

MINUTES
SEVIER COUNTY QUORUM COURT MEETING
2:00 P.M., MONDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2021

The Sevier County Quorum Court met at 2:00 P.M., Monday, November 8, 2021, in the Sevier County Courthouse Courtroom with County Judge Greg Ray presiding. The meeting was opened with prayer by Judge Ray followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called with the following Justices present: Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. Upon a motion by Roxy Stephens and second by Roger Whitmore, the Quorum Court voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and to approve the minutes as emailed. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed.

Committee and Other Reports –

Lori House, CEO of Sever County Medical Center was present to report on the progress of the new hospital construction. Lori stated that the hospital is about 98% framed on the inside. The roof is almost on the main part of the building. They will be pouring the concrete curbs in the next couple of weeks. The amount spent on the hospital so far is \$6,000,000. Sales tax is still doing great. The last amount received was \$204,000. Lori said the board has received over 120 applications from people wanting to work at the new hospital. Some worked at the old hospital. The hiring process is not ready to begin, but as they are building the different departments. They plan to utilize some of these applicants as contract labor to evaluate equipment that will be installed for use. A full time Clinical Informatic Analyst has been hired. Her name is Jacynnda Davis. They will hire another similar position later. They are looking for an Administrative Assistant and a Human Resource Director. As they start hiring these positions, they will need to develop policies and procedures. Kenneth Currence asked about the sheet rock contractor who disappeared without fulfilling his contract. Lori said the attorneys are working on that. He seems to have fallen off the face of the earth. His company has gone out of business.

Judge Ray added to her report that he will be applying for a grant to help pay for the helipad at the new hospital. It will be a 90/10 % matching grant.

The Budget Committee was asked to report. Earl Battiest stated that the budget is about 98% complete. They should rap up in the next couple of weeks and will be getting copies of the budget to the JP's for review. The proposed budget should be ready for approval at the December Quorum Court meeting unless there are changes to be made.

Old Business – There was no Old Business.

New Business –

1. The first agenda item is a request to confirm the appointment of Beth Deen to the Sevier County Library Board. She will be replacing Debbie Brotherton who has declined reappointment. A motion was made by David Wright to approve the appointment. Greg Wright seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed.
2. Second on the agenda is a proposed ordinance to levy 2021 taxes to be collected in 2022. Clerk Akin read the proposed ordinance. Justice David Wright questioned why the fireman's pension fund for De Queen had been changed to Local Police and fireman's retirement. Clerk Akin stated that she is required to levy what the cities pass in their resolutions. She stated that any questions would have to be presented to the city. A motion was made by Greg Wright and seconded by Earl Battiest to approve the ordinance. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed. The ordinance passed with a 2/3 vote.
3. Item three on the agenda is a discussion about the county ambulance service. Tim Litchford was present for this discussion. He explained a scenario involving his father who fallen and an ambulance was called. There was not an ambulance available because they were both on calls. Tim said he understood what had happened and why. He is asking if something can be done by the county to address the problem until the hospital opens next year. Robbie Hinds, owner of the ambulance service was present at the meeting. Mr. Hinds went through the amount of equipment and personnel that he has and what they cover. He stated the cost to operate an additional ambulance. There was also discussion regarding a team that would be an emergency team that could administer CPR and do basic emergency calls. The discussion ended with the County Judge asking Mr. Hinds if he could come back to the December meeting with some possible proposals to address this temporary situation. Mr. Hinds said that he would.
4. A proposed ordinance amending the 2021 budget to allow for pay increases in the Treasurer, Assessor, and RSAT departments was the fourth agenda item. This increase would be retroactive to October 4, 2021. Clerk Akin read the ordinance. Earl Battiest explained that his is to bring up the pay for the Assessor and Treasurer because they were brought in at a lower rate than the previous elected officials. Also, the employees at the jail were given a raise of \$1.00 per hour but the RSAT clerks were not included. This will bring them up in pay to meet the raise given to the other jail employees. A motion was made by David Wright to approve the ordinance. Angie Walker seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed.
5. The next agenda item was a proposed ordinance to establish a new fund name and number for The Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program. Treasurer Heather Barnes read the ordinance. Sheriff Robert Gentry explained that this is a grant fund and the county will be reimbursed 100%. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Greg Wright to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the second

reading by title only. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed. The Treasurer read the ordinance by title for the second reading. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Angie Walker to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the third reading by title only. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed. Heather read the ordinance for the third reading by title. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Roxy Stephens to approve the ordinance. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed. After passing the ordinance Sheriff Gentry asked the Quorum Court to appropriate the money in the grant fund to the 2021 Budget as it will have to be expended by December 31, 2021. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Earl Battiest to approve the appropriation of \$28,491.48. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed.

6. Item six is a proposed ordinance establishing levels and amounts of merit pay for law enforcement officers of Sevier County. Sheriff Gentry read the ordinance. It was explained that this practice is already in place but there is not a documented procedure for it. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Angie Walker to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the second reading. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed. The sheriff read the ordinance for the second time by title only. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Earl Battiest to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the third reading. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed. Sheriff Gentry read the ordinance for the third time by title only. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Angie Walker to approve the ordinance. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed.
7. The seventh agenda item is a request for an additional appropriation of \$45,000 to the Criminal Justice budget for 2021. This is to be transferred from Fund 3404 – Jail Operation and Maintenance Reserve Fund. Earl Battiest explained that this transfer was discussed in the 2021 Budget meetings. It was left off the budget notes when final changes were being made. A motion was made by Roxy Stephens to approve the transfer. David Wright seconded the motion A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed.
8. The final item on the agenda is a proposed ordinance amending the 2021 budget and allowing additional appropriation in order to make a one-time bonus payroll for Sevier County Employees. This bonus is to be paid after the November payroll has been completed. The amounts of the bonus will be identical to the last bonus given in August. This will be reimbursed from Fund 1005 – Coronavirus Relief Fund. A motion was made by Roxy Stephens and seconded by Angie Walker to approve the ordinance. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – None. No – None. The motion passed.

Announcements –

Tiffany Maurer with University of Arkansas/ Economic Development stated that the UA Cossatot Economic Development department secured a \$1,000,000 SBA Community Navigator Pilot Program Grant in partnership with the FRIENDS Foundation., the City of De Queen, the De Queen/Sevier County Chamber of Commerce, the Central Arkansas Development Council, and the U of A Cooperative Extension Service. These funds will be used to create small business resources such as financial literacy training, loan assistance, mentoring, webinars, workshops, seminars, and budget planning. This grant will be spread out over 2 years and will aim to assist all small businesses in Sevier County, with emphasis on those with minority, women, or underserved owners.

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Debbie Akin
County Clerk