

# Benton County Council

January 25, 2024

those funds will assist with that greatly. They discussed the salaries, positions, equipment and other operating expenses and will continue to discuss and see what they can do. There was also a discussion on potential employees and applicants and what he looks at and considers when evaluating those candidates.

The group discussed the cum rates and what would be needed adjusted and if the whole 2% for EMS/Public safety tax. Which is a separate tax from the public safety. Councilman, Brent Cox motioned to approve moving forward with the necessary steps to re-establish the cumulative jail fund, seconded by Councilman, Jack Duncan and motion carried.

The sheriff then spoke about on-going and up-coming projects over the next few years, furnaces and jail pods. His plan is to use the cumulative jail funds to cover what expenses he can. The main thing he will be repairing this year will be to replace the fire escape door and that will cost approximately \$10,000.

Deputy Marsh is in her fourth week of the ILEA training. Deputy Largent will be sworn in on February 12<sup>th</sup> and invited the board to attend. Sheriff Cox shared the jail inspection and stated that the state inspector came on site, and they passed. The inspector said the Sheriff and his staff did a great job. The sheriff wrapped up by talking about intradiction that the department will soon be able to do along state road 41 and other state highways with the 3 K-9 units. The last time there was any niber numbers any reported was done in 2019 so he has tasked his staff with getting this updated and within compliance.

**Business:**

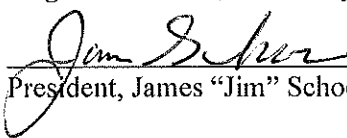
The meeting minutes from December 07, 2023 meeting were approved as presented with a motion by Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach, second by Councilman, Brent Cox and motion carried.

Auditor Freeland reviewed the salary amendments with the board, and they were all approved with a motion by Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach seconded by Councilman, Jack Duncan and motion carried. The changes will be added to the salary ordinance.

Commissioner Berry said that they are moving forward with fiber and broadband projects in the towns.

Councilman Schoen apologized to the board for the beginning of the meeting. The group had a brief discussion and then closed the meeting.

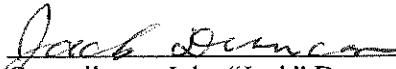
**With no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m. with a motion by Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach, second by Councilman, Brent Cox, motion carried.**

  
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President, James "Jim" Schoen

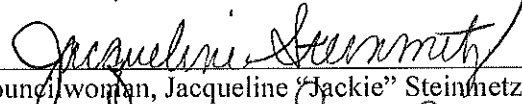
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice President, Brent Cox

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Councilman, Mike Conner

  
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Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach

  
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Councilman, John "Jack" Duncan

  
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Councilwoman, Katrina "Trina" Schutter

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilwoman, Jacqueline "Jackie" Steinmetz

Attest:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Audrey Freeland, County Auditor

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The Benton County Council met at 8:30 a.m. at the Benton County Courthouse. Those in attendance were Council members: Jim Schoen, Angie Glotzbach, Jackie Steinmetz, Trina Schutter, Brent Cox, Jack Duncan and Auditor, Audrey Freeland

Others in attendance were – John Cox, Carole Hoff, Glenda Wallpe, Bryan Berry and Jason Fisher

The first order of business was the organization of offices. Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach motioned to appoint Jim Schoen as the President of the Council, second by Councilman, Brent Cox and motion carried. Councilman, Jack Duncan motioned to appoint Brent Cox as the Vice President of the Council, second by Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach and motion carried. The representative for the NW Solid Waste was determined with a motion to appoint Councilman, Jim Schoen with a motion by Councilman, Brent Cox, seconded by Councilwoman, Jackie Steinmetz and motion carried. The group then decided that the KIRPC representative for the Council will be Councilman, Brent Cox with a motion by Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach, seconded by Councilman, Jack Duncan and motion carried. Brent's back up will be Trina Schutter. The back up for Councilman Schoen's back up will be Jack Duncan.

