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Election Results for Stoddard County Extension Council

FEBRUARY 22ND 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Election Results for Stoddard County Extension Council

We want to thank all candidates that sought election for the Stoddard County Extension Council and to the voters who made the election a success. The turn-out was great and the votes were close but only four (4) could be chosen.

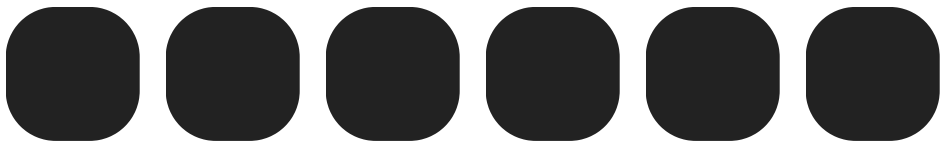
The following persons were elected for two (2) year terms on the Stoddard County Extension Council: James Childers, Dexter; Pamela Elder, Bloomfield; Jennifer Hampton, Dexter and Kelly Midkiff, Dexter.

We look forward to the knowledge and the areas of expertise these new members will bring with them starting their journey in March 2021.

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USDA Program Technician Job Available

FEBRUARY 17TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

USDA Program Technician Job Available

Stoddard County, MO - The USDA Farm Service Agency currently has a vacancy for a Temporary Program Technician job available in Stoddard County.

This vacancy is for a Temporary Program Technician and may be converted as a permanent position.

The open application period is from February 12, 2021 - February 26, 2021.

Grade potential will be based on education, work experience, agricultural knowledge, and background.

Applicants should possess strong customer service skills, a positive attitude and computer knowledge.

Interested individuals should apply online by clicking [HERE](#).

Responsibilities

Carrying out office activities and functions pertaining to one or more of the program areas administered in the county.

Interpreting and explaining procedures, program regulations and forms to producers and other agency personnel.

Utilizing various web-based software applications to maintain producer data and processing automated forms.

Using a high degree of initiative and judgment in planning and carrying out assigned tasks and resolving problems encountered.

Travel Required

Occasional travel - You may be expected to travel for this position.

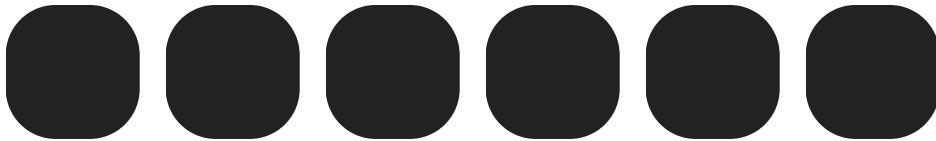
For questions or for more information regarding the vacancy, please contact Brandi Tatum at 573-624-5939, ext 2.

USDA FSA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender.

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Voting for County Extension Council Begins January 19, 2021

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VOTING FOR COUNTY EXTENSION COUNCIL

Voting for the members of Stoddard County Extension Council will begin on January 19, 2021 and end at the close of business on January 26, 2021.

This year we have one candidate running for four two-year term openings they are: James Childers, Pam Elder, Jennifer Hampton, Robinn Daves-Huey, Ashley Jarrell and Kelly Morgan-Midkiff

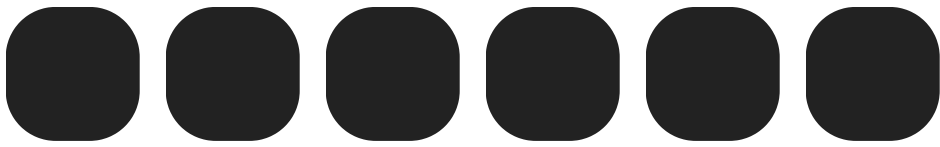
Paper ballots will be available at the Extension Office, located at 316 S. Prairie Street, Bloomfield. Voting may be done by coming in to the Extension Office and requesting a 2021 ballot. Extension Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for voting.

