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Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis Holds First Meeting of the New Year

JANUARY 04TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

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The Commissioners met on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in the government building located in Bloomfield, MO. Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis was sworn in by Judge Satterfield on December 31, 2022. He submitted the documentation to Pam Wheeler Chief Deputy Clerk.

"I thank those who were elected as they were soon in on Friday morning." commented Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis. "My family takes a vacation after Christmas to allow our employees to be with their families. I was unable to attend the swearing in so I had Judge Satterfield meet me at my office and he swore me in on December 31, 2022."

"Over the past four years the operations with the county governments have changed tremendously from when I was in office," stated Mathis. " There are office holders who I hadn't worked with in the past are going to have to get used to me because I won't govern the same styles as Danny Talkington.

"And I got to get used to the style of the office holders that I will have to work with as well," continued Mathis. "It is my belief that the business of our county governments and businesses in an open public dialogue, the media should have access to whatever information they need in order to write the story which will effectively inform our county citizens as to what's happening with our tax dollars in Stoddard County. That being the case, Miss Loflin, you are the queen of Sunshine Law requests. That being said, I hear about it, so the information comes up and you need help getting something you call me

and we will go from there."

"I believe in transparency is the foundation for effective government. That's going to be our motto as we go forward," Mathis said. "I certainly hope that anyone, citizens or office holders, that have any questions that may come to me with a direct question, likewise, I will do the same. We will again, try to keep an open dialogue for everyone."

"General revenue is at an all time high. Stoddard County is in a very good place financially. A lot of good fortune from that general revenue has come on the backs of taxpayers who are paying sales tax on goods and services that have gone up some 20 to 25% due to inflation," stated Mathis. "I don't believe that the increase in sales tax revenue that funds county government has based on consumer confidence through our economy being better off than it was years ago through the purchase of stock markets."

"I want to make sure our infrastructure is in place, whether it be rural bridges, internet, making sure our children still have an opportunity to go to school in a safe environment. We are going to take care of our buildings and grounds. As far as the budget, we will be responsible and monies will be spent in a manner that citizens are Stoddard County deserve."

"If there are no questions, moving on." Commissioner Steve Jordan has been removed from office from a judgement by the honorable Joshua Underwood.

Commissioner Carol Jarrell made a motion to have a Special Session Meeting on Wednesday, January 4, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. to interview and appoint a Commissioner to replace Jordan. Seconded by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis. Both voted yes and it passed.

Mathis asked if Cecil Weeks would notify the Governor of their intentions and per State Statute 105.030 Vacancies, how filled - "The County Commission of all nonstarter counties shall, no later than fourteen (14) days after the occurrence of the vacancy, fill the vacancy by appointment, and the person so appointed by the county commission, after full qualifying and entering upon the discharge of hie or her duties under Thea appointment, shall continue in office until the Governor fills the vacancy by appointment under subsection 1 of the section or until the vacancy is filled by operation of another provision of law."

The Commission has at least seven individuals that are interested in getting the appointment.

Cecil Weeks, County Clerk, also told the Commissioners that they could appoint an Associate Commissioner for the 14 days. Weeks also said that the "job" will be posted today to the Governor's Website. They will take applications online for the position. It may take until mid-February for the Governor to appoint someone. The Governor's office will also send an email to Weeks office to clarify all the requirements for the Associate Commissioner position.

Update on the Employee Health Insurance

Commissioner Jarrell updated with regards to the Health Insurance. She stated the in-network and out-of-network deductibles, the maximum out-of-pocket expenses, and the total cost of the premium per person to the County at \$776.21. She spoke to Mr. McCarty on Friday and he said that we basically have the same insurance as last year with Mr. Billington. "So I am still unclear about everything he doesn't give direct answers from the questions I ask. There were retirement questions and COBRA questions."

Mr. McCarty said the employees would receive an email with their temporary insurance card; however the email was sent to Pam Wheeler who printed them out and gave to the departments. Mrs. Wheeler stated that several were wrong and that they were coming in to let her know.

