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CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT
WASHINGTON COUNTY, ARK.

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

Tuesday, October 27, 2015
5:30 p.m.

Washington County Quorum Court Room

- 716.1 The Washington County Quorum Court met for a special meeting on Tuesday, October 27, 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.
- 716.2 B. Pond led the Quorum Court in prayer and in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 716.3 MEMBERS PRESENT: Daniel Balls, Harvey Bowman, Robert Dennis, Lisa Ecke, Ann Harbison, Sharon Lloyd, Tom Lundstrum, Eva Madison, Sue Madison, Joel Maxwell, Gary McHenry, Joe Patterson, Butch Pond, and Bill Ussery.
- 716.4 MEMBER ABSENT: Rick Cochran
- 716.5 OTHERS PRESENT: County Judge Marilyn Edwards, County Chief of Staff George Butler, County Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger; Interested Citizens; and Members of the Press.
- 716.6 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Judge Edwards asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.
- 716.7 **A. Harbison made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. G. McHenry seconded. The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote.**
- 716.8 REVIEW 2016 BUDGET REQUESTS: Bernie Kurtz, County Extension Office Staff Chair, addressed the Quorum Court with the County Extension Office budget, stating that B. Pond had requested that Blayke Rogers give a presentation.
- 716.9 Blayke Rogers, Greenland 4-H President, Washington County 4-H Council President, Washington County 4-H Ambassador, and an Arkansas State 4-H Ambassador, addressed the Quorum Court with a presentation on 4-H.
- 716.10 Bernie Kurtz then addressed the Quorum Court to answer questions regarding the Extension Office Budget.
- 716.11 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the Extension Office budget of \$159,650. R. Dennis seconded.**
- 716.12 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the Extension Office budget of \$159,650 as presented.**

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- 717.1 **The motion passed by majority voice vote by those present. The County Extension Office budget of \$159,650 was approved as presented.**
- 717.2 Robin Thomas, Administrator of the Washington County Health Department, addressed the Quorum Court with the County Health Department's requested budget for 2016.
- 717.3 **T. Lundstrum made a motion to approve the County Health Department budget as presented. S. Lloyd seconded.**
- 717.4 L. Ecke asked for elaboration on the Small Equipment Line Item which shows a large increase from last year; to which R. Thomas stated that they have some equipment in the building they need to replace and last year with the implementation of the new phone system, they moved money into their phone line because their phone bill kept increasing. She stated this year since their phones have switched over to the new computer system, they do not need as much in the Telephone Line Item and moved it into Small Equipment to replace a couple of environmental refrigerators that they had where they keep food samples from restaurants they inspect and animal heads that they send off to the State office for rabies testing. She further explained that they have used the contract that the County has with Lowes and paid \$300 for the last refrigerator they purchased, but are not opposed to buying refurbished home refrigerators. She stated they plan to purchase two refrigerators and the rest of the money in that line item is to replace items like staplers and televisions in their four waiting areas that they are required to have for their patients to keep them HIPPA compliant so that patients do not overhear conversations going on in the hallways. She noted that the televisions are connected to their internet and they run CDC bites on women's health issues, nutrition, vaccinations and other child health issues.
- 717.5 A. Harbison noted that the Health Department's requested budget is flat and they are keeping the money that was for telephones to replace needed equipment as necessary.
- 717.6 E. Madison asked for a history of the County's support of the Health Department because she recalls a few years when they were not providing support. Last year a large part of what they gave the Health Department, although not a large amount, went toward the phones for upgrade for which they had anticipated some cost savings.
- 717.7 R. Thomas stated that they asked for \$43,000 last year and also took a \$2,500 cut off of their budget as well. This year instead of asking for the

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- 718.1 \$2,500 back, they felt that they could work with what they had with the exception of moving money into small equipment as she has discussed. She stated that the history with the Health Department and the County is that the state provides all positions for staff needed to run the clinic and provides needed medical equipment and supplies. In return, the County supplies the building, buildings & grounds, housekeeping, and phone system as needed. She noted last year the Court asked them to provide an MOA, so every year after the budget is approved, they write a new MOA for the new budget amount and get it signed. Historically, R. Thomas stated that their budget has been as high as \$30,000 and then cut to as low as \$12,000 and then came back up.

