

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

May 3, 2011

A Finance Committee meeting was held Tuesday, May 3, 2011 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court Meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Committee Members Present: Allen, Moore, Jones, J. Harrison, Douglas
Absent: Winscott

Others Present: County Judge Bob Clinard, JPs King and Hawkins, County Clerk Tena O'Brien, Coroner Daniel Oxford, Comptroller Richard McComas, Accounting Manager Michele Anderson, Grants Administrator Richard Redfearn, Administrator of General Services Elizabeth Bowen, Administrator of Public Safety Marshal Watson, Information Systems Director Sidney Reynolds, County Clerk Archivist Mike Carney

Tom Sissom – Benton County Daily Record

Chair JP Allen called the meeting to order.

1. Grants Administrator Report

Grants Administrator Richard Redfearn reported that they are requesting approval to apply for three grants: 1) A Department of Justice Adult Drug Court Grant; 2) A Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement FY2011 Grant; and 3) A National Historical Publications and Records Commission Grant for digitization of county records.

a) National Historical Publications and Records Commission Grant – County Clerk Archives Department

Richard Redfearn stated that the costs of the project will be from \$100,000 to \$125,000, and will allow free online access to public records via the Benton County website. He added that there is a 50% match from the county; however, County Clerk Tena O'Brien will contribute \$100,000 from the Clerk's Automation Fund, with the remainder of the match to be provided through in-kind services.

JP Jones asked if this would be for current or historical records.

Archivist Mike Carney stated that the project would entail indexing entire families of books, such as all marriage records from 1860 through the present. He added that some of the records date back to the 1800's.

JP Jones asked if there is an estimate of how much this will be used, and will there be a need for extra equipment. Mike Carney stated that they are proposing to use a contractor to optically image the probate and marriage documents, and that the Information Systems Department will provide a system to retrieve the records via the internet.

JP Douglas asked if there would be any other cost savings, such as a reduction in the amount of storage space, or would we still have to keep the hard copies. Mike Carney stated that by law, certain records must be kept forever, but others allow for the optical image to serve as the hard copy if another copy is stored in a secondary location, so yes, there would be a cost savings in the future.

JP Hawkins asked if there would be any additional costs involved with secure access or privacy concerns. Mike Carney stated that the contractor owns the code to the software, and therefore owns the privacy of the software, so he does not see any unusual costs.

Information Systems Director Sidney Reynolds stated that they will work with the security that is in place now, and are still working out the details.

JP Hawkins questioned privacy concerns. Mike Carney explained that these are public records; except adoption records, which would not be included.

JP Douglas made motion to forward the Historical Publications and Records Commission Digitizing Grant request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP J. Harrison.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

b) U.S. Department of Justice - Adult Drug Court Grant

JP Douglas made motion to forward the Department of Justice – Adult Drug Court Grant request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

JP Douglas stated that this has been discussed several times in the past, and that without this funding, the Drug Court will lose two positions. He said that the grant will partially fund the positions, which is better than paying \$200,000. Comptroller Richard McComas stated that in 2010 both of the positions were 100% funded by the grant, but that this year they are being funded 75% by another grant and 25% from the General Fund. Richard Redfearn stated that if the grant is awarded, it will be a net cost savings.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

c) Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement FY2011 Grant – Coroner’s Office

Coroner Daniel Oxford addressed the committee about the technical aspects of the Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement grant, and explained that the grant would provide training to be ADEMI certified, provide for small equipment such as respirators which are needed when dealing with airborne contaminants, and provide a safer work environment. He stated that there is no county match, and added that it would also provide funds for additional laptops to be used by the Deputy Coroners to file their reports.

JP Jones made motion to forward the Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement RY2011 grant request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Moore.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands.

d) Report on Department of Energy Grant – Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

Richard Redfearn stated that they will close on the West Side Road Yard property purchase very soon, work has begun on the Courthouse portion of the project, and following some training associated with the work done on the Administration Building, the entire grant project should be completed by the end of May. He added the deadline by which they had to have 100% of the grant funds obligated for the West Side County Road Yard was extended six months, which means they have to have all of the bids completed and contracts signed by August 13, 2011.

