

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

July 7, 2015

A Finance Committee meeting was held Tuesday, July 7, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court Meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Committee Members Present: Allen, Moore, Jones, Chiocco, Slinkard, Easley, Moehring

Others Present: JP's Anglin, Adams, J. Harrison, K. Harrison, Sandlin, Meyers, and Leadabrand, County Judge Bob Clinard, County Clerk Tena O'Brien, Treasurer Deanna Ratcliffe, Sheriff Kelley Craddock, Circuit Judge Tom Smith, Circuit Judge Doug Schrantz, Juvenile Probation Director Petie Cobb, Administrator of General Services John Sudduth, 9-1-1 Administration Director Mary Kay Sullivan, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Human Resources Director Barbara Ludwig

Media: Tom Sissom

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mike Clifford of Bentonville spoke against taxes and longevity pay.

Scott Wideman of Bentonville spoke against longevity pay.

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **Justice Assistance Grant**

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that one of the requirements of the application process for the Justice Assistance Grant is that a public hearing be held prior to submitting the application. She said that a notice was published on July 3, 2015, and if the \$11,865 grant is awarded, it will help pay for part of the tablets needed for deputy patrol cars.

Following a brief discussion regarding the need for new tablets in the patrol cars, the public hearing was declared closed at 6:17 p.m.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **Courthouse Facilities – Location and Financing**

Kevin Faught and Bo Bittle of Stephens, Inc. and Shep Russell of Friday, Eldridge, & Clark were present and discussed with the committee the various options for financing the new courthouse facility.

Kevin Faught presented a proposal for Stephens, Inc. to be the bond underwriter, noting that the company has underwritten 50% of all sales tax bond issues in the state, and with a sales force double in size to that of their nearest competitor, Stephens, Inc. has the ability to reach more investors to purchase the bonds.

Shep Russell outlined the process for calling a sales tax election.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the process to be followed in issuing requests for qualifications, calling an election, contracting with a bond underwriter, and informing voters.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that he will need some direction from the committee regarding when they want to issue the Request for Qualifications. He said he will be presenting a preliminary concept of the facility at the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole meeting.

## **REQUESTS FORWARDED FROM PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

### **REORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Juvenile Probation**

Circuit Judge Tom Smith presented the request to delete two Juvenile Probation Officer positions and replace them with two Lead Juvenile Probation Officers, explaining that the upcoming retirement of Juvenile Probation Director Petie Cobb after 30 years is a good time to reorganize the department. He cited the reduction in lockups over the past several years, but noted that it takes a lot of time and paperwork to track the cases.

JP Moore asked if they will be voting on each request individually. Human Resources Director Barbara Ludwig stated that in the past the committee has considered reorganizations as a group, then the wage adjustments as a group, and the additional position requests individually.

JP Moehring made motion to approve the reorganization of the Juvenile Probation Department as presented, and forward it to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Moore.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### **County Road Department**

Administrator of Public Services Jeff Clark presented reorganizations of the Construction/Operations and Welder/Mechanic Shop divisions of the Road Department.

He said that replacing an Operator III at Grade 11 with an Operator IV at Grade 12 will put an experienced asphalt operator in charge of the paving projects, which is necessary for the job to run efficiently.

Jeff Clark stated that deleting one of the Welder/Mechanic II's at Grade 11 and one of the Welder/Mechanic I's at Grade 9, and adding two Welder/Mechanic III's at Grade 12 will provide an avenue of advancement for experienced employees. He said that keeping experience is more cost-effective than training new employees.

JP Moore made motion to approve the reorganization of the County Road Department as presented, and forward it to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Slinkard.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### **9-1-1 Administration**

9-1-1 Administration Director of Operations Mary Kay Sullivan presented a request to delete one Senior Mapper position at Grade 11 and two Researcher/Mapper positions at Grade 10 and replace them with two GIS Analyst I positions at Grade 13 and one Staff Assistant at Grade 6, because the positions need to more accurately reflect the extensive duties of that are being performed.

JP Jones made motion to approve the reorganization of the 9-1-1 Administration Department as presented, and forward it to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Moehring.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

## **WAGE ADJUSTMENTS**

### **Administrative Assistant to the Treasurer**

Treasurer Deanna Ratcliffe stated that she is requesting a \$5,334 increase in annual salary for her Administrative Assistant due to the increase in responsibilities over the past several years, new reporting requirements, and cash management of the county's investment portfolios. She said the cash volume that her office handles has also increased due to growth in the county, and this employee is responsible for over \$280,000 in disbursements to various taxing entities.

