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Stoddard County Elected Officials Voted to Increase Salaries by 8%

NOVEMBER 06TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Elected Officials Voted to Increase Salaries by 8%

The Stoddard County Salary Commission held a meeting on Friday, November 3, 2023 at 9 a.m.

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis opened the meeting with a motion by Sawyer Smith, Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney.

Present were 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, Jessica Brown, representing the Juvenile Office, and Dee Loflin, ShowMe Times owner.

Mathis read the minutes from the previous meeting held on October 17, 2023.

Motion to accept the minutes by Sawyer Smith, seconded by Candy Collier, Stoddard County Recorder. All voted yes and motion passed.

Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer spoke first about the salary of the County Coroner that was previously voted on in the October 17th meeting. He stated that

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"1. \$14,000 can be put onto the current pay which was set by the Salary Commission. His recommendation is that it goes into effect at the next election period.

2. We need to get the part time vs full time out of our heads and refer to the Coroner as an elected position.
3. The first motion to amend the motion of the prior read motion of the \$2,000 should be taken care of then move on to the next motion."

After some discussion the motion on the floor was to resend the motions as read from the previous minutes as related to the Stoddard County Coroner from the October 17th Salary Commission Meeting was made by Sawyer Smith, seconded by Josh Speakman. All voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to increase the compensation of the Stoddard County Coroner by \$14,000 added to his current pay at the next term of the coroner's elected position made by Candy Collier, seconded by Lori Duckworth, Stoddard County Public Administrator. Some discussion was heard. Not one elected official voted yes; however they all voted no. The Motion did not pass.

Motion to raise the Stoddard County Coroner's salary in the amount of \$14,000 at next term of office plus any COLA (Cost of Living) increases made by Carl Hefner, Stoddard County Sheriff, seconded by Candy Collier. There was some discussion. Josh Speakman stated this is pursuant to MO State Statute 50.327, paragraph 3, August 28, 2022. All voted yes and motion passed.

COLA Increases for the Budgeted 2024 Year

Motion on the floor made by Candy Collier to give all elected and non-elected employees 8% COLA increase, seconded by Jacob Clary, Stoddard County Assessor.

Discussion by several of the salary commission prior to the vote.

"I feel 8% is a good percentage because I looked at inflation around the area and it increased," stated Collier. "I believe 8% is a fair amount."

The cost to Stoddard County would be \$304,000 in 2024 if the increase is set at 8% according to Speakman.

"Inflation has distorted the sales tax in our county and I have to look five years down the road," stated Greg Mathis, Presiding Commissioner. "I look at the loss of Tyson and how that will affect our sales tax. Is our spending sustainable at that point. It has nothing to do with salaries because I think we have a very good financial/benefit package to offer county employees."

"The biggest investment you can make is your employees," commented Collier. "I think we have invested in our financial package and need to continue to do so."

Question from Brent Stidham, Stoddard County Coroner, "Can elected officials take less of an increase or not take any increase at all?" Mathis stated yes; however the motion on the floor is an 8% across the board increase for all county employees.

Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney wanted to make sure the media and public was aware that his salary and the Sheriff's salary is set by the state. They will not receive the COLA increase only their employees would get the increase.

56.265. Compensation of prosecuting attorneys — training program, attendance required, when, expenses, compensation — definition, prosecuting attorney to include circuit attorney (noncharter counties).

57.317. Compensation of sheriff — training program, attendance required, when, expenses, compensation — minimum compensation (noncharter counties).

"I agree with Greg's physical conservatism," stated Sawyer Smith. "I don't know all the County business and I wish there were other ways to save in the other county business and help the employees. If there were ways to save \$300,000 then offset the employees with that amount then I think the Commission should sharpen their pencil and proceed."

Motion to increase both elected officials and employees an 8% Cost of Living (COLA) increase in their salaries made by Candy Collier, seconded by Jacob Clary as read by Greg Mathis. Cecil Weeks suggested they call for the vote individually.

