

Local News



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Stoddard County Commission Meeting for January 23, 2023

JANUARY 23RD 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting for January 23, 2023

Stoddard County Commissioners opened their meeting on Monday, January 23, 2023 with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer. They then read over the minutes from the past meetings.

Motion made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell to approve the Minutes for Monday, January 9, 2023. Seconded by Commissioner Greg Lintz. Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis asked that the minutes be corrected to reflect he was a member of the SoutheastHEALTH Regional Board. The name of the board was recorded incorrectly. All three voted yes.

Motion made by Jarrell to approve the minutes for Wednesday, January 11, 2023. Seconded by Lintz. All three voted yes.

Motion made by Jarrell to approve the Tuesday, January 17, 2023. Seconded by Lintz. All three voted yes.

Mr. Loyd Rice with GoSEMO Fiber and Electric

"Share with the commission on the annual update," stated Rice.

"We have paid \$329,000 worth of taxes to Stoddard County. More than \$125,000 is due to hanging fiber. We serve the bigger half of Stoddard County. We have a natural boundary with Crowley's Ridge. The need is high for fiber. We definitely want to work with IDA and the County with infrastructure. We are hoping to hear some announcements

for help with the western half of Stoddard County."

He also stated he was a Bloomfield resident and that he hated to see some of our gravel roads falling in. he said the county needed to keep being progressive and moving forwards with repairs.

David Cooper, Water District #5

\$31,000 + was initially approved for ARPA Funds. Turned in receipts. We are limited on funds so we had to wait until we had the monies to spend and then turn in receipts. Now it's my understanding that those rules have changed. We can ask for monies to make improvements.

Katelyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission, states that these expenditures are deemed good and the Commission can reimburse Waters District #5 for a total of \$13,200.15. Water District #5 now has \$15,015.15 left from their initial approved ARPA Fund amount.

"The first phase was to patch leaks using ARPA Funds. The leaks we know about have been taken care of for now," commented Cooper.

Requests by the board of Water District #5 for additional ARPA Funds. "We are currently purchasing water from the city of Bloomfield. We have done this for at least four years," per Cooper.

"Digital Mapping was approved by the Board as a recommendation from Missouri Rural Water. They hope to have it completed by February. We have located our valves," continued Cooper. "We are also trying to locate all the water meters. You will see a lot of blue markings around the area. The water valve replacement is a big chore. We have several valves that we feel are leaking. We could pay the city of Bloomfield to replace the valves."

County Road 510 is about five miles long and there are one or two sets of valves on that five mile stretch.

"The largest item is the meter replacement. Missouri Rural Water has also recommended that they replace the meter replacement with a wireless system. We would have to use an outside source to do that work. I have estimates as well." stated Cooper.

"Missouri Rural Water will come in and do a Rate Study so we can tell where we need to be as far as charging for water, etc. Our biggest problem over the years is that one meter has been connected to say five houses and we have some that are stealing water. We have

roughly 300 customers," stated Cooper.

A voucher will need to be filled out and approved once the Budget Hearing has happened on Wednesday, January 25, 2023.

Water District #5 is requesting \$224,000 today. Their request has been sent to the attorney for approval.

There will be about \$30,000 left from the ARPA Funds if all the requests that are in will be allocated and paid per Lambert.

Commissioner Greg Lintz contacted Bell City Fire - They initially requested \$253,170.00. They were told to seek other funds by previous Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington. They did not seek any other funds as they did not know what to do. They felt they were all matching funds and they didn't have the funds to match. They were told to contact Lambert at BRPC. Money was for a building for the fire department. Contact person is Kevin Julian at Bell City Fire..

June 28, 2021 city of Bloomfield requested \$400,000 in ARPA Funds in order to pay down their loan with the USDA for the sewer and water project. This would lesson their monthly bill to the citizens of Bloomfield. He had called the Commission several times and no one returned his call. Lambert will contact the attorney and make sure it is a viable expenditure.

