

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

April 07, 2016

A Finance Committee meeting was held Thursday, April 07, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Quorum Court Meeting Room, Benton County Administration Building, Third Floor, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Committee Members Present: Allen, Sheridan, Jones, Chiocco, Moore, Moehring
Absent: Slinkard

Others Present: JPs J. Harrison, K. Harrison, Adams, Sandlin, Anglin, Leadabrand, Meyers, County Judge Bob Clinard, County Assessor Linda Hambrick, District Judge Ray Bunch, Bella Vista Mayor Peter Christie, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Administer of General Services John Sudduth, Administrator of Public Services Jeff Clark, Major Harold Gage, Captain Jeremy Guyll, Captain Adam Howard, Sheriff Candidate Glenn Latham, Sheriff Candidate Shawn Holloway, Rogers District Court Judge-Elect Chris Griffin, City of Rogers Staff Attorney Bonnie Bridges

Media: Tom Sissom – Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Finance Committee chair JP Allen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Comments:

None.

Discussion:

Convenience Centers Update

Administrator of General Services John Sudduth gave an update on the convenience center pilot program. He stated that the Rogers site opened on February 03, 2016 and the Siloam Springs site will open in the next few days. He stated that the grand opening will be held on April 18, 2016. It will be held at 10 am at the Rogers site and 11:30am at the Siloam Springs site. He stated that they have had a good response to the convenience centers. He reported that, so far this year, they have had 1,750 loads. He presented information to the JPs from the dashboard, including 2015 expenses for the clean-up and the convenience center, and information about how the program has been advertised. He asked JP Allen for permission to include statistical information about the program once a month on the Finance Committee meeting documents.

JP Allen stated that this is information that they would like to see. Short discussion was held about future advertising for the program.

Jail Expansion Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that, at the last Finance Committee meeting, they discussed the jail expansion. She reported that the request is to appropriate \$2 million for the F and H-pods. JP Allen stated that they asked several people to come and speak this evening about the status with regards to misdemeanors and how many are going to jail. He said that the concern was that they did not want to appropriate money for this project if it was not going to be used.

Benton County District Judge for Division 2, Ray Bunch, stated that the two main issues were bonding issues on misdemeanors and jail commitments. He stated that the Sheriff's department was citing misdemeanors out regardless of bonding amounts. Bonding amounts make sure the defendants appear before the court. The other issue is that a lot of times, if he orders someone incarcerated, these orders are not carried out. He stated that the repeat offenders know this and it becomes a vicious cycle.

Discussion was held concerning the jail releasing people that Judge Bunch has sentenced to serve jail time.

JP Allen left the meeting and JP Moore took over as chair.

Captain Jeremy Guyll said that, for the past three weeks when they started accepting misdemeanors again, the jail count went from 350 to 430. He stated that they were given an order from the Sheriff to cite all misdemeanors because he wanted to get the count down to make it safer. It was a misunderstanding, because they continued to cite them out and it went on for about a month. They have corrected it and the count is going back up. He said that there are currently 18 people in the expansion that they did last time. He stated that most of the field deputies come from the jail so the jail is going to be the shortest staffed. He said that there is a revolving door of staff and they had a time when they were down nine or ten people.

JP Allen returned to the meeting as chair.

Discussion was held about the current staffing situation at the jail.

JP Moehring stated that there is no doubt that there will be a need again but he is not sure it is today. He has concern about writing a check for \$2 million out of reserves for this as opposed to working it into the budget for next year. He said that there has been a decrease in the felony prisoners and he does not think it is going to jump back immediately. He said that there is going to be a transition in the Sheriff's office and hopefully some of these issues will stabilize. He would like to see it worked in to the 2017 budget.

Major Harold Gage stated that they have got to have the H-Pod expansion for the women as they have to separate female prisoners from the males.

Discussion was held about hiring part-time jailers.

JP Jones stated that, if they are looking at staffing issues and cost issues, he is in favor of moving forward with H-Pod. He stated that they need to get a break-out of H-Pod.

County Judge Bob Clinard stated that, in order to do an H-Pod break-out, they will have to reject all bids and rebid it which will take some time. He guessed that the cost wouldn't be more than half and it should be less than half. They will have to have the same supervision and the same overhead; that cost is not spread out. He said that, overall, doing them both at the same time will be the best possible price that they will ever get for just under \$2 million

Discussion was held about the layout of the pods.

JP Sheridan stated his opinion that this appropriation should be passed because Benton County is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation and this expansion will be needed with the population increase.

Chris Griffin, Senior Staff Attorney for the City of Rogers and Roger District Court Judge-Elect, introduced City of Rogers Staff Attorney Bonnie Bridges. He stated that, as prosecutors and judges, if they tell someone something is going to happen and it does not happen, is the most catastrophic thing they can do. He said it is important to separate management issues versus facilities. He said that the trajectory of the incarceration rates have only been going in one direction and that is upward following the population growth of the county.