The Stoddard County University of Missouri Extension Council determines the educational programs, policies and approved staff of University Extension for Stoddard County as set by law. In addition, in cooperation with the Stoddard County Commission, they arrange for financing the local portion of the programs.

Some of the educational programs available through University Extension in Stoddard County deal with large scale agriculture and small scale farming enterprises, home economics, community development, homemaker clubs, and foods and nutrition for low-income families. These programs, open to all citizens, are provided by county area-based and campus based specialists and paraprofessionals through the University of Missouri and Lincoln University.

The winning candidates will start their new terms during the Stoddard County Extension Council's annual meeting in March.

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - January 11, 2021

JANUARY 20TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - January 11, 2021

Bloomfield, MO - The Stoddard County Commission finalized the 2021 proposed budget at a special meeting on Thursday, December 31st. At the Monday, January 11, 2021 meeting they announced that a public hearing concerning the budget would be scheduled for 9 a.m. Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at the Stoddard County Government Building located in Bloomfield.

All but one elected official received pay increases for 2021.

The County Coroner's salary increased from \$20,800 to \$25,172 and the deputy coroner increased from \$8,000 to \$9,708.

The three County Commissioners' salary increased from \$113,647 to \$127,502.

The County Clerk's salary increased from \$54,289 to \$55,104

The County Collector/treasurer's salary increased from \$68,837 to \$72,847.

The County Recorder's salary increased from \$54,289 to \$55,104.

The EMA Director salary increased from \$25,000 to \$27,000. (Part-Time Position)

The Public Administrator increased from \$54,289 to \$59,164.

The County Assessor's salary increased from \$54,289 to \$56,457.

The County Sheriff's salary increased from \$60,736 to \$69,767.

The Prosecuting Attorney's salary (\$143,056) remained the same.

In other new business Carla Moore, Stoddard County Collector and Treasurer, questioned the Commission as to why the incoming collector had such a high bond. Josh Speakman will begin his position on April 1, 2021. Moore said her bonds cost \$5,904 at the beginning of her four year term and Speakman's bond cost the county \$36,044.00 a difference of \$30,140.00.

Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington said only one company submitted a bid for the bonds because of the county's rating. The county received a fair rating following the most recent audit for 2017-18. The county was previously rated good. This reporter looked at all Commission Minutes from the election to the present and there is not a motion to acquire bids from bond companies.

The Commission was questioned by two businesses regarding CARES Act funding. Mary Ruth Boone, representing the French Market, in Dexter asked if the six businesses who received payroll were obligated to pay the money back. Talkington answer that they were obligated to pay the funding back; however the county has not received any payment yet.

According to Talkington, any money received will be used to fund businesses who submitted their paperwork by the November 30th deadline and who have not received any CARES Act funds. Talkington said if the county gets back all the estimated \$23,000 mistakenly paid for payroll, the amount would not be enough to fund the remaining seven businesses on the list. Several businesses were excluded from that list when the Commission voted on December 14, 2020 with new rules.

Ray and Heather Carrillo, who own Carrillo's Martial Arts in Dexter, also questioned the Commission on the CARES Act. They asked if there was additional money available at a later date would those businesses who applied this round would be first in line since they received nothing.

“If something comes up in the future, we want to make sure that we're on top of it better,” Ray Carrillo said. “Again, we were really uneducated to the process and how we should go about it.”

Talkington said others have asked about who would receive funds if any additional money becomes available. He said if a business didn't receive anything from this round of CARES Act, people have asked if they can be first on the list.

“As of right now, I have no indication that there will be any funding coming to us. And it would all be based on what the guidelines were that comes with that if it happened,” Talkington said. “But as of right now, I’ve heard nothing from anybody.”

Dee Loflin, ShowMe Times, asked if the Clerk's office could notify all media in Stoddard County as to when meetings would be held and email the agenda in a timely manner like the former Clerk did. It would be a great way to communicate to the public. Currently Cecil Weeks, Stoddard County Clerk, posts the Agenda on a bulletin board outside the Clerk's office on Friday afternoons. Once it is posted the building is locked for the weekend so the public doesn't have the 24 hours access as required.