Mayor Tilmon came by Friday from the city of Bernie originally requested 183,000+ on July 26, 2021. Tilmon told the Commission that he had contacted previous Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington several time, but never got returned phone calls. They wanted to refurbish a lift station and needed to put an alarm system in their lift station and get some spare lift pumps.

Waters Engineering has resigned from the city of Bernie and they have now hired Smith & Co. in Poplar Bluff for the water basin project and other projects.

The city of Bernie requested \$480,000 for the water basin project. Mathis has contacted Smith & Co. and talked to them about the cost. The city of Bernie is having a Special Public Hearing on Monday, January 23, 2023 for the CDGB Grant information.

Water District #4 for \$247,000 August 30, 2021. Commissioner Jarrell spoke to them and they are still very interested in the ARPA Funds.

In another conversation, "We are going to update all the County boards," stated Mathis. "Many of them have not been updated in years." The Commissioners will be looking at

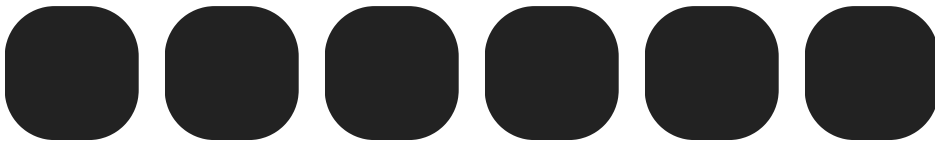
the appointments over the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Greg Lintz made a motion to adjourn at 12:42 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Mathis. Both voted yes as Commissioner Jarrell had to leave a few minutes early.

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting, Monday, December 19, 2022

DECEMBER 20TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting, Monday, December 19, 2022

The Stoddard County Commissioners held a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 19, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Government Building.

Doug Lowery attended the meeting on behalf of the Duck Creek Township on the grant funding with Bootheel Regional Planning Commission. Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington will get with Katelyn Lambert, BRPC, to see if there are any updates.

Colter Gabler, Smith & Company Engineering had a change order for a culvert on County Road 760 as it needs to be replaced. Both Commissioners signed the order.

Russ Oliver, Prosecuting Attorney for Stoddard County, dropped off a request to purchase a table, some storage items, and his computer.

"There will be two additional meetings following Christmas before the end of the year," commented Talkington. One regular meeting on Tuesday, December 27th at 9:00 a.m. the other meeting will be a meeting on Friday for any additional budget changes, time will be announced later.

Commissioner Carol Jarrell made a motion to take the interest income on the ARPA funds to be added to the ARPA funds as a line item from the General Revenue. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes.

Greg Mathis, new Presiding Commissioner, dropped in. He had been to see Cecil Weeks, County Clerk, and asked if he could use one of his employees to take the minutes for the Commissioners in 2023. He said that Weeks would provide someone. He also invited him to attend meetings, it is up to Weeks as to whether he attends or not.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2022. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes.

Here are the minutes from that meeting:

Visitors: Kay Asbell - Recorder, Dee Loflin - ShowMe Times, Josh Ayers - Dexter Statesman, Josh Speakman - Collector, Matthew Dowdy - Citizen, Katelyn Lambert - BRPC, and Tiffany Belcher - BRPC.

Associate Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to award the 2022 single audit to Devereux & Company CPAs & Business Advisors for \$17,500. Passed

Associate Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the revised minutes for November 21, 2022 to state the audit bids to be submitted by Friday 12/9/22 at 4:00 p.m. Passed

Associate Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the minutes for December 5, 2022. Passed

Associate Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to adjourn. Passed

Gary Snider, citizen, entered the meeting to discuss his concerns about the clean-out of Ditch #14. He says if we get heavy rain it floods the area. Commissioner Talkington gave him a list of board members to contact.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to adjourn at 11:37 a.m. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes.

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Stoddard County Commissioners Meeting, Monday, December 12, 2022

DECEMBER 12TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Stoddard County Commissioners Meeting, Monday, December 12, 2022](#)

The Stoddard County Commissioners met on Monday, December 12, 2022 at the government building in Bloomfield.

