

## **Minutes**

### **Dodge County Board of Commissioners**

**August 3, 2015**

**Present:** Dan McCranie, Chairman  
William T. Howell, Vice-Chairman, District 1 Commissioner  
Terry Niblett, District 2 Commissioner  
Brian Watkins, District 3 Commissioner  
Karen Cheek, District 4 Commissioner

**Also Present:** John Harrington, County Attorney  
Bobby Peacock, County Manager  
Nancy Gail Rogers, County Clerk

The Dodge County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, August 3, 2015, in Suite 101 of the Dodge County Courthouse Annex. Chairman McCranie called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag. A devotional was given by Commissioner Cheek and she led in prayer.

#### **Elected Officials/ Department Heads**

A. Probate Judge Al McCranie

Probate Judge Al McCranie thanked the board for the opportunity to speak and reminded them that the last time he addressed them he asked for funds for a solicitor in order to process cases in his court to alleviate those cases being bound to Superior Court. He said some of these cases involve indigent citizens facing jail time and they cannot afford an attorney and once they are told they can have access to a public defender in Superior Court they choose to go with the Superior Court. He said he had hoped to circumvent another public defender but the best procedure was to err on the side of the defendant. He said he had talked with Steve Harrison of the Public Defender's office and he realizes that if the cases aren't dealt with in Probate Court that he will have them in three months in Superior Court. He said he had offered a public defender at the same pay rate as the solicitor which will be less than four thousand dollars (\$4,000) per year. He said the cost for the solicitor and public defender combined would be well below the state norm and the bottom line was to work to keep everything in Probate Court. He said a twenty-five dollar (\$25) application fee for the indigent to qualify for a public defender could be charged to offset part of the cost. Commissioner Cheek asked how many cases were being handled by his court and he replied approximately forty (40) per month. Commissioner Niblett asked how many of those cases were indigent and McCranie replied around fifteen (15). The county manager asked how much revenue would be generated from the twenty-five dollar (\$25) fee and the probate judge replied it would be collected as a part of their fine. The county

attorney asked for a cross reference on income figures so far from using the solicitor and the probate judge said he would compile those for the board.

Charles Williams, Interim President of the Eastman Dodge Chamber of Commerce, was recognized and said he had nothing to report but was attending to support the board.

### **Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. July 20, 2015 Regular Meeting**

Chairman McCranie asked for any additions, corrections, or deletions to the minutes of the regular meeting held on July 20, 2015, and presented to the board in printed form. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to approve seconded by Commissioner Howell. The vote for approval was unanimous.

### **Old Business**

#### **A. Hospital Board Appointments**

County Attorney Harrington reported that the hospital board had recommended Dan Harrell to finish the term of Dr. Blake Milner and stated that Harrell had been approached about the vacancy and had agreed to serve if appointed. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to appoint Dan Harrell to the Dodge County Hospital Board with Commissioner Cheek making the second. All voted in favor of the motion for appointment.

### **New Business**

#### **A. Approval of Accounts Payable**

Chairman McCranie asked if there were any questions concerning the Accounts Payable check listing presented to the board in printed form. Commissioner Howell made a motion to approve the check list seconded by Commissioners Watkins and Niblett. All voted in favor of the motion to approve.

#### **B. Jack Sapp**

Jack Sapp addressed the board members about a variance on the ordinance for property less than an acre. He said he owns a triangular shape tract of land and he had furnished the board with a copy of the plat. He said the property is across from his residence and was only suitable for housing. He said he wanted to put a mobile home on the property for a retired friend with health issues to locate here from Columbus. He said he would hook the mobile home to his well on his property across the road but needed a septic tank adjacent to the mobile home on the tract that is approximately point eight five to point nine zero (.85 - .90) acre. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to grant the variance. County Attorney Harrington asked if it complied with general standards of the Dodge County Health Department as there was no county ordinance. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion by Commissioner Niblett and all voted in favor of the motion.

### C. Gresston Fire Department

Chairman McCranie referred to a letter from Chief Bob Braswell of the Gresston Fire Department requesting a change in the use for SPLOST funds. Due to the widening of the highway from Cochran to Eastman a new fire station will have to be built and the request was for funds to be used for the construction costs rather than a rescue truck as previously requested. Commissioner Watkins made a motion to approve the change as both were capital improvements as stated in the SPLOST request. The county manager said the funds would come from the 2013 SPLOST. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous to approve.

### D. Set Proposed Millage Rate for 2015

County Manager Peacock asked the board to set the proposed tax millage rate for 2015. He said the county was required run the five (5) year history in the newspaper for two weeks and then set the millage rate. He said the rollback rate was 11.556 and they couldn't go above that but could reduce it. Commissioner Niblett asked if the 2014 rate was 11.562 and Peacock answered yes and property values were decreased from last year. Commissioner Niblett made a motion to set the proposed millage at the rollback rate of 11.556 seconded by Commissioner Howell. All voted in favor of the motion.

### **Commissioner Reports**

There were no reports from the Commissioners.

### **County Manager Report**

The county manager had nothing to report and there were no questions for him.

### **Public Comments**

Charles Williams commented on the projected decrease in statewide revenue.

Kenneth Williamson commented on possible conflicts with changing a variance.

### **Move to Executive Session**

Commissioner Howell made a motion to move into executive session seconded by Commissioner Watkins. All voted in favor of the motion.

### **Return to Regular Session**

Commissioner Cheek made a motion to end the executive session and return to the regular meeting. Commissioner Niblett seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

### **Adjourn**

Commissioner Howell made a motion to adjourn seconded by Commissioner Watkins. The vote was unanimous to adjourn.