- 718.2 In response to a question from E. Madison, she stated that their IT including internet is supported by the state and they have separate state and county cabling systems coming into the building. She explained that they have two separate Cox internet lines coming into the building, one for the county's phone line in which the HIV Clinic is on as well and one for the state internet lines.

- 718.3 **Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the County Health Department budget as presented.**

- 718.4 VOTING FOR: G. McHenry, J. Patterson, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, and J. Maxwell. **The motion passed unanimously by those present. The County Health Department budget was approved as presented.**

- 718.5 Dr. Linda McGhee, Medical Director of the County HIV Clinic, addressed the Quorum Court with the requested HIV Clinic budget for 2016.

- 718.6 **A motion was made and seconded to approve the County HIV Clinic budget as presented.**

- 718.7 H. Bowman noted they are asking for \$3,400 for general supplies this year where they have not asked for much at all in previous years; to which Dr. McGhee explained that they basically do not spend any money unless something breaks and their copy machine went belly up. She further noted that all of their furniture is donated and they took \$1,000 off for internet connection when the new phone went in.

- 718.8 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the County HIV Clinic budget as presented.**

- 718.9 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The County HIV Clinic budget was approved as presented.**

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- 719.1 Chris Coker with the Washington County Fire Association addressed the Quorum Court with the County Fire Protection Budget.
- 719.2 A. Harbison noted that this was a flat budget.
- 719.3 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the County Fire Protection budget as presented. B. Pond seconded.**
- 719.4 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the County Fire Protection budget as presented.**
- 719.5 **The motion passed unanimously by those present by voice vote. The County Fire Protection budget was approved as presented.**
- 719.6 Executive Assistant Karen Beeks addressed the Quorum Court with the Quorum Court budget.
- 719.7 E. Madison asked about the increase in the Other Professional Services line item; to which K. Beeks verified this was for the City of Fayetteville contract to broadcast the Quorum Court meetings. She stated that the Advertising Line Item which is used for publishing ordinances was reduced as it has not been running as high in previous years. She also explained that the Quorum Court leases a copier with the County Judge which is divided 80/20% because the Court makes the majority of the copies.
- 719.8 J. Maxwell questioned the Mileage Line Item that they had expenditures in for 2012 and 2013, nothing in 2014, budgeted for \$8,000 in 2015, and then nothing budgeted for 2016; to which K. Beeks explained that prior to the way it is currently handled, they paid mileage at the end of the year out of the Mileage Line Item and now it is paid out of the Part-Time Salaries Line Item. She noted that the Quorum Court will need to move that money appropriated for mileage to part-time salaries for the current year because the Part-time Salaries Line Item is currently at 94% expended for this year.
- 719.9 In response to a question from T. Lundstrum, K. Beeks stated that mileage is paid on every meeting and is included in their paychecks every two weeks.
- 719.10 E. Madison stated she is not okay with moving these funds in the budget feeling that it should stay where it has been historically in the Mileage Line Item.
- 719.11 **E. Madison made a motion to approve the Quorum Court budget with \$8,000 being moved back to the mileage line item. S. Madison seconded.**

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- 720.1 L. Ecke asked E. Madison to explain why she wants these funds moved back; to which she stated that they have discussed in the past whether their mileage is reimbursement or income and she believes that it belongs as a mileage expense.
- 720.2 L. Ecke asked if they had come to a resolution on the IRS's regulations on this because certain accountants say one thing and others say something different.
- 720.3 County Attorney Steve Zega responded to L. Ecke stating that there has been no difference in the information they provided earlier this year. He stated his belief is that the IRS's position is that it is a taxable fringe benefit.
- 720.4 T. Lundstrum stated he is opposed to this because it puts him in income tax avoidance for eight years past because if taxable, they should have been paying tax on it all these years and it would have an impact on Social Security if it is salary. He stated every business he knows of when an employee spends their money first and the company gives the money back, it is called reimbursement, not income. He would suggest that they need to look into this further than they have.
- 720.5 A. Harbison stated she this argument has been going on for months and years and it is time to put it to bed one way or another, and she will vote against this motion.
- 720.6 S. Zega stated that the JPs received a memo from him about sixty days ago on this subject detailing his reasons and belief that backed up some research he did in January or February. He stated he has the obligation to give them the best legal advice that he can and protect the County. He stated he has yet to see one of these accountants or tax lawyers put on his or her letter head the statement, "for the counties use of benefit, these monies are reimbursements and not taxable" and he would gladly cede his opinion to their opinion if they did that as that puts their malpractice on the line for them if they get audited. The personal accountant letters he has seen taking the position that it is reimbursement do not inure the county's benefit because they are not the client paying for their services. Until then, he stated his belief is to simply say they are going to declare these monies to be reimbursement mileage and not commuting reimbursement or taxable fringe benefits, is to risk an audit and to risk unnecessarily penalties and interest to the IRS. 720.7
- 720.7 S. Madison stated that her accountant works for her and the advice her accountant has given her is that this is a reimbursement for mileage and she thinks it is important for the Court to know how much they spend on