Comptroller Richard McComas asked that Captain Mike Sydoriak be recognized to speak to the committee regarding the opportunity to apply for a sex offender grant that the Sheriff's Office has recently been made aware of.

Sheriff's Department Captain Mike Sydoriak stated that there is a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) FY2011 - Child Sexual Predator Program (CSPP) grant available in the amount of up to \$500,000. He said it is a 2-year grant which covers salaries, and the application has to be submitted by June 3, 2011. He added that there will only be 24 grants approved in the United States. Richard McComas added that it is a non-matching grant which does not require any county funds.

JP Douglas asked if there would be any other obligations with the grant. Captain Sydoriak stated that there are no other obligations, and there is a chance that the grant could be extended up to three years.

JP Allen asked if they are going to hire additional personnel. Captain Sydoriak stated that for this program, someone would have to be hired in for two years. JP Allen asked if they will have to decide in two years if they are willing to maintain the positions or do away with them after the grant is expended. Richard McComas stated that when the SO&VC Task Force grant ran out, the Quorum Court voted to maintain the secretary position and Benton County is splitting the cost with two other law enforcement agencies.

JP Harrison made motion to authorize application for the COPS FY2011 Child Sexual Predator Program (CSPP) grant, and forward to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Douglas.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

2. Sheriff's Office – Car Seat Donation Appropriation Ordinance Request:

Richard McComas stated that this is a donation from Wal-Mart for car seats, that we receive this about every year, and that this is to appropriate the money for the purchase of the car seats.

JP Moore made motion to approve and forward the appropriation ordinance request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

3. Citizen Corps Program – (CCP) FY2009 Grant Appropriation Ordinance Request:

Administrator of Public Safety Marshal Watson stated the county has been receiving these funds for approximately 10 years, and this appropriation is to establish Fund 298, the grant fund for FY2009, and to appropriate \$8,175 for CERT kits. He said this is to purchase the equipment that

is provided to the citizens who go through the Community Emergency Response Team program, which is a 6-week course that gives a citizen a basic overview of first aid, disaster awareness, and how to keep themselves, their families, and communities safe. He added that about 600 people have received the training since the program began.

Further discussion was held regarding the number of participants per year and the benefits of the program.

JP Moore made motion to forward the appropriation ordinance request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP J Harrison.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

4. CenCom – BC Alert Appropriation Ordinance Request:

Marshal Watson stated that the costs for the BC Alert system were not included in the 2011 Budget, and since the original contract ends in June, they are requesting funding through the end of the year to cover the unincorporated area of Benton County.

He stated that at this point in time, most of the cities have indicated that they will be participating, including a few who are awaiting approval from their various city councils. He said the cities will share in the cost of the system on prorated basis according to their populations. He noted that this appropriation will only be supporting the cost of the system for the unincorporated area of the county.

He added that they have spent many hours with Cooper Notification to ensure that the system is operating as they want it to, and at this point they are seeing a 61% success rate on the first call for weather alerts issued by the National Weather Service. He said he does not believe they can achieve that success rate with any other type of technology.

JP Allen asked if the cities have been made well aware that they will be cut off if they choose not to participate. Marshal Watson stated that the mayors were all informed at the Intergovernmental Cooperation Council meeting on March 29th. He said they have done several presentations at city council meetings throughout the county, with several more still to go.

JP Allen and JP Douglas both commented that they think the system is working well. JP Douglas questioned the cost per year.

County Judge Bob Clinard was recognized, and explained that when the system was first approved, it was understood that the first year was to be paid for with a \$100,000 grant that the county received, and after the first year, the cities would have the opportunity to opt in to the system, and pay for a share of the cost, or opt out. He said the annual cost for everyone in the county is \$86,250. He said the \$8,651 that they are requesting at this time is for the county's share of the remainder of 2011. He said that next year's cost of \$17,302 can be included in the 2012 Budget process.

Marshal Watson stated that some of the figures discussed in the beginning of the process did not include unlimited voice calls, and that was one of the things most requested by the cities during discussions with them. He said in addition, they are just one or two events away from using the allotted minutes under the current plan, which will mean additional costs, and the plan they are proposing will eliminate that concern, because it will allow unlimited voice call minutes.

