

MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON COUNTY QUORUM COURT

Thursday, August 18, 2016
6:00 p.m.
Washington County Quorum Court Room

DECRY LEGAL LLP
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FILED

- 259.1 The Washington County Quorum Court met in regular session on Thursday, August 18, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Judge Marilyn Edwards.
- 259.2 B. Ussery led the Quorum Court in a prayer and in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 259.3 MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Cochran, Robert Dennis, Lisa Ecke, Ann Harbison, Sharon Lloyd, Tom Lundstrum, Eva Madison, Sue Madison, Joel Maxwell, Gary McHenry, Butch Pond, and Bill Ussery.
- 259.4 MEMBERS ABSENT: D. Balls, H. Bowman, and J. Patterson.
- 259.5 OTHERS PRESENT: Chief of Staff George Butler, County Comptroller Ashley Farber, County Attorney Steve Zega, Interested Citizens; and Members of the Press.
- 259.6 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Judge Edwards asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.
- 259.7 **A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The agenda was adopted as presented.**
- 259.8 APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Judge Edwards asked if there were any corrections to be made to the Minutes of the July 7th and July 28th Special Quorum Court Meetings, as well as the July 21st Regular Quorum Court Meeting.
- 259.9 L. Ecke stated she had reviewed the first two meetings minutes, but not the last set of minutes.
- 259.10 **L. Ecke made a motion to adopt the first two sets of meeting minutes. A. Harbison seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Minutes of the July 7th and July 28th Special Quorum Court Meetings were adopted.**
- 259.11 **R. Cochran made a motion to adopt the third set of meeting minutes. A. Harbison seconded. The motion passed with ten members voting for and one member voting against the motion and one abstention. The Minutes of the July 21st Regular Quorum Court Meeting were adopted.**

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- 260.1 UPDATE FROM THE TREASURER BOBBY HILL ON THE 2017 PRELIMINARY REVENUE PROJECTIONS: County Treasurer Bobby Hill addressed the Quorum Court, noting that this was prepared a full month earlier than he usually does revenue projections, so these numbers can and will change. He reported that the County has seen good growth rates this year in sales tax and property taxes, which he sees continuing into 2017. He noted that the 2017 projected carryover revenue is the 2016 actual ending cash balance less expenditures paid in 2017 for the 2016 budget year; and the 2017 projected new revenue is monies projected to be received in 2017. He pointed out that this shows the County is increasing with new revenue coming in by \$400,000 increase over last year's projected new revenue. He stated that escheated estates represented money from a court case dated back to 2012 that would go to the General Fund in July 2017, if nobody comes forward and claims it.
- 260.2 B. Hill noted similar to last year, the Preliminary Projections for 2017 Budget Summary shows 2017 projected carryover, projected new revenue, holdback, and amount available to budget. He further noted he included the approved 2016 Budget figures as a guideline to compare. He gave the example that if the Court wanted the general budget to be \$30 million this year, then the County would have \$5.9 million in reserves. He noted at this time, the County General available to budget projection for 2017 is \$35,946,490. B. Hill stated that these projections were a lot to do and will be a lot for the Quorum Court to take in, urging it to give him a call with any questions once the members have reviewed the figures.
- 260.3 E. Madison stated on the Road Fund, B. Hill is projecting \$2.2 million in carryover, which is pretty high. Further, she noted the Road Fund ½ cent sales tax was broken out separately from sales tax revenue of \$1.6 million and questioned what the source was for this sales tax revenue. B. Hill responded that this is the 1 cent tax that is shared with county general; to which E. Madison responded that this is general purpose revenue. B. Hill noted that the Court split this up last year at 77%/23%, and he left it the same.
- 260.4 E. Madison referred to the Jail Fund in the prisoner care state and verified with B. Hill that this represents what the state reimburses the County to house its prisoners. She pointed out that it is probably costing the county twice that amount to house state prisoners with the projection of \$2.2 million in state revenue and the cost in excess of \$4 million. She believes the state is giving the county the short-end of the stick when it is sitting on a budget surplus of \$177 million and talking about tax cuts. She believes that the State should start paying attention to its own obligations to the counties first.

- 261.1 A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING CHANGES TO THE COUNTY'S EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN FOR 2017: R. Cochran introduced **A Resolution Recommending Changes To The County's Employee Health Insurance Plan for 2017**, and County Attorney Steve Zega read the resolution. This resolution had been drafted based on the recommendations of Insurance Consultant Nelson Driver. S. Zega noted that this was the alternate version of the resolution.
- 261.2 R. Cochran stated Resolution #7.4 is different than Resolution #7.1 that the County's Insurance Consultant brought to the Court in the past in his original presentation and recommendation.
- 261.3 Nelson Driver, Insurance Consultant, explained that Resolution #7.1 was the original proposal brought to the Court at the last Quorum Court meeting. Resolution #7.4 is an alternate in response to the interjection of County Elected Officials and their meaning to try to hold down the cost transferred to the employees.
- 261.4 E. Madison reported that she has been studying benefits issues over the past week and while not a benefits expert, she wants to make sure that before the Court talks about raising anything, that it has explored all options to do more unique things within the County's existing framework. She addressed N. Driver and stated with respect to the drug list that the Court is considering increasing co-pays on, whether it uses "cost-based" or "impact-based" drug lists; to which N. Driver responded that he believed it is "cost-based", but is not sure about that.
- 261.5 E. Madison stated that her understanding is that insurance would rather pay for someone to take a blood pressure medication than pay for a heart attack. She further stated that by making that the lowest tier, it would encourage an employee to stay on that medication; therefore, that would indicate a new trend of doing the "impact-based" costs.
- 261.6 N. Driver responded to E. Madison stating that one of the things he is looking at in following Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) formulary guidelines, is the actual impact of these costs is driven by "generic" versus "non-preferred," so is "cost-based." He stated that BCBS is trying to drive toward generic utilization and has achieved about 90% of the County's prescription drug utilization is generic. He stated that Washington County is the trendsetter statewide with its peer organizations as far as generic utilization is concerned.
- 261.7 E. Madison stated a heart medication may be very expensive, possibly costing \$60 on a "cost-based" tier. She further stated that if someone has

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to choose between buying the heart medication or groceries, then he or she would not take the heart medication and have a heart attack.

- 262.1 N. Driver stated that people need to question the physicians about alternatives or generic equivalents to prescribed medications; to which E. Madison questioned whether patients would feel that they could stand up to their physicians. N. Driver suggested that patients needed to start questioning their physicians, because that is one of the things that is looked at in prescription drug utilization. He noted that the County paid out almost \$900,000 last year in prescription drug costs, and that trend is not going down. E. Madison asked whether he uses any type of mail order in that process; to which N. Driver responded that he does not.
- 262.2 E. Madison stated that there has been a lot of talk about comparison of county pay rates to Benton County and other places and asked if they have done any benchmarking on the benefits of comparable entities such as the cities of Springdale and Fayetteville to see how their benefits compare. N. Driver responded that he has done benchmarking with the peer group, which is the surrounding larger counties in the state including Benton, Sebastian, Pulaski and Washington County, as well as the cities of Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers and Bentonville. He noted that Washington County used to be considered the "Cadillac Plan" in Northwest Arkansas; however, because of the changes that have come through the "Affordable Care Act" (ACA) and other existing plans, the County is no longer the top tier plan in the marketplace.
- 262.3 In response to a question from E. Madison, N. Driver stated that he has not given any consideration to having tiered rates for premiums based on income levels. He further stated with regard to giving discounts for being tobacco-free, N. Driver stated that it is not done at this point; however, it will come with the Wellness Program, if the Court passes that for 2017.
- 262.4 E. Madison asked if the Human Resources department takes any information on those employees who have secondary insurance coverage; to which Human Resources Director Lindsy Huffaker responded that her office is required to gather that information for BCBS so it can do a coordination of benefits. She added that the County still has to make an offer under the ACA to all employees. She does know if the employee themselves has secondary coverage, but she is currently unaware of those statistics.
- 262.5 E. Madison explained that her reason for asking is that there are employees who have just employee coverage, which they want to be the most affordable, and then there are those who add on spouse or family members

which are where they are looking at increasing costs. She stated that she does not want to discourage people from being on the county's plan, but believes that overall the County offers generous benefits with relatively low cost. She further stated that while the County's plan may be more attractive, she would rather a spouse or family member get insurance through their own employer. She noted some companies will charge additionally for putting a spouse or family member, who has other benefits available, to the county's plan.