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mileage and not let it get run together. She stated she doubts any of them consider this as income for coming to a meeting and she will be voting for the motion.

721.1 T. Lundstrum stating that handling this as reimbursement puts them in risk of an audit, then they have been in risk of an audit for a number of years because he will be here nine years and this is the only year that it has been considered payroll.

721.2 J. Maxwell stated since they all get different amounts paid to them for mileage and if it is compensation or a benefit, how does it differ from one JP to the next, if it is not reimbursement for the actual miles driven from their home office; to which S. Zega responded stating that they are each reimbursed based on the number of miles that their residence they have provided to K. Beeks is from the courthouse. He stated the way the IRS treats commuting vs. reimbursement is much like the discussion they have been having about county employees taking county vehicles home at night and then come back to work. He stated that the county provides a vehicle, gas, oil and maintenance for running of the vehicle which is a commuting expense and is taxable not reimbursement expense. He stated that his previous memo goes into a lot more detail on the research he did on this issue. He noted that J. Maxwell lives the farthest away from the Courthouse and would get hit harder than anyone else for that reason.

721.3 J. Maxwell stated since they pay for their own vehicle, gas, oil and maintenance, it effectively would be a reimbursement by every standard he can find and this is the only entity he has dealt with that treats it as compensation, so he will support the motion.

721.4 S. Zega stated that other local governments handle this somewhat differently and he has a friend who is the City Attorney in North Little Rock and they pay alderman a travel or mileage stipend which is a flat fee and he is given to understand that it is taxed.

721.5 A. Harbison stated since the County staff and the Quorum Court has one attorney and his recommendation even if they vote for this as reimbursement, she does not think it changes anything with the County. It will still be taxed and they have that prerogative. She stated unless they want to bring a lawsuit against them, she thinks they are beating a dead horse.

721.6 B. Pond stated he does not want to pay any more taxes than he has to, but if there is any doubt whether he needs to pay a tax on something or not, he would just as soon pay it to stay on the safe side. He stated that putting this money in a separate line item will not change anything as far

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as the tax goes. He stated he believes this was brought up just to have another dog and pony show.

- 722.1 K. Beeks pointed out that right now it is being paid out of part-time salaries and will continue the same and at the end this money that line item is almost 95% expended. If the Court is going to move \$8,000 back into mileage, she thinks they should consider adding more money to the part-time salaries for next year in order to not go over budget in that line item like the are this year.
- 722.2 E. Madison stated that she will not alter their budget for this, but can deal with it later if they have to. She stated she understands what A. Harbison and B. Pond are saying, but at some point the Quorum Court needs to say what its declaration of principal is because this is important to a lot of them and they want to follow the advice of their accountants and this is their way to declare what their view is on the subject.
- 722.3 B. Pond stated if they are voting to change this and then they are not adding to the budget, he will vote against the motion.
- 722.4 T. Lundstrum stated that he is more than happy to take S. Zega's advice as long as he can see that someone is giving him the right advice. He stated his concern is for an audit for the County and he has a concern about an audit from the IRS on him. He stated he has dealt with them before and if you have not paid taxes for 8-10 years, they put some pretty big penalties on that; over a ten year period, his liability would be between \$5,000 to \$7,000 and he continues this a real issue. He stated if they have been going all of these years without being taxed for exactly the same thing and now suddenly they are being taxed, this is a red flag for the IRS.
- 722.5 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve this budget moving \$8,000 back to the mileage line item.**
- 722.6 **VOTING FOR: G. McHenry, J. Patterson, H. Bowman, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, and J. Maxwell. VOTING AGAINST: B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, R. Dennis, and A. Harbison. **The motion passed with nine members voting for and five members voting against the motion. The Quorum Court budget was approved as amended.****
- 722.7 Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger addressed the Quorum Court with the County General Transfers Out budget.

