

JENNINGS COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

December 20, 2024 @ 9:00 a.m.

Annex Building

Tina Ellis, Dave Woodall, Gene Rudicel, Jerry Lamb, and Howard Malcomb were present. Tina opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Howard made a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes, Jerry seconded the motion, passed unanimously. The meeting was to begin at 9:00 but was delayed to 9:27 am due to a printer error in the Auditor's office.

Tina reviewed the 2024 salary ordinance that was brought before the council to be amended due to several additional appropriations being added. Human Resources' hours were changed from 35 to 40 hours per week, courthouse security also required additional appropriations, as well as the secretary at the sheriff's office. The assessor's Level 2 and Level 3 pay also required additional appropriations. This was a result of an error in the 2024 budget. Howard made a motion to approve the 2024 Salary ordinance, Gene seconded the motion. Tina asks, is there any discussion about that, Dave? You look confused. Dave replied, I think that anytime we make a change, I would like it to be highlighted. Dave would like to be able to look back in the budget book. Dave explains that he is voting blind on the 2024 Salary Ordinance. Tina explains that they are voting on the 2024 Salary Ordinance. The 2024 Salary Ordinance was amended and brought to council for approval. Gene said it would be nice if those amended items were highlighted.

The council reviewed the 2025 salary ordinance with several changes due to the fact that when Reedy picked up the original figures, it was from the old salary ordinance before the new appropriations had been made. Ergo they based the 2025 salaries on that rate, so the new salaries should reflect the change. Tina would like for the motion to be contingent on Reedy Financial taking a final look at it. Tina asked the council members to take a final look because they just received the ordinance, so they are "voting blind." Dave said that he would make a motion to approve. Tina wants it noted that the language in the 2025 ordinance was changed. The county attorney received the salary ordinance about midnight the night before. He had a short amount of time to look it over. The auditor's office said that with the recommendation of Reedy and SBOA, the salary ordinance should reflect the bi-weekly amount, not an hourly amount. Tina said that the council had discussed getting the language changed and they had been working towards getting that accomplished. Amy explained that the judges' salary was amended to \$5000.00 instead of \$5200.00 and that the prosecutors pay could not exceed \$5000.00 per year, so that changed was made also. Tina also made note that the council is aware of additional appropriations that will need to be made to the salaries in January. Tina said that the council will adopt the 2025 Salary Ordinance and then make the additional appropriations in January. Howard seconded Dave's motion to adopt the 2025 Salary Ordinance. Tina tells council that she knows that council is voting blind and that she would have Reedy to take a second look. Gene asks why the council received the salary ordinance so late? He asks if it was Reedy? Tina said that she met with Reedy three weeks ago and reminded them that the language needed changed and they (Reedy) said that they were working with the Auditor's office. Tina explained that she did not hear anything back from the Auditors office or Reedy, so she called Alex (county attorney). Alex said that he had not seen the salary ordinance either. Tina called Reedy and was told that the Auditor's office told them they did not need Reedy's help. Tina states that Alex got it last night and that's all she knows. Gene said that he will not do this

again, and that he is not happy about it, and that they need more time. Gene said that he is so frustrated, and that he has no idea what is in the 2025 Salary Ordinance. Amy, with the Auditor's office explained that she was frustrated also and that she had the 2025 Salary Ordinance completed a month ago but was then told the verbiage in the ordinance needed changed. Dave asks, how are you going to fix this? He tells Tina that she needs to sit down with Reedy and the Auditors office and find out what is going on. The recorder voices her concerns with the salary ordinance. She is asking the council to table it until the next meeting. She says that herself and the other department heads have not seen the salary ordinance or the budget. Tina says that it cannot be tabled. Tina explains that the needed adjustments will be made after the first of the year. Tina explains to Mary that council did tell Reedy to not release any of the budgets. Tina explains that they did this because last year there was three or four copies of the budget floating around and there was a lot of confusion. Jerry states that last year he wasn't involved in the budget because he was not on the council, but this year he is, and he understands that changes are going to need to be made but he is not in favor of it. Jerry says he gets tired of everyone coming and wanting to make changes to their budget, wages, etc. Jerry wants to make sure it is right this time, and no changes to be made to wages. Tina told Jerry that she appreciates his concern on that and that they are trying to get to the point where additional appropriations are not needed, especially to salaries.

