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# Stoddard County Salary Commission, No Decision Made on Pay Increases for County Workers

OCTOBER 19TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Stoddard County Salary Commission, No Decision Made on Pay Increases for County Workers

The Stoddard County Salary Commission met on Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 9 a.m. in the Commissioners office.

Present were Paula Yancey, Circuit Court Clerk, Greg Mathis, Presiding Commissioner, C.D.Stewart, Commissioner Dist. 1, Carol Jarrell, Commissioner Dist. 2, Jacob Clary, Assessor, Josh Speakman, Collector/Treasurer, Cecil Weeks, Clerk, Brett Stidham, Coroner, Sawyer Smith, Prosecuting Attorney, Lorrie Duckworth, Public Administrator, Candy Collier, Recorder, Carl Hefner, Sheriff, Tonya Causy, Juvenile Office Chief Juvenile Officer, and Dee Loflin, ShowMe Times owner.

Ms. Paula Yancey opened the Salary Commission meeting at 9:03 a.m.

First order of business is to elect a chairman of the members of the salary commission.

Carl Hefner nominated Greg Mathis, seconded by Sawyer Smith. All voted yes and Greg Mathis was elected as the chairman.

Mrs.Yancey turned the meeting over to Greg Mathis

"This meeting is to determine salary for the elected officials and employees for the 2024 fiscal year, specifically related to the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)," stated Mathis.

Mr. Cecil Weeks gave review of the budge. The budget revenue is up 1%, expenses are down 15% through September based on the General Revenue Fund. The General Revenue

Fund began with 7 million dollars and ending balance is 8 million dollars through September. "The County is in good financial shape," stated Weeks. "Everyone has been under their budget and revenue is up."

Mr. Brett Stidham, County Coroner, who is considered a part-time employee, but on call 24/7 365 discussed the option of making the job full-time beginning in the 2025 election cycle.

"The Coroner's pay is the lowest one by a lot and this is my first time to discuss so I am not sure what everyone's input would be," stated Stidham.

Mathis clarified with a question, "Would this take effect during this term or the 2025 elected term?" Stidham suggested in 2025.

Mathis reminded the group that they do not have to make any decisions today, but by November 30th everyone must be in agreement and set in place by December 15th per state statute.

"I assume it is a part-time position at this time and if you all want to make this position into a full-time position," stated Stidham. "I am doing more as more duties are assigned. New coroner standards are going to increase with new education requirements." The current salary is \$28,000. In 2020 there were 90 cases, 2021 there were 106 cases, 2022 there were 107, and as of this year there are 86 cases so far."

Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer stated that the Coroner could have a \$14,000 off his base salary which is a \$2,000 increase now and then at the next term in 2025 the full increase could go into effect according to the state statute .

Refer to state statute - **50.327. Base salary schedules for county officials — salary commission responsible for computation of county official salaries, except for charter counties — salary increases, when.**

Butler County has a full-time coroner, Phelps and Lincoln County each moved their coroner to full-time. Scott County is similar to Stoddard County in pay.

**Motion to make the coroner's office a full-time position starting with the next term made by Josh Speakman, seconded by Carl Hefner. All votes yes and the motion passed. Brett Stidham abstained from voting.**

**Motion that we give the coroner's office a \$2,000 bump pursuant to Senate Bill 1158 in 2024 plus the COLA (which will be addressed later in the meeting made by Josh Speakman, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. Brett Stidham abstained**

**from voting.**

The Prosecuting Attorney and the Sheriff are elected officials however their salary is set by the state of Missouri.

"I want to go to bat for my assistant prosecuting attorney. Her salary is extremely low,, half of what mine is and she is an attorney," commented Sawyer Smith, Prosecuting Attorney. "I am asking for a salary increase separate from the COLA. Butler, Cape, New Madrid, Pemiscot, and Scott county pay more than what Stoddard County pays here. Dunklin has an assistant in the 70,000 range and she is more qualified, has more experience and should be deserving of the increase. She makes \$63,500."

Mathis stated that this meeting is not for increasing pay in that matter. "That is a budgetary matter and will be discussed at budget meetings later in the year."

Though the salary commission only looks at all the employees and elected officials as a whole, it is noted that they don't individually increase pay, but the Commission can and will look at that request during the budget meetings. The salary commission group did say all good things about the assistant prosecuting attorney and her ability to do her job well.

