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**MINUTES OF THE  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
WASHINGTON COUNTY QUORUM COURT**

Monday, October 26, 2015  
5:30 p.m.

Washington County Quorum Court Room

- 696.1 The Washington County Quorum Court met for a special meeting on Monday, October 26, 2015. The meeting was called to order by County Judge Marilyn Edwards who stated the purpose of this meeting was to continue working on matters pertaining to the 2016 budget process.
- 696.2 S. Madison introduced Rabi Jacob Adler from Temple Shalom who led the Quorum Court in a prayer and S. Madison led the Court in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 696.3 MEMBERS PRESENT: Daniel Balls, Harvey Bowman, Robert Dennis, Lisa Ecke, Ann Harbison, Sharon Lloyd, Tom Lundstrum, Eva Madison, Sue Madison, Joel Maxwell, Gary McHenry, Butch Pond, and Bill Ussery.
- 696.4 MEMBER ABSENT: Rick Cochran and Joe Patterson.
- 696.5 Judge Edwards reported that Rick Cochran would not be at the meeting and Joe Patterson was recuperating from knee surgery.
- 696.6 OTHERS PRESENT: County Judge Marilyn Edwards, County Chief of Staff George Butler, County Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger; Interested Citizens; and Members of the Press.
- 696.7 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Judge Edwards asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.
- 696.8 **B. Pond made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. S. Lloyd seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote.**
- 696.9 REVIEW 2016 BUDGET REQUESTS: County Clerk Becky Lewallen addressed the Quorum Court with the County Clerk budget stating this will be a big General Election year.
- 696.10 A. Harbison noted that this budget is down \$2,217, and B. Lewallen responded that she stayed within the budget constraints that she was given last year.
- 696.11 **T. Lundstrum made a motion to approve the County Clerk budget.**
- 696.12 A. Harbison referred to the County Clerk's budget summary, noting that she has spoken to Becky Lewallen extensively about the County Clerk's Automation Fund in which she has \$1 million to budget this year; however she only budgeted \$152,950 leaving \$873,000 that is not being used. She

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referred to a handout - Probate and County Matters-Miscellaneous Court Fees, noting the following, "Funds set aside for automation may be allowed to accumulate from year to year or at the discretion of the clerk, may be transferred to the county general fund by a budgeted appropriated transfer." She stated that B. Lewallen has consented to transfer enough money to cover a 2% raise for county employees, which equals \$563,808.84. A. Harbison knows there will be some discussion on using one-time money, but if the Court does not want to put the money into salaries, then it could at least give bonuses. A. Harbison stated she believes the Court should look at this to help meet its budget projections.

- 697.1 T. Lundstrum stated that he is always a little hesitant of taking money like this and giving it to individuals as he doubts the County Clerk is willing to promise this raise past 2016, but if it were transferred to the general fund, he sees giving bonuses as a different proposition. He reported before leaving, the previous County Clerk gave \$50,000 out of this fund to cover the employee's insurance increase for that year, but not for the years thereafter. He saw this as a very generous action, but thought that it was not really her money to give. He thanked B. Lewallen for bringing this available money to the Court's attention.
- 697.2 E. Madison asked how long it took this money to accumulate to which B. Lewallen responded it would be hard for her to give an exact timeline on that, but her last large purchase from this fund was the tablets in 2013 for approximately \$120,000; and she does not have many large purchases. E. Madison stated it appears to have been more than an annual accumulation, so she is worried about taking all of it from her; and with some changes coming with the upcoming election, she is worried about depleting her funds. She stated that this is a very generous offer, but she would be more inclined to give it in the form of a bonus because she does not know how the County would sustain a 2% raise.
- 697.3 J. Maxwell thanked B. Lewallen for her generosity and likes to see the county employees pulling together. He asked if either Treasurer Bobby Hill or Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger could help the Court understand roughly how long it took for this fund to accumulate \$820,000; to which B. Hill responded that it accumulated at approximately \$120,000 a year. He asked if B. Lewallen would be okay with this money or a portion thereof going just into county reserves and not absolutely be earmarked upfront for bonuses or raises; to which she responded she would prefer that it went towards bonuses or raises, but she would cooperate as long as it was for the good of everyone.

