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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - November 20, 2023

NOVEMBER 20TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - November 20, 2023

The Stoddard County Commission meeting began with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner C.D. Stewart is absent from the meeting. He is attending a meeting with Cecil Weeks, County Clerk, and Josh Speakman, County Collector/Treasurer at the Missouri Association of Counties in the Lake of the Ozarks.

There are 503 County elected officials in attendance. Speakman is on the Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee and they voted to pass a list of items that the Missouri Association of Counties will support or object to during this legislative session at the Missouri State Capitol.

Old Business:

The IDA, Peter Coutavas, paid for the hot water heater in the building for Cafe'Ghost and did not pass the invoice on to the Commission.

New Business:

Wildflower Boutique and Cafe'Ghost lease agreements

The Commission has received the lease agreements and when Mr. Stewart returns next week they will go over the lease agreements and sign off on them. They go into effect January 1st per Peter Coutavas, IDA.

New Lisbon Township held their regularly scheduled monthly meeting and the board has requested that Mr. Loyd Hull give a resignation letter in writing. Mr. Hull stated he would send them one. Terry Bates made the motion to remove Mr. Hull from the Board as he no longer wishes to serve.

"It is the job of the Stoddard County Commission to make that appointment," stated Mathis. "New Lisbon Township board has made a recommendation for replacement. We will vote on that at the next meeting since New Lisbon Township is in Commissioner C.D. Stewart's area.

For reference MO State Statute 65.183 Removal of Township Officers, Procedure and Section 65.200 Vacancies in office - how filled.

Other Business:

Motion to accept the regular meeting minutes from November 13, 2023 made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded Commissioner Greg Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to enter into the 10:00 am Hearing for the de-obligation for rural Puxico CDGB grant made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to close the Public Hearing for the de-obligation of CDBG grant at 11:00 a.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to enter into closed session at 11:01 a.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, November 13, 2023

NOVEMBER 13TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, November 13, 2023](#)

The Stoddard County Commission opened their Monday morning meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer on Monday, November 13, 2023.

Mr. Gary Wyman, Stoddard County Extension Council

"I would like to ask for the Commissions' consideration about the possibility of putting a mailbox on the courthouse square for our office," Wyman stated. "The cost of a P.O. Box has had a tremendous increase this year and we currently have a regular business mailbox at the post office. We don't want to take away from the look of the courthouse, but I just want to have options before our next council meeting. We don't have sensitive type items

like the County has when it comes to mail."

No questions at this time from the Commission. Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis said he would look into it and get back to him.

Chase Marable with Higgonbottom Insurance of Springfield, MO

"I have spoken to Cecil Weeks for several years now and I work with city of Dexter within your County on Liability Insurance," stated Marable.

"We have 12 attorneys on staff that review all contracts and we have HR services as well," continued Marable. "We are seeing higher premiums all over."

Ms. Carol Jarrell asked if he was a broker for several insurance companies and he said yes I am a broker.

Insurance renewal is set for February 2024 and will have to be renewed or bid out for new premiums.

Alan Hedrick, County Wide Insurance/Leavitt Group Insurance along with Beth Keller Acct Manager with St. Francis Medical Center and Marv Meyer with GBS

"We typically start looking at the insurance (referring to the Liability Insurance) in October or November and just wanted to make ourselves available for the Commission," commented Hedrick.

"There is a lot of moving parts at SoutheastHEALTH and in nursing," commented Commissioner Mathis. "We will not be doing anything in 2024 as far as new health insurance for our employees. We had a 4% reduction in health insurance premiums so we are staying with them. As far as the Liability Insurance we will get back with you all after discussing. The renewal deadline would be in February 2024 so we need to discuss shortly."

Town Pharmacy of Bloomfield

The Town Pharmacy has been paying the minimum electric bill for the past three years on the building they donated to the Stoddard County Commission.

The total amount is \$2,494.06 and the Commission will reimburse Town Pharmacy this amount. Moving forward the businesses that have rented the buildings will begin paying December 1, 2023 for the electricity.