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- 723.1 In response to a request from E. Madison, C. Bolinger stated this money is what they transfer every year to the HIV Clinic for half of the salaries with Benton County paying half and is the same amount every year of \$38,000. She explained that Benton County pays Washington County twice a year and they do their transfer usually at the first of the year.
- 723.2 **E. Madison made a motion to approve the County General Transfers Out budget as presented. The motion was seconded.**
- 723.3 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the County General Transfers Out budget as presented.**
- 723.4 **The motion passed unanimously by those present. The County Transfers Out budget was approved as presented.**
- 723.5 Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger addressed the Quorum Court with the County Flexible Spending budget, stating that this is the options that County employees can opt to take through different companies for things like long-term disability or cardiac care and other specialized insurances. She stated if an employee signs up for this, it is totally paid by the employee and the money comes out of their paycheck that the county then sends to the vendor.
- 723.6 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the County Flexible Spending budget as presented. L. Ecke seconded.**
- 723.7 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the County Flexible Spending budget as presented.**
- 723.8 **The motion passed unanimously by those present. The County Flexible Spending budget was approved as presented.**
- 723.9 Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger addressed the Quorum Court with the County Court Costs and Fines budget, stating this is exactly what it says. The costs and fines collected by the courts that are set aside in this fund and the payments are those made on the Historical Courthouse bond.
- 723.10 **A. Harbison made a motion to approve the County Court Costs and Fines budget as presented. J. Patterson seconded.**
- 723.11 S. Madison asked if these funds are earmarked for the Historic Courthouse or is that just the way they have done it historically.

- 724.1 S. Zega stated that they are obligated on the bonds to use court costs and this is essentially a contract on the bond with the court costs and fines.
- 724.2 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a voice vote on the motion to approve the County Court Costs and Fines budget as presented. 724.1 The motion passed unanimously by those present. The County Court Costs and Fines budget was approved as presented.**
- 724.3 REVISED 2016 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE ROAD DEPARTMENT:
S. Shrum, Assistant Road Superintendent, addressed the Quorum Court stating he sent a letter last week explaining some changes in the 2016 Road Department budget due to changes that have transpired since the budget was generated back in August as well as the reason they did not include all funds available to use for the 2016 budget.
- 724.4 E. Madison asked about the projects they are planning on doing with this increase in their budget; to which S. Shrum responded due to some problems they had had with chip sealing, they recently changed suppliers and the size by availability which changed the formula or rate at which they have to do their chip seals and the new rate requires more chip seals and chip seal oil which in turn based on the miles they have in their reseal program, created an increase in their budget for the gravel, dirt, sand, and asphalt line items in the regular budget.
- 724.5 E. Madison noted that they requested \$30,000 more in bridges and steel and questioned what project that was going for; to which S. Shrum responded he has mentioned in the past that there are several bridges or small boxes they need to replace and this would allow them to do that.
- 724.6 E. Madison asked if it was because there was now more projected revenue that they were asking for more money, or that they have actually had a shift in their plans for next year. S. Shrum noted that he explained this in detail in his letter, but stated back in August when they presented their budget, they were given an amount to budget off of at \$9,222,426, but as it went on the projections changed and they gave a pretty lean budget. He stated that they want to do what is best for the citizens of Washington County and with this extra money that is what they are trying to do by updating some box culverts and tile; as well as the change in the chip seal which is better as well.
- 724.7 E. Madison stated the struggle she is having with the logic is that you do not spend more money simply because you have it; you map out your year, decide what to do, plan for your projects, and decide the cost. She had commented at their last budget meeting that there was over \$1 million

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remaining in their unappropriated reserves and they seemed fine with that, stating that they were trying to trim their budget down and save this money, and now they are asking to spend it.

725.1 S. Shrum responded that he did not understand what is puzzling about it as there was an amount they were given and as time went on those amounts change and they presented a budget based on the amount they were given in August and turned in that budget. He stated there are always improvements they can make to the roads and when they found this money available, they want to spend it make improvements for the people of the county.

725.2 E. Madison stated just because there is money available does not mean they should spend it; they should spend it because it is the right and wise thing to do. She noted that their revenue figures are showing 40% of the general purpose county's one cent sales tax that could be used for other purposes and just because there is money sitting there does not mean they should buy more dump trucks; it means that this court should decide what is the best way for that money to be spent. She stated she saw that money sitting there as a way to give employees raises or boosting their unappropriated reserves because that money could be considered general purpose dollars and not money dedicated for the Road Department's use. She stated if their budget presented earlier in the year was satisfactory to the Road Department, she has a hard time seeing how just because there is more money, that they should spend it.

