

MINUTES
SEVIER COUNTY QUORUM COURT MEETING
2:00 P.M., MONDAY MAY 10, 2021

The Sevier County Quorum Court met at 2:00 P.M., Monday, May 11, 2021, in the Sevier County Courthouse Courtroom with County Judge Greg Ray presiding. The meeting was opened with prayer by Judge Greg Ray followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called with the following Justices present: Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent: Michael Archer. Upon a motion by Roxy Stephens and second by David Wright, 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 – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed.

Committee and Other Reports - Steve Cole was present to report on the progress of the new hospital construction. Lori House was introduced as the new hospital CEO. Ms. House introduced herself and told a little about her background as well as how important it is to her to be a part of a small community in Arkansas. The Board has made a decision to purchase Stryker beds for the hospital. Horn Accounting Group was voted for on Thursday for accounting Counsel for the hospital. This firm will be putting together the Community Health Needs Assessment. They will also be helping put together a budget for the hospital. Meditech will be the electronics records provider. There are contract issues to be worked out with them. Archiving system will possibly be through General Electric Co. The hospital has spent just a little over 2 million dollars so far on the construction of the hospital.

Judge Ray appointed Angie Walker to the Budget Committee in the absence of Michael Archer until he returns and asked them to meet to discuss Hospital Budget as well as grant request from Dr. Jason Lofton for building of trails around De Queen Lake. They will also look into request by County Clerk Akin for an additional full-time deputy clerk.

Old Business –

New Business –

1. The first agenda item is a request by the County Judge to change the date of the June Quorum Court meeting due to a conflict with the Judge's' Conference. Roxy Stephens made a motion to reschedule the June meeting for June 21st at 2:00 P.M. The motion was seconded by David Wright. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed.
2. Item two was a request for discussion of interest among Quorum Court members for development of an ordinance regulating the location of poultry houses within Sevier County. This item was scratched because the person who requested it be on the agenda was not in attendance.
3. The third agenda item is a request to discuss applying for a TAP grant (Transportation Alternative Program) for trails at the lake. The grant would reimburse the county 80% of what is spent. The county would be responsible for a 20% match. Dr. Jason Lofton presented the information. Dr. Lofton passed out some information regarding location of trails, etc. A blueprint for the trails was paid for by a grant as well as local donations. This is a Corps of Engineers requirement. There is a volunteer group that is currently building hiking trails by hand. He explained that this is an economic development project due to potential revenue to be brought in. He explained that the Walton Foundation could possibly donate some toward the project at a later time. He wants to submit for \$356,871 which would cover cost of trails currently planned. Grant has to be submitted by the County as they do not award to non-profit organizations. The county's match for this grant amount would be about \$71,000. The deadline for this grant is June 1. A motion was made by Roxy Stephens and seconded by David Wright to allow the Judge to apply for this grant with the stipulation of the Budget Committee meeting to determine the amount to be applied for if feasible for this year's budget. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed.

4. Next on the agenda was a proposed ordinance to establish a new fund. Fund #3046-American Rescue Plan Fund. This is for federal funding. The expenditures from this fund will be restricted. That information has not been made available yet. Guidance is expected soon. Treasurer Heather Barnes read the ordinance. A motion was made by Angie Walker to suspend the rule and place on second reading by title only. David Wright seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed. Heather read the ordinance by title only for the second reading. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Greg Wright to suspend the rule and place on third reading by title only. Heather read the ordinance for the third time by title only. David Wright made a motion to approve the ordinance. The second was made by Greg Wright. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed
5. The fifth item on the agenda was a request from County Clerk Debbie Akin for an additional appropriation of \$19,000 to hire a full-time deputy clerk to start in July. She explained that there would be one and possibly two people to retire from her office at the end of next year. The remainder of this year would be to train a new deputy for payroll and probate. This would allow next year for election training and re-districting training also. David Wright made a motion to table this until June in order for the Budget Committee to discuss and make a recommendation. The motion was seconded by Roger Whitmore. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed.
6. Next was a proposed ordinance making final amendments to the Operating Budget for 2020. Clerk Akin read the ordinance and explained changes. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Greg Wright to approve the ordinance. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed by a two-thirds vote.
7. Item seven on the agenda was a Court Order removing items from county inventory. No action is required.
8. Agenda item 8 is a request to confirm re-appointment of Tara Athey to the Sevier County Equalization Board. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Greg Wright to approve the appointment. . A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed.
9. The ninth agenda item was a request to set a salary budget for the CEO of the Sevier County Medical Center for the remainder of 2021. The request was made by Board Chairman Steve Cole. The amount requested is \$130,000.00. Angie Walker made a motion that we approve \$150,000.00 to be sure it is enough to cover all benefits as well as salary. Roxy Stephens seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed.
10. The Judge asked if anyone would entertain a motion to suspend the rules in order to hear a non-agenda item. Greg Wright made a motion to suspend the rules to hear a non-agenda item. The motion was seconded by Angie Walker. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed. The item to be heard is a proposed ordinance establishing a new fund, Fund #3047 Sevier County Medical Center Fund. This is the fund that will pay any employees hired prior to the opening of the new hospital as well as lease of property and other non-construction items for the hospital. Treasurer Barnes read the ordinance. A motion was made by Angie Walker and seconded by Earl Battiest to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the second reading by title only. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed. Heather read the ordinance for the second time by title only. Angie Walker made a motion to suspend the rule and place the ordinance on the third reading by title only. The second was made by Earl Battiest. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed. Heather read the ordinance for the third reading by title only. Greg Wright made a motion to approve the ordinance. Second was made by Angie

Walker. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Evelyn Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Roger Whitmore, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – Michael Archer. The motion passed.

Announcements -

Angie Walker said she noticed that the courthouse lawn needed some benches replaced. She suggested that we replace with lifetime benches and that we have one placed in memory of Justice Charles Keels. The Judge said we would certainly look into doing that.

Tiffany Maurer of Economic Development informed the court that FRIENDS had requested an RFP for a hotel feasibility study. The results will be in and this will be discussed at next Friday's meeting (5/21/21).

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Debbie Akin
County Clerk