Other Business

Motion to accept the regular session meeting minutes for Monday, November 6, 2023 made by C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the closed session minutes from Friday, November 3, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

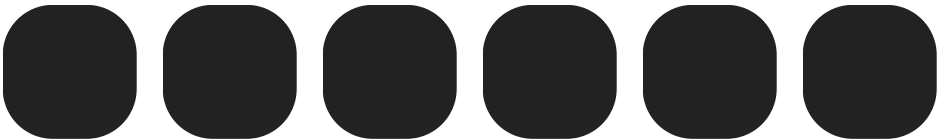
Motion to accept the closed session minutes from Monday, November 6, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to close the regular session at 11:08 a.m. after the ribbon cutting at the courthouse made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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Stoddard County Elected Officials Voted to Increase Salaries by 8%

NOVEMBER 06TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Elected Officials Voted to Increase Salaries by 8%

The Stoddard County Salary Commission held a meeting on Friday, November 3, 2023 at 9 a.m.

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis opened the meeting with a motion by Sawyer Smith, Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney.

Present were Greg Mathis, Presiding Commissioner, C.D.Stewart, Commissioner Dist. 1, Carol Jarrell, Commissioner Dist. 2, Jacob Clary, Assessor, Josh Speakman, Collector/Treasurer, Cecil Weeks, Clerk, Brett Stidham, Coroner, Sawyer Smith, Prosecuting Attorney, Lorrie Duckworth, Public Administrator, Candy Collier, Recorder, Carl Hefner, Sheriff, Jessica Brown, representing the Juvenile Office, and Dee Loflin, ShowMe Times owner.

Mathis read the minutes from the previous meeting held on October 17, 2023.

Motion to accept the minutes by Sawyer Smith, seconded by Candy Collier, Stoddard County Recorder. All voted yes and motion passed.

Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer spoke first about the salary of the County Coroner that was previously voted on in the October 17th meeting. He stated that

"1. \$14,000 can be put onto the current pay which was set by the Salary Commission. His recommendation is that it goes into effect at the next election period.

2. We need to get the part time vs full time out of our heads and refer to the Coroner as an elected position.
3. The first motion to amend the motion of the prior read motion of the \$2,000 should be taken care of then move on to the next motion."

After some discussion the motion on the floor was to resend the motions as read from the previous minutes as related to the Stoddard County Coroner from the October 17th Salary Commission Meeting was made by Sawyer Smith, seconded by Josh Speakman. All voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to increase the compensation of the Stoddard County Coroner by \$14,000 added to his current pay at the next term of the coroner's elected position made by Candy Collier, seconded by Lori Duckworth, Stoddard County Public Administrator. Some discussion was heard. Not one elected official voted yes; however they all voted no. The Motion did not pass.

Motion to raise the Stoddard County Coroner's salary in the amount of \$14,000 at next term of office plus any COLA (Cost of Living) increases made by Carl Hefner, Stoddard County Sheriff, seconded by Candy Collier. There was some discussion. Josh Speakman stated this is pursuant to MO State Statute 50.327, paragraph 3, August 28, 2022. All voted yes and motion passed.

COLA Increases for the Budgeted 2024 Year

Motion on the floor made by Candy Collier to give all elected and non-elected employees 8% COLA increase, seconded by Jacob Clary, Stoddard County Assessor.

Discussion by several of the salary commission prior to the vote.

"I feel 8% is a good percentage because I looked at inflation around the area and it increased," stated Collier. "I believe 8% is a fair amount."

The cost to Stoddard County would be \$304,000 in 2024 if the increase is set at 8% according to Speakman.

"Inflation has distorted the sales tax in our county and I have to look five years down the road," stated Greg Mathis, Presiding Commissioner. "I look at the loss of Tyson and how that will affect our sales tax. Is our spending sustainable at that point. It has nothing to do with salaries because I think we have a very good financial/benefit package to offer county employees."

