

Committee of the Whole Report

January 12, 2016

The Committee of the Whole met Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Quorum Court Room, Benton County Administration Building, Third Floor, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

13 JPs Present: Shadlow, J. Harrison, Allen, K. Harrison, Adams, Jones, Sandlin, Anglin, Slinkard, Chiocco, Leadabrand, Moore, Meyers

2 JPs Absent: Easley, Moehring

Others Present: Comptroller Brenda Guenther, County Judge Bob Clinard

Media: Tom Sissom – Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Committee of the Whole chair JP Kurt Moore called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

JP Jones made a motion to add “discussion of the January 11, 2016 RFQ presentations” to the agenda, seconded by JP Allen.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Allen made a motion to add “discussion of the non-recurring merit salary adjustment that was included in the 2016 budget ordinance (O-2015-69)” to the agenda, seconded by JP Anglin.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Allen also made a motion add the “Arkansas Community Grants appropriation ordinance request” to the agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

JP J. Harrison made a motion to suspend the rules and read all ordinances and resolutions by title only, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

1. Resolution Request Declaring a Vacancy in the Office of Justice of the Peace, District No. 1 for Benton County

Committee of the Whole chair JP Moore read the resolution request by title only.

JP J. Harrison made a motion to forward this resolution request to the January 28, 2016 Quorum Court agenda, seconded by JP Adams.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

2. Resolution Request Confirming the County Judge's Appointment of Dr. Brad D. Johnson to the Northwest Arkansas HIV Clinic Board

Committee of the Whole chair JP Moore read the resolution request by title only.

JP Sandlin made a motion to forward this resolution request to the January 28, 2016 Quorum Court agenda, seconded by JP Shadlow.

A brief discussion was held regarding the function of the clinic and Benton County's representation on the board.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

3. Appropriation Ordinance Request Amending Appropriation Ordinance No. O-2014-84 (2015 Benton County Budget) Authorizing a Transfer of Funds Between Categories and Line Items; Appropriating Additional Monies and Authorizing Additional Expenditures in Various Funds and Departments to Balance Out the Year 2015; Sponsor: JP Mary L. Slinkard

Committee of the Whole chair JP Moore read the appropriation ordinance request by title only.

Comptroller Brenda Guenther explained the individual line items in the proposed appropriation ordinance.

JP Slinkard made a motion to forward this appropriation ordinance request to the January 28, 2016 Quorum Court agenda, seconded by JP J. Harrison.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

4. Appropriation Ordinance Request - Arkansas Community Corrections Grants

Comptroller Brenda Guenther explained that this appropriation ordinance request is for Arkansas Community Corrections grants. She reported at the Finance Committee meeting on January 07, 2016 that they were awarded three grants - one for the Veteran's Court, one for the Juvenile Drug Court, and one for the Adult Drug Court. She stated that they will be getting \$180,000 and three new funds will be created. The effect will be a net zero.

JP Allen made a motion to forward this appropriation ordinance request to the January 28, 2016 Quorum Court agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

JP Leadabrand asked when they found out about this.

Brenda Guenther stated that they were awarded on January 04, 2016. They had applied for them back in November 2015 and they were notified in late December 2015/early January 2016 of the award.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Moore opened the floor to public comment.

Mike Clifford asked what strings are attached to the acceptance of these funds.

Brenda Guenther said that a lot of what they have to do is continue to show support for treatment toward veterans and juveniles - anything that will help get them out of the system in a good way.

JP Moore added that this is for getting certain offenders out of the criminal court pipeline and to try and rehabilitate them. He said they have been very successful.

5. Discussion of RFQ Presentations

JP Jones began a lengthy discussion about the RFQ presentations heard at the January 11, 2016 special Committee of the Whole meeting the previous evening. He stated that he was impressed by Perkowitz and Hight-Jackson and was less impressed with CORE Architects.

JP Shadlow stated that she agreed with JP Jones.

JP K. Harrison liked Perkowitz and Hight-Jackson but preferred Hight-Jackson because they outlined a good, common sense approach to finance it through a tax, if that is what they decide to do.

JP Moore said it depends on whether they want to finance it through a tax or whether they will pay for it internally. If they are going to pay for it internally, a lot of the community involvement would not really be necessary.

JP Meyers said he preferred Perkowitz, CORE and Hight-Jackson in that order. He said Perkowitz was the most enthusiastic. He said that he felt negative watching Hight-Jackson because they seemed like the heir apparent.

JP Allen said he knows all three firms very well and that they cannot go wrong with any of them. He felt that, based on the presentations, Hight-Jackson/DLR's strategy was spot-on and he agrees that they need to get started as soon as possible, if they are going to go with some kind of tax. However, he feels that all the presentations were good and he will not be disappointed with any of them.

JP Leadabrand stated that he liked Perkowitz the best and that watching the presentations brought up a lot of interesting issues that he had not thought of such as operational costs.

JP Adams stated that he enjoyed all three presentations but he was pleasantly surprised with Hight-Jackson and thought they did a good job. Having dealt with them in the past, he knows they are a good firm. He said that Perkowitz & Cromwell had an outstanding presentation and it was a tough act to follow. He feels confident that the county judge and his committee will make a good choice.

JP Moore stated that they need to concentrate on expandability; any building that they put in will probably have to double in size at some point and this needs to be taken into account.

JP J. Harrison stated that he was very impressed with all three and feels they cannot go wrong with any of them.

JP Jones stated that he thought that CORE did the best job of showing how they will model out beyond thirty years.

JP Allen cautioned about the thinking that Benton County will continue to grow at the current pace. He does not know of any city in America that has done that. He stated that land mass is going to be an issue. He is concerned that they may be wasting money if they expand unnecessarily. A short discussion was held on the need for future expansion and how this project will be financed.

JP Moore opened the floor for public comment.

Sue Keith Elverston of Pea Ridge stated that she feels they cannot go wrong with any of the three. She is concerned, however, about rushing to get something onto the ballot in November.

6. Discussion Concerning Lump Sum Salary Adjustments

JP Allen said that they discussed this at the Finance Committee meeting on January 07, 2016. He said that Mike Clifford does not believe that the section of the 2016 budget ordinance (O-2015-69) allowing for non-recurring lump sum salary adjustments for employees at the maximum of the pay range was handled properly. He stated that it was discussed at the December Finance Committee meeting but it was not specifically discussed at the December Committee of the Whole or the December Quorum Court meeting when the 2016 budget ordinance was passed. He reminded the committee of the situation and why there was a need for this language to be added into the ordinance.

Comptroller Brenda Guenther read the language in question, Article 6 of O-2015-69.

Lengthy discussion was held with the overall consensus being that the JPs were aware of and supported this when the budget ordinance was originally passed.

JP Moore opened the floor to public comment.

Mike Clifford of Bentonville thanked JP Allen and the Committee of the Whole for taking the time to discuss it.

JP Allen thanked Mr. Clifford and stated that he wished more people were as involved in government as he.

JP Moore thanked Sue Keith Elverston as well.

JP Sandlin agreed that they need more people like Mike and Sue and thanked them.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JP Adams announced a Transportation Committee meeting for Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

JP K. Harrison announced a Legislative Committee meeting for Monday, January 25, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. He stated that this is an organizational meeting to lay out the agenda for the year.

JP J. Harrison made motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.