JP Jones made motion to forward the appropriation ordinance request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Douglas.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

5. Fire Truck Appropriation Ordinance Request:

Marshal Watson stated that they budgeted \$370,000 for the purchase of two fire trucks for Rural Fire Services using the same specifications that were used for the 2010 bid, and the lowest bid came in at \$405,000, which was 7% higher than anticipated. He said that the bid has been awarded to a vendor, so they are requesting the additional \$35,000 to purchase the two fire trucks as originally planned.

JP Douglas made motion to forward the appropriation ordinance request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Moore.

Motion to amend passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

6. Sheriff's Department - Meth Lab Cleanup Appropriation Ordinance Request:

Captain Mike Sydoriak was recognized and explained that the Drug Enforcement Agency has stopped funding the cleanup of meth lab sites as of February 22, 2011. He said that the sites are still a danger to the public, and the Sheriff's Department has recently spent \$7,531 on cleaning them up. He said there is a possibility of some reimbursement from the Environmental Protection Agency, but the invoices have to be submitted to them after the money is spent. He said that Senator John Boozman is also looking into the situation, and is in favor of the DEA continuing to fund the cleanups.

JP Allen asked if there is any way to get the property owners or landlords to participate in the costs of the cleanup. Captain Sydoriak stated that if they can tell whose lab it is, the Prosecuting Attorney can charge them with the cleanup, but when it is added on to their restitutions, it is usually in the amount of \$50 or \$100 per month, which takes years to equal the cost of the cleanup. He said if the landowner is responsible for the lab, then they are obviously responsible for the cleanup.

JP Douglas asked how many labs the county was responsible for cleaning up last year, and if they are seeing an increase or decrease this year. Captain Sydoriak stated there were 23 last year and 15 so far this year.

JP Hawkins noted that the Sheriff had previously mentioned the possibility of seizing property, but if it still has liens on it, it is not worth it. Captain Sydoriak added that most of the labs are located on rental property anyway, but they are often able to seize vehicles involved in meth distribution. He said they received \$22,000 from the auction of those vehicles at the recent county auction, which goes into the Prosecuting Attorney's Drug Fund, which is used in the undercover purchase of drugs.

JP Moore asked if they could estimate at this time what the total exposure will be for the year for the expense of the cleanups. Captain Sydoriak stated that he anticipates that the total for the year will be approximately \$40,000, and hopefully the EPA will reimburse part of that, or the DEA may resume funding.

JP Douglas made motion to forward the appropriation ordinance request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

7. Quorum Court Meeting Room Video Project Appropriation Ordinance Request:

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that a few months ago, several JPs asked him to address security in the Quorum Court meeting room. He said that he also felt that the meeting room could use an upgrade in technology, such as monitors placed where the public can view the agenda items.

He said that with the assistance of the Information Systems staff, they have developed a budget for \$5,200, to install the monitors, and two security cameras, which will stream to the deputy on duty downstairs and to CenCom in the basement.

He said the Information Systems Director Sydney Reynolds also mentioned that it would be possible to stream the video of the meetings on the county's website. He said the estimate for that project is \$3,200.

He said there are three ways that they can put a record of the meetings on the website: 1) Live audio, which is within the capabilities of the IS Department now; 2) A tape of the video and audio recordings, which could be put on the website the next day, which also will not be any additional cost; 3) Live video and audio streaming to the website, which would cost approximately \$3,200, plus \$60 per month for a hosting server.

Sydney Reynolds demonstrated the "next day – audio and video" process, using a County Commissioners meeting in Florida as an example. He said it is a fixed camera process, and text could be added to the picture.

JP Moore stated that would be a good place to start, and if the public wants more, they could add to it. JP J. Harrison agreed.

JP Harrison made motion to forward the appropriation ordinance request to the May 10, 2011 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Moore.

JP Jones stated that since they are upgrading technology for the whole room, the County Judge had mentioned earlier the possibility of getting laptops or i-pads for the JPs, so they could do away with packets and have something they could view the agenda items on.

