

JENNINGS COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

December 30, 2024 @ 9:00 a.m.

Annex Building

Tina Ellis, Mike Gerth, Dave Woodall, 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. Dave asked if there is a reason why everything discussed in the last meeting was not in the minutes. Dave said that things are not reflected correctly in the minutes. He says that there is something very significant not in the minutes. Dave said he is trying to cover something without saying it, but anytime the council tables something and the auditor's office pays it, that cannot be done. Dave said we don't have a clue sometimes where our money goes, and we don't know what's getting paid or not paid. Tina asks Dave if he would like to add an amendment to the minutes. Dave replied that he isn't saying the minutes are incorrect, he is just saying they are incomplete, in his opinion. Howard asked Dave if he knows how to word what he is wanting to add to the minutes. Dave said not exactly; I just know that there was some very significant stuff in the recording that needs to be in the minutes. Dave made a motion to table the approval of the meeting minutes until they could get a better visual of what was being said. Jerry seconded the motion, passed 4-1. Mike was not present for the meeting in question.

The amended 2024 Salary ordinance needs approved. Amy highlighted the changes so that the council could see the changes. The part time position for recorder because it was changed mid budget season, courthouse security hourly pay was not correct, and HR changes due to increasing the hours worked a week. There were Probation office changes on page 4, and Crystal with the sheriff's department hourly pay increased. Tina said the certification in the Assessors office was incorrect. Mike asked what the changes were with Probation. Amy explained that Andy was splitting up the pay into multiple funds. Howard asked if the amounts were in addition to the original salary in which Tina responded, no. Mike made a motion to approve the amended 2024 salary ordinance, Howard seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Tina now moves to the 2025 Salary Ordinance. The highlighted areas are the changes. The park assistant salary was incorrect. The circuit court person was removed because the council tabled the discussion until the next meeting. In Animal Controls budget there will need to be more money appropriated in January. Superior Court judge was moved back to \$5000.00. The prosecutor has a new hire and will need additional appropriations in January. The county park director will be discussed after the first of the year. Dave made a motion to accept and approve the amended 2025 Salary Ordinance.

Tina said the council needs to discuss the ARPA money. Tina asked the auditors office what the balance was in the ARPA fund and Amy responded, \$528,731.66. There is still a balance owned on the ambulance that was approved to be paid for out of the ARPA fund. Tina said that the council is wanting to use the remaining ARPA money to use towards insurance. The cash reserves would increase in the general fund. The money in the ARPA fund has already been appropriated, so no additional appropriations would be needed. Dave made a motion to move \$528,731.66 from general to ARPA and earmark that for insurance for the commissioners. Dave changes his motion to approve the transfer and to earmark \$280,000.00 for the ambulance, \$78,731 for group insurance, and \$170,000 for additional paving. Mike seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Tina explains to the council that she has asked Katelyn and Trevor from Reedy Financial to join this meeting in case the council had any questions. Tina explains that she had spoken to Reedy about the verbiage on the salary ordinance and that her understanding was that the auditor's office wanted to do that themselves. Tina followed up with the county attorney and he said that he had not seen the salary ordinance. The auditor's office was under the impression that the verbiage in the salary ordinance was coming from Reedy. Tina said that the council just wants to know where the breakdown in communication came from. Katelyn said that she did email Amy with suggestions for the salary ordinance and that she also had a discussion with Sarah over the phone. Dave said that he would like to be kept in the loop and would like to receive any information that Reedy would send out. Dave said that he gets a lot of questions from people and does not know the answers because he isn't being kept in the loop.

Howard asks if the machine that the county purchased had ever been paid. Tina responded with, yes, that is the bill that was not approved to pay and was paid. Matt said that he would love to see more communication and does not know how to accomplish this. Matt said it seems like 'we' are all competing. There are times that commissioners do not know what is going on and there are times that the council does not know what is going on. Dave said when the commissioners approve to pay something, that it needs to immediately go to council. Matt said that the commissioners are usually very respectful of the council. He said that when they have a motion to approve a payment, it is contingent on council finding the money. If commissioners choose to pay for something out of their budget, it does not have to be approved by council. Dave said that he thinks that the Auditors office should know what fund to make payments and make recommendations to council on what they think. Dave said that meetings will go a lot quicker if everyone is working as a team.

Trevor said that Reedy works well with the council and the Auditors office. Tina said that she meets with Reedy on a regular basis and that they were working on getting the gradall invoice paid. Tina said that she asked Reedy to free up money so that council could pay the invoice on the 20th. Matt said that he would like to know how a piece of equipment got ordered, delivered, and used for four months and not paid. Tina said that the highway clerk overspent the fund. The council appropriated \$600,000 for equipment and the highway overspent in that fund, which left the fund short on paying the invoice for the gradall. Dave said that there is more to this story, but we do not have time to get into that right now. Dave asked if a red flag is thrown up when the budget is overspent? Tina said that some of the department heads will make deals for the county and then put the council up against it and say, well are you going to leave them unpaid? The judge went to the commissioners and received approval for a paving project but did not complete the next step of going to the council. Dave said the council and commissioners are willing to help the Auditor's office in any way they can. Dave mentioned outsourcing payroll to help the auditor's office. He believes that this will save on headaches for the long run. Dave said that he heard a comment that the ARPA money is controlled by the commissioners. He said that is 100% correct but they can not spend it without council approval.

Mike is suggesting that the auditor's office reach out to various payroll services. Dave said that the auditor is still in control of payroll even with outsourcing payroll.

Dave mentioned getting the agenda and documentation in a timely fashion, so that it would allow council to prepare for the meetings. Katelyn said that most county governments that they work with require all documentation to be available to them at least one week prior to the meeting. Tina said that she is hearing from department heads that they are not receiving their financials. Tina said isn't just a matter of click, click, click to be able to send the department heads financials? The auditor's office explained how hard/time consuming it would be to send all ledgers to all department heads. Katelyn is speaking of a location budget, not all fund reports. She recommends that after the auditors' office reconciles with the treasure, that the auditor send a location budget to all department heads. Dave said that the department heads have issues with

their funds that they need to be able to talk to someone in the auditor's office that can help with the problems. Matt said the issue is that everyone is so quick to send an email instead of walking into the office that they need help from. Communication is key for everyone!

Tina thanks Howard again for his 28 years of service and welcomes Dave C. to the council.

Howard makes a motion to adjourn, Dave seconds the motion, passed unanimously.

Sarah Abel, Auditor

Tina Ellis, President

Mike Gerth, Vice President

Gene Rudicel

Dave Cheatham

Jerry Lamb

Mandy Creech

Dave Woodall