- 263.1 N. Driver responded to E. Madison that BCBS is not doing that at present, but this is always an option to explore. He noted that some companies in Northwest Arkansas, as well as some of the municipal government entities, are implementing a spousal surcharge.
- 263.2 E. Madison stated that she believes the market is shifting more toward consumer directive plans, which is in line with what N. Driver said about quizzing physicians. It maybe does not cost as much, but has a little higher deductible; It also gives him a little more skin in the game and helps control costs. She asked if he has looked at trying to transition any type of hybrid plan to at least have options; to which N. Driver responded that he is looking at taking RFP's in September for high deductible HSA Plans, which would be "bare-bones" plans as required by ACA.
- 263.3 E. Madison asked if data has been taken or tracked on how many employees see physicians for preventative care. She further questioned whether any incentives were offered to encourage preventative visits; to which N. Driver responded that he is not aware of any such incentives to employees at this point.
- 263.4 E. Madison asked if any type of group Medicare plan for retirees where they coordinate the supplemental with existing Medicare had been considered; to which N. Driver responded he has been talking about this with Humana and representatives from BCBS. They are looking at the Medicare eligible retirees and whether it would be more cost effective to get a Medicare supplement plan in lieu of staying on the county's insurance plan.
- 263.5 E. Madison concluded stating her research has told her that there are a lot of options available to generate funds without dishing it out to everybody. She noted surprise from many employees at all of these cost/benefit increases coming at once, stating she wishes that they had been gradually done with better notice. Therefore, she stated that she is on the fence about passing this resolution or making any kind of recommendation at this time, because she feels that there are other options that could be explored. She gave the example that her employer offers a health savings plan for

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childcare costs, which saves her up to \$5,000 a year tax-free. It was pointed out that the County has done that in the past, and she questioned why N. Driver cannot look at enriching all of the employees' benefits to make this impact not so serious. She stated more questions needed to be asked and more options need to be explored to make sure what the Court is doing is the right thing for the employees.

- 264.1 N. Driver stated that for virtually every year in the last 16 years, he has come to this Court, suggesting adjustments for premiums. Instead the Court has chosen a bandage approach where it infused money into the fund on numerous occasions to keep the increased cost off the backs of the employees. He noted there has been at least two occasions where the Circuit Clerk's Office bailed out the insurance fund with a substantial infusion. These are things that are looked at every year.
- 264.2 A. Harbison stated that she is hopeful that the Court can do something substantial. She further stated that the County only has 610 county employees and their families; she was surprised that the County still spent \$900,000 this year on drugs with the majority being generic. N. Driver responded that the County has approximately 1005 - 1010 lives with its health program. With respect to the proposal the Court is addressing, she asked if that met the \$820,000 that it needs to infuse into the insurance plan to make it stable. N. Driver responded that with that increased funding level on the County's side for the 614 budgeted positions that would meet criteria of plugging the hole in the insurance fund.
- 264.3 A. Harbison asked for an explanation of #3 under Article 1 of the Resolution, where there was a reduction from \$6,000 to \$3,000; to which N. Driver responded that the \$3,000 is the annual stop-loss, which is where the employees' out-of-pocket costs ceases. He explained the employee pays the deductible and 20% co-pay, then the county's portion pays 80% up to that stop-loss figure and then pays 100% after that. A. Harbison stated that she believes that this needs to be tweaked a little more, but likes this second proposal a lot better than the first.
- 264.4 L. Ecke stated that she had earlier asked N. Driver what the county's cost would be to absorb all of this increase if it is not passed onto the employees and he had mentioned the \$112; to which N. Driver responded that the \$112 is just the premium increase and does not include changes in the levels of co-pays. L. Ecke noted that \$112 x 614 employees would be \$68,768 per month or \$825,000 for the year if the county were to absorb the premium cost. N. Driver stated that further cost to the employees, if the county absorbed this increased premium, would depend on their utilization of the plan which affects the change in co-pay. He noted that for someone who

consistently goes to his or her primary care physician that cost would increase by \$5 every time. If the employees are willing to use the IMWELL or UAMS Express Care Programs, then there is no co-pay.

- 265.1 L. Ecke stated that she would like to know how willing the county employees were to use these programs where there is no cost as opposed to going to their physician, because this affects the employees and their families. N. Driver responded that this is not a question he can answer; however, regarding the County's arrangements with IMWELL and UAMS, in order for those companies to be able to afford to waive that co-pay, they have discounted their charges 15% below what BCBS charges for doctor's visits with a primary care physician. He stressed that neither of these entities are trying to move people from their primary care physician, because that is a relationship-type situation. He stated the purpose of these programs is to get someone in and seen for minor issues before it turns into a full-blown case that might require an ER visit or hospitalization. He noted that IMWELL and UAMS can get an employee treated immediately to ward off post-secondary infections, etc., while drastically affecting the county's productivity rate, because they can get right back to work.
- 265.2 L. Ecke noted that the Court did receive feedback regarding the IMWELL and UAMS Programs, mostly positive; however, there were some who stressed that those programs still required an appointment in order to be seen. She suggested that these types of things needed to be clarified with the employees. N. Driver stated that both of these entities strive to give same-day appointments or within 24 hours at the latest, but do require that an appointment be made. L. Ecke stated that she is hearing that these increases in the County's insurance plan will be a hardship to so many employees. She further stated that the last thing that she wants to do is to put this burden and stress on them, believing that the County could come up with creative ways to pay for the increased premium. She stated that it was brought to her attention that there are 100 of the County's employees who are on government assisted programs of some kind.
- 265.3 R. Cochran stated that N. Driver spoke on where the County stood and currently stands in the ranking within its peer groups for the insurance program, and asked where the two proposals, Resolutions #7.1 and #7.4, would rank among these peer groups for benefits criteria and dollar/premium costs. N. Driver responded to R. Cochran that Proposal #7.1 would put the County right in the mix with the industry and with most of the peer organizations that the County compares with. The deductible and co-pay changes therein are pretty much the current norm in the marketplace. He noted, however, that the \$1,000 deductible is significantly lower than many of the other entities. N. Driver stated that

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Proposal #7.4, which has the \$500 deductible and increase in funding by the Quorum Court, would move the county's benefits program closer to the top as far as comparatives are concerned. R. Cochran stated that both would be good choices for the county employees with #7.4 leaning towards those at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

- 266.1 R. Cochran stated that he has spoken about this insurance program for the last three years; however, when the ACA came out, the County got locked in and could not do much with the exception of one opportunity where it was able to make a change up to the maximum a few years ago. He stated now with the 2017 law, the County has to make a change that is not debatable.
- 266.2 N. Driver added the problem with healthcare is that the ACA is extremely misleading, because there is nothing affordable about it. He noted that the ACA has not slowed down the cost of healthcare delivery, because there still are double digit increases in the cost of prescription drug programs, surgical procedures, hospitalizations, and ER visits. He questioned whether the County can keep up with this, but the problem is the fiduciary responsibility that the County has to keep solvent for employees and dependents of the county, which is a tough task. He stated that in dealing with benefit programs, the situation is that the federal government has taken the choice out of the hands of employers. Although it has to provide access to healthcare, there needs to be a critical balance point between affordability and what can satisfy the needs of the employment group.
- 266.3 R. Cochran stated as he compares the two proposals, the cost to the county is essentially the same; however, the large difference is increasing premiums for those employees with families and dependents. He stated that with so many people being in the situation of what they can afford day-to-day, he is inclined to lean toward Resolution #7.4. However, when he looks to the future for the County's employees on their retirement and Resolution #7.4 limits the County's ability to increase the salaries as much as the Court would like to. He further mentioned that the salary level is what the Social Security retirement and employee benefit retirement plan is based on. He stated that he is really struggling to make the right decision for all of the employees. He stated that a percentage raise compounding is better if the money goes to the employees before they pay their health insurance premium. He further stated that if the Court was to go with Resolution #7.1, he firmly believes that the Court would have to take a harder look at the salary increases to help offset the difference. He noted that this does take care of the imbalance between the dependent and employee cost that is being incurred. From a fiduciary standpoint, he likes Resolution #7.1; however, without a substantial change in salaries, Resolution #7.1 is a disaster for several employees as they have let him

know. He stated not knowing what this Court is going to do on a salary increase; he is at an impasse in his mind regarding which way to go with the County's Employee Health Insurance Plan.

- 267.1 N. Driver addressed R. Cochran, stating that from a salary increase standpoint, the salary increase is very critical to the employees as it does affect their Social Security and APERS; and if it is not there, then the employees will suffer from that 30-40 years from now.
- 267.2 R. Cochran reported receiving comments from individuals directly with one stating that with these changes to his insurance plan and the proposed 4% raise he would be \$1.15 short per paycheck. He noted that given this year the Court was only able to give bonuses, it has been effectively three years without any kind of increase, which is hard to do in this day and age.
- 267.3 T. Lundstrum stated that he tends to concur with E. Madison on several of her comments. He further stated that one of his problems with this proposal is the difference between the premium cost for an employee-only and employee/spouse. He noted that \$74.56 per month is an extremely inexpensive healthcare program and questioned what it would look like to the other numbers if the employee-only paid \$85 per month instead of \$74. He realizes that an employee with a spouse and child will pay more for insurance wherever he is at than a single person, which is a lifestyle choice. He noted that it is kind of hard to ask the single employee to help pay the other employees' bill; however, this is a huge discrepancy with no increase compared to a \$200-\$300 per month increase when the employees are both making the same money in terms of the impact on their income. He stated that there is a big difference between the county's portion of \$411 and \$74 as well, so this is a good insurance program with many other plans' deductibles being upwards of \$7,600 to \$8,500. He stated that when he looks at this situation, he questions whether he should have voted for this healthcare program to start with, because it was going to reduce the costs and now it is doing just the opposite.
- 267.4 T. Lundstrum suggested that the Court take a look at those numbers if the employee-only cost was \$85; to which N. Driver responded he would need to rerun the numbers to see where the balance point is. He further stated one of the basic premises of insurance, regardless of what type, is a subsidization program as it does subsidize each other's loses, and this is a pooling affect that it has. He stated the most prominent form of equalization across the board, as far as premiums is concerned, is to go where the claims are and that is where the impact is most likely to occur. He stated this is why there is such a dramatic increase in the family coverage versus employee/spouse or employee/child plan.