Base pay was also discussed. The base pay for new hires is \$16.05 per hour for hourly employees plus the County pays for their insurance 100%. One comment was to bring the base pay up to \$20 or maybe \$18 per hour.

Weeks stated that the turnover rate for 2023 was 38 employees who left he county and 45 new hires since the first of the year. There was also discuss on how to increase the pay in each elected officials department, but no definite decision was made during this meeting.

Benefit package for retirement and SERF were also discussed.

The Chief Juvenile Officer Tonya Causey stated that her employees are on call 24/7 365, but do not really get any extra compensation for going out in the middle of the night or on a holiday. They comp their hours. There is no overtime per the handbook and these people should be paid more and compensated more. When asked if they could set up some type of per diem/shift differential or on call pay by Dee Loflin, she stated they didn't have it, but was open to anything. Sawyer Smith asked Greg Mathis why Dee Loflin was aloud to speak that she was not on the Salary Commission and that she should not be a loud to speak. Mathis reminded Smith that this meeting was open to the public and she could speak.

Loflin reminded Smith that she had over 20 years experience in Human Resources and Sawyer stated he didn't care, he had work to do.

As a reminder to the public the Salary Commission is open to the public. The Chief Juvenile Officer is not on the Salary Commission. She was there to ask about her employees. Please refer to the State Statute **50.333. Salary commission, duties of clerk or court administrator, meetings, notice of, members, duties, report, form, failure to meet, effect of — mileage allowance — maximum compensation allowable, defined (noncharter counties).**

Mathis stated we need to move on to the Cost of Living Adjustment Increase (COLA)

Cecil Weeks suggested 6%, Candy Collier suggested 8% and Josh Speakman suggested a 4.5% increase. Mathis suggested 3% earlier in the year when he was in his first few months doing the budget as a newly elected commissioner. Speakman discussed the room for growth with an 8 million dollar general revenue sitting in the bank and an excess of over 1 million dollars in surplus per year over the past 5 years. COLS would cost the county about 3% and that would be about \$114,000 and at 8% would be about \$304,000 per Speakman.

The next Salary Commission Meeting will be held on Friday, November 3, 2023 at 9 a.m. and is open to the public.

Presiding Commissioner Mathis also went over a few things that needed to be said.

Stoddard County offices are open from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday there is no closing for lunch.

Regarding new hires, they must have their new hire paperwork before they start, no exceptions.

Termination of employment notification must be sent to the clerk's office immediately and vacation days are not last days worked for this information.

If you terminate someone by firing then the clerk's office needs information for the unemployment office the day of termination.

Any and all vacation to be paid out will be performed on the last payroll sheet.

Overtime is over 40 hours per week not after an 8 hour shift. Vacation and holidays do not count towards overtime pay.

Timesheets must be turned in by noon on the 21st of each month.

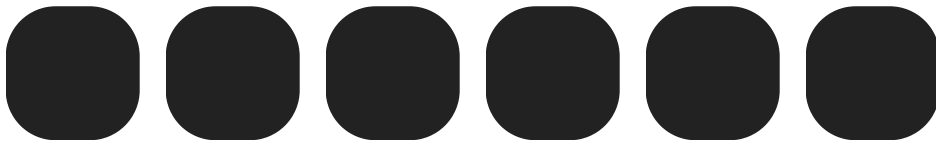
Also you might tell your employees that if they use sick time, don't be on social media having fun that day!

There was no motion to adjourn; however the meeting ended around 11:15 a.m.

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## Stoddard County Commission Meeting - October 16, 2023

OCTOBER 17TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Stoddard County Commission Meeting - October 16, 2023](#)

The Stoddard County Commissioners opened their weekly meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer for the community, Israel, and Mrs. Jarrell's husband, who is ill.

Commissioner Carol Jarrell will not be attending today as her husband is under the weather.

### **Katleyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission**

Water District #5 requested additional approved funds in the amount of \$5,563.23. Mrs. Lambert stated that all the paperwork was in order. They have \$50,724.87 left of their approved ARPA funding.

Motion to pay PSWD #5 \$5,563.23 for reimbursement on ARPA Funds for Project 1 made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

Updated spreadsheet available to the Commission.

According to the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission the Stoddard County Commission has available \$188,943.04 not allocated to anyone. This is due to some interest and other projects that were not approved.

