

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

April 06, 2010

A Finance Committee meeting was held Tuesday, April 06, 2010, at 5:30 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Committee Members Present: Wozniak, Brown, Moore, Allen, Douglas, Stephenson
Absent: Wolf

Others Present: JP Jay Harrison, JP Frank Winscott, JP Bobby Hubbard, County Attorney George Spence, Comptroller Richard McComas, Accounting Manager Michele Anderson, Grants Administrator Kathy Bannister, Director of Public Services Chris Glass, 9-1-1 Director of Operations Mary Kay Sullivan, Chief Deputy Don Townsend, Major Gene Drake

Tabatha Hunter – Benton County Daily Record

JP Moore called the meeting to order

Comptroller Richard McComas announced that Grants Administrator Kathy Bannister is getting married, and will be relocating so tonight would be her last meeting. He added that they are in the process of interviewing to fill her position. Appreciation of Kathy Bannister's work was expressed by members of the committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

Grants Administrator Report

Grants Administrator Kathy Bannister reported that the GIF-I Community Enhancement Grant and GIF-II Fire Protection Grant have been funded. She added that the GIF-II Fire Protection Grant for Beaver Lake Fire Department has been resubmitted.

1-a) Rural GIF II Fire Services Grant Funds

Kathy Bannister stated that the proposed appropriation ordinance is to appropriate \$50,000 for the NEBCO Rural Fire Department for the purchase of a tanker. She stated this is a pass through grant and requires no county funds.

JP Wozniak made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Douglas.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

1-b) GCEG Grant Funds

Kathy Bannister stated that the proposed appropriation ordinance is to appropriate \$12,000 for the purchase of DVR's for courthouse security and comes from General Community Enhancement Grant Program. She stated this is a pass through grant and requires no county funds

JP Wozniak made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Stephenson.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

2-a) Homeland Security Grant Funds

Richard McComas stated that the proposed appropriation ordinance for \$147,098.71 is from the Homeland Security Grant Program for the purchase of the Reverse 9-1-1 system and other communications equipment.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Discussion was held on additional costs of the Reverse 9-1-1 system for the county after the first year.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

2-b) LETTP Grant Funds

Richard McComas stated the proposed appropriation ordinances is to appropriate grant funds from the Law Enforcement Training and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program, for the purchase of tactical equipment approved by the Sheriff's office, and that it requires no county funds.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Lengthy discussion was held on the LETTP grant and the various equipment being purchased with the grant.

Chief Deputy Don Townsend stated that the tactical equipment listed is for the SWAT Team, and that it will benefit the team when they go into high-risk situations which involve drug labs. He added that the Sheriff's office wants to give the SWAT Team the best possible chance to go home every night without being hurt.

He added that failing to take advantage of available grant funds will hurt the people of Benton County, because these federal funds will simply be spent somewhere else. JP Wozniak stated that if we do not take advantage of the entire grant, the amount awarded in the future could decrease.

Further discussion was held on how federal grant funds are used.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

3. Appropriation Ordinance: Jail Fund 970 for Electronic Gate

Richard McComas stated that the proposed appropriation ordinance is to appropriate \$12,000 for an electronic gate for the back entrance to the Jail complex, and is coming from Social Security incentive money collected by the Sheriff's Department.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Chief Don Townsend stated that because of heavy traffic problems on Highway 102, County Judge David Bisbee and Sheriff Keith Ferguson have made it possible to build a back entrance to the jail complex off of Melissa Street, but they will need an additional security gate, in order for the Road Department to have a separate entrance to the property.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

4. Appropriation Ordinance: 9-1-1 Administration for Additional Equipment

Richard McComas stated that the proposed appropriation ordinance is to appropriate \$75,500 for two 9-1-1 equipment stations for CenCom, and five (PSAP) Public Safety Answering Point Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN) radios for CenCom, and added that \$47,920 will be reimbursed by the Emergency Telephone System, with the balance coming from 9-1-1 funds.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

5. Appropriation Ordinance: Architectural Fees for JDC Building

Richard McComas stated the proposed appropriation ordinance is to appropriate \$300,000 for architectural fees for the Juvenile Detention Center building, and was forwarded from the Long Range Planning/Real Estate & Buildings Committee. JP Brown stated that everyone from the court attended the Long Range Planning meeting, and the architectural fees have been thoroughly discussed.