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- 698.1 R. Dennis stated that he does not like this being called a “donation” because it is taxpayers’ money, but either way taxpayers end up paying it. He further stated that 2% of \$100,000 is a lot more than 2% of \$25,000 and he sees a big discrepancy because those at the bottom never gain much by getting 2% of not very much.
- 698.2 H. Bowman asked B. Lewallen about the money being earmarked and she explained that she only spoke to A. Harbison and George Butler about salary increases and bonuses, but had not given anything else much thought. He suggested instead of completely depleting this fund, maybe the Court could just use a portion for this purpose and put the rest in the general fund and B. Lewallen stated she would consider that. H. Bowman asked her to elaborate in her statement that this would “boost morale”; to which B. Lewallen responded that when she first started this job, she made \$9.22 an hour and she understands how a raise or even a bonus would help employees out for Christmas, etc. H. Bowman noted that ever since he has been on the court, it has given raises, but noted that Social Security and a lot of other things are not increasing this year. He stated his preference would be to put the money in the general fund to allow the court time to take a look at all of the numbers before the final decision is made about bonuses or salaries.
- 698.3 S. Madison addressed the list of various court fees that go into this automation fund, including miscellaneous court fees and articles of incorporation, questioning whether any of those fees have guidelines for how the funds are to be used; to which B. Lewallen responded 35% of what is spent out of this fund does have to be for automation purposes and she applied all of her computer-related items to this fund last year. S. Madison noted that based on the \$120,000 a year, it took 7¼ years to accumulate this amount of money and asked whether she had fulfilled that automation requirement every year; to which B. Lewallen responded pretty much the only thing coming out of this fund currently is automated such as computers, Information Technology, leases, software support (\$15,000 for tablets), and internet, along with a small line item for supplies. She further explained that those things classified as “automation” was to purchase, maintain and operate an automated record system.
- 698.4 S. Madison asked if any of the revenue sources are the type that fluctuates from year-to-year; to which B. Lewallen responded that the sources were all pretty general and do not fluctuate much, and the fees that generate the most revenue are articles of incorporation, marriage licenses, and small estates. She also noted that most of these fees are set by statute.

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- 699.1 S. Madison questioned if the Court had the authority to reduce some of the fees; and B. Lewallen stated that a part of it goes to the Domestic Peace Fund, Children's Trust Fund, etc. S. Madison stated that she is dead set against using one-time money for any salary increases and would agree with it coming into the general fund, but without strings attached.
- 699.2 County Attorney Steve Zega noted back when the people of Arkansas passed Amendment 80 in 2000, the Legislature then pretty much took counties out of the business of setting court fees as they had done in the past and enacted uniform fees for these things.
- 699.3 B. Pond pointed out that it is at the discretion of the County Clerk that this money may be transferred, so at this point he would tend to agree with using it for bonuses, which is one-time money. He also would not go as far as to say that she should just turn it over to the Quorum Court to put in the general fund with the notion that the Court could do what it wanted with the money to which is getting around "at the discretion of the County Clerk".
- 699.4 A. Harbison stated she sees this as a common sense approach to providing a bonus or some kind of salary raise to the County's employees. She noted that a 25¢ an hour raise would be \$461,739.21; a 2% raise would be \$563,808.84 and that still leaves \$309,291.16 in the fund for B. Lewallen to use for emergencies.
- 699.5 A. Harbison stated that her intent was to make a motion that the Court accept the County Clerk's offer of transferring funds to be used for salary increases or bonuses to be determined at a later date.
- 699.6 S. Zega pointed out that there had not been a second to T. Lundstrum's motion to approve the budget and though A. Harbison's motion is incidental of that, the Court needs to do something with the County Clerk's main budget first.
- 699.7 **T. Lundstrum made a motion to approve the County Clerk budget. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 699.8 L. Ecke thanked B. Lewallen for her generous offer stating that she does want the court to visit and consider bonuses because the IT Department's salaries are way above every other department and for a strict 2% raise, that department would get a huge increase while the others would not, so the Court needs to look at the salary ranges first before considering giving a countywide raise or bonus.