### **Daniel Kingree, Project Manger/Water with Horner Shifrin**

"Just wanted to introduce myself as the Project Manager with Horner Shifrin," stated Kingree. "We would like to be able to help in any way we can to assist on projects."

They have had an office since 2012; however have never bid on any Stoddard County projects that anyone could remember. There are three engines and about 150 employees. They work with water, waste water, and road repair projected.

### **Issue with Speeding on Northveiw Drive in the County**

Northview Drive is located on the east side of Country Club entrance off Three Mile Road and they have had an issue with speeding in the area. for quite some time.

Mr. Mark McMillion is the spokesman for the group who attended todays meeting. He is a resident of Northview Drive. Also four other families were in attendance. "We have spoken to people up and down the street and are concerned about our children and pets. We have about 15 or more homes on Northview St. In my opinion these folks are speeding in excess of 50 - 60 mph." The current speed limit is 25 mph.

One of the families on the street has spoken to this particular family that seems to be doing the majority of the speeding. We have spoken to Sheriff's office including Hunter Davis on May 10th and I spoke to a MO Highway Patrol Officer Arron Grainer on July 6th. We have a few videos of the speeders and a verbal discussion with the people,"

continued McMillion.

"We have asked about us putting in our own speed bumps with Liberty Township, but then we would be liable for any accidents. Liberty won't put them in because the snow plows and emergency vehicles have issues with the speed bumps.

Retired Marine Veteran and citizen that lives on the street stated, " Yes there is a danger to children and pets. My front yard is like a strip at Nascar. It is dumbfounding to see what is going on up there and in terms of quality of life it is not good. People are flipping us off and a particular family is racing down the street. You are on the edge of a drag strip and it's part of their daily entertainment and they don't care. I am trying to do something for our community. A change has to be made and this is an opportunity to fix."

There are signs, but they ignore them according to McMillion.

Andy Holden, Sheriff's Department stated, "As far as speed bumps go and emergency vehicles I don't think that is an issue and we will navigate those. Sounds like to me as a neighborhood has done what I would have done."

"We don't have radar guns and have never had them," continued Holden. " We can stop them and ticket them for C and I, but we can't write them a speeding ticket; however Highway Patrol can do that. We can put out a patrol car there, but the county is large and if they have to respond to another call then they do have to leave. It is with a very nice neighborhood and I will try to help you in any way I can."

The residents of the area presented a petition to address the speeding in their residential neighborhood outside of the city limit:

The residents of Glenwook Hills, specifically Northview Drive in Dexter are writing to express our deepest concerns regarding the ongoing issue of speeding in their residential area. Despite the clearly posted 25 mph speed limit signs, we have observed numerous instances of vehicles exceeding the speed limit, endangering the safety and well being of our community. We believe that immediate action is necessary to address this problem and ensure the safety of our neighborhood. We are particularly concerned about the safety of our children, pets, and elderly people who reside in our neighborhood. The presence of speeding vehicles poses a significant risk to their well-being. Our neighborhood is home to numerous families with young children who often play outside, ride bicycles or walk. Additionally, many residents have beloved pets that they walk or allow to roam within designated areas. The current speeding issues puts these vulnerable members of our community at an increased risk of accidents, injuries or even death. We

strongly urge immediate action to ensure the safety of our children and pets by implementing the aforementioned measures to address speeding in our residential area.

We kindly request your support and assistance in implementing the following measures:

1. Increased police presence
2. Decreasing the speed limit
3. Traffic calming measures
4. Additional Signage

### **Cecil Weeks, Stoddard County Clerk**

"It is hard to find anyone to do county audits, last year we bid it out in November. I would like to put that out for bids to find an audit firm soon," commented Weeks. "Daniel Jones is currently performing our 2022 audit."

Motion to give Cecil Weeks, County Clerk, permission to bid out the financial single audit for the 2023 year made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Greg Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to except the minutes from the open session on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart

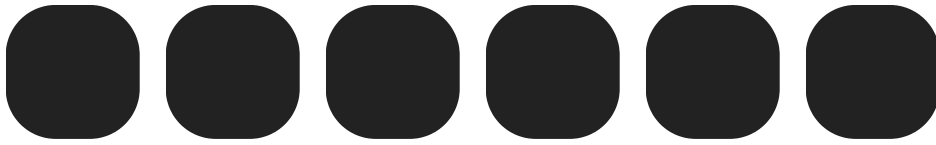
A request by Sawyer Smith it enter into Closed Session requiring personnel at 11:35 a.m. made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Greg Mathis. Both voted yes and motion passed.