725.3 S. Shrum responded stating that the previous budget was a bare bones budget based on the numbers they were given and he would not call it satisfactory.

725.4 E. Madison stated that she cannot support this addition to the Road Department budget because this county is hard pressed for money and if they have a department that has so much money they are trying to find extra ways to spend it, she thinks they need to look at whether that is the best way to spend it.

725.5 B. Pond stated that it sounds like some of them did not read the letter from Mr. Shrum. He did read the letter and suggested that maybe it should be read at this meeting because it is pretty self-explanatory and he is supportive of this request. There is obviously a need for improvement on their county roads and it is unfortunate that one of the most important things that government provides is a transportation system. Whether talking about a community, a county, a state or country, it gets put on the back burner or cut short when there is not enough money to go around because roads is what keeps the economy going. He stated that when

the Road Budget is cut short, the Road Department tries to make do with what they get. The Court complains to the Road Department that they are spending too much money and they cut back and then they complain because they did not spend all the money. He stated it seems like for some reason the Road Department can never satisfy some individuals.

- 726.1 **J. Maxwell articulated a point of order that comments be kept directed at the Road Department and not at each other.**
- 726.2 County Attorney S. Zega stated he believes the point of order is well made.
- 726.3 Judge Edwards ruled in favor of the point of order, stating that B. Pond can change his comments or they can move on.
- 726.4 B. Pond apologized for getting out-of-line, but does want to compliment the Road Department for the work that they do.
- 726.5 A. Harbison stated that the Road Department has asked for \$708,000 more to be added to their budget for roads and they itemized it for asphalt, building concrete culverts, etc., so they have a big agenda for 2016 to improve county roads. She noted that they still have 47 impaired or weight limited bridges in the County that at some point will have to be take care of and this gives them some money to do that. She noted that the her district, along with those of B. Pond and J. Maxwell take in over two-thirds of the County and that is where the county roads are located. She stated that they owe it to the citizens in Fayetteville, Springdale and Tontitown to improve these county roads and their goal should be to see every county road chip sealed.
- 726.6 **A. Harbison made a motion that they approve the addition to the Road Department budget as presented. R. Dennis seconded.**
- 726.7 J. Maxwell stated he knows capital purchase were frozen or cut last year and S. Shrum lists items that were not accomplished due to those budget cuts, including purchasing new and additional equipment and maintenance on current equipment. He noted at a previous meeting, S. Shrum stated that because of the bridge repairs and reconstruction, they were not able to chip seal several miles of road to which S. Shrum responded that they did chip seal all but 4 miles. J. Maxwell asked where they got the additional man power and money to do this; to which S. Shrum responded that the money came from fuel savings. He further stated that the road improvements that they were able to make did not include any paint striping of non-chip seal roads. He explained that they waited to see where they were at and started their chip seal late in August

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and they are just now completing that. Early on in the year, they did not know whether they would be able to do their chip seal program this year but as the year went on the fuel prices got better and the money saved was used to do the work on the Harvey Dowell Bridge and the money had been budgeted to build the Stonewall Bridge. He stated that they were able to do almost all of the chip sealing and about five miles of resealing.

- 727.1 J. Maxwell stated that he does not understand the statement made in the letter that was mentioned at the Quorum Court meeting on October 13; that the Road Department has not been able to accomplish certain items due to budget cuts in 2015 that included improving roads including paving gravel roads and adding material as well as chip seal and asphalt maintenance.
- 727.2 J. Maxwell pointed out the difference in what S. Shrum has reported tonight and what is in his letter with regard to items that they were unable to accomplish; and S. Shrum stated of the 43 miles of reseal, they have two roads totaling about 4.43 miles that they were not able to complete, not because they do not have the money, but because time ran out because they waited so long to be able to see if they could do any of the reseals. He stated that the money to do the work on Harvey Dowell Bridge came from fuel savings, not the money set aside for resealing.
- 727.3 Road Superintendent Donnie Coleman addressed the Quorum Court stating that they did decide early in the year to hold off on the chip seal. They usually start in February cleaning the shoulders and ditches which takes several days on a mile of road and they did not do any of that clean up when they decided to hold off on the chip sealing. He stated when they decided in August to do the reseals, they did them without doing any prep work on the shoulders and ditches which was a savings to try to help with the chip seal. He stated they are about 5 to 5½ miles short of getting the job done but they do not do reseals after October 15 because of the temperature change. He stated so the money saved on fuel, on cutting down on the cleanup is where they came up with money to do the chip seal.
- 727.4 In response to a question from J. Maxwell about paving, S. Shrum stated they did not do any paving this year short of their state aide work. He further stated as far as proper maintenance of roads including the paint striping, maintaining ditches, vegetation control on the right-of-ways, and addressing pot holes is what he was referring to in the letter. He further stated in years past they were able to do five miles of paving in a year.
- 727.5 S. Madison stated that she would like to see all county roads paved as well, but the reality is that there are people who actually prefer to live on a