Judge Clinard stated that the discussion was prompted by the fact that they are sending out 25 packets for every committee meeting that we have, which is hundreds of sheets of paper that get thrown away. He said the information is emailed, so they could just print the items they want, but all of the ordinances and resolutions would be on a screen for them to view. He said that Sidney Reynolds thinks they could find something for around \$400 each, which would have email capabilities, would contain the agendas, etc. He said they are doing a lot of paperwork that could certainly be done electronically.

JP Moore explained that the monitors used by the Siloam Springs City Council simply display what is fed from a single computer; they are not individual workstations. JP Allen stated that there could be some cost savings, over a number of years, in paper, printing, and copying costs.

Judge Clinard stated that if the committee would like for them to, they could get some numbers together, and take them to the next Committee of Thirteen meeting along with this appropriation ordinance request. He said they would appreciate some feedback as to what level of device they would want. Sidney Reynolds stated that a netbook is a smaller, inexpensive laptop, which costs between \$250 to \$375. Judge Clinard noted that i-pads need to be purchased with enough memory to pull up large files quickly.

JP Allen expressed concerns about issuing county property for individual use by the JPs. JP Moore stated that he would prefer something that stayed in the meeting room. JP Allen stated that would benefit any other groups using the room. JP J. Harrison expressed concerns about the devices becoming outdated and stated that he prefers the concept of monitors to view the agenda items. JP Jones stated that unless they are viewing the entire budget at one time, a netbook or notebook should be suitable for many years.

After discussion concerning the original motion, the committee requested that the monitor proposal be presented to the next Committee of Thirteen meeting as a separate item of discussion.

JP Douglas asked what would be done with the present projection system. Sidney Reynolds stated that it could be used elsewhere in the county, such as the new Juvenile Justice Center, or any of the courtrooms, and that projectors are occasionally needed by various departments. JP Douglas suggested moving it to the remodeled Public Services Building.

JP Hawkins stated that he does not think having cameras in the courtroom will prevent anyone from doing something violent, but thinks it would more valuable as a tool to provide the public with more information.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

8. Sales Tax Numbers

Comptroller Richard McComas stated that there was a decrease in the sales tax numbers due to the 2010 Census, but it is smaller than the previous month's decrease, and there actually was an increase in sales tax collections. He said the growth is still there, at about 2.4% over last year's numbers, and at this point they are on target to meet the annual projection of 6.3%.

9. Jail Collections

Richard McComas stated that the Department of Corrections has sent payment for state prisoner fees, so the month's budget was exceeded, and it slightly reduced the deficit to date. He noted that the bill to D.O.C. this month was a little over \$200,000.

11. Fuel Summary

Accounting Manager Michele Anderson reported that the 2010 actual year-end numbers have been added to the report, so they can compare the 2010 and 2011 year-to-date numbers. She said that the Sheriff/Jail Departments are 21% over the same time last year, and the Road Department is 28% over. She said that in 2010, there was \$480,000 budgeted in the Sheriff's Department, and they ended the year at \$400,000; \$834,000 was budgeted for the Road Department, and they finished the year at \$787,000. She said that average fuel costs have increased 30 %, for unleaded and 43% for diesel, which is a cause for concern.

Richard McComas stated that the county's total fuel costs are still under budget, but if fuel prices continue to increase, they could be over budget by September. He said he will be concerned if the departments have spent more than 50% of their budgets by mid-year.

12. Monthly Expenditure Report

Michele Anderson stated that at this point in the year the departments should be at 33% of their total budgets and noted that a few departments are over due to some capital purchases or one-time annual payments which put the departments at 100%. She stated that overall, the General Fund budget is at 31.22%, and All Other Funds is at 27.39%.

13. Other Business

JP Allen stated that he has received numerous emails from county employees expressing appreciation for the nonrecurring salary adjustment.

JP Allen announced that the Benton County Planning Board/Technical Advisory Committee will be meeting Wednesday, May 4, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in the Quorum Court Room.

JP Allen announced that the next Finance Committee meeting will be Tuesday, June 7, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

Upon motion and second the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.