

JENNINGS COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

August 13, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.

Annex Building

Tina Ellis, Mike Gerth, Dave Woodall, Mandy Creech, Howard Malcomb, and Jerry Lamb were present. Tina opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mike made a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes, Howard seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Sue Lamborn with Thrive Alliance asked the council for consideration in the 2025 budget. Council told Sue that Thrive Alliance was in the 2025 budget for \$10,000.00.

Jessica Floyd with the Jennings County Library Board is discussing the libraries WOW bus to the council members. The library started the WOW bus in August of 22. This was started in an old bread truck that was converted into Words on Wheels (WOW). The library did not expect for this program to take off as much as it did. They take the truck to hard-to-reach areas in the community, school groups, daycares, and Autumn Trace. The current truck has broken down several times and has heating and cooling issues. The truck also is not wheelchair accessible. The library started doing a lot of research on a new bus. The main points of the bus are wheelchair accessibility, sturdy shelving and seating, air conditioning, and lighting. The new van was purchased from an Indiana company and was the lowest most reasonable 2024 thirty-four-foot bus at \$308,653.00. The bus still needs to be wrapped by Imagination Graphics and the cost for that is \$10,000 to \$15,000. Dave said that he supports the WOW bus 100% and would like the library to go to the commissioner to get their blessing.

Mike Miller with CSL is asking council for the county to be a match for the CSL Readi Grant. CSL has made it to the final stages of the READI grant (Blight elimination in housing initiative). Mike says all these things come with matching money. Country Squire itself has a 3 to 1 match and Mike will explain where that will come from later. It will also require from the county a 1 to 1 public match. Mike explains that he asked the council for \$750,000 because they are allowing CSL to use some of the road investments to make up the other \$250,000. CSL has asked the county for \$250,000 a year for three years in which Eli Lilly READI grant said that is acceptable, and that the council has approved this.

“What are we going to do with a million and \$750,000 dollars?” states Mike. CSL currently has 1031 mobile homes, which 434 of these are over 30 years old. 58 of these homes are over 50 years old. There are still many mobile homes that are vacant and /or abandoned that need removed. In progress to date, approximately 460 structures have been removed, approximately 115 are active with the Area Plan Commission, 15 awaiting removal, and 75 CSL compliance letters issued. The money used to remove these structures mostly came from back dues collected. Now for the 3 to 1 match from Country Squire. We are allowed to go back to January of last year and to look forward to December 2024. The value of these new homes will count towards our match. Just in the last year and a half there are \$2.37 million that is complete. This includes new homes, stick built homes, and some single wide mobile homes. There is currently \$1 million in process now. Mike said, they will not be building \$400,000 homes in CSL. The range of the new homes will be \$200,000 to \$220,000. Mike said that when he started with CSL, they had 0 dollars in the bank and \$550,000 in debt. Currently they have \$550,000 in the bank and 0 debt. Dues have been

reduced from \$365.00 to \$325.00. CSL had built a fire station, put in a new playground, invested their own money into roads, removing sediment out of the big lake, clubhouse and maintenance have been completely remodeled, and have purchased new maintenance equipment. REMC is changing poles and electrical system. They are also installing broadband in the CSL community. Mike says that the crime rate has also decreased at about 70%. The council is on board with assisting CSL with \$250,000 a year for three years but this is subject to the commissioner's approval. Mike made a motion to approve contingent on commissioners' approval, Mandy seconded the motion. Dave Woodall abstained from the vote.

Autumn Moore with Main Street is asking the council for a donation to help with the funding of Main Street Live. This event will be on Saturday, August 15, 2024. Dave made a motion to donate \$1500.00 contingent on commissioner approval.

Tracy Jones is asking the council to add a new ambulance into the 2025 budget. She has found one with Penn Care that is a brand-new demo with 12 miles on it. The delivery would be March 2025 or later. Ian is working on a grant for \$225,000 that they will apply for in January.

Randy Shepherd is asking council for permission to purchase a new copier/printer. The quote from The Office Shop is \$5,390.00. Dave made a motion to approve Randy's request for \$5,390.00 for the new copier, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Alden Rudicel said that since 2006, when he became coroner, he has used the funeral home van for the coroner's office. He is requesting a new van for the coroner's office. Alden received a price from Russ Hubler on a 2024 Chrysler Pacifica. Dave made a motion to allow Alden to proceed with the purchase of the Pacifica for \$38,305.00. Mandy seconded the motion, Gene abstained from the vote. The payment to Russ Hubler for this vehicle will be paid out of the Riverboat fund. Alden currently turns in all miles to the county for reimbursement. The Auditors office will reach out and order a gas card for the new van. This will eliminate mileage being turned into the county.

The council discussed increasing the funding for the Fire Departments. There are eight Volunteer Fire Departments that spit \$200,000 a year. They are asking for an additional \$116,000.00. Dave made a motion to table this discussion, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

The council members signed the additional appropriations resolution that was approved in the last meeting.

The council discussed a few Reedy invoices that are due. This was tabled so that come research could be done on the invoices. Dave made a motion to table, Mike seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Dave made a motion to adjourn, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Sarah Abel

Sarah Abel, Auditor

Tina Ellis, President

Mike Gerth

Mike Gerth, Vice President

Gene Rudicel

Gene Rudicel

Howard Malcomb

Howard Malcomb

Jerry Lamb

Mandy Creech

Mandy Creech

Dave Woodall