JP Moehring made motion to forward the wage adjustment for the Treasurer's Administrative Assistant to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Accounting/Human Resources - Senior Accounting Specialist**

Comptroller Brenda Guenther explained that the Accounting Manager position is now vacant, and she has asked the Senior Accounting Specialist to assume many of those duties because she is not filling that position anytime soon.

JP Jones made motion to forward the wage adjustment for the Senior Accounting Specialist to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Deputy Public Defenders (4)**

Public Defender Jay Saxon stated that the Arkansas Public Defender Commission has an approved Labor Market rate of \$55,156 for Deputy Public Defenders who are hired by the state, which would cause current experienced, county-funded Deputy Public Defenders to be paid less than new state hires. He stated that there are four positions which will be affected, for a total 2015 budget impact of 9,945.11.

JP Jones made motion to forward the wage adjustments for the Deputy Public Defender positions to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

## **NEW PERSONNEL**

### **County Clerk – Probate Supervisor**

County Clerk Tena O'Brien presented her request for an additional position of Probate Supervisor. She said there has been a significant increase in case volume, due to the addition of fourth Circuit Judge who has been responsible for 335 new cases over the last two years. She said the Administrative Office of the Courts has mandated that all counties switch to a new statewide database, and the new software is very time consuming. She said that the current employee in the office would be assuming supervisory duties if training a new employee and the duties would be comparable to the other satellite office supervisors at Grade 10.

JP Slinkard made motion to forward the request for a new Probate Supervisor position to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Veterans Services Staff Assistant**

Veterans Services Director Renona Crowden stated that the Veterans Services Office has doubled its caseload and has increased the number of outreach events by 800%. She said that the office has switched to a more effective case management system, but each case contains numerous documents that have to be scanned and filed. She said if they are meeting with clients, especially those in very stressful circumstances, it is very distracting to be interrupted by phone calls or people entering the office, and a staff assistant would solve that problem. She added that the complexity of the cases continues to grow, and the cases are basically never closed.

JP Moehring made motion to forward the request for a new Probate Supervisor position to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed:

6 yays

1 abstained (Chiocco)

Sheriff Kelley Craddock apologized to the committee for his department's absence from the June 30, 2015 Personnel Committee meeting.

JP Allen asked the committee to decide whether or not they would hear the Sheriff's Department's requests despite them not being heard by the Personnel Committee.

Personnel Committee Chair Shirley Sandlin stated that her committee does have questions, so even if the financial impact of the requests are considered by the Finance Committee, she feels the Personnel Committee should still have the opportunity to discuss the need for the positions.

JP Moore agreed that the Sheriff's request for new positions should go to Personnel.

JP Meyers stated that although he is on neither committee, he did not see the need to spend \$700 to \$800 on another committee meeting; he felt the requests could be forwarded on to Committee of the Whole tonight.

JP Jones stated that they could be putting the process months behind, and proposed hearing the financial impact now, and then allowing the Sheriff's Department to appear before the Personnel Committee to discuss need. He said that the Personnel Committee could then forward the request on to the Committee of the Whole if they so desired.

JP Jones made motion to allow the Sheriff's Department to present the financial details of the request for additional positions tonight, due to the unique circumstances faced by the Sheriff's Department, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed:

6 in favor

1 opposed (Moore)

JP Allen called a five-minute recess.

Committee back in session.

JP Allen stated that due to the length of tonight's meeting, they would postpone discussion of longevity pay for employees, since it would not take effect until the January of 2016.

### **Sherriff's Office – Detective II for Cybercrime Division (2) Animal Control Officer**

Captain Ken Paul and Major Shawn Holloway of the Sheriff's Office stated that they are withdrawing the request for a Public Information Coordinator, but are moving forward with the request for two Detective II positions -- one for the Cybercrime Division and one which will focus on tracking sex offenders, and one Animal Control Officer position. He said that in 2015, they were asked to cut their budgets, so they did not make these personnel requests at that time, adding that it has been six or seven years since there has been any increase in the Sheriff's total personnel.

Captain Paul stated that the county badly needs a second Animal Control Officer, because there is only one for the entire county. JP Allen voiced support for the position.

