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Stoddard County Commissioner Meeting, Tuesday, February 14, 2023, Update on City of Bernie Water

FEBRUARY 16TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Stoddard County Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer for the county Tuesday, February 14, 2023. Monday, the Stoddard County offices were closed for Lincoln's birthday.

Update on City of Bernie Water

Bill Robison with Smith & Company along with Greg Bell, Project Manager and a water and waste water expert gave an update on the city of Bernie water basin update. The city of Bernie had requested \$480,000 of ARPA funding from the commission.

"We are in a contract with the city of Bernie and Mayor Tilmon. Spent the last few weeks gathering information and reviewing plans," commented Robison. "This basin project is extremely important and needs to be done."

"The backwash basin basically when the backwash they can't backwash at the capacity they need. It was built in 1993 and just can't handle the capacity," stated Bell. "The new basin will be tied into the old one. Also the filters they have in place are clogged up so with a new basin they can blow that back out and media can get out and clean it out. The material will be concrete and can last more than 30 years. With this basin they can alternate the backwashing. We did find that the water plant is in pretty good shape. It could use some cosmetic changes, but the structure is good."

"When you get this new basin built and the population increases, just how long can this basin last?" asked Mathis. Bell stated at least into the 20-30 year range. The filter media has about a 15 year cycle and it hasn't been changed since 1994 so we have sent out quotes for those items first.

Water line replacements and piping at the plant is an ongoing project as well.

"What is the cost of this?" asked Commissioner Greg Lintz. Bell stated that he has seen around \$570,000, but could possibly see it around \$490,000. Just have get the complete plans done and the quotes in.

Commissioner Carol Jarrell had no questions at this time, but stated that she was glad Smith and Company were on track to getting something done in Bernie as the people of Bernie needed clean drinking water.

Bell stated that if we could get started today it would take 3-4 months to get the backwash basin completed. It's a 40'x40' basin with a 14' deep containment of 60,000 gallon capacity. The walls are 15" thick.

"We are moving quickly as possible and getting quotes. They are due in on February 22, 2023 at Smith & Co," stated Robison. "It will be gravity feed. The pumps will be downsized and won't require a larger motor and it will allow the basin to be filled and send to the sewer system at a slower rate which will be better for the city of Bernie. I have met with Mr. Tilmon weekly and got some of the older plans and looked at those and discuss the project. I feel pretty good that we have a pretty good start."

It was noted by Cecil Week, County Collector who lives in Bernie that the city had posted on Monday, for people to conserve water on Saturday, February 18th so they can repair a water leak in the tower. Mayor Tilmon was not present for the meeting.

Stars & Stripes Museum Request for Land

Sue Tippen attended the meeting on behalf of the Stars and Stripes Museum requesting ground be donated by the County Commission for a new building.

"We consider the Stars and Stripes Museum as the major tourist attraction for Stoddard County," stated Tippen. "We are looking to build a new building. We have about 1,000 visitors per year and we would like to have room for new exhibits and storage for donations.

"We decided the only answer to our problem is to build a new building. We have an architect already in place and we want to build on the south side of the barn," continued

Tippen. "We wanted a little more space/land behind the museum and requesting the County donate that land to us."

She said that the Veterans Commission at the cemetery said they may be willing to donate a strip of land to the museum as well. Building size is undetermined at this time, it's about 7 acres of land we need.. We will have a meeting with the architect in March.

David Cooper, Water District #5

Everything is going well at the water district. "I signed the Distribution Agreement for the ARPA Funds and waiting on the Commissioners to sign," commented Cooper, President of Water District #5.

Motion to sign the County Distribution ARPA Funds Agreement with Water District #5 made by Lintz, seconded by Jarrell. All three voted yes and duly passed.

"Our board is real solid and we have managed to get most of our leaks repaired. We are waiting for our ground to dry out and see if we have any more leaks. We are paying our bills to the city and hopefully within the next couple of months have the city of Bloomfield paid off for back water billing," continued Cooper.

Discussion about the County Audit

An email was received by County Clerk, Cecil Weeks from Devereux & Company that they have experienced an unforeseen severe staffing shortage that required them to realign and reallocate their hours for the rest of 2023. They will not have the hours to perform the audit that they earned the bid on for the 2022 accounting year.

On December 12, 2022 the previous Commission accepted the bid from Devereux and Company, CPA for \$17,500. Daniel Jones and Associates CPA had the only other bid for \$25,000.

Motion was made to call Daniel Jones and Associates to see if they can do the audit.

Cecil Weeks is to call them and ask since they had the second bid submitted in November of 2022. Commissioner Lintz made the motion and seconded by Jarrell. All three voted yes and duly passed.