## **Glenda Wallpe – Recorder**

Glenda came before the board to request permission to increase the part time clerical wage from \$14.20 to \$19.00 per hour. She has the funding within her clerical line and former Recorder, Jane Turner, usually covers the office during their absences. Glenda feels that since she is able to perform all of the office functions that the increase is fair. She added that she has the funding available and does not use much of it each year and even with the increase she has sufficient funding available for it. Councilman Schoen asked what the increase for a week would run, it would be \$156.00 approximately. The request to increase the payrate was approved with a motion by Councilwoman, Trina Schutter, seconded by Councilman, Brent Cox and motion carried.

Glenda presented the 2024 ordinance to use the Recorder Perpetuation fund. This is done annually, it is the ordinance, signed affidavit and recorders statement. Councilman, Jack Duncan motioned to approve, second by Councilman, Brent Cox and motion carried.

## **Carole Hoff – Treasurer**

Carole wanted to discuss the investment policy and who should have that policy. Councilman Schoen presented a copy of the one he has and said that since there is a board of finance, so he thinks that they would keep that on record. Carole then asked who makes decisions based off of that policy. Councilwoman Steinmetz asked what kinds of decisions, where it is invested. Councilman Schoen replied that it would be the board of finance and her as the treasurer.

Carole went on to state that she has requested the information via email(s) and that it took multiple attempts. She then shared what was sent to her and asked why he sent the old one and not the updated one. Councilman Schoen replied that he did sign the document in 2018 but he was not president. He said they are going round and round and that he gave her the policy he had and asked what her point of today was. Carole told Councilman Schoen that he holds her bond, and she asked him for something and was not given the correct information for her to be able to do her job.

Councilwoman Glotzbach asked where Carole got the information, she is presenting to which Carole replied, Audrey. Councilwoman Glotzbach asked why she didn't just get the information from her in the first place rather than coming here to put Councilman Schoen in the hot seat. It was then asked what the goal of today was. She would like to accomplish several things today, but she feels that there are things that are going wrong and being hidden, when she needs it to do her job and asked the board if they felt she needed that or not. Councilman Cox stated that he is not saying that but is trying to figure out what

# Benton County Council

January 25, 2024

she is trying to accomplish so they can move forward in a productive manner. Carole stated that Commissioner Berry's name should have never been on the CD's, and it looks like to her that stuff is being hidden from her that is needed to do her job. Councilman Schoen asked if she had the document, she said now she does, but it is no longer needed.

Councilwoman Schutter asked when something is recorded what the process is because they are not together. Auditor Freeland said that the binders in the vault in her office for both ordinances and resolutions are some that were not recorded even back in the day. Councilwoman Schutter says that she feels there should be a file somewhere with all of the information. Auditor Freeland said that aside from recording ordinances she is not involved with the investments but could add something to their SOP's once it is determined who is keeping the file.

Councilman Cox asked Carole what she wanted to see leaving today. She said that she wants to point out that it is very hard to do her job when she is asking for specific information and with everything going on at that time, she could have done something incorrectly without that information. She was surprised to see that it had been updated. After further discussion the topic was closed.

Carole then asked the board about reconsidering the mileage reimbursement rate. The school just recently increased their rate to \$0.67, and the counties has not been updated since 2006. Councilman Cox asked what the average miles driven were and if they had access to the county "pool" vehicles. Auditor Freeland said that they no longer have access to them. Councilwoman Glotzbach stated that when the increase was presented recently it was denied due to the departments having access to them. Unfortunately, due to some issues that that is no longer the case and individuals traveling for conferences and other meetings are required to drive their own vehicles. Councilman Cox asked where the claims are paid from. Auditor Freeland replied that each department has an account line within their budget and then a few other options. Councilwoman, Angie Glotzbach motioned to amend the mileage rate reimbursement to \$0.67 effective with today's date pending county attorneys' approval, seconded by Councilman, Brent Cox and motion carried.

