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# 2023 Annual Report Stoddard County Coroner's Office Brent Stidham - Coroner

JANUARY 08TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## 2023 Annual Report Stoddard County Coroner's Office Brent Stidham - Coroner

### 2023 Annual report Stoddard County Coroner's Office Brent Stidham - Coroner

To continue keeping the public informed and provide transparency, I am releasing my annual Coroner's report to the residents of Stoddard County. The Stoddard County Coroner's office consists of myself and Deputy Coroner Ashley Robey. It is our mission to investigate every death in Stoddard County and provide accurate death information for death certificates and family members. Death investigations often include, ordering and attending autopsies, collecting toxicology testing, responding to scenes, interviewing witnesses, locating and notifying next of kin, speaking with primary care physicians, and obtaining medical records. I once again would like to thank our Stoddard County funeral homes, Mathis Funeral Home, Watkins Funeral Home, and Morgan Funeral Home, as well as all first responders for their professionalism and assistance in 2023.

2023 saw a spike in child fatalities. This is the worst situation imaginable for the families as well as the first responders and agencies who work

these cases. During these cases the county has a Child Fatality Review Panel that is responsible for contributing information to help determine the cause of death, identify and help implement services available to the family, and identify ways to prevent further child fatalities. All information from these meetings is confidential. Autopsies are required in children under 18, with the exception of medical situations when a State certified Child Pathologist deems it unnecessary. In addition the Missouri State Technical Assistance Team ( STAT) will reimburse counties who have an active Child Fatality Review Panel that completes the necessary procedures. In the last three

years Stoddard County has had a 100% reimbursement rate for child autopsies. This is due to conducting meetings and completing required data entry in a timely manner. The due diligence of this panel assured that all child fatalities were thoroughly investigated, while also saving Stoddard County taxpayers \$14,000 in 2023. The Stoddard County Child Fatality Review Panel consists of the following members.

Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney Sawyer Smith Stoddard County Coroner Brent Stidham

Stoddard County Sheriff Carl Hefner, Chief Deputy Andrew Holden, Detective Garry Brady and Detective John Atkinson

Stoddard County Chief Juvenile Officer Tonya Causey ( Chairman) Members of the investigating law enforcement agency (municipalities) Members of the Stoddard County Health Department Members of the Missouri State Highway Patrol

Stoddard County Children's Division Stoddard County Health Department Stoddard County Ambulance District

It should be noted, if a death occurs in the city limits of a town with a Police Department, members of that Department attend the review meetings. In 2023 Officers from the Dexter Police Department and Bernie Police Department attended meetings that concerned children from their

respective municipalities. I would like to thank all of these agencies for their work on this panel.

Another point in this year's report is that Stoddard County did not record a single overdose death. While in some cases drug use was a potential contributing factor, there were not any that were deemed an overdose. In overdoses an autopsy or toxicology testing is always performed. It is uncommon across the state to have a county without an overdose death, however, in Stoddard County there are several reasons we are successfully changing that trend. Those reasons include the public knowledge of properly administering Narcan, the increasing availability and success of inpatient and outpatient rehab facilities in the area, excellent effort by all Stoddard County law enforcement agencies, tough prosecution for repeat offenders, and zero tolerance for dangerous drug dealers. Together all of those things are helping Stoddard County fight fentanyl and the opioid epidemic.

Unfortunately 2023 saw an increase in suicide deaths and one homicide. Looking ahead, I hope to continue working with mental health agencies to eliminate suicide from our County and increase mental health awareness. I also plan to continue working with private entities, and local and state agencies to provide assistance and information that can keep Stoddard County a safe and positive place to live and work.

As Coroner I always strive to be professional, helpful and compassionate during what is a family's worst day. I will continue to speak for those who no longer have a voice to ensure that every death in Stoddard County is properly investigated. I will always ensure that the deceased and families are treated with dignity and respect. In addition, it is my duty to be mindful of taxpayers money. That makes me proud to say that after saving taxpayers over \$12,000 in 2023 our office has now saved taxpayers over \$35,000 in a three year period.