Carol Jarrell said the emails including the agenda had been sent to the news organizations in the past and wanted to know why that could not continue. She made a motion for the clerk's office to begin emailing the Agenda to the news organizations in Stoddard County.

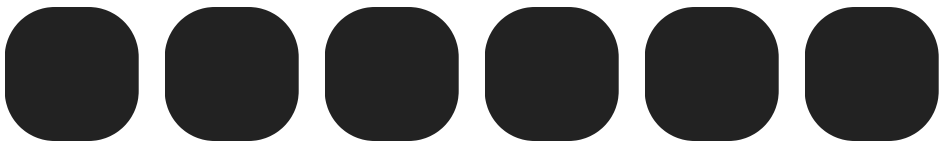
After some discussion Associate Commissioner Steve Jordan seconded the motion with the stipulation that every newspaper, online publication and radio station in the county receives the same email. That would include YHCTV, KDEX, the Bernie Banner, the New Puxico Press, the Dexter Statesman, and the ShowMe Times.

The Commissioners voted 3-0 to approve the motion and Danny Talkinging, Presiding Commissioner, stated he would talk to Cecil Weeks to have this happen.

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Stoddard County Commission Continues to Answer CARES Act Questions in First Meeting of 2021

JANUARY 18TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Continues to Answer CARES Act Questions in First Meeting of 2021

Bloomfield, MO - The Stoddard County Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled Monday morning meeting on January 4, 2021 at 9 a.m. The first meeting of the new year.

Businesses continued to question the Commission about the process used to determine who received the CARES Act funding.

Owner of Bernie Fitness Center, Waylon Owens, asked the commissioners what happened to his application. It was submitted before the deadline.

“We turned in our application in the middle of November. That’s the last I heard of it,” Owens said. “I called Mr. Killian on November 30th at 12:17 p.m. I did talk to Mr. Killian that day, and he said he would call me back to me. We did not hear back from him. I didn’t hear anything else.”

Once Owens started noticing the amounts businesses were receiving in CARES Act funds he began calling again.

“I started calling Mrs. Jarrell. That was the week before Christmas,” Owens said. “Mrs Jarrell, after a few days, tried to get to the bottom of it and told me that my application was nowhere to be found. She could not find my application. That went on for about a week or so until this past Friday when I was told my application was missing a signature. So I’m here to see what we can do about getting some of my money back.”

The normal procedure in a case where someone failed to sign one of the documents was that Mr. Killian would call the business owner and let them know as soon as possible that they needed to sign a document. This according to Danny Talkington, Presiding Commissioner.

Talkington said the paperwork was not lost and the commissioners received it December 7th. He said because there was no signature or date and the deadline to submit CARES Act requests had passed, he considered it an invalid request and “there’s no need to go any further with it and we set it aside.”

Owens said, “I understand we may have missed the signature. I mean, I understand that it is entirely possible. But how did people - we turned in our application in mid-November - how did people that turned in their application after us, how did they get paid? And if we did miss a signature, how is it that we weren’t notified that we missed a signature?”

Owens reiterated that Killian did not return his call as he said he would.

“So, in my thinking, even if I was missing a signature, we could have started the process of remedying that that day,” Owens said. “That was still before the deadline and before some people even submitted their applications, and they still got paid. So I guess at this point, I’m just here to air a grievance because I understand there’s no more money, but if there is any more money, I think it’s fair to say that I feel like I should be at the top of the list.”

Talkington said no funds remained in the COVID-19 funding account, and the \$3,405,212 has been paid out.

Another local business owner, Chris Huggins, owner of Main Street Restaurant in Bernie, stated he learned about the CARES Act funds only days before the deadline.

“We got everything filled out like we should, made a few phone calls and were able to get it here on time before the deadline,” Huggins said. “But when we hear that other businesses that filled their paperwork out after the deadline, I think, (and) got paid, and then that multiple businesses had received two checks that exceeded our amount that we requested, and what we requested wasn’t even all that we could have requested. ... And so I’m just here to see what’s going on. What’s the process here?”

