

Owen County Council
Minutes-March 8, 2021

Meeting was called to order by President Andy Wood.

Pledge of Allegiance was said, and opening Prayer was given.

Andy Wood made a special Presentation of Plaques for past Members Tony Voelker and Andrew Woodall. Mr. Woodall was not able to make it to the meeting, so his will be presented later.

Roll was called; members Amy Casebeer, Chuck Hess were present by Zoom all others were at the meeting. Zoom Attendees: Cris Lunsford, Rachel Whiting, Greg Melton, Lori Quillen, Sheriff Hobbs, Dakota Gibbs, Gary Burton, Donna McElroy, Erich Teuton, Christine Hutson, Stan Brown, Lori Warner, Laura Lane, Paula Wood, Shelley Townsend, "T" and Patty.

A motion to approve the minutes from February 8th was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Anton Neff. Motion carried 6-0-1--Abstention was made by Verl Keith who was not present at the February meeting.

Old Business

Council further discussed the need to cut the County General Fund (per the State cuts) Mr. Neff suggested possible areas to use to compensate the amounts to come from the recent maintenance employee changes that were made, and the auditors staff changes as well. Mr. Wood related that an initial meeting had been held with Crowe-Tim Berry regarding the Audit Report he was preparing for the County. The trend of spending more monies than are being brought in has added to the overall deficit in the County General. Per the February Monthly Comparison Report Treasurer/Auditor that had been provided as well as a summary report from Attorney Jim Bryan shows the county in the negative-\$836765.34 plus 13 other funds for a total negative of \$1962580.46. It was decided to wait on the Crowe Report to decide where to make the possible cuts and plan next steps in moving forward. Mr. Wood will keep members informed if any issues arise. The item will be placed on the April Agenda.

Ms. Reeves explained that due to the current negative balance that no additional appropriations can be presented to the State for approval. She reviewed that at their prior meeting that they had approved an appropriation for Soil & Water-Devin Brown in the amount of \$1041.43. In order to still make the match that was originally agreed to them they would now have to do a direct claim from Riverboat in that amount. Mr. Brown will present a claim to be processed. A motion to allow the change and claim was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Verl Keith. Motion carried 7-0.

Nick Robertson asked for clarification on the County General Fund negative balance being nearly \$900000. Mr. Wood and Mr. Bryan confirmed the amount. Ms. Casebeer asked for the balance of the Riverboat Fund. Ms. Reeves related the amount is \$411700.26.

New Business

Sheriff Hobbs and Stan Brown presented a Second Amendment to the Owen County Police Retirement Fund. A copy of the amendment is attached for permanent record referencing the changes of the "DROP" Accumulation to a monthly annuity. A motion to approve the Amendment was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Wood also briefly mentioned the current issue regarding the Retirement Fund and the fact that it had not been paid/processed by the former Auditor for 2019 and 2020. Due to the urgency of making the required minimum payment to maintain the Funds for Officers a claim was submitted using the 2021 funds. Sheriff Hobbs will have to go before Council to appropriate additional funds to pay for 2021.

Monthly Comparison Reports were previously reviewed. No further discussion was made.

Department Updates-

911 Director Kathleen Lamb briefly discussed possible buyout options of Employees Overtime. She is to get with Mr. Wood and Attorney Bryan to review further. She will bring back to the April Meeting.

Highway Superintendent Greg Melton provided an overview of the Expenses related to the recent Weather event; the largest expense being in overtime. He was thanked for his and his employee's hard work! He also noted that disbursements had been received for Funds 1176 & 1173 and have a 3% increase.

Confirmation Salary Summaries were presented and approved with a motion made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Polly Chesser. Motion carried 7-0.

No additional Attorney Comments were made.

No additional Auditors Comments were made.

Council Comments-

Ms. Casebeer and Mr. Hess thanked Andy for the updates regarding the Crowe Report.

Mr. Robertson has no further comments.

Mr. Keith is awaiting the Crowe Report in hopes that it will offer a Plan or options to the financial situation.

Mr. Neff feels that the Crowe Report will offer a solid footing in moving forward.

He informed members that the Owen County Soil & Water will be holding a Zoom presentation on March 11th. Lastly, he gave a brief overview of the upcoming America Rescue Plan Funds that will be given to Owen County in the amount of \$4069000. Approximately \$2million will be released as soon as May and the remainder in one year. Further direction from Federal Guidelines, SBOA and DLGF will be given soon for allowable expenditures. The money can be spent over a five-year period through 2024. Ms. Reeves asked if an oversight committee should be appointed, and Mr. Neff agreed that a committee and organization of the uses should be made. An update will be given at the April Meeting.

Ms. Chesser expressed her concern with all the current issues at hand with the financial situation, American Care Funds being received, and Department issues being expressed. She asked if they should consider having additional meetings to communicate and resolve some of the issues. While members agreed the need to await the Crowe Report some issues could be addressed. It was agreed to set two meetings to allow discussion for PTO/Comp-time issues without a quorum. Meeting dates were scheduled for March 16th @6pm with Verl, Anton, Nick, Gary and Jim. The second meeting was set for March 23rd @4pm with Andy, Polly, Amy, Bob and Jim. All members agreed that their number one priority at this time is the Financial Situation of the County. They agreed to add a tentative date for budget discussion to their May Agenda.

No other discussion was made.

A motion to adjourn was made by Chuck Hess. Motion carried 7-0.