

JENNINGS COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

May 13, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m.

Annex Building

Tina Ellis, Mike Gerth, Gene Rudicel, Dave W., Jerry Lamb, Mandy Creech, and Dave Cheatham were present. Tina Ellis opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Dave Cheatham followed the Pledge of Allegiance with prayer.

Mike made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

State Rep. Alex Zimmerman gives the council members a short synopsis of the latest legislative session. It is projected there will be a 1.9% growth from the calendar year 2025 to calendar year 2026. The projected growth was around 2.5% so basically Senate Bill 1 slowed the growth of the county. Alex also discussed road funding. House Bill 1461 lowers the match money amount for the county. Currently it is 25% and will be lowered to 20%.

The treasurer provides the council with updates for the month. There was an additional \$5 million invested last month so that leaves the balance at \$19,486,343.00. The interest received for the month of April is \$50,862.00 and the year-to-date interest is \$107,116.00. The amount collected by the treasurers office for property taxes thus far is \$14,774,802.34. After settlement is completed, the treasurer would like to invest more.

Brad Bender, Mayor of Vernon came before the council to give an update on some exciting things happening in Vernon. The new trails start at the Commons, then run to the soccer field, over to the overlook, and then all the way down to Jackson Street. Then it turns into the hiking trail all the way to Vinegar Mill at the county park. The restrooms still need to be completed, and the overlook is being delivered next week. There are beacons installed at the crossing on the highway. Vernon has also partnered with the library and opened a classroom at the Vernon Gym. Big things are happening with the Vernon Gym in hopes of building a true community center here in Vernon.

Tracy, Director of EMS, is asking for additional appropriations of \$5000.00. The reason for the increase is for passing a certification test. Dave C. made a motion to approve the request, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Andy Judd is asking for the council to consider two positions that will be paid for out of grant money. The line items in the Probation User Fees fund would have to be opened back up. These grants are reimbursement grants, so the county would be reimbursed for the positions. The first position would be through the JDAI grant. The JDAI grant is for \$60,000 and \$50,000 can go towards salaries. Andy would like to hire a full-time JDAI coordinator to serve as a dual probation officer. The balance to finish out the year would be around \$21,000.00, give or take, depending on when the position is filled. There will be money left over out of this grant to cover some of the benefit cost. The remaining amount will come from Probation User Fees. The next grant is the JPAR Grant. There is \$57,000 in the grant that will pay benefits and salary for one year. Andy is asking the same for this grant position. Any additional money needed to fund a

JPAR Coordinator will be paid out of the Probation User Fees. The JDAI Coordinator will be working the first year strictly on bringing juvenile alternatives to Jennings County. Dave C. asks how this is different from when Judge Bright came and asked for a grant position to be funded. Judge Bright says that she did not ask for funding. She only wanted this person to be covered by county insurance and retirement. Any expenses incurred by the county would be reimbursed by the grant. Dave W. explains that the person that Andy is going to put in one of these positions is currently employed by the county part time and doesn't carry insurance benefits. Moving this person to full-time would be the same thing that Judge Bright was trying to accomplish and was turned down. Andy explains that in 2024, the position was a full-time position, but they hired a part time person. Dave W. asks if it would hurt if they tabled this to be able to get more clarification.

Judge Bright submitted a claim for Chris Doran to be reimbursed for travel expenses. The claim was submitted on December 13, 2024, and was not paid until January 2025. There will need to be additional appropriations in the amount of \$2821.83 since this was not paid until 2025. The council stated that personal cards should not be used. If you are using a personal card and gaining points, you are getting benefits from charging things for the county and getting personal rewards. Dave W. made a motion to approve the additional appropriations of \$2821.83 but said personal credit cards should not be used. Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously. Judge Bright is asking for the FRC fund to be reimbursed from Pre Trial Services Fund for expenses in the amount of \$11,137.33. Gene made a motion to approve the transfer; Dave W. seconded the motion. Passed 6-1, Jerry Lamb opposed.

