

Owen County Council
Meeting Minutes-June 13, 2022

Meeting was called to order by President Polly Chesser.

Pledge of Allegiance and opening prayer was given.

Members Present: Polly Chesser, Verl Keith, Anton Neff, Andy Wood, and Nick Robertson. Absent: Amy Casebeer and Chuck Hess. Also, present Attorney Jim Bryan and Auditor Sheila Reeves.

A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Anton Neff. Motion carried 4-0-1/Nick Robertson-absent at last meeting.

A Financial Funds review was given by Jim Bryan for all funds. (Reports attached for permanent record) The review included the property tax settlement amounts received (Agenda item "A"). Six consecutive months with a positive balance in the general fund and expected to be at the end of the year. EMS had received a large portion of the settlement based on the rates that were submitted. Possible options for spending the funds/cash were discussed that included possible raises for his staff, paying for ambulances, paying off mortgage for their building, and option of moving EMS into the general fund. Also noted were the past years of less revenue. Mr. Bryan stressed the importance of building the General Fund cash balance in moving forward; Mr. Burton noting that the new jail project is still on the table not refurbishing. Other fund balances were reviewed that have projected shortfalls and needs to be considered possibly at their next meeting.

Review of the rise in gas/fuel costs projections will exceed the appropriated amounts for 2022 budgets. Based on this a motion to advertise for an additional appropriation from the Riverboat Fund# 1191 in the amount of \$200000 to be shared by all departments was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Verl Keith. Carried 5-0.

The next projected shortfall was with inmate meals with an estimated amount of \$31000. It was agreed there was still time to evaluate the balances and no action was taken.

ARPA funds were then discussed beginning with the current proposed road projects that will be used for roads and bridges. Then conversation was combined with Wage Structure Compensation and raises for the proposed list of courthouse employees-19. The list did not include all departments and general fund employees as well as Sheriff, EMS, and Highway. An option of using these funds was to resolve the two historical negative funds for the Community Crossings Grant and Payroll Clearing out of the general fund. The concern of raises not being across the board and that the wage committee had agreed with moving forward with bringing everyone to the high-low end of the pay scale and then consider all to the mid-point, sustainability, and the loss of time due to no action taken at the last two meetings. A motion was made to advertise for a wage committee meeting for further review on June 27th was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0.

A second motion was made to have Ms. Chesser go before the commissioners to discuss the options of using funds as loss of revenue, shoring up the general fund balances. Motion made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 5-0.

The next review was regarding employee Vacation/Personal/Comp Balances and Policies 303 and 307 for hours over the maximum amounts allowed. (Reports attached for record) The amount of compensation for both 35- and 40-hour employee accumulation rates was given, also showing those employees who exceed those limits. Members agreed the policy is clear on accumulation and the "Use it or Lose it" by December 31st each calendar year. A motion was made to "Give Notice" to all departments and provide copies of the policies stressing that all employees need to adhere to the "Maximum" balances and work toward getting them below the cap. Motion made by Andy Wood; seconded Verl Keith. Carried 5-0.

Ms. Chesser opened the Public Hearing for additional appropriation requests. No public comment was made. A motion to approve \$6303.27 from the Reassessment fund for a former employee was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 5-0.

A motion to approve \$6597.10 from the Building -Cash to pay hours for the administrator that was accumulated while employed in the assessor's office. This will bring her below the maximum caps per policy. Motion was made by Nick Robertson; seconded by Verl Keith. Carried 3-2/against Neff and Wood.

A motion to approve \$20000 for Autopsies from the Riverboat#1191 was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Verl Keith. Carried 5-0.

A motion to approve surplus funds \$10600 and \$18574 from LIT#1170 Cash to Vehicle Repair was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Anton Neff. Carried 5-0.

Hearing closed at 9:12pm.

EMA Grant with the Owen County Community Foundation & Duke Energy approval in the amount of \$2500 was made with a motion by Anton Neff; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0.

An updated EMA Job Description was presented by Mr. Bryan and approved with a motion made by Anton Neff; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0

Health Administrator Christine McBride presented transfers for department related Fund#9162, 9163, 9164, 9165 to balance negative line items. A request to transfer and deposit the last \$210000 to Fund#4911. Motion was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Andy Wood to approve the requests. Carried 5-0.

Probation Director Donna McElroy presented two transfers, one for wages from fund Fund#9155 to 1000-11300 in the amount of \$5500. The other from 1000-11300 to 1122-11300 for \$5500. A motion to approve both transfers was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0.

EMS Director Cris Lunsford began with possible proposals (previously discussed in old business) options with utilizing his cash balance to help with expenses. He then presented a proposal for salary increases for his employees. (Attached for record) A motion to grant his request was made by Nick Robertson; seconded by Polly Chesser. Discussion included he was hurting for help to hire and keep, and he has the funds to maintain. An estimated amount of \$83000 would be needed for an additional appropriation. Mr. Neff will work with him and present amounts to the auditor for advertising. Motion carried 4-1against/Neff. Mr. Burton emphasized that the administrative position needed to be filled. Mr. Lunsford also related he would also like to look into changing his PTO Policy, maybe converting to the counties. He will work with Mr. Bryan and present options. Ms. Reeves presented an additional appropriation request in the amount of \$5000 for legal fees deductible to EMC Insurance Company. Motion to advertise from Riverboat#1191 was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Nick Robertson. Carried 5-0.

A motion to allow Ms. Chesser to sign the Salary Ordinance Summaries was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Anton Neff. Carried 5-0.

Elected Officials-Jack White asked members to please keep in mind that he also is a one-person office, and it is not fair that some are paid, and some are not. Further noted that Mr. Robertson knows that he has started the process of getting his vacation/personal/comp hours down below the cap per policy.

Public Comment-

Barron Barnet presented information regarding Codes/Ordinances for a Comprehensive Plan.

Jeff Marks related he encourages members to listen to a recording and keep in mind that the public doesn't always understand and/or follow their discussions and maybe explain further at times.

Nicole DeCriscio wanted it reflected in the minutes that two commissioners Burton/Curry were in the hallway together with an employee.

No additional Attorney comments were made.

Ms. Reeves offered that DLGF was going to hold a pre-budget workshop on July 26th @2:30pm to assist with 2023 budgets. She also reminded them that there was a Council Conference coming up on June 24th & 25th.

A motion to adjourn was made by Nick Robertson.