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- 700.1 T. Lundstrum stated that he sees the budget and automation fund as two totally separate issues that should be handled separately to begin with, plus when the Court considers the automation fund, it has to consider retirement costs, matching social security, etc. as well. He concurred with L. Ecke stating that the Court has found that when it gives a 5% raise, one employee got a \$4,000 a year raise while other employees got a 50¢ an hour raise; however, with a bonus it could give everybody the same amount. T. Lundstrum stated that B. Lewallen has done an excellent job of keeping the costs of her budget down and he has made the motion that the Court pass it.
- 700.2 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the County Clerk budget as presented.**
- 700.3 VOTING FOR: J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, and S. Madison. **The motion passed unanimously by those present. The County Clerk budget was approved as presented.**
- 700.4 **A. Harbison made a motion that the Court accepts the County Clerk's offer of \$563,808 to be distributed to employees as compensation to be determined at a later date. B. Pond seconded.**
- 700.5 E. Madison stated that she would have to vote against this motion at this time because she does not feel that the Court has had enough time to consider what it is doing in terms of compensation and the overall impact on the budget. She stated that she would rather just know that it is in the realm of possibilities for when the Court discusses employee compensation.
- 700.6 J. Maxwell suggested that there may be some wisdom in addressing this in two pieces while the County Clerk is here; if she is amenable to bringing those funds into the general fund and a separate conversation to discuss raises and compensation and decide on the best way to handle this.
- 700.7 H. Bowman stated that he thinks it is shortsighted of the Court to consider zeroing out the County Clerk's automation fund as she may need it for future unforeseen issues and suggested that the Court leave such an amount in this fund, and then deal with personnel compensation at a time that is more appropriate.
- 700.8 Judge Edwards stated with the figures quoted by A. Harbison, there was going to be over \$300,000 left in the automation fund.

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- 701.1 S. Madison stated she understood B. Lewallen to say she was willing to give this money to the general fund without it being earmarked and she is very opposed to the Court earmarking it at this point because it is not finished reviewing the other county budgets and matched up what it has appropriated with what it has to spend.
- 701.2 H. Bowman stated that the Court needs to recognize that B. Lewallen has gone above and beyond to cooperate and help everyone out with budget issues as Circuit Clerk Kyle Sylvester has done for the Animal Shelter and the Court ought to applaud this kind of cooperation from its elected officials. He stated he might not always agree with the choices made, but this demonstrates a generous and open nature to try to cooperate.
- 701.3 L. Ecke concurred with J. Maxwell and H. Bowman on their ideas for a friendly amendment as B. Lewallen is willing to give this amount of money back to the county employees who she works with day in and day out and sees the need. She stated if this is cash in the bank for the employees, then she feels that this is money that the Court has to work with when that time comes because it is separate from the budget. She noted that our county employees work hard; and the Court does not recognize nor value them all the time and this is its opportunity as a court to value it.
- 701.4 C. Bolinger stated that not all county salaries are in county general and there are some large ones in other funds.
- 701.5 S. Zega stated that there was discussion by J. Maxwell about bringing these funds into county general, but he did not hear that made in the form of a motion; and as a friendly amendment, it would have to be accepted by A. Harbison.
- 701.6 A. Harbison stated that C. Bolinger answered that question if all salaries are not paid out of county general. She stated her motion was that the Court accept the County Clerk's generous offer and earmark this money for salaries to be determined at a later time, so she will not accept the amendment.
- 701.7 S. Zega cautioned the court stating if this motion fails at this meeting, someone who voted against it would have to bring it back later.
- 701.8 E. Madison disagreed with S. Zega stating that is only if it is a motion to reconsider at the same sitting, but you can bring it up in another form at another meeting.

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- 702.1 S. Zega stated he is suggesting that maybe the appropriate thing to do with this particular motion is to table it.
- 702.2 J. Maxwell stated that he believes this will get bogged down if it is a two-step process taking the funds that she is generously offering and then automatically earmarking them as the second half for salaries and compensation. He fears that it will fail if tied to salaries and compensation at this time and his suggestion that he can offer in the form of an amendment would be to make the motion just to accept those funds from the County Clerk tonight to put in general reserves and then at a separate time the Court can discuss how best to implement what it wants to do with the funds.
- 702.3 A. Harbison stated that she would not accept that as a friendly amendment because it could go into the general fund and be voted to be used for anything later and B. Lewallen is offering this money for salaries. She wants this money earmarked for some type of compensation and the Court can decide how to use the compensation at a later time.
- 702.4 B. Ussery stated that he would suggest that the Court table this tonight and bring it up later once it knows what all the numbers are and ask B. Lewallen to come back and take her lead in trying to do something for the employees of the county with this money.
- 702.5 **B. Ussery made a motion to table A. Harbison's motion until a later date. E. Madison seconded.**
- 702.6 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to table A. Harbison's motion until a later date.**
- 702.7 **VOTING FOR: J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, and S. Madison. The motion passed unanimously by those present. The motion was tabled.**
- 702.8 County Clerk Becky Lewallen addressed the Quorum Court with the County Clerk Cost budget.
- 702.9 **B. Pond made a motion to approve the County Clerk Cost budget as presented. T. Lundstrum seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The County Clerk Cost budget was approved as presented.**