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- quiet country road. She stated they need to realize the number of miles of county roads that the county maintains is shrinking as areas are annexed into cities and she is assuming that any new roads approved by their Planning Department are at the expense of the developer. She is concerned after this year with the big surprise from the Circuit Clerk where they had to pay a large amount of money to the state and wonders if there will be any surprises in 2016. She stated that there are three lawsuits pending against the county, one involving a Road Department issue, and it is hard to predict how those will turn out. She will be voting against this budget increase, stating that they have been generous with the Road Department, part of it is out of their hands, but the 40% that the Road Fund continues to get of the County's sales tax is in their hands and the Road Department has been receiving it for a long time.
- 728.1 B. Pond stated they have been discussing things that happened this last year and how they had to compensate, and part of the confusion is that they are requesting an increase for next year and are very willing to take these funds and do a little more than they were capable of doing this past year because materials cost money. He stated he takes a lot of pride in Washington County, and is more concerned about the economy and well-being of the people of our county than he is with how much money they wind up with in reserves for government, and he will be voting in favor of this budget increase.
- 728.2 A. Harbison stated this is a very aggressive budget and program to use money to get the county roads back into the condition that they need to be, cleaning the ditches, purchasing a couple dump trucks, contracting with others to do the chip seal if they get to a point where they do not have time to do it in order to get more accomplished. She stated that she supports this budget increase wholeheartedly.
- 728.3 B. Ussery stated that they can continue to cut back each year which could be compared to not changing oil in the car saving money on oil changes, but eventually you have to replace the engine. He stated if they do not keep the ditches clean and maintain what they have, a few years from now a flash flood will take out a bunch of bridges and people's homes and in the end will cost the county a lot more money than the cost of just maintaining what they have. While the county may have a few less miles of road than they did, they certainly do have about the same amount of maintenance to do that they have always had and he will support this because it is what they need to do.
- 728.4 L. Ecke stated that this increase includes two additional dump trucks for a total of four, two to be purchased with the ½ cent sales tax and two with the additional money. In an effort to prioritize, she assumes that they

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need to replace dump trucks as all are out of warranty and the graders are coming up on four years, but they could not get all of the information ready to present it at budget. She concurred with B. Ussery that they need to maintain their vehicles which keeps them safe and going.

- 729.1 In response to L. Ecke's inquiry about the additional \$185,000 for asphalt line items, S. Shrum explained that the asphalt in the Road Department is for the change in rates due to a new supplier of chips for their chip seal program that washes their chips. These are larger which in return calls for more oil and chips. L. Ecke asked him to prioritize his top three in an effort to compromise; to which S. Shrum responded that their reseal program is very important, so the asphalt and gravel for sure and two more dump trucks would be nice, but they can keep repairing those that they have and that would take \$270,000 off of the budget increase. S. Shrum continued stating that the culvert and pipe, concrete, bridges and steel all go together because they have to buy the steel and concrete to make their own boxes. He stated that they obviously need the entire increase or he would not have asked for it and there has been nothing budgeted or set aside for winter weather and another unknown is fuel prices and if they stay low, they will be able to absorb some of that just like they did for the bridges. However, he stated that if the price of chips/oil goes up they will be back asking for more. He stated they do the best they can with what they have and do not try to spend all of their money.
- 729.2 In response to L. Ecke's request to list short-term and long-term projects for next year; S. Shrum stated to chip seal the five miles from this year added to the 53 miles scheduled for next year; and road maintenance as previously discussed.
- 729.3 T. Lundstrum stated that he has always tried to support the Road Department and he would rather give them the additional \$708,000 than he would the Election Commission \$420,000, but the problem is that they have to deal with all county departments and while he could support the Road Department tonight, he may have to come back and vote against them in December when they vote on the entire budget because their reserves are so low right now. He stated if there was any way he could par some of this increase back, he would like to see him do that.
- 729.4 S. Shrum pointed out if the Road Department cannot maintain the roads, some voters may not be able to vote, and the Fire Department, Ambulance Service and Sheriff's Department cannot get to the emergencies.
- 729.5 T. Lundstrum stated that surely with \$8 million a year, they can keep the roads good enough for people to travel on, stating that he lived in the

