

Owen County Council  
Minutes-September 13, 2021

Meeting was called to order by President Andy Wood.

Pledge to Allegiance was said, Opening Prayer given by Nick Robertson.

Members Present: Andy Wood, Verl Keith, Anton Neff, Polly Chesser, Nick Robertson, and Chuck Hess.

Absent: Amy Casebeer. Attorney Jim Bryan, Auditor Sheila Reeves, and Deputy Auditor Nicole VanDerMoere.

Public Signed in; sheet attached for permanent record.

A motion to approve the minutes from August 11<sup>th</sup>-Regular Meeting and August 11<sup>th</sup>-Public Hearing was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Verl Keith. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion to approve the minutes from August 26<sup>th</sup>-Lit Tax increase was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Verl Keith. Motion carried 5-0-1abstention/Chuck Hess was absent.

Attorney Bryan gave an updated Financial Overview of all Funds. Noting the funds that are still carrying a negative balance and the General Fund was \$-368534.55. All claims except payroll are being paid from the LIT Edit Fund and Riverboat. Workman's Compensation and Liability still need to be paid from EMS and Highway Department to help with the deficit. He reminded members that LIT/Riverboat is the only source of funding for the next 90 days and that every dollar saved is most important. Additional dormant funds are to be considered to help reduce the deficit as well.

He asked members to consider action on Fund#4017 \$-17177.39 from cash 1235 Fund, #7331 \$-.04 needs to be reduced and/or rainy day, and then balance of rainy day towards #4914 \$-5050 and remaining balance from #1191. A motion was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson to advertise for the noted funds for the next meeting. Motion carried 6-0. It was added that #4914 will need an ordinance to dissolve the fund, Mr. Bryan will prepare the paperwork.

Mr. Bryan presented a list of all the August Claims and asked for them to consider adding them to the LIT and Riverboat Funds to help with the deficit in the General Fund. A motion was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson. Motion carried 6-0. Mr. Bryan asked that the LIT Edit and Riverboat Funds need to be monitored and provided every week with reports/updates for their review. Current Reports and Treasurers Report were provided for their review and attached for permanent record.

Mr. Bryan and Ms. Reeves also related that when the Sheriff's Retirement Pension was paid out that the amount originally included monies from the General Fund in the amount of \$14453. As the fund is in the red; it cannot be used, and the amount will be paid from the LIT Edit. Mr. Hess asked that updates be given when things come up between meetings and copies given at the meeting for review and acknowledgement of action taken and/or needed.

Mr. Bryan related that in review of the ARP Funds it is not allowable for infrastructure for the roads.

A short review was given by members as well as a letter that had been received from DLGF acknowledging the submission and adoption of the Ordinance 2020-016 regarding the local income tax and that Auditor had provided all the proper paperwork. Updated tax amounts are expected early October.

In review of the 2022 Budget Hearings, it was determined to hold an additional meeting to finalize Funds, Insurance Amounts, Sheriffs Budget with the new tax. A motion to advertise for all the Meetings necessary for the Budgeting process was made by Chuck Hess, seconded by Anton Neff. 2022 Budget Meeting dates will be 09/28/21@7pm, Public Hearing 10/12/21@6pm with Regular Meeting to follow at 7pm, and 10/19/21@7pm for final adoption. Motion carried 6-0.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:48pm for Resolution #2021-024 to present the Jennings Township 2022 Budget. It was noted that the petition had been received from DLGF and in error was wording "increase" and IC Code. Ms. Reeves will verify the resolution with the new DLGF Mr. Hess read the resolution and made the motion to approve the resolution was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson for \$37673 for the 2022 Jennings Township. Motion carried 6-0. Hearing was closed at 7:53pm.

Cook's representative Ron Walker and Economic Development Director Marce King presented information regarding a new Housing Addition Project that is being pursued due to the needs in the county. A packet was given to members for review for styles/sizes and proposed pricing. A process is necessary that includes planning and zoning, funding options, timeline for ARP monies if allowed. Future updates will be given as they become available. Monies for infrastructure sewers/water ARP\$ and an extension of the Town Utilities.

Sheriff Hobbs didn't have anything specific as an agenda item, however he did ask what direction was needed on his budget and to where it would be placed with the new added Tax Increase. It would be decided on during the upcoming meetings.

Highway Superintendent Greg Melton began by giving a road and bridge closing updates with Kelley Rd., Surber Rd., Dunn Rd., and White Rd. Mr. Melton related that he had been directed by the Commissioners to come before them regarding Bridge#16 that has been declared an emergency. The request was to ask for funding in the amount of \$79135 for re-decking. General discussion on the need, was it an emergency, age, structure was given as well as the ways of fixing and need per INDOT. Public comment was made by Victor Vaillette, Rich May, and Sheriff Hobbs on funding options. The request will need to be re-presented to the Commissioners as no quotes/contracts have been accepted. It was noted by Polly Chesser that they were here because a council member had said there was monies available for the repairs, and all members added it would be nice to have had a commissioner present too for this request. He will come back to the council if/when needed.

