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# Stoddard County Commission Meeting, February 6, 2023 and Hazard Mitigation Plan Kick-Off Meeting Combined

FEBRUARY 12TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting, February 6, 2023 and Hazard Mitigation Plan Kick-Off Meeting

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis opened the meeting the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer on Monday, February 6, 2023 at 9 a.m. in the Commissioners' Chambers in Bloomfield.

**Garry Brady** - Stoddard County employee with the Sheriff's Department.

He had many concerns about the new insurance the County has acquired. First they have not been able to get my name corrected on the insurance. They have my first name spelled incorrectly and my last name as Atkinson. "We have asked several questions to Mr. McCarty with the new insurance and he answers each time he doesn't know, but he will find out. We haven't received those answers. Also my prescription went up 42% and we were told there would not be any changes or if so very little. That's not a little change."

I want to know if the county saved money by changing insurance as multiple people have issues at the moment?"

Commissioner Maths stated he has spoken to Mr. McCarty on more than one occasion. He also stated that on October 27, 2022 the formers commissioners accepted the policy. There have been multiple changes to the insurance since then.

Mathis then turned the floor over to Commissioner Carol Jarrell due to her being the only commissioner involved in the insurance decision in 2022.

"I apologize that you did not get any answers from Mr. McCarty at Arch Brokerage. I have heard that the premiums have gone up," stated Commissioner Carol Jarrell. "On December 19, 2022 we signed and accepted the new plan. I am not sure why Mr. McCarty does not know the answers."

Jarrell stated that they went with this company believing it would save the county some money. Now she is unsure as she has heard the premiums have gone up. She also said that Week and former Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington had discussed the insurance on numerous occasions with Mr. McCarty.

She asked Weeks who was standing in the doorway if the premiums had gone up. his response was that he had not sat in on any of the insurance business meetings and did not know anything.

Jarrell alleged that Talkington poke to Weeks about the insurance and that McCarty himself had stated that he had seen a lot of time in Weeks' office talking to him about the insurance and gathering information.

According to Cecil Weeks, County Clerk the premium is \$776.21 per employee per month paid for by the County and not the employee. About half of that is administrative fees per person per month paid to the insurance company for things like answering questions and fixing issues.

Both Mathis and Jarrell apologized to Mr. Brady. Mathis said if McCarty did not call him back the County would look at options to pursue something else. Mathis said he would personally keep Brady in the loop.

## **Loyd Rice**

SEMO Electric Cooperative has been awarded a \$16.6 million grant as part of the Missouri Department of Economic Development's (DED) \$261 million Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program. It is a reimbursable grant and will cover approximately 80% of the total cost of the cooperative's future projects.

Mathis asked if this money would finish the project for the western part of Stoddard County? Rice stated along with the \$1 million ARPA matching funds that would finished the project.

## **Doug Lowery - Duck Creek Township**

Mathis stated that he and the rest of the Commission has spoken to all folks that requested ARPA funds that people requested almost a year and a half ago. No one from the previous Commissioner returned their phone calls. Mathis stated that Mrs. Lambert was also here and would give an update on the ARPA funds.

## **Dave Cooper - Water District #5**

Wondering where we were on ARPA funds specific to the requests made by Water District #5. Mathis stated that Katelyn Lambert was here to give us an update.

## **Katelyn Lambert - Bootheel Regional Planning Commission**

Bloomfield City - The attorney for the county, Travis Elliot, did not recommend using ARPA funds to pay any debt services like a loan. This would be in reference to the city of Bloomfield's request for \$400,000 to pay on a USDA Loan. There was no one present at the meeting representing the city of Bloomfield.

Water District #5 - According to Elliot, the reimbursements for meter replacements, water value replacements, and utility location marking would be eligible. He sent an email to Lambert stating the Commission looked good and the sent an email to Lambert to recommend to pay those funds to Water District #5 if the Commission elected to do so in a meeting.

Bell City Fire Department's request for ARPA funds was for the building of a new fire station. "Funds available under the revenue loss eligible use category generally may be used to meet the non-federal cost-share or matching requirements of other federal programs; however, they would need to be aware that by doing so, the requirements of ARPA as well as the CDBG program would both apply."

City of Bernie - Elliot stated in an email that renovating the lift station, purchasing an alarm, and acquiring backup lift pumps would all be eligible uses, subject to the Commission agreeing to those taking into consideration the existing request of \$480,000 for the backwash basin.

PWDS #4 - Elliot stated in an email that the new piping is an eligible use, but they should be very careful with understanding the numerous requirements where USDA loan and other grants are involved.

Stoddard County Ambulance District - Under the standard allowance, the County could fund the purchase of new computers in the amount of \$8,809.15

Duck Creek Township - Everything looked good for their requests. They would need to do the basic 3 bids for each project etc going forward like any other grant funding.

She also provided a new and up-to-date Distribution Agreement that was done by the County attorney. This reporter had not seen such an agreement in any other meeting. Apparently all entities requesting ARPA funds were supposed to sign a Distribution

Agreement with previous Commission.

### **Stoddard County Sheriff Carl Hefner**

Sheriff said his biggest issue is manpower. "We have an ad running on our Facebook page." There are 87 people in jail currently. He reminded the Commission about the pay-out on PTO time from the previous meeting. He has an employees with a lot of PTO, but will lose it if he doesn't use the time off.

Mathis suggested to the other commissioners of approving a vacation pay-out for one year with option of changing it back. The option would be paying out vacation time rather than taking vacation hours.

Carol Jarrell makes the motion to authorizes County employee purchase their vacation time for the 2023 year with the stipulation that the county commission will revisit the 2024 budget. Seconded by Greg Lintz. All three voted yes. Employees will now be able to purchase their unused vacation time.

Motion made by Commissioner Greg Lintz for \$13,200.15 for Water District #5 for ARPA Reimbursement Funds.

### **Stoddard County Hazard Mitigation Plan Kick-Off**

About 25 people attended the Stoddard County Hazard Mitigation Plan Kick-off at 11 a.m. at the Stoddard County Commissioner's chamber in Bloomfield.

Christy LeGrand, Community Development Specialist from the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission made the presentation.

What is this plan? It reduces long-term risk to people and property. "We will be proactive," stated LeGrand.

What's new this year? Climate Change is new this year and we will address what impact this has on our County.

One reason we do this is because if each town or school district can apply for FEMA funding and other grants for non-disaster funding. FEMA makes funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs including Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program (BRIC), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program.

"Timeline begins with the Kick-Off Meeting today then have a second meeting in March. We will send out a questionnaire to each and have you complete. You must complete in

order to be a part of this plan. We will have meetings in April as well. Then we will meet with the commission for public comments and initiate resolution. In June we will finalize resolutions and submit first draft to SEMO/FEMA by July 14, 2023," according to LeGrand.

What is required of each organization? Each organization must pass the Resolution for their school district and/or city.

The last Mitigation Plan was created in 2018 and finalized in 2019.

The Stoddard County Commissioners have two Mondays in a row that are holidays for the County. Monday, February 13th is Abe Lincoln's Birthday therefore the weekly meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting minutes from Monday, January 30, 2023 were not available to approve.

Next week Smith & Company will be on the agenda to discuss the Water Project at Bernie.

Motion to adjourn at 12:07 p.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Commissioner Lintz. All voted yes.

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