

MINUTES
SEVIER COUNTY QUORUM COURT MEETING
2:00 P.M., MONDAY APRIL 12, 2021

The Sevier County Quorum Court met at 2:00 P.M., Monday, April 12, 2021, in the Sevier County Courthouse Courtroom with County Judge Greg Ray presiding. The meeting was opened with prayer by Sheriff Robert Gentry followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called with the following Justices present: Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, 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 – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

Committee and Other Reports - Steve Cole was present to report on the progress of the new hospital construction. The hospital construction is on schedule. Weather has not been a deterrent. In less than 60 days the foundation will be finished and walls will be going up. March of 2022 is the projected opening date. The Hospital Sales Tax Fund has roughly \$1.5 million dollars to date. The hospital will open as an acute care hospital and will transition to a Critical Access Hospital as soon as possible. The 1st services available will be emergency services with the rest to follow. The Board is making final decisions on Equipment such as the fire alarm system video surveillance, door access control, nurse call system, clocks, paging, and medicine distribution. Mr. Cole informed the court that Dr. Jonathan Hoyt has offered to lease his medical office building to be used as office space until the hospital is up and running. This office space will house a minimum of ten employees. This lease will not be long term and will run month to month. Lease will be \$3000 per month. An extra expense has come up in the amount of \$30,000 to move the water line deeper because it crosses under a driveway. The Board will be interviewing candidates for CEO next week. They have 10 candidates to interview in 5 days. Angie Walker will represent the Quorum Court in the interview process. The CEO is expected to be paid between \$160,000 and \$200,000 per year.

Sheriff Gentry asked about the camera system at the hospital. He asked if the outside cameras could be monitored by the Sheriff's dept. Mr. Cole said he would begin to talk about that with Edafio immediately.

Old Business – Discuss Application and Permit for Liquor Sales

Clerk Debbie Akin presented the format of the Application and the Permit that will be used. There was no action required.

New Business –

1. Proposed Ordinance allowing the County to do business with Tallant and Tallant Investments. The proposed ordinance was read by Clerk Akin. A motion was made by Greg Wright and seconded by Angie Walker to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the 2nd reading by title only. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed. The ordinance was read for the 2nd time by Title only by Clerk Akin. A motion was made by Greg Wright and seconded by Angie Walker to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the 3rd reading by title only. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed. Clerk Akin read the ordinance for the 3rd time by title only. David Wright asked if this was a one-time occurrence, and why we chose to do use this rental. Sheriff Gentry stated that he rented the cabin for a training instructor who was conducting training for the Criminal Justice Department because it was a nice facility. Clerk Akin stated that this ordinance would allow Tallant Investments to be used in the future if necessary. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Angie Walker to approve the ordinance. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.
2. Proposed Ordinance allowing Sevier County to do business with Jonathan and Barbie Hoyt, specifically to rent office space for new hospital employees until the hospital is completed. Judge Ray read the ordinance. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by David Wright to

suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the 2nd reading by title only. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed. Judge Ray read the ordinance for the 2nd time by title only. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Angie Walker to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the 3rd reading by title only. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed. Judge Ray read the ordinance for the 3rd time by title only. David Wright asked if the rent would be the \$3000 mentioned in the Hospital Board Report. Judge Ray stated that it would be \$3000 per month and would be on a month to month basis with no long-term contract. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Roxy Stephens to approve the ordinance. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed

3. The last agenda item was to discuss the County employment policies. Clerk Akin stated that in the February County Clerk's meeting the AAC representative Brandy McAllister had stressed the importance of county's updated their employment policies. Clerk Akin stated that there were several corrections that needed to be made to Sevier County's policies and potentially changes that the Quorum Court would potentially want to amend. A Model policy was presented that was drawn up by AAC. A copy of current policy was also presented as well as a proposed policy that has some of the corrections mentioned by Clerk Akin. It was suggested that maybe a committee of Justices who have some experience or knowledge of policy and Labor laws could work on the policy. Angie Walker volunteered as well as Earl Battiest. A meeting was set for April 28 at 8:30 in the courtroom. Clerk Akin mentioned that she would be getting copies of the Model Policy as well as the Proposed to the elected officials for them to review. Once the committee has completed their suggested policies the policy will be submitted to Kaylen Lewis, County Attorney for her review.

Announcements - Callie Miller addressed the court in regard to the problem of trash on the county roads. There were several others in attendance in support of getting the county cleaned up. Melinda Taggart is working with state agencies in conjunction with a county trash clean-up campaign. Melinda stated that in the past she was involved with clean up around Gillham Lake and local businesses sponsored the effort by donating prizes that were raffled to the workers. Jonathan Buenrostro is working with the City of De Queen on a city-wide clean-up campaign as well. Support from local businesses is being sought. Several citizens gave accounts of how much trash is being thrown out on our roads and how often it has to be picked up in order to make an attempt at cleaning up the county. Sheriff Gentry confirmed that the Sheriff's department is working with community service workers again to help alleviate the problem. Ms. Miller asked if there was a schedule that they worked from the local citizens could coordinate with to cover more areas. The sheriff said there is not a regular schedule at this time. Ms. Miller asked if they pick up trash on dirt roads. The Sheriff said they do if they can do it safely. Ms. Miller asked who the Community Service Office is. The sheriff said it is Officer Philamlee. Callie asked if there might be coordination between the officer and citizen groups who want to help pick up trash. Callie asked if persons were ticketed for littering. Sheriff Gentry said they are and that the Community Service Officer ticketed a person who threw trash out in front of the pick-up crew recently. Social media has all information regarding the pick up which is scheduled for April 17.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Debbie Akin
County Clerk