Judge Bright discusses the meal reimbursement amount with the council to get some clarification. The county will reimburse up to \$45.00 for meals if an employee is at a conference. Taxes will be reimbursed in this case. If you have an advanced event planned, and pay taxes, the county will not reimburse the tax. The Auditor said she spoke to Andy and Donata and gave them clarification on the meal reimbursement daily, so she is unsure of where the misunderstanding is coming from. Judge Bright said that the handbook shows \$45.00 per day and Tina said that the council does not handle policy, the commissioners do. Tina said that there are guidelines that you follow through the state or the county for grant policies. Judge Bright said that the courts are not subject to all county authority, and that they are subject to state authority. Judge Bright said that they try to default to county policy as much as they can. Judge Bright discussed the Pre-Trial Coordinator position with the council members again. Tina will need to speak with Reedy Financial to see if what Judge Bright is asking for can be done.

Dave C. shares with the other council members that he met with the counties' judicial system and discussed the magistrates' funding. The state will no longer fund the magistrate after Dec. 31, 2025. Dave C. is asking that the council have a meeting to discuss the future of the court system and what impact it is going to have on the county. Tina explains that the commissioners would have to come to the council and discuss the funding. Dave W. said that things like this need to be discussed at budget time. Tina explains that not one council member should meet with any department heads. If something needs to be addressed, it should come in front of the entire council. The council members are requesting that Judge Bright provide caseload numbers at budget time.

The county received an invoice for \$510.60 from Reedy Financial for the continued disclosure work on the bond. Mike made a motion to approve the invoice, Dave W. seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

The sheriff submitted an invoice for paint that will need council approval. Gene made a motion to pay \$1763.89 minus the sales tax to Sherwin Williams. Dave W. seconded the motion, passed unanimously. This invoice will be paid out of the sheriff's maintenance account.

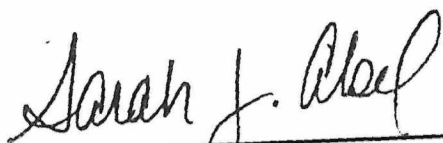
ETC submitted an invoice to the council for some work in the meeting room at the annex. The work to be completed is to reroute the cables under the floor. The quoted price is "not to exceed" \$5000.00. Dave C. made a motion to pay up to \$5000.00 from county general, Mandy seconded the motion. Jerry Lamb abstained from the vote.

Dave C. asked about library appointments. Dave C. was informed that the library has inappropriate materials and wanted to know what influence the council might have to check into that. Dave W. said that his wife was board president for a period and the council has no jurisdiction over anything except board appointments.

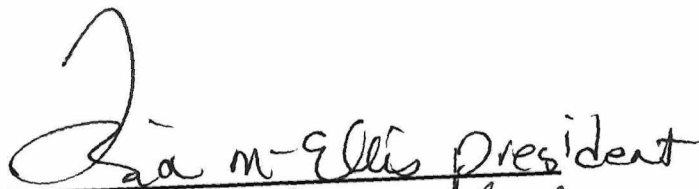
Dave W. made a motion to transfer \$105,204.83 out of county general to fund 1222. Mandy seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Dave C. would like to withdraw his motion pertaining to the hiring of a council attorney. Dave W. seconded the motion, passed unanimously. Dave C. says that when/if the need arises the council will vote on it at that time.

At 7:59 pm, Dave W. made a motion to adjourn, Gene seconded the motion, passed unanimously.



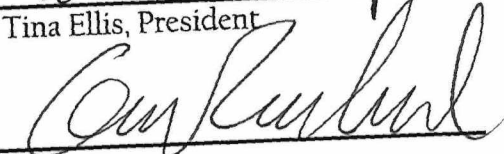
Sarah Abel, Auditor

 Tina Ellis, President

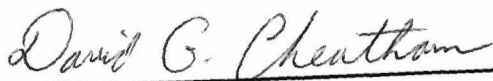
Tina Ellis, President



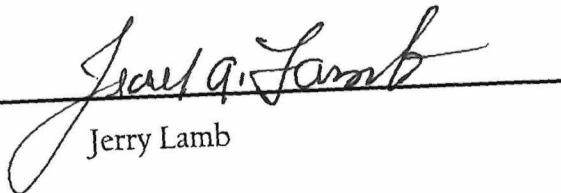
Mike Gerth, Vice President

 Gene Rudicel

Gene Rudicel



Dave Cheatham

 Jerry Lamb

Jerry Lamb

 Mandy Creech

Mandy Creech

Dave Woodall