Katelyn Lambert, Asst Executive Director, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission updated the Commissioners on the ARPA Funds. She presented them with a spreadsheet.

Total amount of ARPA Funds available to the County is \$5,637,766.00 Funds requested are \$4,338,255.96. Funds actually paid to date \$591,848.23. Funds must be paid out by December 31, 2023.

Matthew Dowdy, Concerned Citizen

He had a letter dated November 22, 2022 from Liberty Mutual Insurance (County uses for their bonding insurance), stating "that under the fidelity insurance policy, only the insured, Stoddard County can be indemnified against covered losses allegedly caused by a

dishonest or fraudulent set committed by one of their employees. Only Stoddard County may submit a claim. A review of your correspondence indicates that you are not a proper claimant under the terms of the policy. As such, the Surety must deny this claim in its entirety."

The letter goes on to read, "We have contacted Stoddard County to advise it of the above information so that they may decide how to proceed. Nothing in this letter is to be construed as a waiver of any of the rights or defenses available to The Ohio Casualty Group or Stoddard County."

Talkington said he would have to hire an attorney and file a suit against the Prosecuting Attorney.

"I'd like to thank the commissioners for their time today," stated Dowdy.

Kay Asbell, Stoddard County Recorder, attended the meeting.

Kay Asbell asked the commissioners if retirees were included in the new insurance plan because her staff had a Zoom meeting last week and it was not in the slides.

Commissioner Talkington said yes the retirees were on the plan if they had been employees of the County for at least 20 years.

2022 Single Audit Bid Opening at 10:12 a.m.

Bid #1 Daniel Jones and Associates CPA for \$25,000, received on November 8th

Bid #2 Devereux and Companies CPA for \$17,500, received on November 10th

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to accept the bid from Devereux and Companies CPA for \$17,500. Presiding Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both said yes and passed.

Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector attend the meeting.

" A couple of programming errors was found in our tax system during the audit this summer and the voucher I was questioned on by the commission corrected one of them. The financial correction that occurred from the programming error was made this Nov since the amount of revenue that gets distributed to all the various political subdivisions during November and December is increased. It was corrections from years 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021."

In last week's meeting Speakman discussed a bank card to be used by elected officials.

"I have requested the County Commission look into utilizing Central Bank who has a department that specializes in Municipal and County Government credit cards. This will keep county business, such as postage, hotel stays at statutorily required association trainings etc. from being applied to personal debit cards and then reimbursed to the individual. I feel as if it's a more transparent and simpler approach. The cards come with the county logo and the tax exempt number on them, and would follow the same bill pay approval process as all other county bills."

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the revised minutes from November 21, 2022 to state the audit bids must be turned in by December 9th at 4 p.m. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes and passed.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 5th meeting. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both said yes and passed. A copy of the minutes will not be available until next week's meeting.

Commissioner Jarrell asked Talkington if he had heard from Mr. McCarty at Arch Brokerage about the exclusion of St. Francis or making the deductible higher or co-pays higher. St. Francis is in-network for HealthLink Insurance; however has been excluded in the County's health insurance plan. This is from a discussion in last week's meeting with Josh Speakman, County Collector. Talkington state he had not heard from Mr. McCarty as to the changes in the insurance plan. He will contact him this week.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to adjourn at 11:57 a.m. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes and passed.

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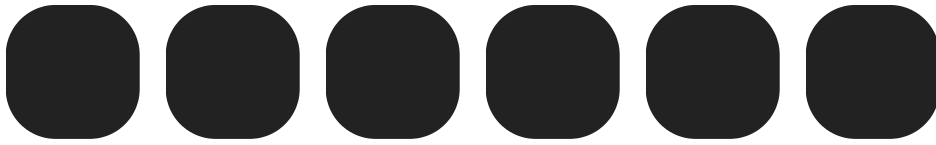
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Stoddard County Commission Meeting for Monday, November 7, 2022

NOVEMBER 07TH 2022 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Stoddard County Commission Meeting for Monday, November 7, 2022](#)

Bloomfield, MO - The Stoddard County Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, November 7, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Jeff Crocker, Heartland Area Land Owners, introduced himself to the Commissioners. Crocker represents landowners who want to develop their land. For example farmers who might want to put solar panels on their land. Commonly referred to as HALO, "They seek to organize, educate, and engage member landowners to better advocate for their own land use priorities. Their landowner members are passionate about their land, their world, and stewarding the resources that feed America and power its economy."