Bonnie Bridges emphasized the need for the misdemeanor pod. She gave examples of situations they have had where they could not put people in jail. She stated that these are serious crimes, even though they are still misdemeanors.

Chris Griffin added that, if they do not pay fines, jail time is the only thing left.

Discussion was held about the need for this expansion and the cost associated with the engineering and design of the project.

Sheriff Candidate Glenn Lathan stated that manpower is the biggest issue. They are never going to be able to keep it fully staffed. He said that they are going to have at least ten to twelve more staff to fulfill state requirements. He stated that there needs to be some stability in the Sheriff's office before the building gets built.

Sheriff Candidate Shawn Holloway said that he does not disagree with Glenn but there is nothing that says they cannot build it now and plan staffing later.

JP Allen recommended that the staffing be a mandatory inclusion in the 2017 budget. He stated that it is foolish to build it and not approve the personnel needed.

JP Adams stated that he agrees that they need to go ahead and consider that they will have to add personnel in the 2017 budget. He said they need to get the building built.

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that the appropriation ordinance request is for \$2 million in funds for the jail expansion.

JP Moore made a motion to send this appropriation request to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Resolution Requests:

2016 Fastlane Grant

Comptroller Brenda Guenther gave background on the FASTLANE and TIGER grants that were discussed at the April 04, 2016 Transportation Committee meeting. She presented a document to the JPs from the dashboard with information about these federal grants. She said that the FASTLANE grant has a short turn around and is due next Thursday. She stated that the TIGER grant works with the FASTLANE grant. The due date for this grant is April 29, 2016. These grants could help in alleviating some of the transportation issues in the county.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the FASTLANE grant resolution request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Lengthy discussion was held about the application process, the requirements, the timeframe for these grants, potential road improvements that could be made, and if there will be cooperation between the County and the surrounding municipalities on this project.

JP Allen reminded everyone that this is just for a resolution to apply for the grant. He said that, if the county receives the grant, it will have to come back to the Finance Committee where they can discuss it again.

A show of hands vote was recorded as follows:

5 in favor: Allen, Sheridan, Jones, Chiocco, Moore

1 against: Moehring

1 absent: Slinkard

Motion passed.

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reminded the JPs that they will have to go into a special Quorum Court meeting after the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting in order to pass this resolution by the April 14, 2016 deadline.

2016 TIGER Grant

Comptroller Brenda Guenther remind the JPs that the TIGER grant application is due at the end of April.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the TIGER grant resolution request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

A show of hands vote was recorded as follows:

5 in favor: Allen, Sheridan, Jones, Chiocco, Moore

1 against: Moehring

1 absent: Slinkard

Motion passed.

Arkansas Unpaved Roads Grant

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that this grant application resolution was briefly discussed at the April 04, 2016 Transportation Committee meeting. She said that this is through the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. She said that it is a \$75,000 grant and has a deadline of May 05, 2016.

JP Adams stated that this is for mitigating sedimentation and run-off into Beaver Lake from unpaved roads.

JP Moehring made a motion to approve the resolution request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

STEP Grant

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this an annual grant that they have been working with the Sheriff's Department for traffic enforcement programs and child safety seats.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the resolution request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

A show of hands vote was recorded as follows:

5 in favor: Sheridan, Jones, Chiocco, Moore, Moehring
1 abstain: Sheridan
1 absent: Slinkard

Motion passed.

Bureau of Justice Assistance – Bulletproof Vests Grant

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this grant is for the purchase of bulletproof vests. The Sheriff's officers have certain expiring vests. This is a 50% match. They have 32 vests that will be expiring and three vests expiring in Environmental Services.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the resolution request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco

Major Lynn Hahn stated that the ballistic vests are good for five years and have expiration dates on them. The material used in the vests deteriorates over time.

JP Adams asked what the threat level rating is for the vests and the cost of the vests.

Major Hahn stated that they are Level 3 and cost \$782 each.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Ordinance Requests

Replace K-9 Dog Injured in late Dec. 2015 – Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this appropriation is replace K-9 Deputy Tigo who was retired in January 2016 by court order due to injury. This is a \$9,500 request for a new dog.

JP Adams asked if there is a way to provide insurance for K-9 units like they do for the regular deputies since the dogs are also deputies.

Captain Adam Howard stated that he handles all the K-9 units and, to his knowledge, there is not. He stated that the dogs are serviceable for five years; Tigo was retired a year early due to injury during a training exercise.

Brenda Guenther stated that she would check on it.