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# Route U in Stoddard County Reduced for Pavement Repairs

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OCTOBER 16TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Route U in Stoddard County Reduced for Pavement Repairs](#)

Route U in Stoddard County will be reduced as Missouri Department of Transportation crews perform pavement repairs.

This section of roadway is located from Route H to Route 25 near Bernie, Missouri.

Weather permitting, work will take place Tuesday, Oct. 17 and Wednesday, Oct. 18 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

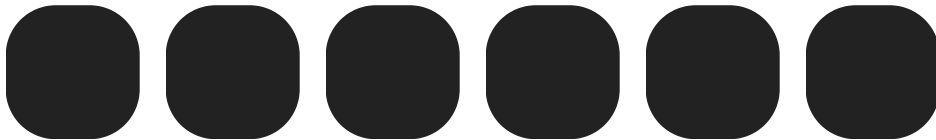
The work zone will be marked with signs. Motorists are urged to use extreme caution while traveling near the area.

For additional information, contact MoDOT's Customer Service Center toll-free at 1-888-ASK-MODOT

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# Stoddard County Commission Has Light Agenda for Tuesday, October 10, 2023

OCTOBER 10TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Stoddard County Commission Has Light Agenda for Tuesday, October 10, 2023

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

The regularly scheduled Monday meeting was moved to Tuesday due to the Columbus Day holiday. The Agenda is light as well today.

Motion made to approve the September 2023 Adds/Abates from Josh Speakman, Collector made by Commissioner Jarrell. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to pay \$198,780.00 to Castor Township for the asphalt overlay for county road 413 that was paid to Causey Companies made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and the motion passed. Castor Township requested these funds

Motion to accept the regular meeting minutes from October 2, 2023 made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the closed meeting minutes from October 2, 2023 made by Commissioner C.d. Stewart. Seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All voted yes and motion passed.

The Commissioners adjourned and entered into closed session around 10:30 a.m.

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## Farm to School Month Proclaimed by Governor Parson

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OCTOBER 09TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Farm to School Month Proclaimed by Governor Parson

Governor Mike Parson proclaimed October to be Farm to School Month in Missouri. Farm to School Month celebrates school nutrition professionals, farmers and ranchers nationwide for their contributions to feeding Missouri students.

“Thousands of Missourian’s grow and raise delicious products that are served on school breakfast and lunch trays every day,” said Director of Agriculture Chris Chinn. “I appreciate the opportunity to recognize this connection from Missouri’s farmers and ranchers to the school table. It is important for students to understand that their food is grown and raised by people in their own community and other communities across Missouri.”

Schools can celebrate Farm to School Month by participating in the national Crunch Off to bring awareness of Missouri grown products. Gather students, co-workers, community members and local food enthusiasts to crunch into a Missouri apple or any other locally grown produce during the month of October. To register your Crunch Off event, click [here](#).

Missouri school districts and Early Childcare Education Centers (ECE) can purchase their produce from a local farmer and receive reimbursement up to \$1,000 with the Promoting Specialty Crops in Missouri Schools Grant Program. This project aims to increase the consumption and knowledge of specialty crops in children and adults in schools/ECEs.

Each school/ECE is required to complete one educational activity about specialty crop production. It is highly encouraged that this activity include the farmer, and can be either in-person or virtual. The specialty crop can be for taste testing, educational activity or served in regular school meals.

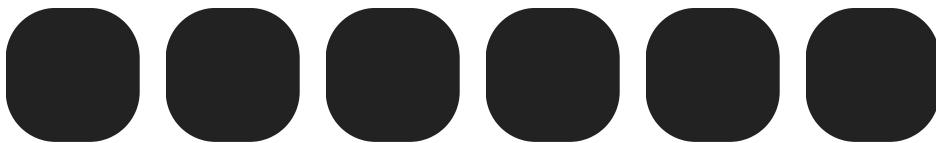
If you grow apples or other produce and are interested in selling in bulk to schools and groups participating in the Crunch Off, contact Lexi Jose at [alexis.jose@mda.mo.gov](mailto:alexis.jose@mda.mo.gov).

For more information about the Missouri Department of Agriculture and its programs, visit the Department online at [Agriculture.Mo.Gov](http://Agriculture.Mo.Gov).

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