2023 budget information Total budgeted: \$60,978.99

Total actual: \$48,848.75

2023 case information

*The following information is in regards to Coroner's Office cases only and does not include deaths occurring under the care of a physician such as hospice.*

Total cases investigated and certified by the Coroner's office: 117 Scene responses: 88

Natural Causes: 94

Homicide: 1

Suicide: 8

Motor vehicle accident: 6 Accident (fire): 2 Accident (fall): 2 Accident (other): 2 Cases pending: 2

**Age groups**

0-18: 5

19-45: 18

46-70: 47

70 and over: 47

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023	From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Missouri Property Tax Credit
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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023

From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Missouri Property Tax Credit

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## Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Tuesday, January 2, 2024

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Tuesday, January 2, 2024
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The Stoddard County Commission began their 2024 year with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer over the county officials, state officials, police and fire and all those serving in the military.

### **Alisha Trammel, Dexter Chamber of Commerce - Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. Update**

“I just wanted to add or rather explain a couple of things that were in the press release,” commented Trammel.

1. Investment of \$13 million putting into the upgrades of the processing plant, mill and hatchery. That is their initial estimate of investment into the buildings and the process.

2. Employment numbers will be in phases. Phase one is 96 employees. That 96 comes from the Missouri Works Program and other state incentives. County wage island average of \$44,000 per person currently and they will have to pay 80% of their salaries and 50% of their insurance benefits. They must have 96 employees and if they do not they are disqualified from the Missouri Works Program.

Tyson pursued Cal Maine Foods, Inc. to purchase the buildings.

"We are actively recruiting for more businesses," stated Trammell. "The hotel project is coming along. I am actually meeting this week to get some dates."

Motion to accept the meeting minutes from Friday, December 29, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

### **Important dates:**

Martin Luther King Jr. day is Monday, January 15, 2024/ County offices are closed

January 10, 2024 is the last day to Register to Vote for February 6, 2024 Bond Election

Final Certification for the April 2, 2024 General Municipal Election is January 23, 2024.

Absentee Voting Begins for March 5, 2024 Charter Election is January 23, 2024

No Excuse Absentee Voting begins for February 6, 2024 Bond Election is January 23, 2024

Motion to enter into closed session made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Missouri Property Tax Credit

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, November 27, 2023

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# Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 18, 2023

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DECEMBER 19TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 18, 2023
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The Stoddard County Commissioners opened the next to the last meeting of the 2023 year with a prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

### Old Business:

Commissioner Greg Mathis stated that everything looks good with the Department of Economic Development for the deobligation of the CDBG grant with Bootheel Regional Planning. He does have one form to send to them and that is the "sign-in" sheet for the last Commission meeting.

The final contract for the health insurance has been finalized. It was already voted on by the Commission at a previous meeting. Today the Commission signed off on the contract.

### **New Business:**

#### **Beau Bishop, Stoddard County Emergency Management**

Bishop stated that the first quarter EMPG grant claims for the operating period of July 1, 2023 thru September 30, 2023 were submitted and approved. ON November 17th we were reimbursed \$6,540.91 for this claim.

The EMPG 2nd quarter grant claims for the operating period of October 1st - December 31st will be submitted before January 15, 2024.

Stoddard County EMA fiscal year 2024 budget has been submitted to the Stoddard County Clerk's office to be reviewed by the Commission.

"On August 22nd - 25th I attended the 2023 Missouri State Emergency Management Conference and from August 30th - September 1st I also attended the 2023 MFSMA Annual Conference," commented Bishop. "On October 19th, I attended the quarterly SEMO EMA and RHSOC meeting. On November 6th the Stoddard County EMA hosted the NWS Winter Weather Workshop with the Paducah National Weather Service.