Stoddard County Insurance Update

"We need about 60 days to get a smooth implementation of insurance," commented John McCarty, Arch Brokerage. " There wasn't much information available to get an item line by item line. So we didn't have the information available.

Here is a timeline he had on his phone and discussed during the Commission meeting.

10/24 Call from Commissioner Danny Talkington approved the bid
11/17 Talkington approved the plan design and summary 1500/5700 deductible
11/29 Talkington excluded St. Francis to drive business to SoutheastHEALTH
11/30 Open Enrollment Meeting began
12/05 Changes made to the deductible
12/07 Onboarding call with Cecil Week's office
12/12 Threshold change to make the process smoother
12/15 First Invoice was sent out to be paid
12/19 Talkington signed the voucher
12/22 Transferred over and sent it
12/22 New Funding approved
12/25 Week of Christmas got the last deductible change \$1,500/\$3,000
01/01 New Commissioner begins their 2023 year.
1/26 Got a response back there would be additional money to the County of \$30,000 in order to change the plan to a 3-tier plan. This would be the 4th change to the plan design in the last 3 months. This would not go into effect until March 1st or April 1st. And could be a train wreck with claims according to McCarty. The other option would be the HRA option and could be a train wreck as well. Southeast would have to be on the Explanation of Benefits in order to pay out on the plan.

As of today, February 14, 2023 the benefits states \$1,500 in-network/\$3,000 out-of-network according to Mr. McCarty.

The floor was open to questions and concerns: These will be general statements that McCarty has promised to fix timely.

There are people who have insurance cards who do not want the insurance.

One person had the wrong name and still does not have a physical new card yet.

The plan changed from Express Scripts to CVS and some prescriptions have increased by 40%

Benefits Overview booklet has not been distributed to employees. The Commission now has a copy of the latest plan design.

Employees who have terminated their employment have yet to receive COBRA under this plan. Federal law states the employees must receive COBRA notification within 30 days. ACP program was cancelled. About a half of dozen people are on this plan. Employees have numerous questions regarding that cancellation.

"I have asked you to talk to Pam Wheeler on more than one occasion and keep her in the loop as she administers the insurance for the county employees," commented

Commissioner Jarrell. "If they have an issue or complaint they come see her. I don't know why you have not gotten with her. I'm not sure if you were told by Mr. Weeks not to talk to her or by Talkington or what, but she need to be in the loop! We are not on the same page!

"It is not the commissioner's fault by no means," stated McCarty. He told the employees you can throw the rocks at me, but I don't want to tell you anything that is not correct.

There was much discussion around the room, but finally Mr. Mathis asked, "What are our options."

Stay on the plan for the remainder of the year would be the best option.

When asked how much is administrative cost per employee per month? McCarty did not know the exact amount.

If we have the HRA plan how does that work," asked Mathis. "It would be administered by a third party administrator; however the paperwork will end up on Wheeler's desk," commented McCarty.

"I'm just going to say this. The insurance is a cluster "#@*\$% ". I completely blame the previous commission and I point my finger at you Mrs. Jarrell," stated Mathis. The insurance should have been completely taking care of by December 31st. Most start working on insurance bids in late June or early July to get completely timely. The previous commission began in October. There is a one year contract with this insurance so they will be looking again in a few months, but the employees will have to deal with this for now.

Mathis stated do we have a motion to keep the insurance as it with the plan we have now. Commissioner Jarrell made the motion. Commissioner Lintz seconded. All three voted yes.

Ice Storm Pay for Employees Who Worked While County Offices Were Closed

Sheriff Hefner requested the Commission to make a decision on if employees should be paid if they came in when the County closed the offices to be paid time and a half.

Mathis stated to bring in a list of employees who worked when the offices were closed and the Commission would make a decision on Tuesday next week.

Motion to approve the minutes from January 30, 2023 meeting made by Jarrell, seconded by Lintz. All three voted yes and duly passed.

Motion to approve the minutes from February 6, 2023 meeting made by Jarrell, seconded by Lintz. All three voted yes and duly passed.

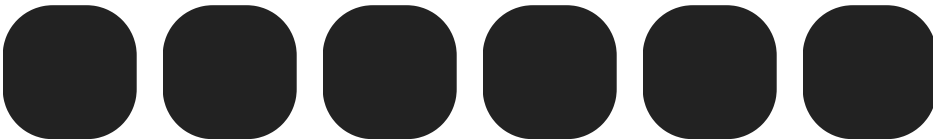
Motion made to except the change order for Brown Construction GNA in the amount of \$25,260.00 dated February 10, 2023 by Lintz. Seconded by Jarrell. All three voted yes and duly passed.

Motion to adjourn at 1: 18 p.m. made by Commissioner Lintz. Seconded by Commission Jarrell. All three voted yes.

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