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- 268.1 T. Lundstrum stated that the single employee paying \$74 a month could have a large insurance claim too and he is just looking for something that seems a little more equitable. He stated even if the county were to pay \$10 more a month per employee to bring these other three numbers down to where a reasonable pay increase would at least cover it.
- 268.2 S. Madison stated that she thinks the County should be doing more to encourage wellness. She questioned with respect to the IMWELL and UAMS Clinics, whether they did any kind of preventative medicine such as physicals or vision screening with no co-pay. N. Driver responded that they have not used either provider for annual physicals at this point, but he sees no issue with it. He further stated that he would be happy to check with those clinics for routine annual physical examinations, because the County pays for those, and they go with the health program.
- 268.3 S. Madison questioned that the County has a contract in a sense with IMWELL and UAMS for a discount, but for preventative healthcare, the employees are going to their private provider.
- 268.4 Human Resources Administrator Lindsi Huffaker stated that IMWELL and UAMS primarily offer preventative medicine, treating colds, flu, and sniffles. Dr. Womack originally brought the case with IMWELL to the county, because she was an internal medicine specialist, where her goal was to deal with preventative health care. The County has a number of employees who solely utilize that clinic to manage chronic diseases and have annual check-ups, which are provided on site; however, does not offer vision screenings.
- 268.5 S. Madison asked if an employee has had some sort of chronic condition or device that requires oversight like diabetes or a pace maker, whether these wellness clinics can handle those routine checkups. N. Driver responded when you start talking about cardiac care that would be more of a specialist. He further verified that county employees have been notified that they can go to these clinics for these preventative checks.
- 268.6 In response to a question from S. Madison, L. Huffaker stated that these clinics will give flu shots at no charge as well.
- 268.7 S. Madison stated she is concerned that the County is not giving a tobacco-free discount to employees, because of the health risks associated with tobacco use, and their tobacco-free employees are subsidizing those who use tobacco.

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- 269.1 N. Driver stated this has been part of the initiative to try to get wellness programs into the county for the last couple of years. He stated in the past, because of the implementation cost of the wellness program, it has been voted down. Further, he stated that in order to do that and maintain it, you have to do biometric screening with a blood test or cheek swab done on an annual basis in order to maintain discounts.
- 269.2 S. Madison asked if the County requires vision screening for the employees who operate county vehicles; to which N. Driver responded that would only be required in DOT physicals for commercial driver's licenses (CDL). S. Madison stated that she feels it would be wise to require vision screening for all employees who drive county vehicles.
- 269.3 S. Madison asked if employees who are veterans are going to the Veteran's Administration and using that healthcare system; to which N. Driver responded that he does not know, but is confident that most Veterans know that is the best place for them to go.
- 269.4 S. Madison stated she knows there is some concern about taking on employee's families and spouses, but believes it is important to remember that when the children are healthy, have had their immunizations, and have proper care that prevents lifelong issues, the community is better off. She stated that she is in favor of encouraging employees that when their spouses have other options, to take those other options; however, is concerned that the employee are not doing more about wellness initiatives.
- 269.5 A. Harbison stated that the Court has put a band-aid approach on this system for a long time now, and it will try to do its best to provide the employees with insurance. She further stated that she wants to keep their insurance down and come as close to that 7% as she can, and if there had been a 3% increase last year, the Court would not be looking at 7% this year.
- 269.6 J. Maxwell stated that this a pretty serious issue for a lot of the employees and he thinks that the Court is clear on the fact that it is making decisions that will be affecting everyone to some degree. He further stated that it is his understanding that this resolution has no binding power because the Judge will be the one making the decision; to which County Attorney Steve Zega confirmed. J. Maxwell stated that he is trying to decide how much of an impact the Court's decision is actually going to have. He inquired that if the Court moves a plan to a \$1000 deductible, the original recommendation (#7.1), then that will put the County in the middle of the pack with its competitive peer group; to which Nelson Driver responded that it would put the County right there with the peer group. J. Maxwell questioned where the

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County currently ranks with its \$345 deductible and the current benefits; to which Nelson Driver responded that deductible wise, Washington County has the lowest deductible out there in the market. J. Maxwell stated that none of these choices will put the County below midway. He stated that he has heard from several county employees where half want insurance to stay the same with an increase in their salaries, and the other half would like their salary and insurance to increase; it is hard to do a poll from the conversations that he had. He thinks that the Court needs to be discussing salary increases, which he does think needs to be moved up in order to catch up, and then after the Court knows how much it is going to cost, then it can discuss the recommendations for the health care.

- 270.1 N. Driver responded that the County is rapidly approaching open enrollment. If any changes are going to take place by January 1st, then L. Huffaker has to have this information in hand to get out to the employees, so they can start making their decisions prior to open enrollment.
- 270.2 J. Maxwell stated that it looks like the employees are better if they have a raise in their pocket, because they can use it. Secondly, there will be an accumulative affect. The employees will get a raise on top of that raise next year in addition to a percentage increase from here on out, which also helps retirement. He is not opposed to keeping healthcare as affordable as possible; however, with the way that these propositions are structured, the people with families get assistance, but anyone who is an employee only does not get any benefit. With that he is going to abstain from any definitive decision on healthcare until the Court takes a definitive action on salaries and can address that appropriately afterward.
- 270.3 T. Lundstrum made a motion to table the resolution indefinitely. E. Madison seconded.
- 270.4 In response to a question from R. Cochran, L. Huffaker stated that she would not recommend making a change after October 1st at the very latest. Further, she stated that people who are eligible for Medicare start their open enrollment in October.
- 270.5 T. Lundstrum made a motion to amend his motion to table the resolution until the next Quorum Court meeting. E. Madison seconded the amendment to the motion.
- 270.6 With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to table the resolution.

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- 271.1 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B. Pond. VOTING AGAINST: A. Harbison. The motion passed with eleven members voting in favor and one member voting against the motion. The resolution would be tabled until the next Quorum Court meeting.
- 271.2 **A. Harbison made a motion to suspend the rules and give the public a chance to speak on Resolution #7.4. R. Dennis seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote.**
- 271.3 Citizen Comments: Matt Wallace, employee of the Washington County Road Department, addressed the Quorum Court stating he has been here since February. He stated not having a primary care physician, he uses the IMWELL Clinic 100% of the time and knows many county employees do as well. He stated he likes this service, but wishes that it had a walk-in service.
- 271.4 Mike Bowen, employee of the Washington County Road Department for six years, addressed the Quorum Court stating he, his wife, and four children all use the IMWELL Clinic as their only medical provider. He stated that the clinic takes care of all prescriptions, monitor their blood pressure, etc., and they can usually get in to see a physician the day you call or the next morning.
- 271.5 Kenny Yates, employee of the Washington County Sheriff's Department, addressed the Quorum Court and read a letter from Justin Brandon, one of his employees, which Sheriff Helder asked him to read to the Court in his absence. Justin Brandon reported in the letter that he and his wife had applied to the Department of Human Services to become foster parents and eventually be able to adopt. He noted in this application, DHS collected a lot of information including his pay and cost of living, and when this application was processed, he was advised that he did not qualify because his income was considered below poverty level in the State of Arkansas. He stated that he is not complaining or wanting pity, but wanted to share this to show what the state says about his income. He stated he loves his job and enjoys working for Sheriff Helder and the staff of the Washington County Sheriff's Department.
- 271.6 William Stephenson, employee of the Washington County Assessor's Office, addressed the Quorum Court and thanked J. Maxwell for coming to his office and speaking to him as he has obviously put a lot of thought into this and made some really good points. He further applauds Ms. Madison for suggesting that other options be explored. He stated insurance is a complicated thing and takes a lot to wade through it, but believes N. Driver's

proposal is a viable option for the employees. He noted that when e-mails are sent, many of the employees are confused regarding their deductible amount and what their stop loss amount is, etc. He stated his deductible is currently \$345 as a single person and he pays 100% of that deductible before insurance ever kicks in; and his \$1,000 out-of-pocket is based on the stop-loss amount, so he pays 20% of his stop-loss which is currently \$5,000 and insurance pays the other 80% of that \$5,000 and he pays 20% which is the other \$3,000. He stated the confusion came from the original proposal showed out-of-pocket of \$6,000, which is a lot of money for the insurance if 20% of the stop-loss is \$6,000, and this scared a lot of people in his office. W. Stephenson reiterated his main point that many employees are confusing the deductible with stop-loss and suggested that future e-mails be clearer.