Mr. Melton had two freeze exemption forms to present.

Mr. Wood related that the Freeze Exemption was on the agenda later in the meeting but went ahead and presented the changes for consideration. A motion to lift the hiring freeze and allow positions that become vacant to be filled and that it does not include any of the positions that have been previously cut, was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Chuck Hess. Motion carried 6-0.

Lastly, Mr. Melton presented Additional Appropriations for L&R #1135 \$30000 and #1169 \$163475. A motion to advertise the amounts was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Chuck Hess. Motion carried 6-0. Ms. Reeves related that these were part of the pre-approved appropriations from the State.

EMS Director Cris Lunsford provided a copy of an EMS Administrative Position that was previously discussed for consideration. Three salary amounts were proposed of \$17.89/\$16.83/\$15.38hrly for a fulltime position with benefits. After discussion it was agreed that his Cash Balance could fund the position and hire upon DLGF approval for an additional appropriation. A motion was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson to hire one "D" level employee at \$36250.00. Mr. Wood wanted it made clear that this approval will be paid from his #1151 Fund not the county general. Motion carried 6-0.

911 Director Kathleen Lamb began by adding comment about the new EMS position coming in at \$16.75hr was above her current advertised opening at \$15.39. She reminded them that she had come to them and asked for raises for her employees and could be paid from her own funds; and was denied. Mr. Wood related that a pay adjustment had been made a few years ago, Mr. Neff it all needs to be done systematically and possibly be put back on the plate this coming year.

Updates-

She has two open positions still available and had reached out to staff that had been cut and no one has applied.

A current Phone Project separating the 911 lines from the Sheriff's Dept. A new line for the Sheriff Administrative is 812-829-5757 and the 829-4874 line will remain and with 911-Dispatch. Hicom will be the primary and AT&T and the bill is expected to be cut in half.

J&K will be doing a walkthrough on Wednesday for the new radio tower in Freedom.

Additional Appropriation request for \$50 Cash to Donation Fund#4915 was made. A motion to approve the request was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson. Motion carried 5-0-1Abstention/Neff.

Probation Director Donna McElroy had presented a request for an Additional Appropriations in the amount of \$7500 from Drug Court#9154 from monies received on June 21<sup>st</sup>. A motion to advertise was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Anton Neff. Motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Bryan and Ms. Reeves presented information regarding the Congressional School Fund and transferring it back to the State for administering. Mr. Bryan read the Resolution 2021-026 for the procedures and requirements to relinquish Fund#1124 and Fund#1125. A motion was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Chuck Hess to have Mr. Bryan prepare the Report to be presented to the Commissioners for final procedures. Motion carried 6-0. Copies of the fund reports were provided for review.

A copy of the Owen County Records Perpetuation Fund Ordinance 2021-017 was presented and read allowing for funds to be used for office expenses for the 2022 Budget Year. A motion to approve the was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Polly Chesser. Motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Bryan asked members to consider transferring the LIT Edit monies that were originally appropriated for LIT 7332 Wages-\$50000 & Capital Outlays-\$50000 to be placed in Other Services for an increase to \$450000. A motion to approve the transfer was made by Anton Neff; seconded by Chuck Hess. Motion carried 6-0.

A motion to approve the Salary Confirmation Summaries presented was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Nick Robertson. Motion carried 6-0. President Andy Wood will sign the summaries. Attached for record. Mr. Neff related that four of them reflected the cuts and changes made prior.

Elected Officials-

Sheriff Hobbs added that he had received a resignation from his Jail Matron and that he would be advertising it immediately. He will offer it to any of the employees who have been let go as well as the public.

Attorney Bryan reviewed LIT Edit balances and the Owen County Settlements appears not to be able to have in until late December-14<sup>th</sup> at the earliest. No rush of spending, lower small purchases and pre-approval for expenditures and limits set could be considered. A motion to recommend to the Commissioners to set a maximum spending limit of \$500 without approval was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Chuck Hess. Motion carried 6-0.

He next related that some of the Funds in the "Red" are Grant Funds and are required by a current County Ordinance to go before the Commissioners to request application and then to Council to set a Budget. A checklist had been used prior. A motion to have the Attorney send an email to all departments reminding them to follow the Ordinance protocol for current and future Grants. The motion was made by Andy Wood; seconded by Verl Keith. Motion carried 6-0.

Auditor Comments-She reviewed the cuts that had been made prior to the Treasurers Office and asked them to possibly consider giving some funds toward a part-time. She thought the treasurer was going to be present and it would have come up under budget review or department comments. Mr. Neff related those cuts made at hearings pre-approved seasonal part-time and only an estimated \$700 off from what was previously. No action was taken.

Dormant Funds will be presented to the Commissioners and following review and further approval by the state. A motion to allow any approved certifications of funds to be place in the county general action was made by Chuck Hess; seconded by Anton Neff. Motion carried 6-0.

#### Council Comments

Mr. Wood wanted to publicly "Thank" Mr. Bryan for his hard work with all the Budgets. All members agreed unanimously!

A motion to adjourn was made by Chuck Hess.