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- 703.1 County Clerk Becky Lewallen addressed the Quorum Court with the County Clerk Operating budget stating that \$2 from every marriage license issued goes into this fund.
- 703.2 **J. Maxwell made a motion to approve the County Clerk Operating budget as presented. J. McHenry seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The County Clerk Operating budget was approved as presented.**
- 703.3 Election Commissioner Max Deitchler and Election Coordinator Jennifer Price addressed the Quorum Court with the Election Commission budget.
- 703.4 **S. Madison made a motion to approve the Election Commission budget as presented. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 703.5 **Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the Election Commission budget as presented.**
- 703.6 VOTING FOR: G. McHenry, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, E. Madison, and S. Madison. VOTING AGAINST: J. Maxwell, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, and T. Lundstrum. **The motion passed with nine members voting in favor and four members voting against the motion. The Election Commission budget was approved as presented.**
- 703.7 County Assessor Russell Hill addressed the Quorum Court with the booklet that he created setting out the Assessor's 2016 budget. He noted that the Assessor's Office is commission-based and the entire budget affects the county general by 8% to 9%. He reported that the County is just wrapping up a 5-year reappraisal contract, pointing out that in 2010 it had 93,315 parcels and was paying \$11.50 per parcel; and he was able to renegotiate the 2016 contract, with the county growing since 2010 by 1,393 parcels, for a total of \$94,708, which was negotiated to \$10.75 per parcel. He noted that the County's 2010 contract was \$5,365,000 and the 2016 contract was \$5,090,555, but he challenged the contractor to decrease it further and by eliminating the parcel pictometry, which was deemed unnecessary, he saved an additional \$100,000. He stated that the final negotiated 5-year contract of \$4,990,555 divided over 5 years at \$998,111 per year which is \$83,175.92 per month or \$10.54 per parcel with a total savings from 2010 of \$375,000.
- 703.8 R. Hill stated that he had come to the Quorum Court asking for two Deputy Assessors, one needed due to population growth and one needed for the new Revenue Office opening on Razorback Road. At that time, he had a



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lady retiring at the end of 2016 and the extra person was needed for one year, which would be absorbed. However, this lady advised him recently that she will need to keep working for a couple more years, but he would like to keep the position available and see if he can just get by with one additional Deputy Assessor with the option to hire the additional person if needed.

- 704.1 R. Hill noted that he had cut his budget by \$100 for medication/drugs and by \$1,000 for food. He noted an increase under clothing/uniforms of \$1,500 for a total of \$2,000 and reported his office averaged \$1,500 to \$1,800 a year for clothing/uniforms up until 2011. He stated that he has 33 employees and this money is to provide shirts or sweaters with the county emblem that say "Assessor" as his office has not purchased anything in a number of years and have staff members that have never been supplied a uniform shirt. He stated that he accepted a position on the Legislative Committee for the counties and is one of three representing Assessor's Offices in the State of Arkansas. He noted a decrease from \$10,000 to \$8,000 for fuel/oil/lubricants due to lower fuel prices and the Legislature will not be in session in 2016 so he will not need to travel to Little Rock multiple times to protect the interest of the laws coming into play that affect the Assessor's Office, County, and revenue stream. He reported that a couple of his vehicles will probably need tires in 2016.
- 704.2 R. Hill noted a large increase of \$15,000 in his computers/equipment budget explaining that he has four PCs that need to be replaced at \$1,500 each or \$6,000; and the new office set-up at the Revenue Office at \$6,640.18. He stated that the total Purchase Request Form for equipment needed for the new office came in at \$9,610.96 and he took a few items off this list for the revised total of \$6,640.18, saving the county about \$3,000.
- 704.3 R. Hill stated that his office has an issue in its personal property due to vehicle VIN number entry mistakes, which creates an error on statements. He proposes buying 17 scanners at \$700 for a total of \$11,900 so his office can scan the VIN numbers, which attach into the personal property files and allows correction to be made and close the cracks caused from mistakes. With respect to the PC's he noted that his office has 37 total and 13 were purchased in 2013; however, he wants to space this out so he is buying 5-6 a year. He stated his total computer/IT equipment budget is \$25,000.
- 704.4 R. Hill addressed other professional services, his office was at \$7,000 for 2015 and this was increased by \$9,000 for a total of \$15,000 to go toward cabinets that will have to be built and installed at the Razorback Road Office. He stated that the cost for the Collector and Assessor together is almost \$18,000 with his half being \$9,000. He noted his travel was down

by \$500, but common carrier increased by \$1,500 for a total of \$2,500 due to two conferences that are extremely important for his office to attend. One is a GIS/CAMA (Geographical Information System)/(Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal) Worldwide conference, where the attendees will fly to Savannah, GA, and this is where they will learn about mapping the county more efficiently and accurately. He stated that marketing the new office will increase his advertising/publication budget by \$800 for a total of \$1,000. He noted under dues/memberships, his office spent \$5,900 this year and he had to move \$1,000 over to handle the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO), which writes all of his office's regulations; and he is required to subscribe to be a part of the organization. Under meals/lodging, he shows an increase of \$10,500 for a total of \$15,500, which is for conferences, dues and memberships for education. He addressed his budget booklet that set out each conference with registration fees, rooms, food and airfares with staff who will be attending. He explained that in the Assessor's Office it is very important that his staff are licensed and certified their field so what they do is accurate and precise, so this training and classes are required for continuing education hours.