Vote as follows C.D. Stewart Yes, Carol Jarrell Yes, Jacob, Clary Yes, Josh Speakman No, Cecil Weeks Yes, Brent Stidham Yes, Sawyer Smith Abstained from voting, Lorrie Duckworth Yes, Candy Collier Yes, Carl Hefner Yes, Greg Mathis No. There were 8 votes for yes, 2 votes for no and 1 abstained. Motion passed. The increase will begin January 1, 2024.

Starting Wages for County Employees

There was quite a bit of discussion in both meetings about the low starting wages of employees. The current starting wage is \$16.05 set by former Presiding Commissioner Danny Talkington, Commissioner Carol Jarrell and Commissioner Steve Jordan.

Carl Hefner stated his sheriff's department has been starting employees at \$18.75 per hour plus benefits. Sawyer Smith stated he started his investigator at a higher starting salary.

"Dexter PD is falling behind in pay for their officer's," stated Hefner. "Our guys put their lives on the line and should be compensated for that."

Mathis stated, "I think as the Commission we can look at starting pays for the 2024 budget."

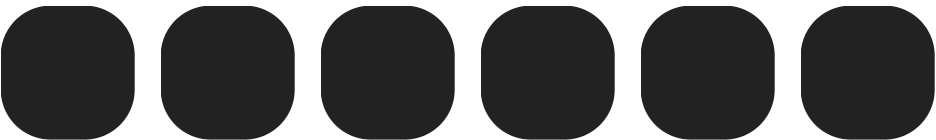
The Commissioners will meet with the Sheriff, Juvenile Office, and Prosecuting Attorney and discuss starting salaries moving forward in 2024. This is a budgetary item and not covered by the Salary Commission.

Motion to adjourn made by Jarrell, seconded by Jacob. The Stoddard County Salary Commission adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

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Stoddard County Commission Works Through Light Agenda - Monday, November 6, 2023

NOVEMBER 06TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Works Through Light Agenda - Monday, November 6, 2023

The Stoddard County Commissioner meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer for the county officials by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.

Judge Joe Satterfield

Judge Satterfield showed the Commission a photo of a confiscated weapon from a middle school student from this weekend who made threats to other students. The weapon in question is an AR-15.

"I just wanted you to see what the juvenile office deals with on a daily basis," stated Satterfield. "I want you to be clear what we deal with day in and day out and we do keep the schools in our area safe. I have been there 28 years and we have a program in place that works."

There are some issues going on with a certain attorney who was appointed by Judge Joe Satterfield and Judge Rob Mayer, according to Commissioner Mathis.

In 2023 the State of Missouri gave the Judges the ability to appoint an additional attorney for juveniles. There are four attorneys in Stoddard County, each with their own field of expertise.

Katelyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

The City of Dexter is requesting their full \$800,000 for the purchase of new water meters. Lambert stated that all paperwork is in good order.

Motion to reimburse \$800,000 in APRA Funds made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Water District #2 has signed their Distribution Agreement and Lambert is working with their attorney on other items. No other water district/township/city hired an attorney.

City of Dexter, Dave Wyman, City Administrator

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis asked about the Lagoon Project. Mr. Wyman stated that basically since Tyson has left the area the chemistry has changed quite a bit with regards to the lagoon. "Common knowledge is that Tyson has been sold and there is a pending sales agreement signed, but the attorneys are trying to formalize it before announcing to the public," commented Wyman. "We will have to get information on the amount of water that will be needed for the new company and then get with the engineers for a new design."

The Old County Courthouse Clock Tower

The clock tower has been repaired and is working properly. The cost was \$5,000 and an annual fee of \$800 for a service agreement which was voted on by the previous Commission in October of 2021.

The Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce will have a ribbon cutting for the clock tower on Monday, November 13th at 11:00 a.m. on the north side of the courthouse.