- 272.1 Randall Denzer, long-term employee of the Washington County Sheriff's Office, addressed the Quorum Court stating that he has always had part-time jobs to make a living; however, the benefit package was usually what carried him through as it was always better than others. He thanked the Quorum Court for the job that it does at making the tough decisions. He stated that over the last two years his department has hired, trained, and certified over 30 people, and then they leave. He reported last week an officer who had been at the Sheriff's Department for 2½ years left for a job in a small community where he would be getting a \$1 an hour more with paid insurance. He stated this has been happening down through the years and if the Court does not change it, then the County is almost a second-class citizen with every other agency taking people from it.
- 272.2 Donnie Coleman, 20 year employee at the Washington County Road Department, addressed the Quorum Court stating that he understands how hard these decisions are for the Court. He noted that he has much the same situation at the Road Department where it hires and trains people only for those employees to leave for more wages. He stated that the raise and insurance means a lot to the county employees, especially those with families, and the County has to do something to keep them.
- 272.3 Juliet Richey, Washington County Planning Department Director, addressed the Quorum Court stating that information given by Salary Consultant Blair Johanson during the meeting with department heads and elected officials last week showed that the County is below market, even with its current healthcare plan. If the Court is looking at putting more on the employees, then they will be further behind the market. She stated that when the Court talks specifically about the premium or deductible for one person, that is just one piece of the plan; and when the Court compares it to a piece of its own plan, then that may not be indicative of the actual benefits

package that the employees have. She further stated that she realizes that everything is subject to change; however, people are hired with a benefits package and a salary and if you start taking that away, then you are taking money away from people. She stated even though the County is behind the market, the Court is taking away from people who were hired under that consideration. She stated that the Court needs to find a way to make it work, because every department in the County is trying to retain people and by just having retractable conversations about how much one individual or family pays for a premium, these are just side conversations to the actual big picture. She stated that the big picture is people were hired and given benefits packages and everything that the Court is currently talking about takes away from that. She stated besides the serious issues that come from not being able to retain employees, there are costs that go along with that.

- 273.1 John Luther, Director of Washington County Emergency Management, addressed the Quorum Court stating that some of the things that he thinks the Court misses are the points that the Court makes that it wants to help and take care of the County's employees. However, the Sheriff's Office has an employee who cannot qualify to care for foster children, because he or she is below the poverty level as a County employee. He stated that the Court talks about raises and going towards the percentage of APERS and retirement or each year when that raise comes when each year that raise does not come, so it becomes a hypothetical. He stated as an employee it is hard to go to IMWELL, utilize the system, and do what the County has tried to offer only to find out that he or she cannot be served in that capacity.
- 273.2 Judge Edwards stated her appreciation to all of the county employees who have spoken to the Court from the heart on these matters.
- 273.3 **A recess was taken at this time to reset the audio system.**
- 273.4 PRESENTATION BY SALARY CONSULTANT BLAIR JOHANSON ON WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPENSATION PLANNING FOR 2017: Salary Consultant Blair Johanson addressed the Quorum Court with a power point presentation on the market study, internal analysis and recommendations. He stated one thing the Court looks at is the salary adjustment in the given year as well as the future year in doing budget planning; and based on the World at Work Study for the State of Arkansas, the County is looking at a 3% for both mean and median and 3.1% to 3% for the next budget year. He noted that he brings that locally through the NOARK study, which represents 53 organizations. He further noted that for 2016, the County is looking at general increases averaging 2.83%, COLA of 2.25%, and Merit at 2.94%. For 2017, the organizations are

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projecting 2.79% for a general increase, COLA at 2.28% and Merit at 3.37%. B. Johanson noted this represents the full work force with an average of both exempt and non-exempt employees as well as those who are eligible and not eligible for overtime. He noted the organizations in Northwest Arkansas that submitted data are both public and private organizations that range from fairly large to small organizations.

- 274.1 B. Johanson addressed average annual pay comparisons, the 2015 State average was \$38,540 or \$18.53/hour; the 2015 Northwest Arkansas Regional average was \$43,570 or \$20.95/hour; and the 2016 Washington County Employee average is \$36,417 or \$17.51/hour. He stated that based on job title in comparison to the pay structure of the current minimum, midpoint and max, 61% of the work force is underneath the midpoint of the range and 39% above the midpoint. He noted that every time the County gives an increase, the pay is moving toward the midpoint, and over time when the County does not offer an increase, it starts to lose ground. If the range structure stays consistent, then the County will stay at about 60%/40%. He noted preferably based on tenure, the County wants to try to be at least 50% or better for those above midpoint.
- 274.2 B. Johanson addressed the market pay variance summary, which has been consistently compared against the larger NWA cities, Department of Labor, NOARK, Benton County and Sebastian County over the last 6-8 years. He noted that the County's internal average pay compared to similar positions within the NWA cities was 13.1% behind, 9.4% behind of the DOL, 9.2% behind of NOARK, 4.8% behind Benton County, and less than 1% ahead of Sebastian County. He stated from a historical perspective, in 2014, Washington County was a little less than 2% behind market when looking at the overall average; 3.31% behind in 2015; and now, in 2016, it is 7.16% behind the market. He noted that this happens if the Court is not able to give an adjustment to base pay; the County loses ground as the market continues to move. He noted that the market is moving at about 3% on the average with some entities paying more than that if they are paying merit pay. This is why the County lost a little more than 3%, because some municipalities are paying better than 3% for their uniform positions.
- 274.3 B. Johanson stated he had a request from some JPs to dig in a little deeper as to what the 7% behind the market represents. He reported that the County has 181 job titles of which 4 are 10.1% to 15% ahead of the market average; 7 are between 5.1% to 10% ahead of the market average; and 16 are between 0 to 5% ahead of the market average. He stated that there were 45 job titles that were 0.1% to 5% behind the market average; 45 were 5% to 10% behind the market average, 33 job titles 15.1% to 20% behind the market average, etc. He explained that this helps the Court to

determine where the County is behind at a per title basis as opposed to the overall organization at 7%.

- 275.1 B. Johanson addressed his 2016 pay study adjustment recommendations, stating that it has been five years since the pay range has been adjusted; and he is recommending an adjustment of the current pay range by 3%, which allows the County to be competitive on its hiring rate as well as offering a little more longevity to those who top out at the maximum. He noted that he suggests to a lot of his clients to move the range every other year by about 2% in order to stay a bit behind employee pay adjustments at 3%. He stated that he would suggest adjusting the employees' pay by 7%. He stated the the market will move about 3% in the next year, so even if the Court allocates the money at 7%, the County is still 3% behind next year. He noted historically whenever the County has gotten behind, it has stepped up. He reminded the Court that when he started working with the County 30 years ago, it was 15% behind market. He noted at that time the Quorum Court voted to increase the millage, so it had the resources to be more competitive with its employees' pay. He stated that the Court saves the residents of Washington County money over a period of time with less millage from 44 down to 39; however, this is an opportunity to make an investment in the County's employees and be competitive with pay to retain them.
- 275.2 B. Johanson stated that the regional projected average salary adjustment for 2017 will range from 2.8% to 3.4%; and he recommends adjusting the pay grades and range structure by 3% for budget year 2017. He stated that this pay structure adjustment will increase the lowest grade level pay range minimum from \$10.76 to \$11.03 per hour. For elected officials, he would recommend continuing the current policy of 83% of the state allowable pay range maximum and a higher percentage for elected officials after completion of the second term.
- 275.3 A. Harbison asked about a total dollar amount equated from this recommended pay increase; to which Lindsy Huffaker responded that the cost estimate for employee raises was shown on #9.2 and #9.3, which had been updated because she received notice today that APERS was increasing the contribution from retirement to 14.75% in July 2017.
- 275.4 J. Maxwell questioned whether the recommended 3% range adjustment or 7% salary adjustment would go into effect first; to which B. Johanson responded that historically the Court implements this at the first of the year, which gives a bump to the person under minimum and then and a 3% increase on top of that. However, he is recommending that the Court adjust the range now and then the overall adjustment in pay will bring someone

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under minimum above minimum on into the first quartile instead of layering that on top of the range adjustment. He explained the purpose for that was to say when the range adjustment is made; it is not costing the County money, because it is using its employee pay increase as its actual dollars to expend. He explained that it is a range adjustment which does not have dollars associated with it, because the Court is moving the structure. The real dollars are associated with what the Court allocates to get the pay increases. He stated that in the past when the Court has brought the salaries up to midpoint and layered 3% on top, it created compression issues with people who had been employed for a longer period of time.

- 276.1 In response to a question from J. Maxwell about which county job titles are associated with the pay variance percentage to market pay; B. Johanson stated that the titles are set out in agenda item #8.2 of his presentation and will correspond to the banding of the 5% by title. He further noted that the percentages shown are the accumulative average of the other comparable entities.
- 276.2 R. Cochran stated in the past the Court has tried to address the significance of the percentage off of the market by doing various things. He further stated that since the percentages are based on certain ranges, it would be interesting to see what it would take to bring those folks who are significantly below market up to market and still be able to give those who are above market a range. He asked if it would be possible to calculate the financial cost to accomplish that, and then use it in a way to not create another compression problem.
- 276.3 B. Johanson responded to R. Cochran that this could be done; however, the Court would definitely want to take tenure and position into consideration so it is not just automatically giving a significant adjustment to someone who just started. He stated this is doable, but is a significant matrix.
- 276.4 R. Cochran stated he would be interested in seeing what B. Johanson's recommendation would be to do that which, depending on the number, may need to be done over a couple years to bring folks who are quite a bit below market up to market. He stated that this would possibly address those employees referred to by John Luther, so the County can avoid losing the technical and mental assets it has. He further stated that these employees know what they are doing, do not require as much attention, and become more valuable and efficient at serving our county residents.
- 276.5 L. Ecke stated that if possible, she would like to separate the percentage of employee pay and range into two separate motions, so the Court can at least get one accomplished over the other; to which B. Johanson

responded was doable. He noted that this would not complicate things, because the court is doing the comparison on outside pay and not looking at the structure. It could actually move the structure, which would not change the reporting as far as what it would cost for a 7% adjustment, or as R. Cochran suggested, try to be more specific about addressing those who are further off the market compared to those who are not as far off the market.

