

OWEN COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 15, 2024

Meeting called to order by President Chesser

- Opening prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.
- Roll Call and public sign in.
- Council Members present: Amy Casebeer, Polly Chesser, Verl Keith, Anton Neff, Nick Robertson and Andy Wood.
- Council Members absent: Steve Carrell

Approval of Previous Minutes:

- **Motion:** Nick Robertson moved to approve the minutes for both the regular meeting on September 9 and the meeting on September 30, 2024.
- **Seconded by:** Amy Casebeer.
- **Discussion:**
 - Anton Neff noted corrections were needed in past minutes, such as fixing references to Councilman Robertson on being mistakenly listed as Councilman Robertson/Roberts.
 - Polly Chesser suggested approving the minutes separately due to attendance differences, but it was decided to proceed with a joint approval.
- **Vote:** 4/0 Approved with one abstention Verl Keith.
- **Outcome:** Minutes approved as presented.

Additional Appropriations & Transfers:

- **Motion:** Nick Robertson moved to approve a series of additional appropriations for various departments.
 - **Appropriations Included:**
 - **Highway Department:**
 - \$25,000 for bituminous and hot mix.
 - \$25,000 for stone, gravel, and aggregate.
 - Greg Melton explained the funds were for end-of-year cushioning, as suggested by the auditor.
 - **Sheriff's Department:**
 - \$21,000 for inmate medical expenses.
 - \$1,000 for additional inmate medical expenses.
 - \$2,000 for a copy machine lease.
 - Discussion noted the need to ensure the 2025 budget would adequately cover rising medical costs.
 - **Clerk's Office:**
 - \$1,500 for election supplies.
 - \$637.30 for printing expenses.

- **Motion Seconded by:** Amy Casebeer.
- **Vote:** 5/0 Approved.
- **Outcome:** Appropriations approved.
- **Transfers:**
 - **Motion:** Nick Robertson moved to approve the following transfers:
 - **Coroner's Office:**
 - \$1,000 transferred from the body bags line item to cover additional pay for the deputy coroner.
 - Explanation: Needed to ensure funds for extra coverage during the end-of-year period.
 - **Probation Department:**
 - \$5,183.97 transferred from a pre-trial grant to reimburse project income.
 - **Seconded by:** Amy Casebeer.
 - **Vote:** 5/0 Approved.
 - **Outcome:** Transfers approved.

Riverfront Restoration Project Grant Request:

- **Motion:** Amy Casebeer moved to allocate \$5,000 from the riverboat fund for the Owen County Soil and Water Conservation District's Riverfront Restoration project.
- **Seconded by:** Anton Neff.
- **Discussion:**
 - Tammy Bingham presented the project, detailing that the DNR grant covered 80% of the \$111,270 project cost, leaving a local match of around \$20,000.
 - Tammy requested \$5,000 from the County Council to help meet the match, emphasizing the project's importance to the community.
 - Nick Robertson expressed concerns about using county funds for a project that might be more appropriate for DNR or Army Corps of Engineers funding.
 - Anton Neff clarified the project does not meet the criteria for Army Corps involvement and noted the benefits of keeping costs down by not involving federal agencies.
- **Vote:** 4/0 Approved with one abstention (Nick Robertson).
- **Outcome:** \$5,000 appropriated from the riverboat fund.

Full-Time Court Reporter Position Request:

- **Request:** Judge Kelsey Hanlon requested converting a part-time court reporter position into a full-time role.
- **Discussion:**
 - Judge Hanlon explained that a part-time employee was retiring, and that the workload requires a third full-time position for adequate court operations.
 - Anton Neff provided cost estimates, noting that the switch to full-time would result in a general fund impact of \$16,400, with additional insurance costs managed through the EDIT fund.
 - Nick Robertson inquired whether this change would alleviate comp time issues in the office, to which Judge Hanlon confirmed it would.

- **Motion:** Verl Keith moved to approve advertising for the additional appropriation needed for overlap training before the part-time employee's retirement.
- **Seconded by:** Nick Robertson.
- **Vote:** 5/0 Approved.
- **Outcome:** Request for advertising approved, allowing the court to proceed with recruitment and training.

Appointment to SCCAP Board:

- **Motion:** Nick Robertson moved to appoint Karah Bobeck to the South-Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) Board.
- **Seconded by:** Verl Keith.
- **Discussion:**
 - Anton Neff noted that Karah Bobeck had submitted a letter of intent and resume and expressed interest in representing Owen County on the board.
 - The appointment process was clarified as flexible, allowing either the Council or the Commissioners to make the decision.
- **Vote:** 5/0 approved.
- **Outcome:** Karah Bobeck appointed to the SC CAP board.

Auditor's Office Billing Issue (Postponed):

- **Discussion:** The Council discussed an old bill for temperature monitoring equipment purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic, initially billed to the Sheriff's Department.
 - Sam Hobbs noted that two malfunctioning machines were returned, which could be the source of the billing confusion.
 - Anton Neff suggested the potential use of remaining COVID grant funds or revisiting payment records to determine if the bill was already settled.
- **Motion:** Anton Neff moved to postpone further action until the next meeting to allow time for additional research.
- **Seconded by:** Nick Robertson.
- **Vote:** 5/0 Approved.
- **Outcome:** Decision postponed until the next meeting.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** Nick Robertson moved to adjourn the meeting.
- **Seconded by:** Not specified.
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Outcome:** Meeting adjourned.