JP K. Harrison said that they already have money appropriated for it in the budget and need the dog. He will support this request.

JP Moehring made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Public Safety Fund Car Seats - Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this is for \$2,500 to purchase child safety seats. She stated that funding is available for this purpose.

JP Jones asked where the funding is coming from.

Brenda Guenther stated that the funds come from district court fines that go into this special fund and some additional money carried over from a prior year.

JP Jones asked if the County usually gets a Wal-Mart grant for this.

Brenda Guenther stated that they have applied for it, but she does not know if they will get it yet.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Sheriff Tablet Docking Stations - Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this is a \$31,000 request for docking stations. In FY 2015, \$243,000 was appropriated for the 60 docking stations. The docking stations were on backorder so they were not able to pay for them in 2015. This is carrying over an additional \$31,000 from last year's request to pay for the final docking stations. She stated that this amount will come out of reserves for this year.

JP Moehring made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Jail Oper/Maint Fund – Transfer from General Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this account is overspent because they ended up not having as much beginning cash as planned. She said that they can make changes to this account out of County General instead. She suggested that they hold this appropriation and wait until later on. She stated that she was going to request a transfer of \$60,000 to cover the shortfall of the beginning balance.

After some short discussion was held about the best way to address this shortfall, no action was taken on this appropriation request.

Jail Architect Fees Capital Projects Fund – Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this is a request to carry forward \$48,000 from the FY 2015 appropriation. They appropriated \$94,000 for the jail expansion architect fees in FY 2015.

They did not spent it all so it needs to be carried forward to FY 2016. It went into the Capital Projects Fund.

JP Moehring made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Sheriff Microbial Growth – Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that they budgeted \$252,000 in FY 2015 and have a remaining balance of \$86,000. She stated that this is coming out of the Capital Projects Fund.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

JP Moore stated that he was unaware that these were going to be resurfacing. He said that last month she made a statement that they had settled FY 2015.

Brenda Guenther stated that they did settle for the General and Road funds but they did not carry forward anything. She stated that the budget clean-up was complete. She did not balance the Capital Projects Fund and they had some carry forward on these two projects.

JP Moore asked if this will clear out FY 2015 once and for all.

Brenda Guenther stated that it will.

JP Allen stated that he concurs with Justice Moore. He said that, if they know they are going to have carry forward expenses, they need to exclude them from being sent to the Capital Projects Fund. He said that it needs to carry forward in the same line item for the next year.

JP Jones suggested that these appropriations be combined into one appropriation that will the clean-up ordinance for these projects for Committee of the Whole.

JP Moehring agreed to combine the appropriations into one.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

HELP-Grant Appropriation

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that there were some funds remaining from FY 2015 for the HELP grant that needs to be carried forward to FY 2016.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Sheriff/Jail Ordinance

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that these are re-classifications between the Supplies category to Capital Projects.

JP Jones made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Chiocco.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Rocky Branch Fire Department

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that this is to appropriate grant funds from the Rocky Branch GIF grant to purchase a fire/rescue boat for the Rocky Branch Volunteer Fire Department.

JP Moehring made a motion to approve the appropriation request and send it to the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole agenda, seconded by JP Jones.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Fund Summary:

2016 through 03/31/16

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that, overall for the year, they are below target on payroll salaries by less than a percent. She stated that there are a few departments that are over but it is due to workman's comp. She stated that, overall in the expenditures, they are at 25.9% and that is because of the early Capital Projects purchases under each of the funds.

Monthly Reports:

Overtime & Premium Pay Analysis

Comptroller Brenda Guenther stated that, looking at the General Fund FY 2016 versus FY 2015, overall, they have spent \$178,000 in overtime this year. Last year they had spent \$205,000. She said that they have spent a little more in Other Funds by \$4,000 but in general they are below last year's overtime.

Sales Tax Numbers

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that the sales tax was not quite as good as it was a year ago. She said that last year, it was tremendous. She said, compared to FY 2014, it is up more than it was for that year.

Jail Collections

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that they have received a \$815,000 check from the State. She reported that they are caught up through November, 2015. She said next month it will look a whole lot better.

Fuel Analysis

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that they are doing well on fuel.

Grants Administrator Report

Comptroller Brenda Guenther reported that grant software was purchased and will be implemented.

Other Business:

None.

Announcements:

JP K. Harrison announced a Legislative Committee meeting to be held on April 11, 2016. He stated that they will be discussing some proposed legislation, the Arkansas Works Program, which could impact as much as 100% of the county's turnback if it does not pass. They will propose getting a resolution to the Committee of the Whole in support of the Arkansas Works Program.

JP Moore announced that he will be absent for the April 12, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting and stated that JP Allen will chair the meeting in his absence.

JP Allen declared the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.