- 277.1 L. Ecke stated that she would like to make a motion that the Court adjusts the pay range by 3% as recommended by Blair Johanson and seconded by A. Harbison; however, County Attorney Steve Zega stated that this would have to be in the form of an ordinance.
- 277.2 R. Cochran questioned whether the Court normally addresses that in the Budget Controls Ordinance that it does; to which S. Zega responded that the Court could either do it as a stand-alone ordinance, but traditionally it has been done in the budget. B. Johanson concurred stating that it usually ties into the beginning of the budget cycle; and R. Cochran noted that as the motion was made, it would go into effect immediately, which would really create a problem.
- 277.3 E. Madison questioned whether separating law enforcement employees and considering them in a separate banding had been looked in to; to which B. Johanson responded that this is something he could put together with some preliminary information. He noted that Fayetteville and Springdale have a step program in place for each year of service for uniform positions and is separate; and Rogers and Bentonville have a range in place like the County and is not separate.
- 277.4 E. Madison stated that she wants to do a raise, but believes the Court has to address the Sheriff's concern about law enforcement not fitting in with the other employees. She further stated that she thinks the system needs a little bit of an overhaul.
- 277.5 L. Ecke stated that as Chairman of the Jail/Law Enforcement/Courts Committee, T. Lundstrum is in great support of increasing wages at the Sheriff's Department, as they all are; to which T. Lundstrum responded that the Court gave law enforcement a pay raise based on training and certification if the Sheriff has the money in his budget.
- 277.6 B. Ussery stated that he appreciates B. Johanson laying his presentation out the way he has, because it has been very helpful. He stated that the Court can look at law enforcement separately, but there are other employees who are underpaid as well. He noted that law enforcement is a

different deal, but it is a different deal of the employees' choosing; it comes with the territory.

- 278.1 T. Lundstrum stated that he hears talk about the county losing employees. He knows a lot of law enforcement officers who have left the Washington County Sheriff's Department and gone to smaller cities for less money, because they had a problem with management, which is something seen in any business. He stated that he wants to see our employees making equal to other markets, but noted that our Road Superintendent is making more money than the Benton County man is, as well as the County's heavy equipment operators.
- 278.2 T. Lundstrum stated by the chart B. Johanson provided, 29% of the employees are making more and 61% are making less than the other entities; to which B. Johanson responded that those percentages are not representing the market, but just above the mid-point of our own internal pay structure range. He pointed out as long as cities are able to gobble up the county, our property tax revenue is going to decrease and when we raise taxes to increase that, we are not getting all the money, the cities are. He noted that Sheriff Helder had talked to him about his deputies making less than Benton County does and he pointed out that if Walmart moved to Washington County, then the Court could give all employees a raise. T. Lundstrum thanked B. Johanson for the time he put into getting all these numbers as it gives the Court something to compare to.
- 278.3 B. Johanson stated that the County does not necessarily lose directly to Benton County, but it can lose to the private sector as well as to the cities; this is why it is important that the Court capture as much market data as possible, so it has a true average for the market. He stated that historically, the Quorum Court wanted to be competitive with the marketplace; however, it did not need to lead the marketplace, so it adjusted to be at the market average, producing less risk to lose people to the market. He pointed out that there will be private entities out there that can pay \$2 to \$3 more and attract people away from the county; however, if the county can stay competitive to the average, then it lessens that risk.
- 278.4 T. Lundstrum reported that his own family company has had a huge increase in sales and have added two additional companies, so it is able to pay its employees a lot better than it could four years ago. He further pointed out with regard to the insurance issue that it is not the county putting this burden on county employees, but it is the federal government who passed a law that forced the insurance prices up.

- 279.1 A. Harbison stated that she thinks the Court should do the 7% across the board. She stated that if the county employees are important to the Court, then it needs to bring all of the employees up to market value. She stated that the Court does not only have salaries to think about, but it also has other things that will cost \$1 million, giving the Juvenile Court as an example. A. Harbison stated the County has more needs than it has money, so the Court has to decide what is important and realize that it cannot provide all of these services with the current revenue. She believes the court's number one priority needs to be bringing the county employees' salaries up to market value.
- 279.2 A. Harbison was given a round of applause from the audience.
- 279.3 S. Madison stated she is concerned that some of the charts prepared by B. Johanson do not compare apples to apples. She stated that instead, the counties are being compared to the cities, which are being compared to private business; and she would like to see a broader comparison with other counties in the same class. She explained that the private sector is much different from the public sector as it may not have a retirement plan for its employees, and the holiday schedule is probably not as good as the county. She stated that she is concerned about the inclusion of perhaps warping how the County is really being compared to others.
- 279.4 B. Johanson addressed S. Madison reporting he went through the exercise, including some of the other Class 6 and 7 counties, and it diluted the percentage by at least 3% to 4%. He stated that the exercise will dilute the percentage, but it does not change the fact that the market is the market. He believes that it would give the county a false sense that it is matching market when it is not.
- 279.5 S. Madison stated that it is hard to really weigh one against the other sometimes in a dollars comparison because of the holidays, retirement packages, and health insurance. She questioned if B. Johanson took that information into account.
- 279.6 B. Johanson responded to E. Madison stating that based on the Court looking at benefits this year, there is a lot more being considered about benefits than in the past. He stated that a combination of what the employees are paying and what the county is paying to fund the overall budget in categories of employees and employee/spouse compared to what the market is paying premium wise, the county is paying more dollars as it has to fund a larger usage budget or higher expense per employee.

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- 280.1 In response to a question from S. Madison on whether the county has a more expensive insurance carrier; B. Johanson responded the county has a higher usage of medical services, which costs more money to fund the overall budget. He explained that when compared against what the 53 organizations did in the NOARK study, the market is paying less to fund its overall healthcare than what the county is paying.
- 280.2 R. Dennis noted since the Court does not have a motion on the table, so it really does not have a motion to discuss. He therefore suggested that the Court put Ordinance 9.1 on the board and discuss it along with this versus starting all over again with 9.1.
- 280.3 County Attorney Steve Zega stated that the Court does not have a motion on the floor at this time; free form discussion is currently going on about this topic. He stated that the Court can continue this discussion in light of Agenda item #9, but he does not necessarily believe that is out of order because it is Agenda Item #8.
- 280.4 B. Pond stated that he appreciates the study done by B. Johanson as well as the information and explanations which help him comprehend where the County sits with all of its employees no matter what department they work in or where they are on the charts. He stated that he completely recognizes B. Johanson's recommendation of a 7% increase will put the County back in a position where it is not continually training employees and then losing them to other places of employment. He noted that he cannot begrudge an employee who leaves the county's employment to better themselves where they can provide better for their families. B. Pond stated that he is in favor of whatever is needed to get to that 7% increase for all county employees so the County does not lose so much money in hiring or training new people starting over. He noted that when he first came on the court, the employees below the poverty level were rampant, and he was surprised to hear that this may again be the case.
- 280.5 J. Maxwell stated on his chart that shows which job titles are currently above the market as well as which ones are below, it looks like there were some at the market level and above as well as others who are substantially below. He questioned whether it was B. Johanson's recommendation that the Court make a flat across the board percentage increase for everybody including those currently above the market level, or was there a more precise recommendation for bringing those with a large disparity up so it is more competitive for those jobs. He stated for a department that is substantially underfunded at 20% to 25% below market, it still will not retain those employees. He questioned whether a flat across the board increase

was the wisest way to do that, or should the Court be more specific by taking care of the trouble areas more than the others.

- 281.1 B. Johanson responded to J Maxwell, stating that ties into what R. Cochran suggested in trying to use that schedule to address the employees who are further off the market. He noted that the straight 7% across the board is easier to do, because it covers the whole workforce at 7%; however, it does not address those who are 15% to 20% off the market other than to improve things and help the overall average. He reiterated R. Cochran's suggestion that he tie in tenure and position to make sure that compression is not created. He stated that he is recommending 7% across the board, but is willing to go to that detail if it helps the Court be more effective overall for employees. He stated that they would probably look at the employees individually, as well as grouped by department.
- 281.2 J. Maxwell noted that a 7% across the board increase would cost the county a \$2,018,517 increase to its budget, which is substantial, but if it can retain employees and increase morale, that would be great. He stated that he wants the county to get its money's worth and reward its employees appropriately.
- 281.3 L. Ecke inquired whether the county had a seniority pay raise plan according to the number of years on the job; to which L. Huffaker responded that the County has a longevity bonus, but it does not offer increases based on tenure. She further stated that every December, the employees are eligible for a longevity pay bonus per county ordinance.
- 281.4 L. Ecke stated that she believes that is what the Sheriff was saying Springdale has where from 1-3 years, the employees know what their pay range will be and are easier to retain.
- 281.5 B. Johanson responded to L. Ecke stating that is what is referred to as a step system where it is publicized and what each step represents is based on years of employment as opposed to a minimum and a maximum.
- 281.6 L. Ecke asked how that would fit into his matrix, to which B. Johanson responded that it does not.
- 281.7 L. Huffaker stated that she is sure employees would love to know that there is a guaranteed raise in upcoming years; however, the catch is that there will have to be budgeting and a commitment for these step raises every year in the future.