Information was provided on the upcoming winter weather season and the new NWS Chat Service. 17 area stakeholders attended."

He continued to discuss the November 28th quarter Bootheel LEPD meeting and the December 13th quarter Stoddard County Consortium meeting. Stoddard County EMA asked for, and received approval from the board, for access to the Zuercher System that all county dispatchers use. With access, EMA will be able to start weather related CFS's for time tracking during an event, and will also have access to the map functions that will allow for EMA to place real time barriers and information on the map concerning flooded/blocked roads, etc. Once these are placed on the map, all dispatches will be able to see the same information, so it can be conveyed to their appropriate people when routing to a call could be an issue.

The HMPG Siren Grant - Notice for bid is active. It was advertised in the Daily Statesman, and the Daily American republic. Notice for bid is also posted on the front door of the Stoddard County Ambulance office. Bids are due no later than Friday, January 5th at 3 p.m. CST. Once all bids are received they will be brought to the Commission for discussion.

The procurement paperwork is ongoing for the HMPG Generator Grant.

The bid process has been completed for ARPA radios. Battles Communications was the only bid received. All paperwork submitted to BRPC and the approval was given to order radios. Radios have been ordered and we are waiting for them to be received.

Preliminary breakdown of radio distribution is as follows: Puxico Fire (3), Dudley Fire (3), Essex Fire (3), Bernie Fire (3), Bloomfield Fire (2), Bernie MEA (1), Stoddard County EMA (1).

Bishop gave upcoming dates he will be attending three meetings. On January 18th there will be a quarterly SEMO EMA and RHSOC meeting, January 30th a quarterly Bootheel LEPD meeting and on February 28th and 29th in Columbia for the Local Volunteer and Donations Management Class.

**Debbie Ellinghouse, AFLAC agent for Stoddard County**

She stepped in for just a minute to check in with the Commission and drop off the Employee Benefit Options for 2024 with rates for the pay period

Motion to accept the regular meeting minutes for December 11th made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

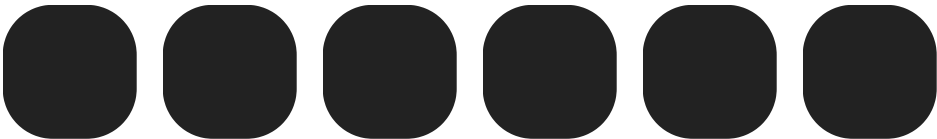
Motion to accept the closed session meeting minutes for December 11th made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commission Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to close the regular session of the meeting at 11:51 a.m.made by Commissioner Jarrell and seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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## Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023

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DECEMBER 12TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

<a href="#">Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023</a>
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The Stoddard County Commission began their Monday morning with a prayer and Pledge of Allegiance and by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.

### Bill Aslin, Mayor of Bloomfield

"I just wanted to clear up a few items on the parking regulations," commented Aslin. "We will not be closing any parking around the courthouse only next to the businesses to give them a chance. We have new businesses and we want to give them a chance to be successful," stated Aslin.

"We did have AA down from 4 p.m. - 8 p.m for the Christmas Around the Courthouse event on Saturday evening," continued Aslin. "We are very excited to have this event and our new businesses downtown."

"Christmas Around the Courthouse had sever vendors,' though we lost a few because of the threat of weather," stated Aslin. "It actually turned out to be a great evening. We had items for sale and many items for free. A Parade of Lights prior to the event with several entries. There were carriage rides for free, Santa was in the beauty shop with Dee Loflin taking photos for the Chamber. The event date has already been set for next year on December 7, 2024."

### **Katelyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission**

"Duck Creek Township has used all of their funding for the ARPA monies with this request of \$18,346.65 for the culvert expenses, and rental equipment expenses," stated Lambert.

Motion to accept the Duck Creek Township request for \$18,346.65 out of the ARPA funds made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commission Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

There is approximately \$188,934.04 left in ARPA Funds not designated for expenditure at this time. This is due to the interest earned on the ARPA funds being placed into money market accounts. The interested to date is \$183,289.19.