Motion to accept the October 2023 Ads and Abates from Josh Speakman, Collector/Treasurer made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Public Hearing for the de-obligation of the rural broadband has to be 7 days and not five days per Commissioner Mathis. He called the Department of Economic Development and made sure of the exact timing.

Motion to move the Public Hearing for the De-obligation for the CDB Grant from November 13th to November 20th at 10 a.m. made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

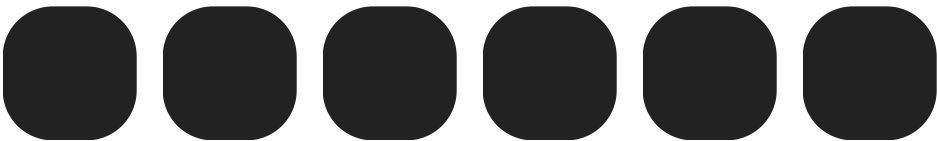
Motion to accept the minutes from the October 30, 2023 made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

No closed session meeting minutes from October 30, 2023 or closed session meeting minutes from November 3, 2023 available until next week.

Motion to enter into closed session made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart at 11:01 a.m. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, October 30, 2023

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, October 30, 2023

Stoddard County Commission meeting began the weekly Monday morning meeting with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Presiding Commissioner Mathis also praised the Advance Lady Hornets on their bid to the Final Four in volleyball as well as Puxico and Dexter Cross Country Teams headed to state.

Dale Moreland, 527A Closing in Castor Township

"We tore out that bridge and put some fill in it," Moreland stated. "Don contacted me and wants to maintain that bridge. He is wanting to put a gate about 100 feet past that bridge."

Motion to close a portion of 527A, 100 feet west of the bridge which is his property line that goes into Donnie Foster's property made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D.Stewart. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

John McCarty and 2024 Health Insurance Rates with Arch Brokerage Inc.

We had a 79 percent of premium vs claims which is slightly under the 80% goal," McCarty stated. "We have coordinated with SoutheastHEALTH to get a better deal and we did get a better deal in my opinion.

"One of the differences is the Lab Work. There is \$0 co-pay for the going to SoutheastHEALTH vs having a deductible/coinsurance with the base plan with Healthlink," McCarty said.

There is a 4.51% decrease in premium costs which is good for the County," continued McCarty. "Premiums for the 2023 were \$254,781.00 and for 2024 will be 213,220 a savings of \$41,560.00 in 2024. This is a self-insured plan," per McCarty.

"You all are putting more money back into the insurance bucket vs what is going out in premium costs," stated McCarty. "We went on to say that next year it may hurt the county depending on the claims and so forth and being year three of the plan."

Though the contract ends in 2023 the Commission opted not to bid out the insurance for 2024 and stay with the current employee health insurance with Arch Brokerage, Inc. The Commission does not have to bid each year per MO State Statute 67.150 and 376.696.

67.150. Insurance for elected officials and employees, political subdivision may contribute - contracting procedure. - *The governing body of any political subdivision may utilize the revenues and other available funds of the subdivision, as a part of the compensation of the elected officials and employees of the subdivision, to contribute to the cost of a plan, including a plan underwritten by insurance, for furnishing all or part of hospitalization or medical expenses, life insurance or similar benefits for the subdivision's elected officials and employees. If any county elects to provide a plan for furnishing all or part of hospitalization or medical expenses, such plan shall include all elected officials, if any elected officials are to be covered.*

No contract shall be entered into by the governing body of the political subdivision to purchase any insurance policy or policies pursuant to the terms of this section unless the contract is submitted to competitive bidding at least every three years and the contract is awarded to the lowest and best bidder.

376.696. Political subdivisions purchasing any insurance policies to submit to competitive bidding, when — renewal between bidding periods deemed extension. — Any other law to the contrary notwithstanding, no contract shall be entered into by the governing body of any political subdivision to purchase any insurance policy or policies unless the contract is submitted to competitive bidding at least every six years and the contract is awarded to the lowest or best bidder. The renewal of any insurance policy during any period between submissions of the contract to competitive bidding shall not constitute a separate and distinct contract for the time covered by the renewal but shall be treated only as an extension of an existing contract.