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- 282.1 L. Ecke stated that what comes to mind is what she wants the society to look like in Washington County. She stated that she wants it to look prosperous, healthy, and robust with working people who are well-educated and trained; and questioned what it is going to take. She also questioned whether Elected Officials would be willing to support having that as their priority followed by everything else, since the Court is looking at salaries before the departmental budgets. She stated department heads and elected officials need to let their opinions be known so they can work with the Court to do this. L. Ecke stated that she values the actions taken by past courts, some being brilliant decisions and others perhaps not thought out well. Nevertheless, those decisions were made and now the Court is faced with these decisions. She stated that she has been advised by her constituents to not raise the millage; however, she sees what the decision to cut the millage did to the county and the Court is here because of that. She stated that things have changed and now the Court needs to change with them. She stated that a millage increase will affect the employees as well and asked for comments on such.
- 282.2 T. Lundstrum stated last year R. Cochran and he talked about the JESAP program and the pay ranges on each job title, with raising that by 2% this year and maybe 5% every other year. He stated if B. Johanson is talking about a 7% increase, he does not believe that will fit into some of those slots right now. He further stated that the Court may need to look at increasing the range, which will give people room to make more money.
- 282.3 R. Cochran asked if it is possible for B. Johanson to put the information he proposed to him earlier for that different calculation together and bring that to B. Pond's Personnel Committee meeting on September 6th; to which B. Johanson responded that he should have enough time to do that. He further responded to T. Lundstrum, regarding the top-end of the pay structure, stating that the Court has not but once limited anyone to not receiving their raises since he has been on the Court. There was a handful of employees in the Sheriff's Department that missed out and the Court did go back and rectify that.
- 282.4 S. Lloyd thanked B. Johanson for all of his work and presentation. She addressed the chart that shows an hourly raise and stated if the Court gives all of the employees a \$1/hour raise that equals \$2,080 per year and would save the county about \$500,000 instead of the 7% raise. She asked B. Johanson to give his pros and cons for the hourly raise; to which he stated that in the past, the court has gone with percentages and a dollar amount does impact people differently at the lower end of the schedule. He noted that usually when the Court uses a dollar amount as opposed to a percentage; it is trying to help those at the lower end to get a little bit more

than a 3% raise. He stated that the downside to that is that the County cannot do it every year noting that the increase would be less than 3% for those in the middle to upper part of the range structure. He stated the Court has to be careful about using the same pattern consistently both ways, because it affects people on both ends of the schedule.

- 283.1 AN ORDINANCE TO RAISE THE SALARIES AND WAGES OF NON-ELECTED COUNTY EMPLOYEES BY FOUR PERCENT (4%) OVER 2016 BASE PAY FOR BUDGET YEAR 2017: Robert Dennis introduced **An Ordinance To Raise The Salaries And Wages Of Non-Elected County Employees By Four Percent (4%) Over 2016 Base Pay For Budget Year 2017**, and County Attorney Steve Zega read the ordinance that was tabled at the Special Quorum Court meeting on July 28th.
- 283.2 R. Dennis stated he thinks everything has been said that needs to be said; the Court has heard about the competitive market, the cost to the employees, has not kept up on the pay increases, and has passed the insurance costs to the employees. He believes that now is the time to vote on this long overdue raise that the Washington County employees deserve.
- 283.3 **R. Dennis made a motion to adopt the ordinance. L. Ecke seconded.**
- 283.4 **A. Harbison made a motion to amend the ordinance to 7% to bring the increases up to market value. R. Dennis seconded.**
- 283.5 **R. Dennis and L. Ecke accepted A. Harbison's motion as a friendly amendment.**
- 283.6 J. Maxwell stated he thought R. Cochran's discussion earlier with B. Johanson was that he would come to B. Pond's next Personnel Committee meeting to discuss a more specific way to roll out an increase.
- 283.7 R. Dennis stated he finds this discussion interesting and the fact that now the Court wants to give a merit raise when a year ago this same court denied a merit raise. He stated that he would like to see something done before the Court enters into the budget process. He believes that now is the time to give everyone a raise and then the Court can budget accordingly after that.
- 283.8 T. Lundstrum stated that no one has told him what a 7% raise will cost the County nor does he know what the County's budget is going to look like. He stated that he will not support any kind of a raise until he has time to look at the budget to know whether there will be money to pay for it in addition to the parking deck, health insurance, etc. He further stated that if the Court

is going to raise the millage, then it needs to have that discussion to know if it will have the money to pay for it.

- 284.1 B. Ussery stated that this is so much information for the Court to digest. While he wants to give these raises, he wants to do it right. He wants to give B. Johanson time to present the material to the Court, as requested, as well as have time to review and discuss it. After which, he believes that the Court will be able to pass something that will work for everybody.
- 284.2 **B. Ussery made a motion to table the ordinance until the September Regular Quorum Court meeting. S. Madison seconded.**
- 284.3 **Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to table the ordinance.**
- 284.4 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Cochran, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B. Pond. VOTING AGAINST: R. Dennis, L. Ecke, and A. Harbison. The motion passed with nine members voting in favor and three members voting against the motion. The ordinance would be tabled until the September Regular Quorum Court meeting.
- 284.5 R. Cochran stated since their salary discussion depends on the millage, he requested that Judge Edwards include that on the agenda for the next meeting as well.
- 284.6 TREASURER'S REPORT: County Treasurer Bobby Hill reported that the General Fund was down in both revenues and expenditures, but the Road Fund and Jail Fund were up this month. He noted those funds began the month with \$33.3 million in the bank and ended the month with \$33.6 million.
- 284.7 B. Hill reported the county 1% sales tax and ¼ cent jail sales tax were both up around 5%, which was good over the past two months. He stated that the road ½ cent sales tax had its best increase of the year at 8%.
- 284.8 B. Hill addressed the Employee Insurance report, stating that the County ended the month with \$1.5 million, but as of right now it has \$1,358,000 in that fund.
- 284.9 COMPTROLLER'S REPORT: Comptroller Ashley Farber addressed General Fund Unappropriated Reserves Report, noting in July, the differences seen are the ordinances passed at the last Quorum Court meeting. She addressed the Summary of Revenues and Expenditures Report with the County's unappropriated reserves balance, stating that

every fund should be running around 60% expended. She stated that the Summary Statement of Operations-Expenses by Fund and Department shows encumbrances and the percent used for each department should be around 60%.

- 285.1 AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING THE AMOUNT OF \$24,400 FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE BUILDINGS & GROUNDS BUDGET FOR 2016: B. Pond introduced **An Ordinance Appropriating The Amount Of \$24,400 From The General Fund To The Buildings & Grounds Budget For 2016**, and County Attorney Steve Zega read the ordinance that is being recommended by the Public Works Committee.
- 285.2 B. Pond explained that this appropriation was for a new x-ray machine. He noted that the security guards have been struggling with the existing x-ray machine at the front door of the Courthouse for quite sometime. He stated that it was out of order several days and once up and running, security was afraid to shut it off again. Ultimately, it stayed on for several days before it quit again. He stated that trying to make repairs on the existing machine is just throwing good money away with the bad.
- 285.3 **B. Pond made a motion to adopt the ordinance. R. Cochran seconded the motion.**
- 285.4 S. Lloyd asked what the department was going to do with the old machine; whether it was going to sell it; to which B. Pond responded he assumes it will be going to salvage.
- 285.5 Buildings and Grounds Superintendent Ron Wood stated that the plans are to keep it for spare parts.
- 285.6 Citizen Comments: There were no citizen comments made.
- 285.7 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to adopt the ordinance.**
- 285.8 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B. Pond. **The motion passed unanimously by those present. The ordinance was adopted.**
- ORDINANCE NO. 2016-51, BOOK NO. 10, PAGE NO. 478**
- 285.9 AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING THE AMOUNT OF \$135,500 FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE ELECTION COMMISSION BUDGET FOR

2016: R. Cochran introduced **An Ordinance Appropriating The Amount Of \$135,500 From The General Fund To The Election Commission Budget For 2016**, and County Attorney Steve Zega read the ordinance.

- 286.1 Bill Ackerman, Commissioner with the Election Commission, addressed the Quorum Court stating that it came to the Court several weeks ago and was approved for \$420,000 that was needed for the county's part of the acquisition of voting equipment with the State advising that it would give the Commission \$1.2 million. He reported that after the fact, the State did not give the Commission \$1.2 million, but rather \$1 million, which left it \$200,000 short from what was calculated. He stated that the Commission would need that money from the court to get it whole. He stated that the Commission is not buying any more equipment than the Court already approved. It is only trying to purchase the equipment that was allocated for as it is incumbent on the Commission that the County makes up the shortfall.
- 286.2 R. Cochran stated that he knows the Commission increased the number of voting machines significantly from the old style to the new style and asked how many voting machines this is involving.
- 286.3 Jennifer Price with the Election Commission addressed R. Cochran's question, stating this would give the Commission 20 more of the express votes and 25 more of the express poll books, which is the mechanism to check the voters in. She stated that the Commission really could use more and can never have enough with the anticipated voter turnout for the General Election, and this additional equipment will alleviate some of the long lines that will be seen at the polling places.
- 286.4 In further response to a question from R. Cochran, J. Price explained a couple of things happened; the shortfall from the state in what it originally told the Commission that it would be able to purchase. Additionally, she advised that the state indicated that the Commission would be able to retain the old poll books that had been purchased in 2013; however, now the State is requiring the Commission to purchase the poll books that the State is currently using. This also changed how the Commission had to place its order in May. She further stated that in regards to the voting equipment, the Commission originally thought that the express vote would be a tabulator or an all-in-one machine that would count the ballots; however, that was not federally approved. She stated that meant that the Commission had to purchase the DS200, which is the large ballot box that the ballots will go into. She stated that this adjusted the number of equipment that the Commission actually needed, in terms of what it would

use at its polling places, as well as the dollar amount and how the Commission spent the money.