Human Resources Director Barbara Ludwig stated that the 2015 budget impact will be \$57,741.31 for a .85% increase, and the 2016 budget impact will be \$150,127.41 for a 2.18% increase.

Following a brief discussion of the need for the positions and the procedures they follow, JP Allen stated that they needed to focus on the financial impact, because the need would be considered by the Personnel Committee.

JP Moehring made motion to forward the request for all three positions in the Sheriff's Department to the next called Personnel Committee meeting, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by voice vote:

6 in favor

1 abstained

### **ORDINANCE REQUESTS**

#### **Appropriation – Sheriff's Department Chiller Replacement**

Administrator of General Services John Sudduth stated that the chiller unit on the Sheriff's Department is not working, affecting the temperature of two of the jail pods, so it will have to be replaced.

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that the replacement cost will be \$252,000 out of Capital Projects.

JP Jones made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### **Appropriation – EMSD—VAS Levy**

Brenda Guenther explained that this appropriation is to reflect revenue and expense for the EMSD/VAS service district in the amount of \$188,851.

JP Jones made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Moehring.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

#### **Appropriation – Environmental Services to Replace Guns**

Brenda Guenther stated that \$1,065 in proceeds from guns sold at the county surplus auction will be used toward the purchase of new firearms for Environmental Officers.

JP Moehring made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Appropriation – Building Safety & Environmental Services – Transfer of Funds**

Brenda Guenther stated that this appropriation is to transfer \$30,757 which was originally budgeted as part of the purchase price for a vehicle, but was actually for some equipment that was installed on it, so it has to be moved to the Small Equipment line item.

JP Jones made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Moehring.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Appropriation – Fall Cleanup**

John Sudduth stated that they are hoping not to need the additional \$20,000 in funds being appropriated for the 2015 fall cleanup, but they will not be certain until the bills come in, and they are moving forward with plans for the expanded convenience center pilot program and will use the fall event to publicize it.

JP Moehring made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Appropriation – Massey Building Janitorial Contract**

John Sudduth stated that the owner of the Massey Building which the county is leasing for the Prosecuting Attorney has requested that the current contract for janitorial services for the building be maintained, because they want to keep the continuity of the service.

JP Moehring made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Resolution – NEBCO VFD-EMS Grant Arkansas Rural Department Commission**

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that a resolution will be needed to apply for a \$14,970 in grant funds from the Arkansas Rural Development Commission for the NEBCO VFD-EMS.

JP Jones made motion to forward a resolution request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Slinkard.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**Appropriation – Court Improvement Program**

Brenda Guenther stated that an appropriation ordinance is needed for \$5,000 in grant revenue and expenses in the Court Improvement Program – H.E.L.P Grant.

JP Moehring made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **Board of Equalization – Meeting Pay Increase**

Brenda Guenther reported that a request has come from some members of the Equalization Board to increase the meeting pay from \$100 per day to \$125 per day. She stated that she had also looked into the rates of pay for the Planning Board and the Election Commission, and they might want to consider those also.

A brief discussion was held on Justice of the Peace pay rates, the length of time the Equalization Board meets each day, and how Benton County's rate compares to other counties.

JP Chiocco made motion to forward consideration of a pay increase for all boards to the 2016 budget discussion, seconded by JP Easley.

JP Jones noted that the Equalization Board is unique in that they meet only for a few weeks coming up in August, and the other boards meet year around, so they will see an increase in pay as soon as it is adopted, while the Equalization Board will have to wait until August 2016.

Motion passed.

6 yays

1 nay (Slinkard)

### **COMPTROLLER REPORT**

Brenda Guenther gave an abbreviated report, including the Budget Recapitulation based on all appropriations for the first six months of 2016, and stated that the overall cash balance was at \$249,856, noting that does not include returned appropriations and unanticipated sales tax revenue.

### **TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT – JP PAT ADAMS**

JP Adams stated that the Transportation Committee met on July 6<sup>th</sup>, and heard a presentation from Great River Engineering from Springfield, Missouri on repairing the War Eagle Bridge. He stated that the information will also be presented at the July 14, 2015 Committee of the Whole.

JP Adams also stated that the Road Department is seeking a waiver on a requirement of county ordinance No. O-2000-20 concerning minimum load requirements on bridges being repaired. He said that they are working with County Attorney George Spence on whether the ordinance should be repealed or amended.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.