"The biggest investment you can make is your employees," commented Collier. "I think we have invested in our financial package and need to continue to do so."

Question from Brent Stidham, Stoddard County Coroner, "Can elected officials take less of an increase or not take any increase at all?" Mathis stated yes; however the motion on the floor is an 8% across the board increase for all county employees.

Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney wanted to make sure the media and public was aware that his salary and the Sheriff's salary is set by the state. They will not receive the COLA increase only their employees would get the increase.

56.265. Compensation of prosecuting attorneys — training program, attendance required, when, expenses, compensation — definition, prosecuting attorney to include circuit attorney (noncharter counties).

57.317. Compensation of sheriff — training program, attendance required, when, expenses, compensation — minimum compensation (noncharter counties).

"I agree with Greg's physical conservatism," stated Sawyer Smith. "I don't know all the County business and I wish there were other ways to save in the other county business and help the employees. If there were ways to save \$300,000 then offset the employees with that amount then I think the Commission should sharpen their pencil and proceed."

Motion to increase both elected officials and employees an 8% Cost of Living (COLA) increase in their salaries made by Candy Collier, seconded by Jacob Clary as read by Greg Mathis. Cecil Weeks suggested they call for the vote individually.

Vote as follows C.D. Stewart Yes, Carol Jarrell Yes, Jacob, Clary Yes, Josh Speakman No, Cecil Weeks Yes, Brent Stidham Yes, Sawyer Smith Abstained from voting, Lorrie Duckworth Yes, Candy Collier Yes, Carl Hefner Yes, Greg Mathis No. There were 8 votes for yes, 2 votes for no and 1 abstained. Motion passed. The increase will begin January 1, 2024.

Starting Wages for County Employees

There was quite a bit of discussion in both meetings about the low starting wages of employees. The current starting wage is \$16.05 set by former Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington, Commissioner Carol Jarrell and Commissioner Steve Jordan.

Carl Hefner stated his sheriff's department has been starting employees at \$18.75 per hour plus benefits. Sawyer Smith stated he started his investigator at a higher starting salary.

"Dexter PD is falling behind in pay for their officer's," stated Hefner. "Our guys put their lives on the line and should be compensated for that."

Mathis stated, "I think as the Commission we can look at starting pays for the 2024 budget."

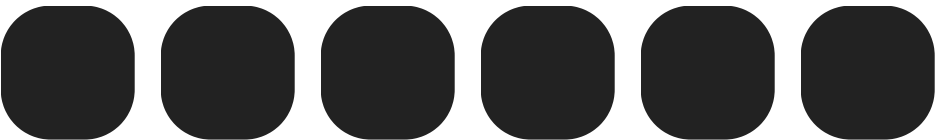
The Commissioners will meet with the Sheriff, Juvenile Office, and Prosecuting Attorney and discuss starting salaries moving forward in 2024. This is a budgetary item and not covered by the Salary Commission.

Motion to adjourn made by Jarrell, seconded by Jacob. The Stoddard County Salary Commission adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

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Stoddard County Commission Works Through Light Agenda - Monday, November 6, 2023

NOVEMBER 06TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Works Through Light Agenda - Monday, November 6, 2023

The Stoddard County Commissioner meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer for the county officials by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.

Judge Joe Satterfield

Judge Satterfield showed the Commission a photo of a confiscated weapon from a middle school student from this weekend who made threats to other students. The weapon in question is an AR-15.

"I just wanted you to see what the juvenile office deals with on a daily basis," stated Satterfield. "I want you to be clear what we deal with day in and day out and we do keep the schools in our area safe. I have been there 28 years and we have a program in place that works."

There are some issues going on with a certain attorney who was appointed by Judge Joe Satterfield and Judge Rob Mayer, according to Commissioner Mathis.

In 2023 the State of Missouri gave the Judges the ability to appoint an additional attorney for juveniles. There are four attorneys in Stoddard County, each with their own field of expertise.

Katelyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

The City of Dexter is requesting their full \$800,000 for the purchase of new water meters. Lambert stated that all paperwork is in good order.

Motion to reimburse \$800,000 in APRA Funds made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Water District #2 has signed their Distribution Agreement and Lambert is working with their attorney on other items. No other water district/township/city hired an attorney.

City of Dexter, Dave Wyman, City Administrator

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis asked about the Lagoon Project. Mr. Wyman stated that basically since Tyson has left the area the chemistry has changed quite a bit with regards to the lagoon. "Common knowledge is that Tyson has been sold and there is a pending sales agreement signed, but the attorneys are trying to formalize it before announcing to the public," commented Wyman. "We will have to get information on the amount of water that will be needed for the new company and then get with the engineers for a new design."

The Old County Courthouse Clock Tower

The clock tower has been repaired and is working properly. The cost was \$5,000 and an annual fee of \$800 for a service agreement which was voted on by the previous Commission in October of 2021.

The Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce will have a ribbon cutting for the clock tower on Monday, November 13th at 11:00 a.m. on the north side of the courthouse.

Motion to accept the October 2023 Ads and Abates from Josh Speakman, Collector/Treasurer made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Public Hearing for the de-obligation of the rural broadband has to be 7 days and not five days per Commissioner Mathis. He called the Department of Economic Development and made sure of the exact timing.

Motion to move the Public Hearing for the De-obligation for the CDB Grant from November 13th to November 20th at 10 a.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

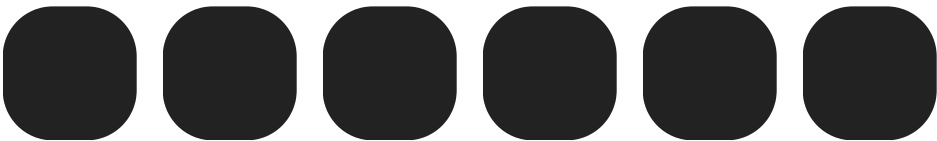
Motion to accept the minutes from the October 30, 2023 made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

No closed session meeting minutes from October 30, 2023 or closed session meeting minutes from November 3, 2023 available until next week.

Motion to enter into closed session made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart at 11:01 a.m. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, October 30, 2023

[Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, October 30, 2023](#)

Stoddard County Commission meeting began the weekly Monday morning meeting with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Presiding Commissioner Mathis also praised the Advance Lady Hornets on their bid to the Final Four in volleyball as well as Puxico and Dexter Cross Country Teams headed to state.

Dale Moreland, 527A Closing in Castor Township

"We tore out that bridge and put some fill in it," Moreland stated. "Don contacted me and wants to maintain that bridge. He is wanting to put a gate about 100 feet past that bridge."

Motion to close a portion of 527A, 100 feet west of the bridge which is his property line that goes into Donnie Foster's property made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D.Stewart. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

John McCarty and 2024 Health Insurance Rates with Arch Brokerage Inc.

We had a 79 percent of premium vs claims which is slightly under the 80% goal," McCarty stated. "We have coordinated with SoutheastHEALTH to get a better deal and we did get a better deal in my opinion.

"One of the differences is the Lab Work. There is \$0 co-pay for the going to SoutheastHEALTH vs having a deductible/coinsurance with the base plan with Healthlink," McCarty said.

There is a 4.51% decrease in premium costs which is good for the County," continued McCarty. "Premiums for the 2023 were \$254,781.00 and for 2024 will be 213,220 a savings of \$41,560.00 in 2024. This is a self-insured plan," per McCarty.

"You all are putting more money back into the insurance bucket vs what is going out in premium costs," stated McCarty. "We went on to say that next year it may hurt the county depending on the claims and so forth and being year three of the plan."

Though the contract ends in 2023 the Commission opted not to bid out the insurance for 2024 and stay with the current employee health insurance with Arch Brokerage, Inc. The Commission does not have to bid each year per MO State Statute 67.150 and 376.696.