Motion to accept the \$35,000 County Deductible Stop Loss and the \$500 deductible for Tier 1 and a \$1500 deductible for Tier 2, and a \$4,000 for Tier 3 on the 3-Tier Medical Plan 2024 Health Insurance as presented by Arch Brokerage, Inc. made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell and seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

Peter Coutavas, IDA

The Ghost Coffee Shop will be opening soon. The Wildflower Boutique is open and going. "I have exhausted my budget helping with repairs for them," commented Coutavas.

"Can the County replace the hot water heater? I have reached my budget helping the boutique and the coffee shop," stated Coutavas. Mathis said since the County owned the building and they are renting from the County and Coutavas already had someone working on the building to just get the hot water replaced and give the bill to the County.

New 2-Hour Parking Signs in Downtown Bloomfield

Mayor of Bloomfield Mr. Bill Aslin called and told Mr. Mathis that the city is placing 2-Hour parking signs up in downtown Bloomfield. If they park there on a long term basis they will be ticketed; however there will be a grace period before the ticketing will begin. This is due to the number of new businesses coming to downtown Bloomfield and the lack of parking when court is in session as well as the number of employees working in the County offices.

Close-out of the CDBG Grant with Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

Motion to set November 13, 2023 for a Public Hearing for the closing/deobligation of the CDBG grant dealing with broadband at 10 a.m. made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Important Dates to Remember for the County Offices

Veterans Day is November 11th, Saturday

The County offices will be closed on Friday, November 10th

Thanksgiving on November 23rd

The County offices will be closed on November 24th and 25th.

Christmas on December 25th

The County offices will be closed on December 25th and 26th. The Stoddard County Commission will meet on December 27th and again on December 29th to do year end.

MoDOT Bridge and Road Signage

The Commission received a list of county roads from MoDOT in need of new signage to replace worn or broken signs. Mathis said MoDOT said some of the townships have not replaced the signs. There are about 11 signs that need replacing. The Commission has been asked to make contact with the Townships.

Water District #2 - ARPA Funding

Water District #2 has been approved for around \$100k in ARPA funds for water meter replacement. They have yet to fill out and return the Distribution Agreement with Bootheel Regional Planning Commission. They have also hired an attorney out of Sikeston to represent them in obtaining such ARPA Funds.

Motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes from October 16th made by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the Closed Session Minutes from October 16th by Commissioner Jarrell and seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes from October 23rd made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the Closed Session Minutes from October 23rd made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

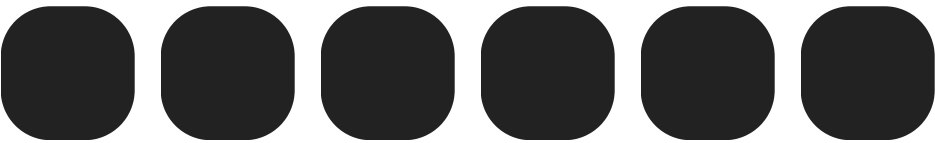
Motion to enter in closed session to discuss personnel issues at 11:00 a.m. Monday, October 30th made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All

three voted yes and motion passed.

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Stoddard County Commissioner Meeting - Monday,

October 23, 2023

OCTOBER 28TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commissioner Meeting - Monday, October 23, 2023

The Stoddard County Commissioners' meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.

Duck Creek Township

Doug Lowery was asking about the ARPA monies and in need of a bridge repaired. " We have three families that have built homes just past the bridge," stated Lowery.

"We had to cut some folks when we discovered an error. We have about \$188,000 available, but we are not committing to anyone at this time until we see where we are," stated Mathis.

