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# Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, November 27, 2023

DECEMBER 01ST 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, November 27, 2023

The Stoddard County Commission meeting opened with a prayer and a Pledge of Allegiance lead by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.

### Designated Parking Signs

"I am here on behalf of the ladies that work in the courthouse. They are getting older and some don't get around as well as they used to. I was wanting designated employee parking areas to keep people out of them," stated Mrs. Wilson.

At the current time there are 2-hour designated parking spots. The signs were put up by the city of Bloomfield.

At this time the Commissioner Mathis is not in favor of putting up designated parking signs. He stated that we will put it on the agenda for next week and take a vote at that time.

### Loyd Rice, GoSEMO Fiber

We are getting ready to have services in the city of Puxico. People will then begin requesting services. This has nothing to do with the grant monies that the Commission designated for the rural Puxico area, but Rice wanted to update the Commission and let them know everything is on schedule.

"There will be a lot of people getting service soon. We have worked much better with Duck Creek and their county roads over there," Rice stated.

Mathis asked if GoSEMO Fiber would be applying for other grants.

"Yes we will look at all alternatives of grant funding," stated Rice. "There is a BEAD Grant that will be available; however there are David Bacon requirements, prevailing wages and other matching requirements and the rules are yet to be determined."

### **MAC Conference Update**

CART money is managed differently across the state of Missouri per Josh Speakman, County Collector/Treasurer. Also lots of discussion on the SB 190 real estate tax credit for the elderly.

### **December Payroll**

The Clerk's Office is requesting that the Commission ask the office holders to have their payroll in on December 20th vs December 21st. Mathis stated he would have the Clerk's office send an email to the Office holders to reflect that date.

### **Other Business**

Motion to accept the November 20th regular session meeting minutes made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Mathis since Mr. C.D. Stewart was absent. Commissioner Jarrell and Commissioner Mathis both voted yes.

Meeting minutes for the closed session were not available.

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

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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.

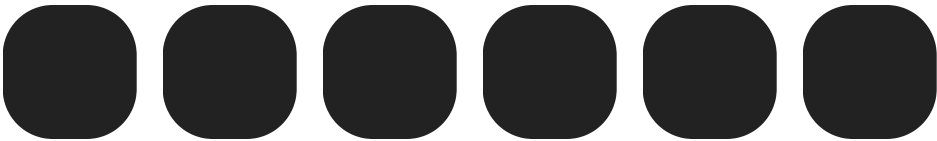
Motion to enter into the 10:00 am Hearing for the de-obligation for rural Puxico CDGB grant made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

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

## 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."

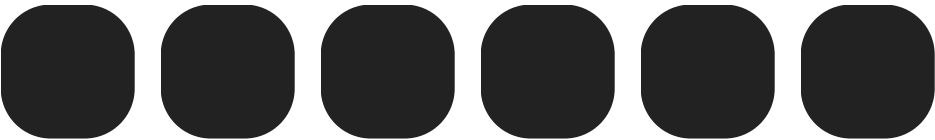
The Commissioners will meet with the Sheriff, Juvenile Office, and Prosecuting Attorney and discuss starting salaries moving forward in 2024. This is a budgetary item and not covered by the Salary Commission.

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.

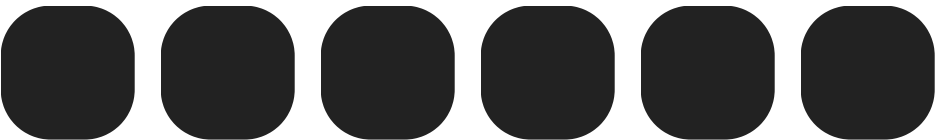
No closed session meeting minutes from October 30, 2023 or closed session meeting minutes from November 3, 2023 available until next week.

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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