### **New Lisbon Township**

Mr.Terry Bates received a resignation letter from Loyd Hull who was on the board for the New Lisbon Township. The board met in a special meeting and have recommended Scott Jones or Mike Townsend.

The Lisbon Township board of directors has nominated Scott Jones and the Commissioner must vote to appoint him to the board.

Motion to appoint Scott Jones to the New Lisbon Township Board made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

### **Gary Wyman, Missouri Extension Office**

Mr. Wyman brought in a budget request for the University of Missouri Extension Office. The only addition to the budget is a raise for the secretary of \$1.00 per hour. Commissioner Mathis stated that they will take in consideration of their budge proposal.

"As long as I have served on the board I have never brought in a significant raise and we try our best to stay within our budget," stated Wyman.

The Commission will be going over the Stoddard County budget in the coming weeks.

When it has been approved there will be a 10 day window if any citizen wishes to review the budget at the County Clerk's office before the final vote on the budget takes place.

### **Stoddard County 911 Board of Directors**

"On October 10, 2023 I received a letter from the Stoddard County 911 Services Board of Directors that stated several members terms end on December 31, 2023. They are Dan Seiger, Doug Siler, Chuck Kasting, Leroy Stockton, and Andy Holden, stated Mathis.

Motion to reappoint Chuck Kasting, Dan Sager, Leroy Stockton, Doug Siler, and Andy Holden to serve another 3 year term made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

### **Deobligation of CDB Grant with the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission as Administrator**

On November 20th the Stoddard County Commission had a public hearing regarding the deobligation of the CDB grant rural broadband in the Puxico area. Commissioner C.D. Stewart was at a meeting in the Ozarks and not in attendance. Commissioners Mathis and Jarrell were in attendance; however no one came in with any issues or concerns during the public hearing.

Motion to vote to terminated the contract with Bootheel Regional Regional Planning Commission with regards to the CDB Grant for rural broadband in the Puxico area made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

The Grant was tied to prevailing wages and the cost would be two to there times greater than just performing the work without the grant. Also the Commission has already obligated 1 million in ARPA funds for the project in Puxico. GoSEMO Fiber was awarded that money and is already performing the work in Puxico.

### **Department of Economic Development Money Owed**

The Department of Economic Development performed administrative work on the CDB grant for rural Puxico for the fiber optic broadband in the amount of \$21,600. This money will need to be reimbursed.

Motion to reimburse the Department of Economic Development for the administration work done by BRPC in the amount of \$21, 600 made by Commissioner Jarrell, and seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

## **Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer**

The city of Bernie entered into a contract, approved by the County Commission, with the Stoddard County Collectors Office to begin collecting city taxes for them a few months ago.

"During the transition process, it was agreed upon that the Collector would attempt to help settle some of their more recent delinquent accounts," commented Speakman. "In order to do this they gathered the last 4 years tax rolls and entered the delinquents into a separate collection software to monitor and then flag accounts in our county software."

"Let's back up a moment, the Bernie City's tax rolls were printed reports and when an individual came into pay at the city, they were given a stamped receipt/marked paid, copy retained at the city and then marked paid on the tax roll," continued Speakman.

The city of Bernie has had a handful of occasions where the County entered them into their city delinquent monitoring system, using the tax roll provided, triggering their system to flag them as they came in to pay the 2023 year and it showed they had not paid the previous years.

Speakman took action and offered two ways to deal with the issue:

1. Do not pay them, and return with the stamped receipt. They will then correct it on the city delinquent tracking system and all will be good. In the event they were unable to produce a receipt, they were made aware they would not fall off and would have to be addressed in the near future.
2. Pay the delinquent, return with the stamped or marked paid receipt from the city of Bernie and they would ensure the city of Bernie would reimburse the tax and the County would correct it on their end.

