

## Local News



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# Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, August 19, 2024

AUGUST 23RD 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, August 19, 2024

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis opened the regular Monday morning Commissioner meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer for all Stoddard County citizens.

Motion to approve the August 12, 2024 regular session minutes made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to approve the August 12, 2024 closed session minutes made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed. No voting was done during closed session.

### **Peter Coutavas, City of Puxico Alderman**

Coutavas talked about the 77th Annual V.F.W. Puxico Homecoming. "The event went very well," commented Coutavas. " We had good weather and a tremendous amount of people came out and participated in the many events including the 5K Goat Run, Pageants, music, square dancing, the carnival, the Owl Calling contest, tractor show, car show, class reunions, and the parade.

### **Colter Gaebler, Smith & Co. Engineers**

Bridge County Road 752 - "Will be replacing a pipe during the construction and raising the road," commented Gaebler. "We have had zero success getting on to the property to

get the easement. We can't get in touch with the owners." Mr. Gaebler is going out there after the meeting.

"If we replace the guardrail the cost is about \$5,000 - \$10,000 on the top end. The Commissioner would be responsible for 11% for a soft match," explained Gaebler.

Commissioner Stewart asked about the width of the bridge so that farm equipment could cross. "I think we will be able to make it wide enough," Gaebler stated. "I think they can get a combine header over the top of the guard rail, it's maybe 24" off the ground."

Presiding Commissioner Greg Mathis asked Mr. Gaebler to touch base with the Elk Township Board members since this bridge is in their area, especially if there are going to be any changes.

"We have never had any issues like this before, it is odd." stated Gaebler. "If we get this signed today it would be at least 6 weeks before we could get started. I am sure all the bridge contractors are pretty busy, but we will have to bid this out."

### **Josh Speakman, Stoddard County Collector/Treasurer**

Speakman spoke about the SB190 Senior Tax Credit as he is receiving applications for the tax credit. This will not affect the 2024 taxes; however it will go in effect for the 2025 tax season. The new application form will be on the Collector's website this week.

"I attended the summer board meeting for Missouri Association of Counties (MAC). The big topic was the solar panels and MAC is developing a resolution to get things rolling on the solar panels," commented Speakman.

Tax Sale Auction is Monday at 10:00 a.m. in front of the Old Courthouse.

### **Public Hearing Tax Levies Hearing Opens at 10:00 a.m.**

Motion to enter into the 2024 Public Hearing Tax Levies Session made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to set the tax rate for Drainage District No. 1 Reformed at \$1.50 per acre made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to set the tax rate for Drainage District No. 7 at \$1.00 per acre made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to set the tax rate for Drainage District No. 13-33 set at 10% Maintenance Levy w/a \$10.00 minimum made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to set the tax rate for Drainage District No. 14 10% Maintenance Levy w/ a \$10 minimum made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to set the tax rate for Drainage District No. 17 at 10% Maintenance Levy made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to set the tax rate Drainage District No. 19 at \$2.50 per acre made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

In addition, a Public Hearing to set the 2024 Tax Levy for the Stoddard County SB40 Board.

### **Public Hearing Senate Bill SB40**

"The building project at the Stoddard County workshop is about mid-way," commented Devin Miller, administrator of the Stoddard County Sheltered Workshop. "We definitely do not want the tax levy lowered."

The Sheltered Workshop has 24 employees and operating a recycling service for five counties. They also fulfill contracts with Allen Wire and DeWitt out of Sikeston, Missouri.

Miller stated his concerns about having the Sheltered Workshop having to "beg" or "ask" for monies that are already designated to go to the Workshop through a tax.

Do you submit a budget to the SB40 Board and ask for "X" amount of dollars to get through the year," asked Commissioner Jarrell. "Do you have to ask at each meeting for money for a project?"

"We do receive a monthly check from SB40 only covers one part of a month of payroll. I do a budget based upon what they send us each month as per the contract. If we do projects then we can ask for money," explained Miller. "But at the end of the day, if we did not have the Sheltered Workshop, we would not have the tax."