“Sometimes it went through the (Dexter Chamber of Commerce) and Frank would pick it up there. Sometimes it was sent directly to Frank. Sometimes he picked them up here,” Talkington stated. “He takes it and goes through the paperwork, looks at the receipts, makes sure documentation is there, and he calculates the total amount. Most of the time

people have a recap sheet (spreadsheet) in there. And he fills out a request and brings it to us and we go through it to make sure to see if we (don't have) questions and then we would process the payment."

The state of Missouri gave Stoddard County \$3,405,212 of CARES Act money to distribute to small businesses and government and community entities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have about \$7.1 million in requests for \$3.4 million," Talkington said. "So not everybody got everything they asked for and some didn't get anything." (This reporter has viewed all the numbers and will be asking how the Commission came to that conclusion of \$7.1 million)

Shane Taylor, owner of Farm First Crop Insurance LLC of Essex also voiced his concerns. He said, "who makes the rules?" Rules were changed, exclusions were made on December 14, 2020 by the Commissioners once they determined they were running out of funds.

"For instance, the paperwork I saw, there's no mortgage payments. None of that was allowed. Later that changed. Then I saw the insurance companies were paid, and I saw you came back and said insurance companies should not be paid. I mean, where does all this come from?"

From May to August zero funds were distributed by the Commissioners. In September they began distributing funds.

"The grants that were being made to municipalities, police departments and ambulance districts, we had very specific guidelines," commented Talkington. "We finally started getting some guidelines for businesses in September and then again in October," continued Talkington.

The exclusions made on December 14, 2020 were determined by the Commissioners and are listed in a previous article on the ShowMe Times. [Click HERE](#)

In a Special Meeting on Thursday, January 31, 2020 the Commission chose to award CARES Act funds to four businesses.

"We had money we had allocated and they didn't spend all that money, so we had an extra (\$23,143.06)," Talkington said.

Bootheel Counseling Services did not spend as much money as expected. They received \$8,689.97 in CARES Act funds, approximately \$10,000 less than what it asked for earlier

in the year.

- Lucas Florist, \$3,800.42
- Main Street Restaurant, \$13,624.85 (Main Street Restaurant was not aware of the funds until they appeared at the Jan 4th meeting. Commissioners did not notify businesses prior to mailing a check for funds requested nor an explanation of what was excluded, etc.)
- Stoddard County Senior Citizens Agency, \$5,118.87
- Tips and Toes, \$598.92

In other business James Hensley, Stoddard County resident, asked how the Johnsongrass tax began and if it could be discontinued.

“The way that it was started is there had to be a revenue statute, which 100 people in the county had to request be done, and then it goes to the Secretary of Agriculture, who then appoints a board,” Talkington said. “I didn’t see any provision for how to get rid of it at this point. I’ve only answered part of your question as to how it got started, but I don’t know how to get it to stop.”

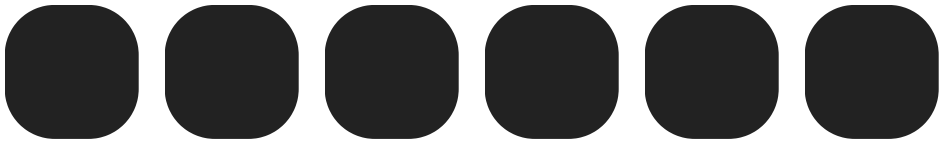
Talkington said he would need to contact the Secretary of State’s office to learn how to take the tax off the books.

“Coming out here this morning from my driveway to town, there were five dead deer lying on the road,” Hensley said. “We as a society drive down the road (and say) ‘well look, there’s a dead deer.’ We just keep going. Nothing’s thought about it. ... MoDOT is always broke. They’re not going to pick them up. And I’m not gonna pick them up, I don’t think. ... It’s an eyesore and we as a community should be ashamed of ourselves for letting that happen.”

LAST UPDATED ON JANUARY 18TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

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