- 705.1 **R. Dennis made a motion to approve the County Assessor budget as presented. B. Pond seconded.**
- 705.2 H. Bowman stated he appreciates the in depth review given by R. Hill and asked if the scanners will increase the speed of processing; to which he responded that it will add an extra measure so there is correct information in the system. He stated that his office has 17 people processing hundreds of people a day and when typing in a 19-digit VIN number, mistakes are bound to be made, so these scanners will increase the accuracy. H. Bowman stated he would think that eliminating the need to enter this information manually would decrease the number of staff needed in the future; to which R. Hill stated that his office still has to manage the information and this will increase the efficiency and accuracy.
- 705.3 A. Harbison commended R. Hill on his professionalism and willingness to go the extra step to get education needed.
- 705.4 In response to the question of when money comes to the Assessor from the school districts, Treasurer Bobby Hill stated that some comes in every month and at the first of the year the Treasurer's Office rolls it into the Assessor, Collector and Treasurer's account, so until this occurs, those offices operate on county general money.
- 705.5 J. Maxwell stated his appreciation to R. Hill's attention to detail and the way he manages his budget, renegotiating contracts, proactively changing his

county car policy, etc., which all makes the Court's job much simpler. He further asked if new vehicle titles from Arkansas have a barcode; to which R. Hill responded that he was unaware if this was the case, but agreed that it would remove all source of errors and increase efficiency.

- 706.1 E. Madison inquired about the two scanners R. Hill had removed from the IT estimate, stating that she sees scanners as being a necessary part of office equipment these days and cuts down on paper. R. Hill responded stating that he is replacing those on the estimate with scanners that are \$700 instead of \$900 apiece.
- 706.2 G. McHenry inquired about the scanners being purchased; to which R. Hill explained that they are specialized scanners that are installed in their software system and are recommended by and purchased through their software provider so they will work with the office's CAMA system. He further reported that this type of equipment is currently used in Benton County, but only in Washington County's business personal system at this time.
- 706.3 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the County Assessor budget as presented.**
- 706.4 **VOTING FOR: J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, and S. Madison. The motion passed unanimously by those present. The County Assessor budget was approved as presented.**
- 706.5 County Assessor Russell Hill addressed the Quorum Court with the Equalization Board budget.
- 706.6 B. Ussery stated that the 3009 - Other Professional Services line item has increased substantially; to which R. Hill responded that this is for the office's county imagery. This is a six-year contract and since the County is starting its reappraisal, the first year pixilation will be really tight as will the year before the final reappraisal, with the in-between years being substantially less. He further stated with that is also cooperative program so the cities are also involved with the county paying the lion's share and the cities pitching in and reimbursing the County for a portion. He stated that he works with Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning and everybody pitches in on the imagery because everybody in the county utilizes it. R. Hill explained that \$30,000 of this cost is for the digital footprints, which is put around each building on each parcel that allows down the line to see if property has been added onto, if building permits were issued, and if it is assessed properly.

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- 707.1 Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger explained that the money reimbursed to the county for this goes into county general and is part of the revenue projections.
- 707.2 **A motion was made and seconded to approve the Equalization Board budget as presented.**
- 707.3 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the Equalization Board budget as presented.**
- 707.4 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Equalization Board budget was approved as presented.**
- 707.5 County Assessor Russell Hill addressed the Quorum Court with the Assessor's Amendment 79 budget, and explained that this was a fund that the State reimburses by approximately \$20,000 a year. He stated that restrictions on this money are that it has to be used only on specific ways such as funding the Office of Amendment 79, which has four staff members. He stated that he tends to use this fund for education and training, for some of the office's postage costs, and to upgrade the computers.
- 707.6 In response to a question from S. Madison, R. Hill explained that Amendment 79 is the Homestead Exemption for a \$350 credit and to those people who are disabled or 65 and older; their tax is frozen.
- 707.7 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the Assessor's Amendment 79 budget as presented. H. Bowman seconded.**
- 707.8 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the Assessor's Amendment 79 budget as presented.**
- 707.9 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Assessor's Amendment 79 budget was approved as presented.**
- 707.10 Circuit Clerk Kyle Sylvester addressed the Quorum Court with the Circuit Clerk budget.
- 707.11 A. Harbison noted the Circuit Clerk budget is up \$4,476 from last year.
- 707.12 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the Circuit Clerk budget as presented. G. McHenry seconded.**