Brad Hubbard, Stoddard County Workshop Board Member, stated he can't get an answer as to how the Sheltered Workshop receives their money from the SB40 Board.

According to the most recent audit stated that the SB40 had roughly \$297,089 on hand in their bank account. It is estimated they will receive approximately \$487,000 this year.

"The Commission's job is not to tell the SB40 how to spend their monies; however it is our job to appoint board members and set the tax levy for the SB40 Board," stated Commissioner Mathis.

Motion to leave the SB40 2024 tax levy at .094 made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to enter back into regular session at 10:45 a.m. made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

### **Beau Bishop, Stoddard County Emergency Management Director**

"The teams that came in after the declaration was accounted and have gone door to door, talking to people especially those registered online for the FEMA assistance," commented Bishop. "They were on the ground for two weeks and have now left the area. They were very enthused that everyone was very nice."

"SBA and SEMA have been in town meeting with people at the Bootheel Regional Planning Commission building. They have averaged about 7 people per day about 85 people so far in total. They are available Monday - Friday and even on Saturday," commented Bishop.

"We had a debriefing where all the road districts and townships were invited to see if they had any unmet needs, five attended, Duck Creek, New Lisbon were two of the townships who came and have also asked for ARPA Funds from the Commission," stated Bishop. "Dimension Church on Business Highway 60 has also reached out and have filled out paperwork for assistance."

The Hazardous Mitigation Grant has opened up and right now at application time it is a 75/25 grant, but could move to be a 90/10 grant. Bishop would like to add three more weather sirens in northern Bloomfield, Aquila and Advance areas. Notice of Interest will need to be submitted by September 6, 2024 and then will be in for that grant cycle. If the County isn't chosen for the grant then the notice of interest is on file for two years.

Motion to approve the EMA Director to proceed with Application of Interest for three additional storm sirens made by Commission C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner

Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

### **Alan Hedrick, Stafford and Stafford Insurance of Dexter**

"We had discussion last week on Property Insurance and how we are going to proceed with finding the best property insurance quotes available," stated Commissioner Mathis. "We typically do this every four years."

"We are currently unaware of any issues or problems maintaining the insurance with the County," commented Hedrick. "We meet at least once a year with Cecil Week's County Clerk to see if there is anything the County needs. We also go to the markets each and every year and make sure your rates are viable and strong even though you all don't bid out but every four years."

"What I would really like to do is make my point to the fact that hopefully you will see the importance in our insurance agency and myself and how much we have vested in Stoddard County," continued Hedrick. "We aren't just a local agency, but we are tied to professional insurance group and I am a professional insurance agent. I continuously stay up on the issues and everything I can for you as Commissioners. Your account is extremely important to you and we want to be there to help you now and in the future."

"We don't need to close our eyes to everyone out there," stated Commissioner Stewart. "I would be more interested on where we are on price. Part of our obligation is to represent the whole county and get the best deal for them, to get the best price and what comes along with that. We need to open it up to everyone."

"As long as I have been here you have done an excellent job," stated Commissioner Jarrell. "You were around when no one would insure us and Traveler's was the only company that would take us on and that is when we changed to Traveler's. Our loss ratio was higher at that time. I like that you are local and we should shop local. I like it that I can come down to your office and speak to you eyeball to eyeball and not get someone on the phone on the other side of the state."

"We will vote next week on moving forward to seek qualifications for a broker/agent," stated Mathis.

### **Other Business:**

On September 2nd the offices will be closed due to the Labor Day Holiday. On September 3rd the Commission will meet at 9 a.m.

Mathis spoke to Chuck Kasting at Stoddard County Ambulance District and thinks he has everything he wanted so he may not use the ARPA funds. Total was about \$8,000.

The Commission is aware that the clock is no longer working again at the old courthouse. The maintenance person who repaired the clock has been contacted.

Motion to adjourn at 11:52 a.m. made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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