The auditor explains that in the past when department heads would call wanting to see their budget, and we would get them a copy so that they could have their eyes on it and review it. The auditors explained that we were not able to do that this year. The auditor explained to the council that she understands their intent but, what happened is exactly why it shouldn't have been done that way. Tina said that she appreciates the input, but it is up to council to decide. Tina said that she directed anybody that had trouble with the budget to notify her and not the Auditor's office. Tina said that she spoke to everyone that reported issues with their budget. Dave said the bottom line is that it comes through the council/Board President, not the Auditors office, and this is the way we are going to continue to do it. Tina said that she has a motion and a second. Is there any more discussion? 2025 Salary Ordinance approved unanimously.

Tina has moved on to the additional appropriations that Reedy Financial has sent to the Auditor's office for End of the Year cleanup. There are some additional appropriations to the 2024 budget, and some are simply appropriating the fund to allow for spending. Tina asked why bills were paid if the funds was not appropriated? Tina understands that Reedy would like for accounts to be broken down instead of paying things from Misc. Tina said that these appropriations should not be called 'additional' because we are not taking more money out, we are only appropriating the funds that are already there. The council members discussed the additional appropriations, and Dave made a motion to approve the additional appropriations, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously. Tina reads an email from Reedy pertaining to these additional appropriations. Tina asked how are they to understand which is additional and which isn't? Gene said that he understood that none of them were additional. Tina said that the year-end cleanup needs to be completed, and this is what Reedy is recommending. Tina will bring back a report in January to share with council on what was additional. Dave said that it is important for the department heads to know their budget and to know when appropriations need to be moved. Tina said that she has been hearing from department heads that they are not getting an up-to-date ledger. The auditor's office explains that they do not automatically send them out. They are sent out when the department head requests them. Tina was under the impression that the department head could see their own ledgers and the auditor's office

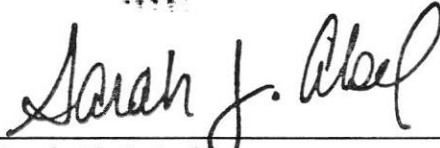
explained that the department heads do not have access to the Low software. Dave is asking how accounts can be overspent without the council approval? Dave also asks how they can overspend without the Auditors approval? Dave asks if an invoice comes in and the account is budgeted for \$20,000 but the invoice is for \$25,000 if the auditor's office is going ahead and paying the invoice? Tina says that should never happen and that it needs to come to council. The Auditors office said, are we supposed to hold utility bills for a month to bring to a council meeting? Dave said that they should just email Tina and not to hold anything up. Tina said there should be no money spent without council appropriating it. Tina said the council voted to table a payment to All Star Paving, but it was paid anyway. She is asking who gave the auditor's office permission to pay it. The auditor's office explained that when they looked back on meeting minutes, the commissioners said to pay it out of ARPA. Tina said that the commissioners are not the financial body. Tina said that the commissioners should not have said to pay it and that it should have come back to the December council meeting. Tina asks about another invoice for the highways gradall. She said that if it was paid, it was paid illegally because they did not approve it. Tina said that she was working with Reedy Financial to get some things recoded to free up money to be able to pay the invoice. The auditor's office said that it had been negative but Reedy sent a transfer that would allow for that invoice to be paid. Tina said that it was brought to the council and council said they were not paying it, and it should have come back to the December meeting. Gene said that it is paid and done so what does council do now? Tina said that they cannot have bills being paid that have not been approved by council. Howard asked if the invoice could be paid up to the amount that the account has in it? Tina replied, No! It was tabled. Tina said that there is a motion on the table to approve the additional appropriations. Dave made the motion to approve the additional appropriations, Howard seconded the motion, passed unanimously. Dave said there is a process, and the process needs to be followed. Dave said that it isn't being operated properly and that must be fixed. The auditor's office verified the date that the gradall was paid. That date was November 26, 2024. When the transfer from Reedy was made, it allowed for the account to have enough money to pay the invoice. Tina said that she worked with Reedy on coming up with a plan to get the bill paid. Tina said at no time did council give the auditor's office permission to pay. Dave said he doesn't give a crap what Reedy or anyone else says, if the council tables something and it gets paid, that becomes a legal issue. Dave said the auditor paid a bill on two separate occasions and they were going to dig to see if there was more than two. Dave said that when the board votes to table something and the auditor's office overrides them and makes the payment anyway, it is a serious issue.