Clarence Smith, President of Water District #4

"We were turned down for some funds earlier and since there is \$188,000 available and we would like to put our name in the hat if there is a hat available," stated Smith.

"We have an urgent need for a computer and are desperately in need of replacing our computer," continued Smith. "We still have a few problems, but we are fixing leaks as they occur."

"No decision will be made on how to allocate these particular ARPA funds until after the first of the year," stated Mathis.

Williams Dowdy, Stoddard County Maintenance

"We counted existing phones throughout, but we did not count phone jacks as they were unoccupied. The reason for this was the number of licenses needed. Fast forward to now we have added people and now we have maxed out and we need to expand the system.

We have to buy a license for each data card and each card covers a certain number of extension lines. The phone system was put in about three years ago. We need to expand this system," stated Dowdy. "The cost from SEMO Technologies would be \$2,671.84 for about 24 lines to be added to the buildings."

Update on the County Courthouse Clock

After texting the owner of S&N Clock Repair, the owner stated they were scheduled to come on Thursday, October 26, 2023. This has been an ongoing process for almost three years to get the clock repaired.

We have been a tough time to get down there, but we are scheduled to be down there on Thursday and I will book some time all next week to get everything done. I have the wiring and the motors done and just need to pick up a relay and it should be striking by the end of the next week. Set a completion date of November 3, 2023. S&N Clock owned by Sean Barnes put in a quote of \$5,000 on October 26, 2021 to repair the clock and then annually \$800 to maintain the clock each year. This was voted on by the previous Commission.

Also the roof has some issues with the rain. Mathis said this a process that will need to be bid out as the only quote received was from R.L. Persons Construction at a cost of \$120,998.00.

Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer

"It is tax season a said due to the number of people coming in we have added some part time staff," stated Speakman. "Signs for the 30 minute parking to be placed in the front of the building, Probably the first week of November and then again in December to help people being able to park close to the building"

"I think we can send out a mass email to the employees not to park on the east side of the government building and along the west of the building and in front of the building"

We implemented a new program/tool in the Collector's office called ENGAGE, so if a taxpayer calls in and can't pay by coming in we can send a text alert to their phone with a link and then they can pay. They can pay online, debit/credit card or come in and pay," continued Speakman.

There were no minutes available at the moment for the October 16, 2023 meeting for open and closed. The Commission should have available next week.

CERF Annual Contribution Election 2023

Effective January 2, 2002, an additional 4% of compensation was required on behalf of employees hired on or after February 25, 2002, to be directed to CERF.

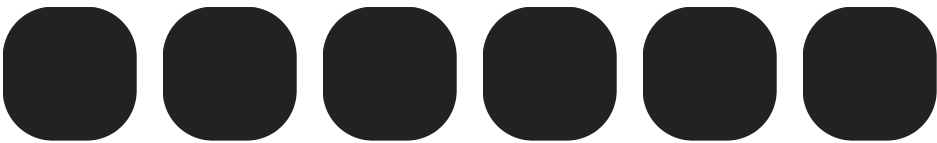
Motion to accept the CERF Annual Contribution and everything will be the same through the 2024 year made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted and motion passed.

Motion to move into closed session made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell at 10:47 p.m. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - October 16, 2023

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 Manager/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 Northview 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 today's 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

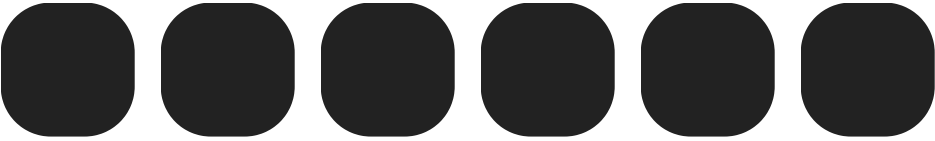
"It is hard to find anyone to do county audits, last year we bid it out in November. I would like to put that out for bids to find an audit firm soon," commented Weeks. "Daniel Jones is currently performing our 2022 audit."

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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