Carole then moved on to discuss whether or not her deputy's position should be non-exempt versus exempt for overtime/comp time. She stated that once a year during her finance board she asks for comp time. She said that she and Auditor Freeland (in fall of 2022) discussed this and was told that her deputy would be getting overtime the following year. Auditor Freeland said that she told her if the council moved everyone except elected officials to an hourly rate. She said since that did not occur, and Auditor Freeland said that no reclassifications occurred to move them too hourly. Carole went on to explain that she contacted FLSA, and they informed her that her deputy is nonexempt and that all deputies should be reviewed. Auditor Freeland said that they are exempt until they hit 40 hours since they are salary the job descriptions are ok, after 40 hours it varies. Auditor Freeland explained how comp time has been awarded and earned in the past. Auditor Freeland went on to say that Carole was told that there were multiple areas that were not in compliance. Carole stated that if someone was to file a formal complaint, and it is determined in favor of the employee the county could have to go back 2 years. Councilwoman Glotzbach asked how often her deputy works over 40 hours. It is not often, and it is only around spring and fall collections. Councilman Schoen said that he feels that they should rely on the county attorney to advise whether or not anything changes need to be made.

Jason Fisher said that the current policies were written after the FLSA came through and that is why the EMS and Sheriff departments are the way they are now as of when he came on in 2011. Auditor Freeland spoke about her first year in office and how the audit resulted in getting everyone placed on a two week behind schedule. Auditor Freeland said that Attorney Ahler was looking into everything further. Carole said she just wants her deputy paid correctly and asked if her deputy was going to be paid comp time or not for this upcoming May season. Commissioner Berry stated that she would need to

# Benton County Council

## January 25, 2024

come before the board and request it during a commissioner's meeting because she had done it in a board of finance meeting, and that they would probably approve comp time hours to the 40-hour mark. Carole asked if he wanted her to move forward with comp time, he replied that is what she was requesting. Berry said under 40 hours will be comp time and over 40 hours will be overtime. Auditor Freeland explained that the time in question is the 7.5 hours between the 32.5 scheduled hours until she hit 40 hours and whether they will be paying that at an hourly rate or will be considered comp time. The topic will be revisited once Attorney Ahler has reviewed it.

### **Jason Fisher – DHS / EMA Director**

Jason started off by officially thanking the board for the raise the board approved.

He recapped 2 hazardous grants he was awarded-

11,460.00 – Meters that were distributed to fire departments and they have all been trained on it

14,825.00 – commodity flow study (Jason will share with the board) and training for up to 5 members to attend training in Baltimore

Jason spoke about being awarded another year for the EMPG salary reimbursement grant for 32,000. The HMEPG grant is where the county receives reimbursement for half of his, Jonathan and up to two part time positions. He received a 45,000.00 with a 5,000 match from the Office of Energy Development. There is a planning grant for up to 25,000 for mitigation plan for the county that was awarded as well. He also applied and was awarded a 25,000-tuition grant from Homeland security for up to 3 paramedics to attend schooling.

Run total for 2023 was 1690. He wanted to let the board know that after the approved budgets and with the increased runs he ran some projections and stated that overtime, holiday pay and fuel lines have him concerned and he will be watching.

The income report for the CAR report shows that they have brought in \$454,552.98, which is up from previous years. He hopes that will continue to increase and he is currently receiving additional from Medicare, but Medicaid does not pay that well.

Jason then spoke briefly about some tax options and wanted to discuss HB1246 which is where Fire territories, but it is also an EMS tax capability in there as well. Whether they are looking to maintain or add a possible additional ambulance to help cover the run volume this is something that the county will want to possibly enact. He covered the current budgets and where the funding currently comes from and then touched on the discussion of the re-establishment of the cumulative funds and state requirements that might be imposed down the road such as two dispatchers per shift. He explained that yes there is down time but in public safety it should not be weighed the same as a typical office staff since it is a life saving position. Councilman Schoen asked when it had to be implemented. Auditor Freeland said for the cumulative funds the public hearings and other requirements are due to the DLGF by May 31 for and effective date of January 1.

### **John Cox – Sheriff**

He received his end of year quality correctional care costs and shared with the board. He showed what charges are absorbed and what all they do on behalf of the county and the savings they offer.

He did a public safety tax worksheet and projection of where he would like to see his department go.

The Sheriff presented a total picture of where the department(s) need to be, where they are currently and what is needed to get there. The goal is to get the departments fully staffed with some additional personnel. He also discussed re-establishing the Cum Jail fund and then if they add the public safety tax