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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023

DECEMBER 12TH 2023 BY DEE LOFLIN

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The Stoddard County Commission began their Monday morning with a prayer and Pledge of Allegiance and by Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis.

Bill Aslin, Mayor of Bloomfield

"I just wanted to clear up a few items on the parking regulations," commented Aslin. "We will not be closing any parking around the courthouse only next to the businesses to give them a chance. We have new businesses and we want to give them a chance to be successful," stated Aslin.

"We did have AA down from 4 p.m. - 8 p.m for the Christmas Around the Courthouse event on Saturday evening," continued Aslin. "We are very excited to have this event and our new businesses downtown."

"Christmas Around the Courthouse had sever vendors,' though we lost a few because of the threat of weather," stated Aslin. "It actually turned out to be a great evening. We had items for sale and many items for free. A Parade of Lights prior to the event with several entries. There were carriage rides for free, Santa was in the beauty shop with Dee Loflin taking photos for the Chamber. The event date has already been set for next year on December 7, 2024."

Katelyn Lambert, Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

"Duck Creek Township has used all of their funding for the ARPA monies with this request of \$18,346.65 for the culvert expenses, and rental equipment expenses," stated Lambert.

Motion to accept the Duck Creek Township request for \$18,346.65 out of the ARPA funds made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commission Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

There is approximately \$188,934.04 left in ARPA Funds not designated for expenditure at this time. This is due to the interest earned on the ARPA funds being placed into money market accounts. The interested to date is \$183,289.19.

New Lisbon Township

Mr. Terry Bates received a resignation letter from Loyd Hull who was on the board for the New Lisbon Township. The board met in a special meeting and have recommended Scott Jones or Mike Townsend.

The Lisbon Township board of directors has nominated Scott Jones and the Commissioner must vote to appoint him to the board.

Motion to appoint Scott Jones to the New Lisbon Township Board made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and the motion passed.

Gary Wyman, Missouri Extension Office

Mr. Wyman brought in a budget request for the University of Missouri Extension Office. The only addition to the budget is a raise for the secretary of \$1.00 per hour. Commissioner Mathis stated that they will take in consideration of their budge proposal.

"As long as I have served on the board I have never brought in a significant raise and we try our best to stay within our budget," stated Wyman.

The Commission will be going over the Stoddard County budget in the coming weeks. When it has been approved there will be a 10 day window if any citizen wishes to review the budget at the County Clerk's office before the final vote on the budget takes place.

Stoddard County 911 Board of Directors

"On October 10, 2023 I received a letter from the Stoddard County 911 Services Board of Directors that stated several members terms end on December 31, 2023. They are Dan Seiger, Doug Siler, Chuck Kasting, Leroy Stockton, and Andy Holden, stated Mathis.

Motion to reappoint Chuck Kasting, Dan Sager, Leroy Stockton, Doug Siler, and Andy Holden to serve another 3 year term made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Deobligation of CDB Grant with the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission as Administrator

On November 20th the Stoddard County Commission had a public hearing regarding the deobligation of the CDB grant rural broadband in the Puxico area. Commissioner C.D. Stewart was at a meeting in the Ozarks and not in attendance. Commissioners Mathis and Jarrell were in attendance; however no one came in with any issues or concerns during the public hearing.

Motion to vote to terminated the contract with Bootheel Regional Regional Planning Commission with regards to the CDB Grant for rural broadband in the Puxico area made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

The Grant was tied to prevailing wages and the cost would be two to there times greater than just performing the work without the grant. Also the Commission has already obligated 1 million in ARPA funds for the project in Puxico. GoSEMO Fiber was awarded that money and is already performing the work in Puxico.

Department of Economic Development Money Owed

The Department of Economic Development performed administrative work on the CDB grant for rural Puxico for the fiber optic broadband in the amount of \$21,600. This money will need to be reimbursed.

Motion to reimburse the Department of Economic Development for the administration work done by BRPC in the amount of \$21, 600 made by Commissioner Jarrell, and seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer

The city of Bernie entered into a contract, approved by the County Commission, with the Stoddard County Collectors Office to begin collecting city taxes for them a few months ago.

"During the transition process, it was agreed upon that the Collector would attempt to help settle some of their more recent delinquent accounts," commented Speakman. "In order to do this they gathered the last 4 years tax rolls and entered the delinquents into a

separate collection software to monitor and then flag accounts in our county software."

"Let's back up a moment, the Bernie City's tax rolls were printed reports and when an individual came into pay at the city, they were given a stamped receipt/marked paid, copy retained at the city and then marked paid on the tax roll," continued Speakman.

The city of Bernie has had a handful of occasions where the County entered them into their city delinquent monitoring system, using the tax roll provided, triggering their system to flag them as they came in to pay the 2023 year and it showed they had not paid the previous years.

Speakman took action and offered two ways to deal with the issue:

1. Do not pay them, and return with the stamped receipt. They will then correct it on the city delinquent tracking system and all will be good. In the event they were unable to produce a receipt, they were made aware they would not fall off and would have to be addressed in the near future.
2. Pay the delinquent, return with the stamped or marked paid receipt from the city of Bernie and they would ensure the city of Bernie would reimburse the tax and the County would correct it on their end.

The County Collector have been flexible and looking at each situation on a case by case basis.

"The mayor of Bernie, city clerk, and their city hall staff have also been very helpful during this transition," commented Speakman.

"These issues have been somewhat rare," continued Speakman. "By the County collecting , this helps eliminate these types of issues in the future. The citizens of Bernie now have a one stop shop and the resources such as the Tax Installment Plan, paying online with card or E-Check, or having us send a link to their phone to pay, Monday through Friday access in person and a 24/7 online access. Lots of options here for the citizens."

"I am not necessarily alarmed by the clerical errors, considering it was all done by hand, I somewhat expected some issues during this transition," continued Speakman. "The city of Bernie's willingness to make it right has also been extremely helpful."

Cecil Weeks, Stoddard County Clerk

County Clerk's Office will be open 8:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. on December 26th. This is the Christmas holiday for the County and they will be the only office open due it being the last day for people to file to run for office. This is unfortunate and the state may rectify this in the future to have the dates changed, but for now someone has to work that day.

Other Business

Motion to have the weekly Commissioner's meeting at 1 p.m. on Friday, December 29, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to approve the Ads and Abates for November 2023 from Josh Speakman, County Collector/Treasurer made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the open session minutes from December 4, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the closed session minutes from December 4, 2023 made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the closes session minutes from November 20, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to enter into closed session at 11:04 a.m. for Personnel issues made by Commission Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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