OWEN COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR
MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 15, 2024

Meeting called to order by President Chesser

- Opening prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.
- Roll Call and public sign in.
- Council Members present: Amy Casebeer, Polly Chesser, Verl Keith, Anton Neff, Nick Robertson and Andy Wood.
- Council Members absent: Steve Carrell

Approval of Previous Minutes:

- **Motion**: Nick Robertson moved to approve the minutes for both the regular meeting on September 9 and the meeting on September 30, 2024.
- **Seconded by**: Amy Casebeer.
- **Discussion**:
    - Anton Neff noted corrections were needed in past minutes, such as fixing references to Councilman Robertson on being mistakenly listed as Councilman Robertson/Roberts.
    - Polly Chesser suggested approving the minutes separately due to attendance differences, but it was decided to proceed with a joint approval.
- **Vote**: 4/0 Approved with one abstention Verl Keith.
- **Outcome**: Minutes approved as presented.

Additional Appropriations & Transfers:

- **Motion**: Nick Robertson moved to approve a series of additional appropriations for various departments.
    - **Appropriations Included**:
        - **Highway Department**:
            - $25,000 for bituminous and hot mix.
            - $25,000 for stone, gravel, and aggregate.
            - Greg Melton explained the funds were for end-of-year cushioning, as suggested by the auditor.
        - **Sheriff's Department**:
            - $21,000 for inmate medical expenses.
            - $1,000 for additional inmate medical expenses.
            - $2,000 for a copy machine lease.
            - Discussion noted the need to ensure the 2025 budget would adequately cover rising medical costs.
        - **Clerk’s Office**:
            - $1,500 for election supplies.
            - $637.30 for printing expenses.

        - **Motion Seconded by**: Amy Casebeer.
        - **Vote**: 5/0 Approved.
        - **Outcome**: Appropriations approved.
- **Transfers**:
    - **Motion**: Nick Robertson moved to approve the following transfers:
        - **Coroner's Office**:
            - $1,000 transferred from the body bags line item to cover additional pay for the deputy coroner.
            - Explanation: Needed to ensure funds for extra coverage during the end-of-year period.
        - **Probation Department**:
            - $5,183.97 transferred from a pre-trial grant to reimburse project income.
            - **Seconded by**: Amy Casebeer.
        - **Vote**: 5/0 Approved.
        - **Outcome**: Transfers approved.

Riverfront Restoration Project Grant Request:

- **Motion**: Amy Casebeer moved to allocate $5,000 from the riverboat fund for the Owen County Soil and Water Conservation District's Riverfront Restoration project.
- **Seconded by**: Anton Neff.
- **Discussion**:
    - Tammy Bingham presented the project, detailing that the DNR grant covered 80% of the $111,270 project cost, leaving a local match of around $20,000.
    - Tammy requested $5,000 from the County Council to help meet the match, emphasizing the project's importance to the community.
    - Nick Robertson expressed concerns about using county funds for a project that might be more appropriate for DNR or Army Corps of Engineers funding.
    - Anton Neff clarified the project does not meet the criteria for Army Corps involvement and noted the benefits of keeping costs down by not involving federal agencies.
- **Vote**: 4/0 Approved with one abstention (Nick Robertson).
- **Outcome**: $5,000 appropriated from the riverboat fund.

Full-Time Court Reporter Position Request:

- **Request**: Judge Kelsey Hanlon requested converting a part-time court reporter position into a full-time role.
- **Discussion**:
    - Judge Hanlon explained that a part-time employee was retiring, and that the workload requires a third full-time position for adequate court operations.
    - Anton Neff provided cost estimates, noting that the switch to full-time would result in a general fund impact of $16,400, with additional insurance costs managed through the EDIT fund.
    - Nick Robertson inquired whether this change would alleviate comp time issues in the office, to which Judge Hanlon confirmed it would.

- **Motion**: Verl Keith moved to approve advertising for the additional appropriation needed for overlap training before the part-time employee's retirement.
- **Seconded by**: Nick Robertson.
- **Vote**: 5/0 Approved.
- **Outcome**: Request for advertising approved, allowing the court to proceed with recruitment and training.

Appointment to SCCAP Board:

- **Motion**: Nick Robertson moved to appoint Karah Bobeck to the South-Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) Board.
- **Seconded by**: Verl Keith.
- **Discussion**:
  - Anton Neff noted that Karah Bobeck had submitted a letter of intent and resume and expressed interest in representing Owen County on the board.
  - The appointment process was clarified as flexible, allowing either the Council or the Commissioners to make the decision.
- **Vote**: 5/0 approved.
- **Outcome**: Karah Bobeck appointed to the SC CAP board.

Auditor's Office Billing Issue (Postponed):

- **Discussion**: The Council discussed an old bill for temperature monitoring equipment purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic, initially billed to the Sheriff's Department.
  - Sam Hobbs noted that two malfunctioning machines were returned, which could be the source of the billing confusion.
  - Anton Neff suggested the potential use of remaining COVID grant funds or revisiting payment records to determine if the bill was already settled.
- **Motion**: Anton Neff moved to postpone further action until the next meeting to allow time for additional research.
- **Seconded by**: Nick Robertson.
- **Vote**: 5/0 Approved.
- **Outcome**: Decision postponed until the next meeting.

Adjournment:

- **Motion**: Nick Robertson moved to adjourn the meeting.
- **Seconded by**: Not specified.
- **Vote**: Unanimously approved.
- **Outcome**: Meeting adjourned.