- 708.1 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the Circuit Clerk budget as presented.**
- 708.2 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Circuit Clerk budget was approved as presented.**
- 708.3 Circuit Clerk Kyle Sylvester addressed the Quorum Court with the Recorder's Cost budget.
- 708.4 H. Bowman noted a large increase in the full-time salaries; to which K. Sylvester responded that the Quorum Court had approved three full-time slots.
- 708.5 S. Madison asked which one of the funds did the excess come from that went to the Animal Shelter; to which K. Sylvester responded that those funds did not come from any fund that the Court is considering tonight.
- 708.6 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the Recorder's Cost budget as presented. R. Dennis seconded.**
- 708.7 L. Ecke noted when K. Sylvester generously offered the Animal Shelter money when needed, it came from a commissioner fee fund and she questioned if there were any restrictions on those funds and whether it could have been used to hire three additional staff. K. Sylvester responded that the issue with that fund is that it is all based on commissions from foreclosure sales and hard to forecast how much money would come in during the year because it relies on the real estate market at that point. She asked how much money is in the commissioner fee fund at this time; to which he responded that after the money was transferred into county general, there is about \$12,000 left.
- 708.8 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the Recorder's Cost budget as presented.**
- 708.9 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Recorder's Cost budget was approved as presented.**
- 708.10 Circuit Clerk Kyle Sylvester addressed the Quorum Court with the Transfer Out Recorder's Cost Fund budget, and stated he believes this is the projected roll over for 2016 and Treasurer Hill estimated it at \$700,000.
- 708.11 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the Transfer Out Recorder's Cost Fund budget as presented. R. Dennis seconded.**

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- 709.1 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the Transfer Out Recorder's Cost Fund budget as presented.**
- 709.2 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Transfer Out Recorder's Cost Fund budget was approved as presented.**
- 709.3 Circuit Clerk Kyle Sylvester addressed the Quorum Court with the Transfer Out Child Support Fund budget, stating there are certain fees from this fund that go to help pay for that particular position at the end of the year.
- 709.4 J. Maxwell asked why there were no transfers out in 2014; to which K. Sylvester responded that those are items that the Treasurer calculates at the end of the year and transfers out.
- 709.5 C. Bolinger added that the whole process with this is because that fund does not generate enough revenue to actually cover the Child Support Coordinator position and back before K. Sylvester was Circuit Clerk; her office would do court orders every payroll to cover that. She stated she had asked the previous Circuit Clerk if it was okay to actually move the position to the county general budget and then at the end of the year, she could transfer it and she imagines in 2014, it did not get transferred until after the end of the year.
- 709.6 **H. Bowman made a motion to approve the Transfer Out Child Support Fund budget as presented. B. Pond seconded.**
- 709.7 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the Transfer Out Child Support Fund budget as presented.**
- 709.8 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Transfer Out Child Support Fund budget was approved as presented.**
- 709.9 County Tax Collector David Ruff addressed the Quorum Court with the Tax Collector budget, stating that he did eliminate his office's food fund for a reduction along with some others and increased several as well. He noted that his total budget is an increase from last year of \$106,000 with the County's portion being \$9,676. He explained that he has not increased his budget in sometime. He is opening up the new office at the Revenue Office, hiring two employees, adding additional funds to his overtime line item, and his postage and publications are up. D. Ruff reported that he has

nearly completed collections for the year, and compared to this time last year, his office is up \$1,720,375 in collections; and the county's portion of that is 9.12%.