- 287.1 R. Cochran asked in total how many voting machines this will give the Commission with the anticipated purchase; to which J. Price responded that it currently has 288 of the express votes, 50 of the DS-200 ballot boxes, and 154 of the tablets. She stated with this new tablet system, the County Clerk's office also has to have tablets in her office, and that 154 includes tablets for the County Clerk's Office as well. J. Price reiterated that the Commission is asking for additional 20 of the express votes and 25 of the tablets.
- 287.2 In response to a question from S. Madison about which division of the State failed to provide the Commission with the money it promised in good faith; to which B. Ackerman responded that the Court can start with the Legislature who did not fund it. S. Madison stated that the County should never have relied on a Category C; to which B. Ackerman responded that the Secretary of State's Office called and told the Commission that the money had been allocated and then at the very end, it was \$200,000 short.
- 287.3 J. Price stated when the Court allocated this money to the Commission, it was only given numbers that the Commission had in 2006, so it was already and still is behind with equipment equivalent to ten years ago dollars wise. She further stated that in the future, there will be other acquisitions for equipment.
- 287.4 In response to a question from Judge Edwards, Commissioner Max Deitchler verified that the voter registration lists from 2006 when the Secretary of State's Office gave counties new voting equipment were the same figures used to determine how much counties were going to get this time around.
- 287.5 S. Lloyd asked if the Commission did not get these funds from the county, where will it not have voting machines; to which B. Ackerman responded that the Commission will probably have to pare down voting locations or operate with less equipment at each site, which will result in long lines. He further noted that the Commission is still running the same number of polling places that it has always had, but it needs more equipment because of the increase in voters.
- 287.6 J. Price gave the example of the Rodeo Grounds in Springdale, which has 6,000 registered voters at that one location. She further stated that when the Commission looks at expected voter turnout of 75% to 80% and calculates 35% to 40% of early votes, this means that the Commission can

expect to see close to 3,000 people voting at the Rodeo Grounds on Election Day.

- 288.1 R. Dennis stated he is a little bit tired of the State putting the screws to Washington County and it was noted that the Arkansas Secretary of State is Mark Martin from Northwest Arkansas. He stated that this angers him, because the County just lets the State do whatever it wants. He questioned where Washington County's legislators are in this.
- 288.2 B. Ackerman stated that the County needs to know how this thing comes down, which is (1) the Legislature; (2) the Governor; and (3) the Secretary of State. He reported that this year the Secretary of State did not get one dime from the Legislature or Governor for the electronic equipment. He further stated that the counties that have the new equipment today came out of Mark Martin's budget.
- 288.3 **E. Madison made a motion to adopt the ordinance. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 288.4 B. Pond requested that Mr. Ackerman let Secretary of State Mark Martin know that he appreciates the money the State sent. He stated that he does not intend to take the money the County received from the Commission and then give his office a thrashing, because the Commission did not get more.
- 288.5 B. Ackerman stated that time is of the essence with this situation because the voting season is here. The School Board election is coming up and has already been programmed as well as the Primary and General Election, so the Commission would appreciate timely movement on this request up or down.
- 288.6 L. Ecke requested that the Election Commission confirm that as of that day, they are not adding any additional polling places to what already exists no matter what happens in the future; to which B. Ackerman responded that she is forcing him to bring up an issue that has nothing to do with this.
- 288.7 Renee Oelschlaeger, Chairman of the Election Commission, noted that the Commission has already had one polling place that said that it does not even want to be open for the School Board Election.
- 288.8 Judge Edwards stated that they are getting out of order on this as they are working on an ordinance.
- 288.9 Citizen Comments: There were no citizen comments made.

- 289.1 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to adopt the ordinance.**
- 289.2 **VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Cochran, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B Pond. VOTING AGAINST: R. Dennis, S. Lloyd, and T. Lundstrum. **The motion failed with nine members voting in favor and three members voting against the motion.****
- 289.3 **E. Madison made a motion to suspend the rules and move onto second reading by title only. A. Harbison seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote.**
- 289.4 County Attorney Steve Zega read **An Ordinance Appropriating The Amount Of \$135,500 From The General Fund To The Election Commission Budget For 2016** by title only.
- 289.5 **E. Madison made a motion to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on third and final reading by title only. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 289.6 **Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to suspend the rules.**
- 289.7 **VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B Pond. VOTING AGAINST: L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, and T. Lundstrum. **The motion passed with nine members voting in favor and three members voting against the motion to suspend the rules.****
- 289.8 County Attorney Steve Zega read **An Ordinance Appropriating The Amount Of \$135,500 From The General Fund To The Election Commission Budget For 2016** by title only.
- 289.9 **E. Madison made a motion to adopt the ordinance. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 289.10 L. Ecke stated that she wants assurance that no new voting places are going to be added as of that day, because many of her constituents have advised her that the University of Arkansas wants voting places for its college students. She further stated that if this is where the equipment is going to go, she cannot support this ordinance. She restated that she wants to know exactly where the requested new equipment will be going.

- 290.1 **Judge Edwards stated that L. Ecke was out of order.**
- 290.2 County Attorney Steve Zega responded stating that Judge Edwards was sustained both to JP Madison's point of order and on her own, so there has been a ruling from the Chair.
- 290.3 Citizen Comments: There were no citizen comments made.
- 290.4 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to adopt the ordinance.**
- 290.5 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, A. Harbison, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B. Pond. VOTING AGAINST: R. Cochran, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, and T. Lundstrum. **The motion failed with seven members voting in favor and five members voting against the motion.**
- 290.6 In response to a question from S. Lloyd, M. Deitchler stated that under Arkansas law Section 75-418, it is the decision of the Election Commission where to put polling places. Further, he stated one great thing about this equipment versus the old equipment is that the old equipment had to be used at either an early voting location, a vote center, or polling location on Election Day; however, the new equipment can be used for either one. He reiterated that the new equipment will be at a voting center of the Commission's choosing on Election Day.
- 290.7 S. Zega stated that the ordinance has failed and continuing discussion on the issue would be out of order.
- 290.8 A. Harbison stated that the Court had three readings on this ordinance and it passed with a majority present, 7 for and 5 against, but it takes 8 votes in favor to pass, because there are 15 members of the court. S. Zega confirmed that this was correct.
- 290.9 T. Lundstrum stated that he wanted the Election Commissioners to know that his vote against this ordinance was not a vote against the Election Commission. He further stated that he is voting against the State of Arkansas and its Legislature. He brought up the resolution that the Court has before the Legislature asking that it pay 100% of what it costs to house the State's prisoners instead of half of it. He noted that there are numerous state mandates that are not funded and this is just another example of it. He does not believe it will stop until it sees the impact it has on the counties.

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- 291.1 E. Madison stated that she understands that T. Lundstrum and R. Dennis voted against the ordinance because they were trying to send a message to the state, but they picked the one opportunity to vote no that hurts the citizens of Washington County. She stated that on Election Day people will now be standing in line and be turned away to vote because those JPs decided to send a message to the Legislature and Mark Martin. She stated that this ordinance had 8 votes on the first round and was going to pass, but because some JPs are worried about students having access to voting, they are denying funding to the Election Commission. She further noted that the money that the County has already given to the Commission will now not be as effective, because the Court turned down this additional request.
- 291.2 B. Ussery stated that the Court's actions tonight will impact Washington County severely before it is over with. He stated the county has not purchased voting equipment in over ten years. He mentioned that Washington County had no part in the original purchase in 2006, because the federal government gave it to the Secretary of State. He stated that the \$1 million that the County received from the State was a gift and it could have been responsible for \$1.6 million. He stated the fact that the county is waiting for funding from the State to house its prisoners is academic because the voters of Washington County are the ones who will be penalized over a very poor decision of this court.
- 291.3 S. Madison addressed County Attorney Steve Zega and stated it was her understanding that someone from the prevailing side would have to make a motion to reconsider for the Court to take this up again. She is concerned that the Election Commission has committed the funds to buy these machines and now the Commission will be left owing a debt. She further noted that the Court has three JPs absent tonight as well.
- 291.4 S. Zega responded to S. Madison that someone who voted against the ordinance tonight would have to call to reconsider this ordinance either tonight or when the Court is in session next.
- 291.5 In response to a question from S. Madison, B. Ackerman stated that the equipment has not been ordered; however, it is on standby, because they knew that they were working with a tight timeframe. He stated in order to have the equipment here for the General Election, they need to order the equipment the next day.
- 291.6 **R. Dennis made a motion that the Court reconsider the ordinance. E. Madison seconded.**

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- 292.1 A. Harbison noted that there were two things that they voted against; one was because of the State and the other because they do not want voting machines at the University.
- 292.2 **Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to reconsider the ordinance.**
- 292.3 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B Pond. VOTING AGAINST: R. Cochran, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, and T. Lundstrum. **The motion passed with eight members voting in favor and four members voting against the motion to reconsider.**
- 292.4 **E. Madison made a motion to suspend the rules. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 292.5 **The motion passed by a majority of those present by voice vote. The rules were suspended.**
- 292.6 **L. Ecke made a motion to table the ordinance until after the Commission makes a decision and until the next Quorum Court meeting. S. Lloyd seconded.**
- 292.7 **E. Madison called for a point of order on L. Ecke's motion and Judge Edwards ruled in favor of L. Ecke.**
- 292.8 **Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to table the ordinance.**
- 292.9 VOTING FOR: R. Cochran, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, and T. Lundstrum. VOTING AGAINST: B. Ussery, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B Pond. **The motion failed with four members voting in favor and eight members voting against the motion to table the ordinance.**
- 292.10 **E. Madison made a motion to adopt the ordinance. The motion was seconded.**
- 292.11 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to adopt the ordinance.**
- 292.12 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B Pond. VOTING AGAINST: R. Cochran, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, and T. Lundstrum. **The motion passed with**

eight members voting in favor and four members voting against the motion. The ordinance was adopted.

