

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

December 03, 2009

A Finance Committee meeting was held Tuesday, December 03, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Administration Building, Quorum Court meeting Room, 215 East Central, Bentonville, Arkansas.

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

Others Present: JP Sandlin, JP Winscott, Director of Public Services Chris Glass, Department of Emergency Management Director Marshall Watson

Tabatha Hunter – Benton County Daily Record

JP Moore called the meeting to order

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

Grants Administrator Report

JP Moore stated that Grants Administrator Kathy Bannister is not present, but if there are any questions regarding the grants report, they can be addressed at the Committee of Thirteen meeting. Comptroller Richard McComas said she will be back early next week, and to call if they needed something answered before then.

Collectors Request

Richard McComas stated that the Collector and Assessor are doing some remodeling at the Rogers office that had been planned for 2010. He said that the timing is better for the Collector's office to go ahead and complete the project this year, and they have the funds available. He said they are requesting an appropriation ordinance to go ahead and spend the money this year, and will not need the money that is in Collector's 2010 Budget for this project.

JP Stephenson made motion to forward an appropriation ordinance request to the December 8, 2009 Committee of Thirteen agenda, seconded by JP Wolf.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Reverse 9-1-1 System

Department of Emergency Management Coordinator Marshall Watson reviewed the proposal for an emergency notification system presented by Cooper Notification Systems. He said there are two options—150,000 minutes per year for an initial investment of \$100,000, followed by an annual renewal cost of \$21,000. He said based on percentages of population, the county's share would be 25% of that amount, or \$5,200 per year, if all of the cities choose to participate. He said that the other option would be to purchase 150,000 minutes per year at a fixed rate of \$50,000 per year, which would increase the county's share.

He said that initially, Cooper Notifications Systems was the only vendor that could provide emergency weather notification through voice dialing, but recently, he was informed that another vendor has made the decision to provide that service.

Marshall Watson stated that the second company has developed a fixed-rate option, wherein the county is charged \$1.25 per address point, for unlimited emergency use of the system. He said that there are approximately 65,000 address points in Benton County, for a yearly fee of roughly \$81,000, 25% of which would be \$20,000, depending on the number of cities that choose to participate. He said that the definition of emergency use would include notifying residents of severe weather, disasters, boil orders, smoke warnings, or early school closings due to inclement weather.

He said that this same company also offers a second pricing option of \$1.91 per address point, for complete unlimited use of the system. He said that yearly cost would be approximately \$124,000, and 25% of that cost would be roughly \$31,000. He said this percentage is based solely on the county and municipalities sharing the cost, and listed other entities that might be interested in participating, such as utility companies, school districts, and civic organizations. He said that with the unlimited use, the communication possibilities are endless.

Marshall Watson said that his recommendation is to proceed with the bid process, because they will not have firm numbers until they do. He noted that since they are requesting voice dial emergency weather notification as part of the system, that will reduce the number of vendors who will submit bids.

The committee discussed the definition of address points. Marshall Watson stated that it is normally defined as an inhabitable structure, and there are 65,000 in Benton County.

Marshall Watson went over the various ways that users will be able to customize the system to their personal preferences for notification.

The committee discussed partnership possibilities. Marshall Watson stated that he has not contacted any of the school districts yet. JP Wozniak stated that Bella Vista will definitely participate, and he felt that Pea Ridge would also, based on the interest shown by Mayor Jackie Crabtree.

JP Winscott asked what additional staffing would be required. Marshall Watson stated that no additional staffing will be required, only training for the people who are authorized to use the system, which will be provided by the vendor as part of the initial purchase.

JP Wozniak made motion to move ahead with the bid process, and provide the results at the appropriate meeting following receipt of the bids, seconded by JP Wolf.

Richard McComas stated that once they have firm numbers, the Quorum Court will need to approve the budgets for the 2007 and 2008 Arkansas State Homeland Security Grants, which will probably be sometime in January. He said that they have received approval of the budgets from the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Jail Vehicles 2009-2010

Richard McComas stated that the Jail had budgeted for a prisoner transport van that will not be able to be delivered before the end of 2009, so it will need to come out of the 2010 Budget instead. He said he is requesting verbal approval of a budget adjustment to be made early next year.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve the budget adjustment, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

Sales Tax Numbers

Richard McComas stated that sales tax receipts decreased 9% last month, which he had hoped would be up due to the LPGA event held in September in Rogers. He said that they adjusted the sales tax projections to \$8.2 million, so if they receive \$645,000 in December they will meet those projections. He noted that both Bentonville and Rogers saw larger decreases. He added that they have not projected any growth in sales tax revenue in 2010.

JP Winscott asked if there are numbers available to compare to the national average. Richard McComas stated that he does not, but in looking at the county's numbers over the last four to five years, he would think that the county's numbers would be far above the national average.

Jail Collections

Richard McComas stated that Jail Collections were down this month, but he has already been informed that they will be up next month. He said they will exceed the projected \$1.4 million for 2009.

Fuel Summary

Michele Anderson stated that in the month of November, the Sheriff's Department and Jail spent \$32,016, and the Road Department spent \$43,747. She said with only two months left in the year, they should finish under their budgets, and that money will be returned to County General. JP Moore asked what is projected for fuel costs in 2010. Richard McComas stated \$3.20 per gallon, and if prices remain stable, they will have money to turn back at the end of 2010.

Monthly Expenditure Report

Michele Anderson stated that departments should be at 91.66% at this point, and the few that are over will need transfers from various line items to finish out the year. Richard McComas noted that the overall budget is still under, at 83.62%, and that there will be returned appropriations even after all of the budget cuts made earlier in the year.

JP Moore commended the Elected Officials and Department Heads for being so frugal this year.

Other Business

Richard McComas stated that the January ice storm caused a delay in completing some Road Department projects, notably Cloverdale Road, and although approximately \$100,000 in the asphalt line item will be returned at the end of the year, they will need to re-appropriate that money next year to complete the project in 2010.

He said he would like verbal approval of the adjustment to be made in early 2010.

JP Stephenson made motion to approve the adjustment, seconded by JP Wozniak.

Motion passed by unanimous show of hands vote.

JP Stephenson requested information on any grants available to help with the costs of repairing some of the bridges that are closed in the county. He said he noticed that Springtown recently obtained \$200,000 for a low water bridge, and mentioned another \$50,000 grant. Richard

McComas stated that they have \$75,000 budgeted in grant funds for bridge repair next year, but he does not recall which bridge it is for. JP Stephenson requested that Greg Hines investigate other counties' use of rail cars for bridges, and report back to them. Richard McComas stated that Mr. Hines is working on it.

JP Moore stated that Greg Hines has invited an engineer from Garver Engineering to make a presentation on the Fisher Ford Bridge at the next Committee of Thirteen meeting. He said that they may need to appropriate money for an engineering study to determine if it is reparable and how much it will co

Richard McComas stated that no one has called with any questions concerning the 2010 Budget, which is scheduled to go to the Committee of Thirteen and Quorum Court this month, so he is assuming that everyone understands it.

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

Upon motion and second the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.