

MAR 18 2022

MADISON COUNTY QUORUM COURT REGULAR SESSION

CERTIFY THAT THIS INSTRUMENT WAS FILED
FOR RECORD IN MY OFFICE AND RECORDED
IN BOOK PAGE
TAMITHA BLOCKER COUNTY CLERK
D.C.

February 22, 2022

6:00 PM

The Madison County Quorum Court met on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, in a regular session with all nine members present.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as written.

The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented.

The Expenditure Report was approved as presented.

County Judge Frank Weaver called the meeting to order. Pattie Shinn made a motion not to pay the Justices of the Peace for the Special Quorum Court Meeting held on January 25, 2022, and Larry Garrett seconded. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Judge Weaver introduced Skip Woessner with Clear Energy, who presented two plans for Madison County's solar project. The first plan included basic upgrades to county buildings, including a switch to LED lighting, adding window film to all windows, sealing brick and mortar exteriors, adding the solar array, and providing a supplemental service for 911. The second plan included all measures proposed in the first plan and included the replacement of nine older HVAC units. Mr. Woessner explained that both plans would require a down payment if the county wanted to take advantage of a new grant program that the State of Arkansas is currently offering. The grant program would offer a lower interest rate. He also explained that the plan selected by the Quorum Court would need to be submitted to the State by the first of March in order to be assured of receiving a portion of the limited funds being offered. Both plans would utilize a down payment from the county, along with savings from funds currently being paid to the utility companies, and would be paid for in ten years. T.W. Dotson made a motion to table the discussion until the end of the meeting so that the Quorum Court had an opportunity to hear from Southbuild about the construction of a jail. Larry Garrett seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion passed 8-1. JP Pattie Shinn voted against the motion.

Judge Weaver presented a list of possible projects using ARPA funding for discussion.

The first item on the list was emergency services communications upgrades utilizing FirstNet Emergency Services Technology. Levi Fitch with Telogix explained that the FirstNet Federal Communications Program was created by the 9-11 Commission to improve communication between law enforcement and other emergency services. It is a cellular network for government and emergency services workers only. Mr. Fitch and Captain Russell Alberts of the Madison County Sheriff's Office drove to the worst spots in the county where cellular and radio communications do not work. Mr. Fitch reported that FirstNet's mega range antennas cover 80-85% of the county. Captain Alberts reported that only 60-70% of the county currently has coverage. In the event of a disaster, the law requires FirstNet Communications to be restored first before any other communications providers. The total cost for equipment to cover the Sheriff's Office, EMS, DEM, County Judge, and Road Foreman would be \$84,000. In addition, each device has a \$40 monthly charge. However, the devices would replace our current cellphones, which also cost around \$40 per month for each line. The cost to add FirstNet mega range antennas for the county's volunteer fire departments would be an additional \$88,000 and a monthly fee of \$40 per device. Backup internet services for the E-911 dispatching center would cost \$6500 and a monthly fee of \$40. County Clerk Tamitha Blocker said it was important to note that the E-911 mapping system utilized by our dispatch was about to change from a static system to an internet-based system that requires reliable internet service. Captain Alberts said the E-911 dispatch backup system was needed because every time the internet connection is lost, the county has no 911 service. He also stated that more and more calls are dispatched by cell phone for officer safety reasons.

The second item on the list was the County Jail. Judge Weaver led the discussion with a list of several potential building sites, including county-owned land and several properties that were currently for sale. The county-owned parking lot across the street from the courthouse would only accommodate a 60-bed facility, and any expansion would have to go up. Jim Langford and Mike Kelly with SouthBuild presented a sketch of a 100-bed facility that might possibly share the county owned EMS site with the existing EMS building. Without having conducted an in-depth work session, their estimated price for that facility was between 10-12 million dollars, possibly more due to Covid factors. Other potential sites discussed included the county-owned land next to the Road & Bridge Department, which has been designated for the solar array, city-owned land initially designated for an industrial park, property owned by Kay Coger on Highway 412 Business, the old B&B Implement property, property owned by Duane Glenn on the Highway 412 Bypass, and the Houston property across from Lew Thompson and Son Trucking. Judge Weaver stated that Southbuild needed a site selected prior to beginning the work session. After discussion, the work session with Southbuild that was set for March 7-11 was rescheduled to the week of April 4.

