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Stoddard County Commissioners Meeting, Monday, July 12, 2021

JULY 15TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Bloomfield, MO - The Stoddard County Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, July 12, 2021.

MU Extension

Two representatives from the University of Missouri Extension Stoddard County office, Kristi Baker and Gary Wyman, informed the commissioners that they had failed to apply for reimbursement of all money owed to them by the county.

The extension didn't submit Social Security payroll tax to the county for reimbursement. Wyman, Stoddard County Extension Council president, said the extension will be asking for those funds to be reimbursed. "There was an issue of when things were posted and the end of the month hitting. We have corrected that moving forward."

"So I want to warn you, you're going to get an inflated request for one month," Wyman said.

Baker, county specialist for the 4-H youth development, told the commissioners that the Extension remains short-handed because of a hiring freeze by the University of Missouri. She said the county is looking for a Youth Program Associate and an Agronomist.

Parking Lot Bid - Maintenance

Bid for the parking lot maintenance were received. Only one bid for \$6,625.00 came in from Causey Company LLC. The commission accepted the bid to seal and stripe and fill cracks in the two parking lots located across the street from the Justice Center. The county leases the parking lots from the First Baptist Church of Bloomfield; however the county must maintain the property according to Danny Talkington, Presiding Commissioner. When asked how much was the lease he stated, "Off-hand I'm not sure I would have to pull the contract and look at the details."

Causey submitted a separate \$1,000 bid to fix a hole in the parking lot. Carol Jarrell, Commissioner, was not in favor of paying for a hole repair on the rented property. Steve Jordan, Commissioner, said the hole was a structural problem, not a maintenance issue.

SB40 Appointments - Error in June 28, 2021 Minutes

Per Danny Talkington a vote need to be retaken on the SB40 appointments from the previous meeting. There was an error in the June 28, 2021 minutes. The Senate Bill 40 was omitted from the description of the vote.

Jordan and Talkington voted 2-0 to reappoint Josh Hester. Jarrell abstained because she attends the church in which Hester is the pastor.

The commissioners voted 3-0 to reappoint Danny Griffin and Ray McLane.

Jarrell recommended the Commission send them an official letter informing them of their reappointments.

American Rescue Plan - Distribution of Money

Dee Loflin, owner of ShowMe Times, told commissioners that fellow business owners have asked if any of the ARP money would be made available to help small businesses.

"Back in January, actually January 11th in a commissioners meeting, you (Danny Talkington) had stated that if any monies came down the pipe, and it could be used for businesses," stated Loflin. "You would take care of the businesses who applied or the Cares Act that either didn't receive any monies or only got partial monies. So the Rescue Act does provide for small businesses."

"Also I had asked two weeks ago since everyone was asking for monies how the commissioners were going to distribute these monies," asked Loflin. "What are the guidelines as to how these monies will be distributed."

"Then there is the issue about SCAD who was approved for monies, but somehow they were forgotten and they never got their reimbursement," continued Loflin. "The commissioners approved that money, voted on it, put it in the minutes, never at an open or closed meeting redacted that approval."

"One, what can I tell the businesses, two, are you going to make good on your promise to those businesses, and three when are you going to pay the Stoddard County Ambulance District their money that you already approved? Those are my questions today." stated Loflin.

Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington said, "until we get through with our work session, there's not a thing I can do."

Stoddard County Ambulance District - Chuck Kasting, Director

The Stoddard County Ambulance District board is considering legal action against the county concerning pre-approved Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds the district didn't receive

The county approved a request of \$219,922.98 for the purchase of LUCAS CPR devices, four ventilators and 10 digital handheld pulse ox machines during its Oct. 13, 2020, meeting. **"Commissioner Jarrell made the motion to approve SCAD to purchase, under COVID-19 funds, ten LUCAS CPR devices for \$146,412.10; four 2011 ventilators for \$67,410.88 and ten digital handheld pulse ox machines for \$5,700. Commissioner Jordan seconds with all three in favor."**

"I have been directed by the board to let y'all know that they are considering and they are prepared to take legal action if they need to in order to settle this," SCAD Director Chuck Kasting said. "They feel very strongly that that money was pre-approved, and therefore we should have received that money in some way by some means."

Associate commissioner Carol Jarrell wanted to make a statement to Kasting. "I am sorry that you went through this," Jarrell said. "I'm sorry that you had to face your board after being newly appointed and say, 'hey look we're \$219,000 in the hole.' "

"I don't know what happened. Point 10 fingers at me. But somewhere along the way, something happened," Jarrell said. "Didn't even know it happened until you came in in December asking for your reimbursement of things that you had purchased with the agreement that we would reimburse you back for the ambulance..You were transporting more

Covid patients than anyone else..... ... To be honest I was shocked that this had fallen

through the cracks somehow, and other businesses got paid quite a bit of money on Nov. 30 up until December something. I don't know the exact date, but they did."

Jarrell said the approval appeared in the minutes.

"We never did amend these minutes," Jarrell said. "These minutes stand, in my opinion, as proof, recorded. And I guess what I'm trying to say is ... I personally want you to get your money. I'm just gonna lay it out there because a word that we give is a word to be kept."

Neither Jordan or Talkington spoke on the matter nor made eye contact with Mr. Kasting while he talked or while Jarrell apologized.

Kasting said the ambulance board does not want to pursue these funds through legal proceedings. He reiterated the board has not filed any lawsuits or hired an attorney.

"We would have never purchased that had it not been with the assumption that we were getting that money back," Kasting said. "We would have never purchased over \$219,000 worth of equipment to help us fight COVID and protect our patients and the citizens. We would have found other ways (to help)."

The Commissioners closed the meeting and chose to have a "work" session to follow to discuss the distribution of the Recovery Act Monies, reimbursement to those businesses who were promised monies, and the SCAD reimbursement that had previously been approved. No voting can take place as it is not an official closed session meeting.

LAST UPDATED ON JULY 15TH 2021 BY DEE LOFLIN

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