JP Brown made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Stephenson.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

6. Appropriation Ordinance: 2009 Unemployment Payments

Richard McComas stated the proposed appropriation ordinance is for payment of 2009 unemployment taxes, which are to be paid in 2010.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve and forward the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Douglas.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

7. Ordinance: Amendment to Cash Advance Travel Policy

Michele Anderson stated that County Attorney George Spence has amended the Cash Advance Travel Ordinance which was adopted in 2004 to split the cash advance travel fund into two separate funds – one fund for the Sheriff’s Office and a second fund for the remaining County Officials. She added this would make it more convenient for the Sheriff’s office when transporting inmates during hours that the offices are not open.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve the amended the cash advance travel policy and forward to the proposed appropriation ordinance to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

8. Sales Tax Numbers

Richard McComas stated that the January receipts showed an increase of 1.62% in sales tax revenue, and that January was the second month to show an increase. He added that if this continues for five or six months in a row, he would say that it is significant.

9. Jail Collections

Richard McComas stated that a check has been received from the State for over \$200,000 for back jail collection fees, and this puts us back on track to reach the 2010 projection.

10. Fuel Summary

Michele Anderson reported a 48% increase in unleaded fuel expense compared with last year when unleaded was \$1.57 per gallon, and added that diesel fuel costs have increased 39% from \$1.54 per gallon in 2009 to \$2.14 this year. She added that the numbers budgeted for 2010 are good numbers, but are being watched closely.

11. Monthly Expenditure Report

Michele Anderson stated funds should be at 25 % overall, and that the General Fund is at 25.23% due to annual service agreements and capital expenditures. The unemployment shown will be cleared out with the appropriation ordinance which was forwarded tonight to the Committee of Thirteen.

Richard McComas stated that access to the Monthly Expenditure Report is available on the county website, and that the previous day's numbers are available. He added that the information is located on the county website in the Accounting Department, under the "Budget and Expenditure" reports.

12. Other Business as Needed

12-a) VAS/NEBCO Legal Assistance

County Attorney George Spence stated that County Judge David Bisbee had sent him a memo from Kara Funk, Chairman of the Northeast Benton County Fire Department regarding the possible transition of Emergency Medical Services from VAS to NEBCO. He stated that the NEBCO Board of Directors has requested him to provide legal assistance and guidance on the transition, and that he would need approval of the court in order to assist them.

JP Stephenson stated that this would benefit a large portion of the county and he sees nothing wrong with assisting them. He added that the court should consider a maximum for the county to spend.

JP Stephenson made motion to authorize County Attorney George Spence to proceed with legal assistance in the transition of the VAS Ambulance Corporation to NEBCO, with the amount not to exceed \$7,500.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

12-b) City of Bella Vista – Road Tax Lawsuit Settlement

County Attorney George Spence stated that in December of 2006, Bella Vista incorporated as a city, and that Bella Vista believes that they should receive the 2006 County Road taxes collected in 2007. He stated that Bella Vista filed a lawsuit against the county in 2008 to recoup the \$492,641, the amount of the road tax collected.

He stated that a proposal for settlement has been proposed by the City of Bella Vista for \$246,320, which is half of the \$492,641. He said that the County Treasurer will collect 2%, or \$4,926.41, leaving Bella Vista with a proposed settlement of \$241,394. He stated that it is a good settlement, and he would advise the committee to settle. He added that the Bella Vista City Council must also approve the proposed settlement amount before the lawsuit can be settled.

Lengthy discussion was held on the Bella Vista lawsuit against Benton County for the 2006 road taxes collected in 2007 and the proposed settlement amount.

JP Stephenson stated that this is uncharted territory, and added there are a lot of frustrated people in Bella Vista, and a lot of frustrated people in Benton County. He stated we can lawyer it to death, but that would end up reducing what both sides have.

JP Stephenson made motion to accept this proposed settlement of \$241,394.09 to the City of Bella Vista, and forward it to the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Motion passed by show of hands vote.

5 in favor: Wozniak, Moore, Allen, Douglas, Stephenson

1 against: Brown

1 absent: Wolf

JP Moore stated that someone from the Finance committee will need to bring the items forward at the April 13, 2010 Committee of Thirteen meeting as he would be unable to attend. JP Douglas nominated JP Allen to bring the items forward.

The nomination was approved unanimously by the committee.

JP Hubbard requested an update from Director of Public Services Chris Glass on the convenience center located on west Highway 59. Chris Glass stated that they now have schematic drawings of the topography, and detailed estimates are being put together. He added that the same is occurring on the east side, and that they have received approval for funding from the Department of Energy.

Further discussion was held on the progress of the convenience centers.

JP Moore announced that the next Finance Committee meeting will be Tuesday, May 4, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.

Upon motion and second the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.