Owen County Council
Minutes-May 8, 2023

Meeting was called to order by President Polly Chesser with Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.
Members Present: Polly Chesser, Anton Neff, Amy Casebeer, Nick Robertson, Steve Carrell, and Andy Wood.
Also present was auditor Sheila Reeves. Public sign in sheet attached for permanent record.
A motion to approve the minutes was made by Steve Carrell; seconded by Andy Wood. Carried 6-0.
Copies of the Monthly LOW reports were provided for review. Ms. Reeves also provided Monthly LOW Reports from July 2022 to current to offer a comparison and show that there is a trend in spending more than what is being brought in. Settlement is expected by their June meeting.
Old Business
Time Management-Reeves related that the Commissioners stated due to the transition with the Auditor and Treasurer they rescinded all payroll comments and contracts of any kind with Paycor. No further action was taken at this time.
Alcohol Beverage Board-Due to State Codes the recent appointment of Tony Leaderbrand had to be rescinded with a motion made by Robertson; seconded by Wood. Carried 6-0. A motion to appoint Amy Casebeer was made Neff; seconded by Carrell. Carried 6-0.
Holiday Pay Ordinance-Pending legal review.
Tax Abatements-
Mader Mill & Owen Valley Winery still needed legal direction on how to approve/disapprove applications. Committee meetings were held to obtain further information. Carrell had spoken with State Steve McCann regarding the Winery and ERA with a required public hearing with notice, contingent upon hearing. Wood asked about the need for a scoring system. Carrel said this is what we want is businesses like this for our county. Wood made a motion to approve the Winery request for an abatement; seconded by Casebeer. Neff asked about the drafting for the ERA and the meeting requirements. Wood made a motion to withdraw the motion; seconded by Casebeer. A meeting date was selected for May 30th@6pm for a Public Hearing of the ERA with the attorney preparing the paperwork. The motion being made by Neff; seconded by Carrell for the special meeting. Carried 6-0. They will also review re-writing the Policies and Scoring system.
Discussion then led to review legal representation and the need to have to retain their own and address it at budget time. Sam Hobbs commented that the contract was budgeted for elected officials; not one entity. Carrell commented that as a taxpayer it is a waste of money for another attorney for council.
Wood related that former-Bryan was full-time, and what would a fair split be worth.
At this time Robertson made a motion to grant Mader Mill one more year. Dies for a lack of second, and he withdrew his motion. A new motion made by Robertson was to reduce the abatement to fifty percent; seconded by Neff. Carried 4-2-Casebeer/Wood.

Public Hearing-Additional Appropriations was opened by Chesser.
A motion to approve the April Meeting List presented was made by Wood; seconded by Neff. Carried 6-0.
Reeves noted concern of appropriations being given for multiple departments. She used the Building Department as an example of Cash Balances versus budget and the need to keep them and others on the radar to make sure they are not short at the end of the year. Suzanne Simmerman commented that they are self-funding and have other funds that they are also paid from, as well as permits, P&Z and enforcement is picking up. She specifically talked about payroll still not being claimed from the surveyor's perpetuation. Reeves will look into it. An updated report/review will be given in June. The hearing closed at 6:52pm.

New Business

911 Director Kathleen Lamb and Sheriff's Deputy Matt Miller presented an Owen County LMR System Assessment & Upgrade Proposal. This assessment will address the countywide system that is totally agreed by all emergency agencies is desperately needed and should be a high priority to adequately allow communication with Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement. She has applied for a grant that would help assist in the funding. Concerns regarding funding options were discussed. A motion of Council support and is interested in moving forward and passing when the results of the Grant Application and financial review, and after settlement is received was made by Robertson; seconded by Wood. Carried 4-2/Neff-Carrell. An updated report will be provided at the next meeting.

She next presented a request for an employee to be able to go above the Comp time Policy to earn time off for maternity leave, with the assurance from the employee she will return. Continued concern for staffing issues at dispatch, this would help retain an individual. It was also noted that the county does not have a maternity/paternity policy. A motion was made by Robertson to allow 183 hours total with a second by Carrell. Motion failed 2-4. The overall concern with the lack of Policy offered a motion by Wood; seconded by Neff to request of the Attorney for a policy to be written that will be a joint effort with Commissioners and Council working jointly as it involves policy and finance. Carried 6-0. Chesser will contact the attorney and commissioners.

Community Corrections Donna McElroy provided copies for review of departmental grants. She also introduced her replacement effective May 30th--Natasha Pointer as the new Chief Probation Officer. Wood and other members thanked her for her years of service.

EMA Director Jack White reviewed a letter from the Emergency Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) and the need to request for an extension of the current policy for vacation/personal/comp balance limits. Due to the recent disaster, he has not been able to take time off. The concern with updating policies across the board for all departments is still an ongoing issue relating to enforcement, financial cost, continued snowballing and some department heads lack of management. A motion to grant an extension until December 31st was made by Neff; seconded by Wood. Carried 6-0. Chesser will contact the attorney and commissioners as it involves all of them in a team effort as well as meet with departments to have a leadership core group.

EMS Director Cris Lunsford echoed the EMA position and concerns. He will do his best and adhere to the extended timeline for December 31st.

Auditor Reeves again echoed in the same boat as EMA/EMS and will do her best to get her staff down. She also noted that she inherited years' worth of the accumulated time.

Additional Appropriation Requests were presented and approved with a motion made by Neff; seconded by Robertson for the following: Correctional 1233-30700 $75000, Council appropriation 1000-0061 $46406.25, Toshiba Contract Riverboat-1191 $4068, 2023 Budget Reductions Funds 1159/1151/1176/1212/1222/1235/1188 and Court Reform $9177. Carried 6-0.

A motion to approve Transfers for Pretrial 9155 to 1000-11200 $11366, Justice Partners 9153 to Cash $5144.31, and Juvenile 7116 to 2150-880 $405 was made by Neff; seconded by Wood. Carried 6-0.

Council Appropriation was tabled pending commissioner review to replace the funds spent for the coroner's van. It was related by them during the last meeting to use ARPA or Opioid. A motion to allow the Council President-Chesser to sign the Salary Confirmation Summaries except the payroll deputy was made by Wood; seconded by Neff. Carried 6-0. A motion to have Robertson sign the deputy payroll was made by Wood; seconded by Neff. Carried 5-0-1Ab/Chesser.

Elected Officials

Extension-Jennifer Abrell presented a request for additional funds to support a full-time position due to an employee leaving. The position is refunded fifty percent with reimbursement to the general fund. Following discussion regarding budget balances/line-items, a motion to transfer $4600 from regular to part-time to support the position including perf was made. The motion was made by Wood; seconded by Casebeer. Carried 6-0.

Sheriff Ryan White presented an updated Job Description-Jail Officer Training Coordinator. As it is a budget neutral position a motion was made by Neff; seconded by Wood to approve/accept the new description. Carried 6-0.

Council Comments-Neff related AIC Meeting information on May 18th in Greencastle. Also, a SBOA called meeting for June 23rd and 24th.

Robertson wanted to note that they had voted not to allow any items to the agenda unless it was an emergency and there were two tonight. Jail was an old business item and extension and was needed.

A motion to adjourn was made by Chesser.