The County Collector have been flexible and looking at each situation on a case by case basis.

"The mayor of Bernie, city clerk, and their city hall staff have also been very helpful during this transition," commented Speakman.

"These issues have been somewhat rare," continued Speakman. "By the County collecting , this helps eliminate these types of issues in the future. The citizens of Bernie now have a one stop shop and the resources such as the Tax Installment Plan, paying online with card or E-Check, or having us send a link to their phone to pay, Monday through Friday access in person and a 24/7 online access. Lots of options here for the

citizens."

"I am not necessarily alarmed by the clerical errors, considering it was all done by hand, I somewhat expected some issues during this transition," continued Speakman. "The city of Bernie's willingness to make it right has also been extremely helpful."

### **Cecil Weeks, Stoddard County Clerk**

County Clerk's Office will be open 8:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. on December 26th. This is the Christmas holiday for the County and they will be the only office open due it being the last day for people to file to run for office. This is unfortunate and the state may rectify this in the future to have the dates changed, but for now someone has to work that day.

### **Other Business**

Motion to have the weekly Commissioner's meeting at 1 p.m. on Friday, December 29, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to approve the Ads and Abates for November 2023 from Josh Speakman, County Collector/Treasurer made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

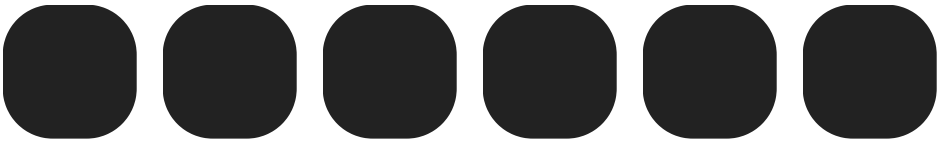
Motion to accept the open session minutes from December 4, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the closed session minutes from December 4, 2023 made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the closes session minutes from November 20, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to enter into closed session at 11:04 a.m. for Personnel issues made by Commission Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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# From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Missouri Property Tax Credit

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[From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Missouri Property Tax Credit](#)

From the Desk of Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer  
Missouri Property Tax Credit

You MUST PAY your local taxes first; this is a refund from the state.

If you FILE TAXES, 65 and older, or you are disabled see next few bullet points.

Married and own home, income 34,000 or less, and file taxes: fill out the following

File 1040 with MO PTS form accompanied with tax receipt and 948 (assessor form)

Single and own home, income less than 30,000, and file taxes: fill out the following

File 1040 with MO PTS form accompanied with tax receipt and 948 (assessor form)

Married and RENT, income 29,200 and file taxes: fill out forms below.

File 1040 with MO CRP accompanied with tax receipt and form 5674 from land lord. If the rental property is tax exempt the renter does not qualify.

Single and RENT, income 27,200 or less and file taxes: fill out forms below

File 1040 with MO CRP accompanied with tax receipt and form 5674 from land lord.

If you DO NOT file taxes, 65 or older, or you are disabled, see next few bullet points below.

Married and own home, income 34,000 or less, and file taxes: fill out the following

Fill out MO PTC form accompanied with tax receipt and 948 (assessor form)

Single and own home, income less than 30,000, and file taxes: fill out the following

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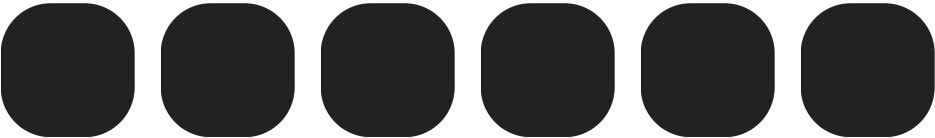
If you are 100% VA service connected, and file taxes, follow the first set of bullet points; income and marital status threshold is excluded.

If you are 100% VA service Connected, and DO NOT file taxes, follow the second set of bullet points; income and marital status threshold is excluded.

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