordinators. This grant involves 2 program coordinators, 2 full time peer specialist and one part time and it covers a part time fill in jailer, like when the program coordinators are off, we can recoup our money over time for a part-time person working in their place. Justice Angie Walker, asked if there was going to be a board that will be over this project. Gentry stated that there is a board in Little Rock that the paperwork is submitted to. Justice Angie asked but as far as like numbers and stuff like that your data and stuff, do you have an internal board that you all meet once a month or do anything like that as far as oversight for the program. Gentry told Justice Walker that he is to submit all his numbers straight up to Little Rock. Gentry stated this is guaranteed money for three years, and if we can show growth over the period of that three years, it could be extended out another three years. They except this money to keep flowing in for twelve more years. Justice Walker asked if we had to spend it or loose it or will it just roll over. Gentry stated that if we don't spend it in the first twelve months, we have to give it back, that they encourage us to spend everything that's been budgeted. A motion was made by Angie Walker to allow the sheriff to proceed with the acceptance of the

Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership Grant. The motion was seconded by Callie Efird. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Barnes, Kenneth Currence, Callie Efird, Scottie Morris, Walter Smith, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, and Greg Wright., No – None. The motion passed. Sheriff Gentry stated that in addition to this RSAT and the Community Outreach Program, he has been awarded the Naloxone Community Hero program, which means that Gentry and a Peer specialist will give training to give out free naloxone to private citizens. We can't give it to law enforcement, because we can't interfere with Doctor May CJI Program. When somebody goes to the pharmacy and asks for some Naloxone because they have a family member that has abused an opioid, they have to pay for it. This is a way that we can give Naloxone out to the public for free. I've been. I've been approved for 10 cases. Justice Walker asked if Clinics could come into the training and get it too. Gentry said he will have to ask to be sure, but he thinks so.

Old Business – There is no old business

Announcements – Mayor Brown informed the Quorum that in the next City Council Meeting they were going to have an ordinance to accept the ownership of the sewer line from hospital to the city. This will just make it official.

Adjournment – With no further business to discuss, Greg Wright made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Callie Efird. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

RENEA BAILEY

Renea Bailey
County Clerk