67.150. Insurance for elected officials and employees, political subdivision may contribute - contracting procedure. - *The governing body of any political subdivision may utilize the revenues and other available funds of the subdivision, as a part of the compensation of the elected officials and employees of the subdivision, to contribute to the cost of a plan, including a plan underwritten by insurance, for furnishing all or part of hospitalization or medical expenses, life insurance or similar benefits for the subdivision's elected officials and employees. If any county elects to provide a plan for furnishing all or part of hospitalization or medical expenses, such plan shall include all elected officials, if any elected officials are to be covered.*

No contract shall be entered into by the governing body of the political subdivision to purchase any insurance policy or policies pursuant to the terms of this section unless the contract is submitted to competitive bidding at least every three years and the contract is awarded to the lowest and best bidder.

376.696. Political subdivisions purchasing any insurance policies to submit to competitive bidding, when — renewal between bidding periods deemed extension. — Any other law to the contrary notwithstanding, no contract shall be entered into by the governing body of any political subdivision to purchase any insurance policy or policies unless the contract is submitted to competitive bidding at least every six years and the contract is awarded to the lowest or best bidder. The renewal of any insurance policy during any period between submissions of the contract to competitive bidding shall not constitute a separate and distinct contract for the time covered by the renewal but shall be treated only as an extension of an existing contract.

Motion to accept the \$35,000 County Deductible Stop Loss and the \$500 deductible for Tier 1 and a \$1500 deductible for Tier 2, and a \$4,000 for Tier 3 on the 3-Tier Medical Plan 2024 Health Insurance as presented by Arch Brokerage, Inc. made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell and seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

Peter Coutavas, IDA

The Ghost Coffee Shop will be opening soon. The Wildflower Boutique is open and going. "I have exhausted my budget helping with repairs for them," commented Coutavas.

"Can the County replace the hot water heater? I have reached my budget helping the boutique and the coffee shop," stated Coutavas. Mathis said since the County owned the building and they are renting from the County and Coutavas already had someone working on the building to just get the hot water replaced and give the bill to the County.

New 2-Hour Parking Signs in Downtown Bloomfield

Mayor of Bloomfield Mr. Bill Aslin called and told Mr. Mathis that the city is placing 2-Hour parking signs up in downtown Bloomfield. If they park there on a long term basis they will be ticketed; however there will be a grace period before the ticketing will begin. This is due to the number of new businesses coming to downtown Bloomfield and the lack of parking when court is in session as well as the number of employees working in the County offices.

Close-out of the CDBG Grant with Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

Motion to set November 13, 2023 for a Public Hearing for the closing/deobligation of the CDBG grant dealing with broadband at 10 a.m. made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Important Dates to Remember for the County Offices

Veterans Day is November 11th, Saturday

The County offices will be closed on Friday, November 10th

Thanksgiving on November 23rd

The County offices will be closed on November 24th and 25th.

Christmas on December 25th

The County offices will be closed on December 25th and 26th. The Stoddard County Commission will meet on December 27th and again on December 29th to do year end.

MoDOT Bridge and Road Signage

The Commission received a list of county roads from MoDOT in need of new signage to replace worn or broken signs. Mathis said MoDOT said some of the townships have not replaced the signs. There are about 11 signs that need replacing. The Commission has been asked to make contact with the Townships.

Water District #2 - ARPA Funding

Water District #2 has been approved for around \$100k in ARPA funds for water meter replacement. They have yet to fill out and return the Distribution Agreement with Bootheel Regional Planning Commission. They have also hired an attorney out of Sikeston to represent them in obtaining such ARPA Funds.

Motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes from October 16th made by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the Closed Session Minutes from October 16th by Commissioner Jarrell and seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes from October 23rd made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the Closed Session Minutes from October 23rd made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to enter in closed session to discuss personnel issues at 11:00 a.m. Monday, October 30th made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All

three voted yes and motion passed.

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