ORDINANCE NO. 2016-52, BOOK NO. 10, PAGE NO. 479

293.1 AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000 FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE QUORUM COURT BUDGET FOR 2016: R. Cochran introduced **An Ordinance Appropriating The Amount Of \$10,000 From The General Fund To The Quorum Court Budget For 2016**, and County Attorney Steve Zega read the ordinance.

293.2 R. Cochran explained that the Court's budget is pretty well expended and it needs an influx of funds for the Government Channel who billed them for part of 2015 in this year and the Ordinance Review Committee has put up quite a few fees for publishing.

293.3 **R. Cochran made a motion to adopt the ordinance. T. Lundstrum seconded.**

293.4 Citizen Comment: There were no citizen comments made.

293.5 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to adopt the ordinance.**

293.6 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B. Pond. **The motion passed unanimously by those present. The ordinance was adopted.**

ORDINANCE NO. 2016-53, BOOK NO. 10, PAGE NO. 480

293.7 COUNTY JUDGE'S REPORT: Judge Edwards reported that Washington Regional has had one of their Board of Directors resign and the Board of Directors at Washington Regional has nominated Charles Robinson for approval by the Quorum Court for services on the Medical Center Board of Directors. She noted that Charles Robinson is a Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs at the University of Arkansas and is replacing Sharon Gabor who resigned from the Board on April 30th and left the U of A about the same time.

293.8 **A motion was made and seconded to approve the appointment of Charles Robinson to the Washington Regional Medical Center's Board of Directors. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The appointment was approved.**

- 294.1 COMMITTEE REPORTS: E. Madison stated that the County Services Committee did not meet this month due to lack of an agenda.
- 294.2 B. Pond, Vice-Chairman of the Public Works Committee, reported that the committee met on August 1st and had discussion on the use of GPS devices on the County Road Department equipment. The matter is currently on hold as the committee is waiting on some statistical information. He stated that the committee discussed the ordinance requesting funds for the new x-ray machine for the courthouse, and passed it on to the full Quorum Court with a do pass recommendation, which was previously passed by the court.
- 294.3 T. Lundstrum, Chairman of the Jail/Law Enforcement/Courts Committee, reported that the committee did not meet this month for lack of an agenda.
- 294.5 B. Ussery, Chairman of the Ordinance Review Committee, reported that the committee met on August 15, 2016 and had a healthy discussion regarding some ordinances on personnel; a section was passed, which will be on the agenda at the next Quorum Court meeting. He stated that the Committee will continue to work through the ordinances and hopefully at its next meeting will be talking about the IT Department.
- 294.6 A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF PRAIRIE GROVE REGARDING THE REGULATION OF COMMUNITY SEWER SYSTEMS: E. Madison introduced **A Resolution Approving An Interlocal Agreement With The City of Prairie Grove Regarding The Regulation Of Community Sewer Systems.** This resolution was tabled at the regular Quorum Court meeting on July 21.
- 294.7 A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF GOSHEN REGARDING THE REGULATION OF COMMUNITY SEWER SYSTEMS: E. Madison introduced **A Resolution Approving An Interlocal Agreement With The City of Goshen Regarding The Regulation Of Community Sewer Systems.** This resolution was tabled at the regular Quorum Court meeting on July 21.
- 294.8 E. Madison stated that there has been some discussion by the Goshen City Council about whether it really wants to do this, so she believes the best course of action is to put the resolutions on hold.
- 294.9 **E. Madison made a motion to table Resolutions #17.1 and #18.1. T. Lundstrum seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The resolutions were tabled.**

- 295.1 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING WASHINGTON COUNTY CODE SECTIONS 2-31 THROUGH 2-33: B. Ussery introduced **An Ordinance Amending Washington County Code Sections 2-31 Through 2-33.** This ordinance is on first reading and is being recommended by the Ordinance Review Committee.
- 295.2 **B. Ussery made a motion to suspend the rules and read the ordinance by title only. R. Cochran seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote.**
- 295.3 County Attorney Steve Zega read **An Ordinance Amending Washington County Code Sections 2-31 Through 2-33** by title only.
- 295.4 **B. Ussery made a motion to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on second reading by title only. R. Cochran seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote.**
- 295.5 County Attorney Steve Zega read **An Ordinance Amending Washington County Code Sections 2-31 Through 2-33** by title only.
- 295.6 **B. Ussery made a motion to suspend the rules and place the ordinance on third and final reading by title only. R. Cochran seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote.**
- 295.7 County Attorney Steve Zega read **An Ordinance Amending Washington County Code Sections 2-31 Through 2-33** by title only.
- 295.8 **B. Ussery made a motion to adopt the ordinance. R. Cochran seconded.**
- 295.9 Citizen Comments: There were no citizen comments made.
- 295.10 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to adopt the ordinance.**
- 295.11 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and B. Pond. **The motion passed unanimously by those present. The ordinance was adopted.**

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- 296.1 OTHER BUSINESS: A. Harbison reported that the work on the Woolsey Bridge should start very soon with a Missouri Company getting the bid.
- 296.2 CITIZEN COMMENTS: Matt Durrett, Washington County Prosecuting Attorney, addressed the Quorum Court regarding employee raises. He stated that his concern is that there appears to be talk about treating some employees differently, based on the printout prepared by Blair Johanson, concerning how much those employees are paid as opposed to their counterparts elsewhere. He reported there are 27 county employees or 15% who are paid more than their area counterparts and he has five of those employees in his office. He stated that when the Quorum Court makes a decision on this issue, he hopes that it takes into consideration why those employees are paid more than their area counterparts. He stated that those five employees total 100 years of service to this county. He stated that these employees bring much more value to the county than they take away in compensation and are invaluable to his office. He is concerned that those employees will not get the same consideration for raises as others or they may not get a raise at all.
- 296.3 Judge Edwards reported that the county is losing someone from its IT Department in a week because that employee was offered over \$20,000 more to leave us and go somewhere else. This is what the County is facing particularly when it has skilled people who are much in demand.
- 296.4 David Williams, employee at the Washington County Road Department, addressed the Quorum Court stating he believes most county employees are underpaid. He further stated that those above his counterparts are probably getting paid exactly what they are worth or more. He has heard the Court discuss the potential of a "step system." He has been a part of this system during past employment and reported that he thinks it is great. He stated as far as budgetary items, it is not automatic, pointing out that the City of Fayetteville does pay freezes occasionally, which is basically what the Quorum Court has done in the past years when the money was not there. However, when the money is there, the raises are automatic and employees know. D. Williams explained that when he was employed by the City of Fayetteville, it had seven steps at first and then changed it to four. He reported that in those four years an employee would go from the bottom to the top pay, which was the pay range unless there was a pay freeze. He stated that the employees knew whether they were going to move up and that they were valued. If for some reason the employer did not want to give that employee a raise, then that employee should be terminated; then you will have the best work force possible. He stated he would appreciate any raise that the Court gives; however, it will not change

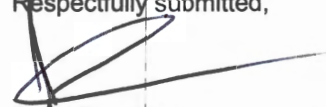
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the way he works for the County and he will continue to do the best job he can.

297.1 Brian Comstock, 21 year employee at the Washington County Sheriff's Department, addressed the Quorum Court and thanked it for its service to the County. He stated that he doubts the Court took the job for the money, which is not why the officers in law enforcement do that either. He stated that he has never been above the base pay for his grade in 21 years and he believes that merit raises are very important to define where people are. He believes that everybody working for the county deserves a raise; however, if the Court gives an across-the-board raise, then it does not give an incentive to work harder to the person who does not work as hard as others. He further stated that the people who do work hard get more tasks piled on top of them by their supervisors. He addressed longevity pay, stating that he believes as a Corporal his is \$750.00 for 21 years, which is great if it comes at Christmas time, but is a very small portion of his pay and he is at the bottom of his pay grade. B. Comstock stated that Washington County has the best law enforcement in the State and are a model for other Sheriff's Departments.

297.2 ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carly Sandidge
Quorum Court Coordinator/Reporter