

MINUTES  
SEVIER COUNTY QUORUM COURT MEETING  
2:00 P.M., MONDAY DECEMBER 13, 2021

The Sevier County Quorum Court met at 2:00 P.M., Monday, December 13, 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, and Greg Wright. Absent – David Wright. (David came in at 2:10) 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. A roll call vote was taken. Yes –Marilyn Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, and Greg Wright. Absent – David Wright. No – None. The motion passed.

**Committee and Other Reports –**

Lori House, CEO of Sevier County Medical Center was present to report on the progress of the new hospital construction. Lori stated that the construction has hit a couple of bumps due to materials being slow to arrive. The Board is pushing the contractors to keep everything on schedule. Lori introduced newly added staff for the hospital. Amy McDonald – Administrative Assistant, Jacynnda Davis – Senior Clinical Informatics Analyst / Risk Management, Trey Frachiseur – Human Resources Manager, Brandyn Gortemiller – Health Information Manager. Lori said she has three more that will come on before the end of the year and she is looking to hire a fourth. She stated that this will be the staff until closer to hospital completion when employees will be added in preparation of the opening of the hospital. Lori mentioned that the past month's sales tax was \$201,000. This is excellent. The attorney who has been advising the Board recommended that the hospital keep its own distinct accounting system separate from the County. Lori told the Court that there is a local person helping with the location of a tower that the hospital can utilize for AWIN radio system that will be a necessity for communication with ambulance service, fire departments, and law enforcement. Roxy Stephens mentioned that she would like an update on the scam regarding the hospital finances. The judge said the State Police is investigating the incident. It was explained that someone hacked the e-mail of the County Treasurer. Bank OZK did not verify the e-mail they received directing them to direct deposit the county's sales tax for the month. The county had not in the past requested any direct deposit of funds and would not do so by e-mail. The county has since this event, set up multiple verification to access e-mail accounts.

**Old Business –** Ambulance Service – Judge to appoint Ambulance Service Committee

Judge Ray stated that he wanted to appoint a committee to review the contract for ambulance services. He appointed Angie Walker, Earl Battiest, David Wright, Robert Gentry, and the Judge will serve on the committee.

Robbie Hinds stated that the contract is automatic renewal and should be addressed 90 days prior to renewal. The renewal comes up in January. Mr. Hinds was expected to give the county any options that he could to assist with the situation in the county now where there is not always adequate coverage. Mr. Hinds said the only thing he could come up with is to add an ambulance and crew, but he does not have the resources to do this. In the interim Scott County has decided not to contract with EMS so that will leave an extra ambulance in Mena that might be utilized if we were in a situation that called for them to come to Sevier. Robbie said the county could entertain the idea to buy an ambulance and that would allow EMS to possibly staff the ambulance for a period of time. Perhaps this could be paid for with some of the Federal ARP money. The cost of an ambulance would be between \$150,000 and \$175,000. Mr. Hinds told the court that all the ambulances are being equipped with new heart monitors. Angie Walker asked what the number of calls are per day here. The answer is 4 on average and probably one transport.

**New Business –**

1. The first agenda item is a request to transfer funds from the Hospital Sales Tax Fund to Sevier County Medical Center Fund in the amount of \$1,808,926 to accommodate the 2022 budget appropriations for the hospital. David Wright asked if this budget would carry the hospital through next year. Clerk Akin said it would not. It only has salaries for next year and expenses at the current office that is housing the employees for the hospital. Earl Battiest said that the county will just be a pass through for money going to the hospital. He said that the budget committee didn't approve the budget for the hospital because they don't have anything to do with that. He stated that we give them what they want. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Roxy Stephens to approve the transfer. 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. No – None. The motion passed.
2. Second on the agenda is a request to rescind an allocation of \$45,000 that was approved in November. This allocation was made to transfer funds from Jail Operation Fund 3404 to Criminal Justice Fund 3017. Earl Battiest explained that this is not needed after reviewing revenues to be carried over this year. Roxy Stephens made a motion to approve the rescinding of this appropriation. 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. No – None. The motion passed.
3. Agenda item three is a proposed ordinance to establish the 2022 operating budget for Sevier County. County Clerk Debbie Akin read the ordinance. David Wright made a motion 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. No – None. The motion passed by a 2/3 vote. Judge Ray stated that he appreciated the Budget Committee approving a good raise for county employees for 2022. Roxy Stephens said she was thankful for the ability to give bonuses as well.

4. Item four is a proposed resolution expressing the willingness of Sevier County to partner with the Arkansas Department of Transportation for a project for De Queen Lake Road Railroad Signals Upgrade (Sevier County) and Railway-Highway Crossing Improvement. Judge Ray read the resolution and explained that this project is to put crossing bars at the railroad crossing on De Queen Lake Road. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Greg Wright to approve the resolution. 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. No – None. The motion passed.
5. With no further agenda items, the Judge asked if someone would entertain a motion to hear 3 non-agenda items. These are three items are three ordinances that need to be addressed this year. Angie Walker made the motion to suspend the rules and hear the three items. 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. No – None. The motion passed.
6. Clerk Akin read the first Ordinance Establishing a New Fund Number and Name for the County of Sevier as Required by State Law for the Annual Operating Budget of 2021. This is for Fund 3507 – Airport Coronavirus Response Grant Program. A motion was made by Greg Wright and seconded by Angie Walker 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. No – None. The motion passed. The Ordinance was read for the second reading by Title only. A motion was made by Greg 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. No – None. The motion passed. The ordinance was read for the third reading by title. Greg Wright made a motion to approve the ordinance. The motion was seconded by Earl Battiest. 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. No – None. The motion passed by a 2/3 vote.
7. Treasurer Heather Barnes read the second Ordinance Establishing a new Fund Number and Fund Name for the County of Sevier as Required by State Law for the Annual Operating Budget for 2022. This is Fund 3508 – Airport Rescue Grant Program. 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. No – None. The motion passed. Treasurer Barnes read the ordinance for the second reading by title. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Greg Wright 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. No – None. The motion passed. Treasurer Barnes read the ordinance for the third reading by title only. A motion was made by Greg 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. No – None. The motion passed.
8. The final ordinance to Define the Allocation of the County's Portion of a One Percent County Sales and Use Tax was read by Treasurer Barnes. A motion was made by Greg 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. No – None. The motion passed by a 2/3 vote.

**Announcements –**

Senior Citizen Director Joyce Short was present to introduce the new manager for the Horatio Center. She is Linda Ramsey. Joyce stated that she appreciates the help that the county gives the centers.

**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