

MINUTES

SEVIER COUNTY QUORUM COURT MEETING

2:00 P.M., MONDAY JULY 13, 2020

The Sevier County Quorum Court met at 2:00 p.m., Monday, July 13, 2020, in the De Queen High School Cafeteria 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: Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, Greg Wright and David Wright. Absent: Roger Whitmore. Upon a motion by Roxy Stephens and second by Greg 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 – Michael Archer, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Absent – Roger Whitmore. No- None. The motion passed. Roger Whitmore came in after this vote.

Committee and Other Reports

Update from Hospital Board of Governors – Board Chair, Steve Cole was in attendance to give an update. Mr. Cole had a digital presentation. This presentation gave the different aspects of how the Sevier County Hospital will look. Mr. Cole told the court that the hospital bonds are scheduled to sell in August. Mr. Bowman with the Friday Firm will be meeting with the Quorum Court at the next meeting to pass an ordinance allowing the sale to begin. Our sales tax revenue has been better than projected even with the pandemic. A treasurer has been elected for the Board. This is Greg Revels. Ground breaking is expected to take place by November 1. The hospital is still on track to open in December of 2021. There are some bills that need to be paid in regard to the hospital. This will be addressed later in this meeting. Bank of Ozarks will pay all bills for construction of the hospital once it has been started. The County will also be reimbursed for what it has paid prior to the sale of bonds and beginning of the construction. On August 19 there will be an Ordinance that will need to be passed by the Quorum Court regarding the bonds.

Old Business

New Business

The First agenda item is a proposed resolution adopting the Sevier County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The hazard mitigation plan is required to achieve eligibility for mitigation grants. Judge Ray read the Resolution. A motion was made by Greg Wright and seconded by Roxy Stephens to approve the Resolution. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

Next on the agenda is a proposed resolution urging all residents and visitors to wear face coverings in public settings. This resolution was introduced by Victor Rojas. Judge Ray read the proposed resolution. Roxy Stephens made a motion to approve this resolution. Mike Archer stated that residents in his area have contacted him and they do not want this resolution passed. David Wright indicated the same experience. After a brief discussion a second was made by Angie Walker to approve. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, and Angie Walker. No – Michael Archer, Kenneth Currence, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Abstain – Earl Battiest and Roger Whitmore. Absent – None. The motion Failed.

The third agenda item is a request for funding to help purchase two l-pads for a giveaway as part of a campaign to encourage Sevier County residents to complete the Census. This project will be a partnership between the County(if approved), City of De Queen, The De Queen/ Sevier county Chamber of Commerce, and U of A Cossatot. The cost is estimated to be around \$150 per party. Tiffany Maurer, Economic Development coordinator explained the giveaway program. A motion was made by Michael Archer and seconded by Roxy Stephens to approve the request. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

Agenda item four is a proposed Resolution authorizing the County Judge to enter into a Contract of Obligation with the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment, Division of Environmental Quality. Judge Ray read the proposed resolution. A motion was made by Greg Wright and seconded by Roxy Stephens to approve the resolution. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

Next on the agenda is a proposed resolution declaring support for the J. Lynn Helms – Sevier County Airport Improvement Project and Authorizing the County Judge to accept a grant on behalf of the Sevier County Airport Commission. (Grant for an Airport Layout Plan update) The County Judge read the proposed resolution. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Greg Wright to approve the resolution. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

Item six on the agenda is a request to approve the re-appointment of Debbie Pickering to the Sevier County Equalization Board. A motion was made by Michael Archer and seconded by Angie Walker to approve the request. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

Item seven is a request to approve the re-appointment of Jimna Stinnett to the Sevier County Equalization Board. A motion was made by Roxy Stephens and seconded by Charles Keels to approve the request. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

Item eight on the agenda is a request to re-appoint Roger Whitmore to the Sevier County housing Authority Board. A motion was made by David Wright and seconded by Roxy Stephens to approve the request.

Item nine on the agenda is a request to approve the re-appointment of Jonathan Hoyt to the Sevier County Hospital Board of Governors. A motion was made by Michael Archer and seconded by Angie Walker to approve the request. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed.

The last agenda item is a proposed ordinance to keep someone from building chicken houses next to the De Queen Country Club. Judge Ray asked to hear comments from the public first on this matter. The floor was opened to comment. Robert Whitney, owner of the Country Club had his daughter Dena Hibbs speak on behalf of the Country Club. Ms. Hibbs stated that this proposed ordinance would only affect chicken houses built in the future. They are attempting to set specific guidelines regarding how close in proximity to residential areas that chicken houses can be built. She indicated that the smell from the chicken houses would be detrimental to the longevity of the Country Club. They are requesting this ordinance by county-wide and not specific to the country Club area. Ms. Hibbs requested that this be viewed as what is best for Sevier County and not just in this particular instance. She also mentioned that Mr. Whitney owns the motel beside the Country Club and that the people who stay there are typically people coming to do business in this area. It was asked if any of the home owners who have homes behind the Country Club are in attendance today. Ms. Hibbs stated that they were not. Chad Jenkins who is planning to build six chicken houses across from the Country Club stood and spoke on his behalf. He stated that this state and county are big into poultry industry. These houses will be more than ¼ mile from the Country Club. He stated that ventilation now is so good that the smell from the chicken houses would not be significant. He also stated that typically winds in this area come from the west or southwest and not from the east. David Wright asked if this was the most opportune place for him to build these or could he consider another place. Chad indicated that other options would cost him about \$250,000 to have access to natural gas and water. He stated this is about the cost of one chicken house. These utilities are readily available at the current proposed site. He also indicated environmental issues at another site. Mike Archer asked if he had looked at the future I-49 corridor. He stated that he had not and that he would just have to deal with that when it occurred. Roxy Stephens stated that she does not smell chicken houses anymore. She visits family that have them and she never smells them. David Wright stated that he didn't know if this item should be handled by the Quorum Court. An attorney present mentioned that the current situation should probably be addressed in circuit court. She also stated that the ordinance provided was not sufficient to consider. There is a place that refers to zoning that is not correct for this county as well as a reference to Clark County. David Wright made a motion to dismiss the ordinance because the Quorum Court can't support it as written. Roger Whitmore seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, David Wright, and Greg Wright. Abstain – Angie Walker. No – None. Absent – None. The motion to dismiss this ordinance passed.

With no other agenda items, the County Judge asked if someone would entertain a motion to suspend the rules in order to address a non-agenda item. Angie Walker made a motion to suspend the rules. David Wright seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Yes – Michael Archer, Earl Battiest, Kenneth Currence, Charles Keels, Roxy Stephens, Angie Walker, David Wright, and Greg Wright. No – None. Absent – None. The motion passed. Judge Ray explained that there are bills in the amount of \$113,129.00 that need to be paid for the hospital construction project. The county received \$170,000 for the month of April. The money needed to pay these bills will need to be transferred from the Sales Tax Fund to County General, Quorum Court budget for 2020. A motion was made by Greg Wright to approve this transfer and payment of these bills. Roxy Stephens seconded the

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

Announcements

Chamber of Commerce Office Manager Suzanne Babb announced that there is an additional person now in the Chamber office. Her name is Sue Stowers.

Judge Ray announced that the August meeting will be held on August 19 at 12:00 noon. This date is due to the need for an Ordinance to be passed on that specific day regarding Hospital Bond Sales. The meeting will be in the High School Cafeteria.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Debbie Akin
County Clerk