- 710.1 E. Madison asked why he was using overtime instead of the comp-time option that governments have available, where his office does not have to actually spend that money; to which D. Ruff responded that he requests that his employees use as much comp time as possible, and because certain positions have to be filled at certain places, it is either one or the other. He reiterated that he encourages his staff to use comp-time, especially those employees who have used all of their sick and annual leave.
- 710.2 E. Madison stated that she was curious about his special legal costs; to which D. Ruff responded when he first took over the office, there was \$2,000 in that line item, which he took it out when the budget was cut and put it back in because it is something that he may need. He further explained that it is to protect the Collector and gives legal advice outside counsel of the county. E. Madison stated that the County Attorney functions as his attorney as well, except when he has trouble with some other entity in the county.
- 710.3 County Attorney Steve Zega explained if one elected official sues another, he would disqualify himself entirely.
- 710.4 E. Madison questioned why every elected official did not have such a fund and is not following the need for this given that he has ever had to use it and she does not know that she could foresee this happening.
- 710.5 D. Ruff stated that he is going to retire in one year and two months and he wants to leave his office and budget the way he found it and that was already in the budget when he took office and he had been told it is to protect the Collector's Office in case of a lawsuit.
- 710.6 E. Madison stated she cannot support such an odd contingency in a budget and if the Court does this for him, she feels like it will receive the same request from other departments. She inquired about the significant increase in postage; to which he responded that postage has gone up and his office has tried to cut back by not sending a receipt for partial tax payments. With respect to the increase in the advertising and publications budget, it is due to the increase in population and this is a cost that he will get back from delinquent taxpayers.
- 710.7 **E. Madison made a motion to approve the Tax Collector's budget minus the \$4,000 for Special Legal. S. Madison seconded.**

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- 711.1 S. Lloyd stated now that the Collector's Office does so much by email, she is confused about the \$10,000 increase in postage; to which D. Ruff pointed out that the office's largest mail usage was in the past few weeks, which is not reflected in the figures from sending receipts to taxpayers and the cost of postage just increased by 2 cents. He added that he does not want to run out of postage at the end of the year.
- 711.2 In response to a question from S. Lloyd as to how much the Collector had spent on postage so far this year, Comptroller C. Bolinger stated for the bills paid he has spent \$49,771 to date, but there may be some bills that her office has not paid yet. D. Ruff added that this is probably the case and this month was a big month on top of that. C. Bolinger stated that he has spent 82% of his postage budget already this year with a \$60,000 budget.
- 711.3 S. Lloyd stated she could see the necessity for an increase if his office was not doing anything by email.
- 711.4 L. Ecke asked D. Ruff to explain his internet connection amount; to which he stated a lot of it is for the new office. She asked him to give the Court a report from the IT Department on exactly what his office's expenses are and what IT suggests that he purchase for the new office.
- 711.5 D. Ruff stated that he usually deals with Cox, which does not have competition so he has stuck to that company; to which L. Ecke asked if that was just for the connection and not for any equipment, cameras, computers, etc. D. Ruff stated that his office also has the phone and fax systems along with the computer system. L. Ecke stated that she wants to support this but wants to make sure that the Collector is not getting sold something he does not need; to which D. Ruff responded that it really was not any of her business; it's his business. As the Collector, he works on this daily and he is trying to operate within his budget, noting that the Collector's budgets have been flat for the last 4-5 years. L. Ecke stated she just wants to do the right thing for the County and if it is not right for the County, she will ask a question.
- 711.6 L. Ecke repeated her question to D. Ruff stating that the amount he has for internet connection seems large to her and she asked what this includes; to which D. Ruff responded that he does have cameras that protects the clerks to see who they are dealing with and whether they have been short-changed; he is installing four cameras at the new office, plus a server, and all of the equipment for this office.



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- 712.1 S. Madison stated she takes great offense to his comment made to L. Ecke because this is the Court's business and she is prepared to vote against his budget over the comment. D. Ruff apologized to L. Ecke.
- 712.2 S. Madison stated D. Ruff initially stated he reduced his budget by \$2,600 by eliminating the food item and that the budget the Court is looking at was not correct at \$1,252,704 and asked for the correct amount for his budget. D. Ruff stated his information shows a budget of \$1,288,155. S. Madison stated she is not sure what the original motion was based on, to which C. Bolinger stated she believes the Court's budget book is correct. She stated when she originally discussed his budget with him, she was confused about how many employees he was asking for and his original budget had more for full-time employees. S. Madison verified that the \$2,600 for food as well as the \$4,000 for special legal should be subtracted and E. Madison stated she would accept subtracting the \$2,600 as a friendly amendment.
- 712.3 **S. Lloyd made an amendment to the motion that the Court reduce the Tax Collector postage line item from \$70,000 to \$60,000. E. Madison and S. Madison agreed to accept this as a friendly amendment to the motion.**
- 712.4 In response to a question from A. Harbison, D. Ruff stated that by law the Collector has to mail tax statements out to the last known address, except those that he has an email address for and have requested for him to use email only. He further stated that his office currently has about 46,000 email addresses, but about 20,000 of those still want the tax bill mailed. A. Harbison stated that the email option is so new and there are still a lot of people who do not have computers, so she really thinks the Collector may need the extra for postage and if he comes up short, then he will have to return for additional funds for postage.
- 712.5 T. Lundstrum gave the total updated Tax Collector budget at \$1,236,104, which is about \$54,000 higher than last year because of his new office and makes perfect sense.
- 712.6 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the Tax Collector budget minus the special legal, and food, and with a \$10,000 reduction in postage line item.**
- 712.7 **VOTING FOR: J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, and S. Madison. VOTING AGAINST: R. Dennis. The motion passed with twelve members voting for and one member voting against the**