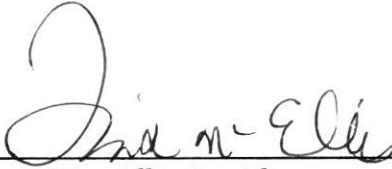
Judge Bright received grant funding for 2025 to do a drug court and a pretrial program. Ellie's request is specific to the pretrial services coordinator. She is asking that the coordinator (Sherri Porter) for the pretrial services be paid as a county employee. The grant will cover her salary of \$65,000.00. Ellie said the state grant funds will cover her salary. SBOA is saying that there will need to be an additional appropriation for her salary. Tina said that the way she is understanding this is that the grant of \$65,000 will cover her salary, taxes, and benefits. So basically, it is just a pass-through account. Ellie said that Sherri would not take county insurance until at least 2026. Ellie is thinking that they would pay her a stipend to put towards her own insurance. Ellie does not know for sure if she will take the county insurance. Tina told Ellie to confirm the benefits and to come back to the next meeting. Jerry wanted to make it clear that if the State decided to do away with this grant, that her employment would not continue.

Tracy with EMS is discussing end of the year cleanup with council. Tracy said that in her total budget she has \$43,000.00 left over. Tracy is short \$25,419.00 on her salaries. The reason for the shortage is that the base salaried are budgeted at 80 hours. There was an additional \$10,000 approved last month so Tracy needs to transfer \$15,000.00 in her 1170 fund to the salary line. Tracy also told council that she did sell the old ambulance chassis for \$957.00 and that was put into the general fund. They also reclaimed \$5000.00 in unclaimed funds that they were able to put into county general. In EMS collections, Tracy has collected \$100,000 more in collections than what was collected last year. Jerry made a motion to approve the transfer of \$15,419 in 1170, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously. Tracy said that she has told her employees that anything over 16 hours per pay period, would go into comp time.

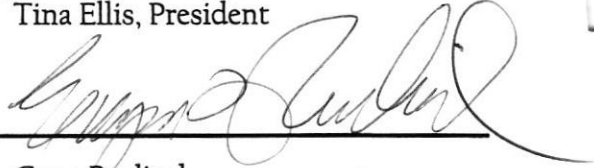
Tina said that all part time employees were moved to \$18.00 per hour. Animal Control has a full-time employee that is only making \$17.00. Council will request additional appropriations in January to reflect the full-time person's increase to \$18.00 per hour. Dave made a motion to approve the pay increase from \$16.28 per hour to \$18.00 per hour. Jerry seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

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

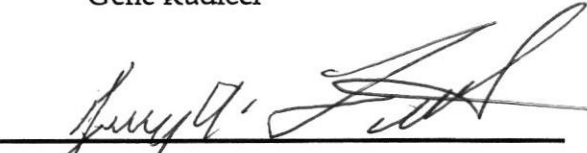

Sarah Abel, Auditor


Tina Ellis, President


Mike Gerth, Vice President


Gene Rudicel

Dave Cheatham


Jerry Lamb

Mandy Creech


Dave Woodall