Mathis asked who we had the County's property and vehicle insurance with locally.

Weeks stated County Wide Insurance was the broker and Traveler's Insurance was who they had it with and that there were some claims out there, but that would be a private matter between Weeks and Mathis and not for open Commission meeting.

Commissioner asked if the County had a salary structure for beginning employees. It was stated that the amount was \$16.05; however there was nothing ever voted on in a Commissioner meeting nor in any previous minutes.

Devin Miller from the Shelter Workshop was in attendance and gave an update. "We are making extensive renovations at the Workshop and upgrading the warehouse. This has not impacted the operation out there, just the construction has been delayed due to rain and snow issues," commented Miller.

Ms. Loflin, ShowMe Times, asked if the Commissioners would look into Duck Creek Township and their paving project grant. Talkington was supposed to sign off on the grant; however according to Doug Lowery at a previous meeting this had not happened yet and they lost their grant because of a missed deadline. Mathis will get with Katelyn Lambert at Bootheel Regional Planning Commission and dive into the matter.

Mr. Mathis discussed a citizen's personal property tax delinquent information with Mr. Josh Spearman, County Collector. No names were mentioned, but neither have the statutory authority to relieve the debt or the additional fines unless there was an error or omission. It is set by the state of Missouri.

Commissioner Conference for March 1st, 2nd and 3rd at Osage Beach, Missouri.
Commissioners are required to attend or lose \$1,000 of their pay.

ARPA Fund Updates

Presiding Commissioner Mathis stated he will get with Katylyn Lambert at the BRPC and see what monies have been promised, allocated, and distributed.

William Dowdy, County maintenance, stated that they have been working on a generator project for some time now. He had asked the old generator be moved from the Sheriff's dept over here and then purchase one for the Sheriff's dept. The plan was not to purchase two generators, but to move one and purchase one. "There was some monies coming back to the County to purchase this new generator, but we are in standby mode in delivery and not sure of a timeline," stated Dowdy.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the minutes from December 27, 2022.
Mathis seconded the motion. Both voted yes and passed without prejudice.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the minutes from December 30, 2022.
Mathis seconded the motion. Both voted yes and passed without prejudice.

Sawyer Smith, Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney and Justin Allen, Stoddard County Investigator, both stepped in for a few moment to attend the meeting and wanted to say hello to the Commission. Smith had to be in court in Stoddard and Butler counties today, but wanted to wish everyone a happy new year.

Mathis asked about the new locks being changed over the holiday weekend and not done during the week.. Smith stated it was a dire emergency to change the locks out since he took over at 12:01 a.m. January 1st. "Not all the keys were transitioned to us over the weekend so I had to change the locks." He didn't want anyone to have access to their computers and files. Smith stated that the office was left an absolute wreck and there was some damage to the walks so it needed a fresh coat of paint. Also one vehicle that the previous PA used had a flat tire and is currently not functional.

Mathis reminded Smith that the County Commissioners were in charge of building and grounds. Any painting, moving of furniture out, and changing locks must be approved by The Commission and there are protocols in place to remove furniture from inventory, or

adding to inventory and others who will need a master key such as maintenance. Mathis also said we need to use our local locksmith and not one outside of the county, so in the future go through the County Commissioners.

City of Bernie water was briefly discussed as there have been many complaints on Facebook and to various people. Commissioner Jarrell reached out to Mayor Tillman.

He stated that they were waiting on a USDA Grant. Jarrell offered him information on a CDBG Grant thru the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission in the amount of \$750,000 as well as ARPA Funds that were still available. According to Justin Allen, the city did get a Bond passed about two years ago for water projects. Currently some of the city residents are experienced "brown" water.

There will be a city council meeting on Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to adjourn at 12:03 p.m. Mathis seconded the motion. Both voted yes and passed without prejudice.

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