**motion. The County Tax Collector's budget was approved as amended.**

- 713.1 Tax Collector David Ruff addressed the Quorum Court with the Collector's Automation Fund budget stating that he moved money around in this fund and increased it by \$18,000, which has to do with the computer equipment at the new office.
- 713.2 S. Madison asked for the balance in the Tax Collector's Automation Fund; to which D. Ruff stated he has been putting \$150,000 in it annually and this budget is what the court has approved for him to use out of that.
- 713.3 Comptroller C. Bolinger stated that the Treasurer and Tax Collector's Automation Funds are different and are based off of commission. The Treasurer and Collector can put a lot more in there than they do and only put enough in there to cover the budgets with the remaining given back to the taxing entities or entities that it is collected from. She stated what goes into this fund is at the discretion of the elected official and both usually put enough in these funds to cover the budgets, but the Quorum Court still has to approve it.
- 713.4 D. Ruff stated he tries to put enough in the fund so his office can replace the computers, printers, etc. in case of a total disaster and to update the equipment, which is all about five years old.
- 713.5 S. Madison asked about the increase in the small equipment line item from \$3,500 to \$10,000; to which D. Ruff responded there will be calculators, printers, scanners, etc.
- 713.6 S. Lloyd noted in the Court's budget books where it shows the balances in automation funds and for the Tax Collector it shows \$72,000. D. Ruff stated that he puts it in there one year and uses it the next. C. Bolinger explained that does not have anything to do with this year; this is what Treasurer Bobby Hill has projected as revenue and then what Collector David Ruff has asked for as the expenditure and the current balance may or may not be close to that.
- 713.7 Treasurer B. Hill stated that the current balance in the Tax Collector Automation Fund is \$52,000.
- 713.8 **H. Bowman made a motion to approve the Collector's Automation budget as presented. A. Harbison seconded.**

- 714.1 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the Collector's Automation budget as presented.**
- 714.2 **VOTING FOR: J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, and S. Madison. The motion passed unanimously by those present. The County Collector's Automation budget was approved as presented.**
- 714.3 D. Ruff stated with regard to the raises versus bonuses that the Court is looking at, he has always fought for merit because there is a lot of difference between employees; you can give the same raises to two different employees with one person putting out twice as much work than the other one who shows up just enough to keep his job. He stated that the elected official needs discretion to be able to use that money to reward good behavior instead of a mediocrity that our government seems to like to work under.
- 714.4 County Treasurer Bobby Hill addressed the Quorum Court with the Treasurer budget, noting he had moved items from other services and charges into his automation fund and from now on with the court's approval, just personal services will be the Treasurer's budget.
- 714.5 **E. Madison made a motion to approve the Treasurer Budget as presented. S. Lloyd seconded.**
- 714.6 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the Treasurer budget as presented.**
- 714.7 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Treasurer budget was approved as presented.**
- 714.8 County Treasurer Bobby Hill addressed the Quorum Court with the Treasurer Automation budget, noting when he moved the items over from other services and charges into his automation fund, he came in under last year cutting his budget by \$7,000 to \$8,000.
- 714.9 **S. Lloyd made a motion to approve the Treasurer Automation Budget as presented. G. McHenry seconded.**
- 714.10 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the Treasurer Automation budget as presented.**

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- 715.1        **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The Treasurer Automation budget was approved as presented.**
- 715.2        OTHER BUSINESS: E. Madison reminded the court that Thursday night was the "Fifty Shades of Stray" fundraiser for the Washington County Animal Shelter and tickets could be purchased at the door for \$35.
- 715.3        E. Madison stated that the Quorum Court has always gathered money to buy a Thanksgiving meal for the kids at the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) and she will be collecting money for that purpose at the special meeting tomorrow. She stated this was something that Candy Clark started when she was on the court and the Court usually raises enough money to buy Christmas dinner for the JDC as well.
- 715.4        CITIZENS COMMENTS: There were no citizen comments made.
- 715.5        ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carly Sandidge  
Quorum Court Coordinator/Reporter