Bell City Update

Bell City Improvement Corporation (PIC) functions alone; however it is up to the mayor and the city council to get involved and appointment members. This according to Peter Coutavas, IDA Director. Mr. Finney had come to a previous meeting and asked questions about the Bell City Improvement Corporation. Mr. Coutavas will call him and let him know what he found out with regards to the group.

Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

According to Katelyn Lambert, they have almost completed the roof for the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission. Tomorrow is the Bid Opening for the HVAC. Once all that is complete that should be the end of the grant they received.

Duck Creek Township - Administration Update

The only Bid received for the Duck Creek Township was from Bootheel Regional Planning Commission. It was \$30,000 for the administration of the blacktop of a road in the Duck Creek Township. The Community Development Block Grant require the bidding of the administration of the grant. The Commissioners sent a letter to 23 potential bidders.

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to accept the bid from Bootheel Regional Planning Commission to administer the grant for Duck Creek Township. The grant will go towards the paving project. Seconded by Commissioner Talkington. Both voted yes.

Commissioner Carol Jarrell made a motion to accept the minutes from October 31, 2022. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes.

The minutes stated two items. Associate Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to approve the minutes for October 24, 2022 and a motion to adjourn at 10:42 a.m.

Commissioner Carol Jarrell made a motion to accept the Ads & Abates from the Collector, Josh Speakman. Commissioner Talkington seconded the motion. Both voted yes.

Stoddard County Collector Josh Speakman Update

Real Estate Tax and Personal Property Tax bills went out in the mail. Don't forget you can do an instalment payment plan with the County Collector. Go to the website www.stoddardcollector.org

Sign up now to pay your 2022 Stoddard County taxes on a monthly installment basis. Contact the collector's office at (573) 568-3327 for more information.

"Your payments will be based on the amount you paid for the previous year taxes. There will be ten equal installments, with the eleventh and final installment being the balance of the tax due. Taxes not paid in full by December 31st will result in late penalties and fees being charged which will be the responsibility of the taxpayer; and, the payment plan may be terminated.

We will only accept automated payment from your bank account. Please contact our office for further information regarding payment. If you are planning to sign up for automated payment, please fill out and sign the Automated Payment Service authorization and agreement form to enroll in the installment payment plan. Please read the Installment Program fact sheet for additional information regarding the automated payment process.

Real estate and personal property taxes are eligible for installment payments at this time. Payment plans will be set up for each individual account. Delinquent taxes are not eligible for the payment plan. For example, your 2021 real estate taxes must be paid before enrolling in a payment plan for your 2022 real estate taxes.

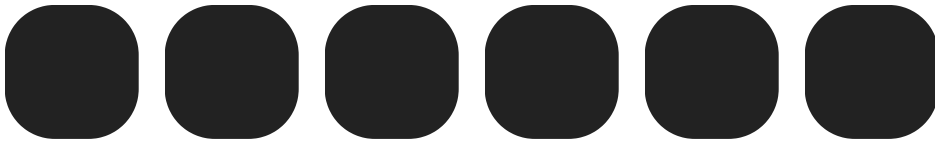
If you currently escrow your real estate taxes with a mortgage company or related servicing company, you will not be able to set up a payment plan for that particular parcel of land at this time. Remember, payment plans will be set up for each individual account regardless of the number of properties you own."

Commissioner Jarrell made a motion to adjourn at 11:33 a.m. Seconded by Talkington. Both voted yes.

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