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country back in the 1950's when all country roads were dirt and they had no problems. S. Shrum responded stating that some of those bridges from the 1950's are still out there and need to be replaced and this budget does not include any of those. T. Lundstrum stated they talked some time ago about \$1 million or so coming in from the state from the ½ cent sales tax where they could redo six bridges over a five year period. S. Shrum stated that from 2014 to 2015, the Road budget was cut by \$1.7 million and they have adjusted. T. Lundstrum stated if they cut this back and needed it next year, they can come back and ask for it which should not be a problem if the money is here and S. Shrum noted that is what they did last year.

- 730.1 H. Bowman stated that one of the most important infrastructures they can provide for Washington County is better roads. He addressed the \$1.9 million that the Road Department had left in their budget this year and S. Shrum stated that this amount is not necessarily what they have left in their budget because the chip seal bills have not been paid. H. Bowman stated that he has noticed when traveling on the county gravel roads that they are much worse and do not appear to have had hardly any grading and he has heard the same complaints from people on the west and southeast areas of the county.
- 730.2 In response to a question from H. Bowman on how the cutbacks this year have affected the frequency of grading roads and adding gravel, Donnie Coleman stated that their graders run every day unless it is raining and each grader has about 38 miles in their district that are rotated and each rotation takes about 8-9 weeks. He also stated the Road Department had 500 complaints called in on dirt roads, either for being too rough and needing grading, tiles stopped up, signs bent over, etc.
- 730.3 H. Bowman pointed out that the rains affected the roads he is referring to as well as the stopped up culverts and ditches are a major issue. He believes if they can find someone who specializes in talking to property owners about putting tiles in to prevent water from crossing over the roads instead of having the grader operators do this, it might dramatically improve the results; to which D. Coleman responded that their supervisors talk to the property owners and they are not finding anyone who is willing to have a tile put in to run water in towards their homes.
- 730.4 **L. Ecke made an amendment to the motion to cut the \$708,000 increase in half eliminating \$270,000 for the two dump trucks, making the additional increase \$438,000. The motion was seconded.**
- 730.5 **A. Harbison accepted L. Ecke's motion as a friendly amendment.**

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- 731.1 **R. Dennis would not accept this motion as a friendly amendment.**
- 731.2 **A short recess was taken at this time.**
- 731.3 **R. Dennis stated he would go ahead and accept L. Ecke's motion as a friendly amendment.**
- 731.4 S. Zega stated that the motion on the floor is to pass this particular budget request less the \$270,000 for the dump trucks for a total budget increase of \$438,000.
- 731.5 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to approve the budget increase of \$438,000.**
- 731.6 VOTING FOR: G. McHenry, B. Pond, B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, and A. Harbison. VOTING AGAINST: S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, and S. Madison. ABSTENTIONS: J. Patterson and J. Maxwell. **The motion passed with eight members voting for and four members voting against the motion and two abstentions.**
- 731.7 **The addition to the Road Department budget was approved as amended.**
- 731.8 CITIZENS COMMENTS: Christy Weaver, 4-H Club Leader, addressed the Quorum Court and urged them to reconsider fully funding the Extension Office by providing the funds for a full-time 4-H agent, and suggested that the millage be reestablished to the previous level to assist with the budget.
- 731.9 Patsy Louk, President of the Washington County Master Gardeners, addressed the Quorum Court noting that this program comes under the County Extension Office and they currently have 240 members who volunteered over 13,000 hours in 2014 at 16 projects across the county including the Botanical Gardens of the Ozarks, Headquarters House in Fayetteville, Shiloh Museum in Springdale, Elkins Community Center, Prairie Grove Mock Park, the West Fork Library and Winslow Community Development.
- 731.10 ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Carly Sandidge
Quorum Court Coordinator/Reporter