The third item on the list was the replacement of old equipment at the Madison County Solid Waste and Recycling Center. Judge Weaver explained that most of the equipment at the center is at least thirty years old and beyond repair. A list compiled by the Center's Director, Christal Baker, estimated the total replacement cost at \$686,000. Ms. Baker said the two most pressing needs were the replacement of the grapple loader and the compactor. After much discussion, TW Dotson made a motion to table the discussion until more information was available. Matt Cleaver seconded the motion. The motion carried on a voice vote.

The fourth item presented was the replacement of audio/visual equipment and other upgrades to the courtroom. New equipment would improve sound quality, add assistive listening devices, allow for the live stream and recording of all public meetings, and make it more efficient and cost-effective to conduct court proceedings by Zoom or other virtual technology. The court agreed to allow Judge Weaver to seek bids for equipment upgrades to the courtroom.

The last item presented was a request from Kingston resident Jeanine Palazzi for \$300,000 to purchase ten premanufactured cabins for their non-profit Restoration Ranch, which serves as an alternative to jails. After discussion, no action was taken by the court.

Judge Weaver gave an update on the road grader purchase. Judge Weaver informed the court that the current rental contract ends in March of this year. Caterpillar has given us a timeline of late fall to early spring for the arrival of the new road graders. John Deere has proposed renting the current road graders to us for \$11,000 per machine per month. Judge Weaver stated that those machines would be returned to John Deere. Caterpillar has agreed to rent ten graders to the county for \$3800 per machine per month until the new machines arrive. Judge Weaver stated that interest rates might very well rise before new machines are delivered.

In new business, Madison County Sheriff Rick Evans reported that a Circuit Judge is now requiring the Sheriff's Department to pick up prisoners and bring them back to Madison County from other county jails when they bond out or are otherwise released from jail. He also reported that two prisoners recently had surgery while incarcerated and that it required three deputies to babysit the prisoners while they were at the hospital. Sheriff Evans stated that he needed transport officers to do this as he is currently forced to take officers off the road. The cost to add each officer to the payroll is about \$67,000 per officer per year. T.W. Dotson made a motion to add two transport officers to the Sheriff's Department. Pattie Shinn seconded the motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote. An appropriation from the County General Fund will be required, and a special meeting will be scheduled to vote on the appropriation.

Judge Weaver asked the Quorum Court to confirm the appointment of James Bailey and Paul Richmond to the Pine Top Water Association. Larry Garrett made a motion to confirm the appointments, and Wendy Pettz seconded. All members voted in favor.

Judge Weaver reported that the Carroll and Madison Library System's Annual Report had been submitted and was distributed to each member of the court.

Judge Weaver introduced Ordinance 2022-3, a supplemental appropriation ordinance. Pattie Shinn made a motion to read Ordinance 2022-3, and Larry Garrett seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion. County Clerk Tamitha Blocker read Ordinance


2022-3. Pattie Shinn made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2022-3, and T.W. Dotson seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the motion. Ordinance No. 2022-3 was adopted.

Judge Weaver asked Skip Woessner with Clear Energy to return to the podium for additional discussion on the solar energy proposals. Mr. Woessner had calculated the cost of each proposal. One proposal included a down payment and Arkansas Energy Office funding, and the other proposal did not include a down payment, and funding would be secured from a bank or traditional lender. After discussion, Larry Garrett made a motion to proceed with the project with no money down. Pattie Shinn seconded. Seven members voted in favor of the motion. Luke Dotson voted against the motion, and Matt Cleaver abstained. The motion carried.

Judge Weaver asked Levi Fitch with Telogix to return to the podium for additional discussion on the emergency communications upgrade proposal. Mr. Fitch reminded the court of the three proposals. After discussion, T.W. Dotson made a motion to proceed with the \$6500 backup internet proposal for dispatch. Devin Glenn seconded. All members voted in favor of the motion.

With no further business, a motion was made by Larry Garrett and seconded by Pattie Shinn to adjourn the meeting. All members voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED: 
Frank Weaver, Madison County Judge

ATTEST: 
Tamitha Blocker, Madison County Clerk

DATED: March 17, 2022