

Owen County Board of Commissioners
Minutes-March 22, 2023

Meeting was called to order by President Gary Burton with the Pledge of Allegiance and Opening Prayer given. Members Present: Gary Burton, Bob Curry, and Joel Lowe. Also, attorney Dana Kerr and auditor Sheila Reeves. Public Sign in sheet attached for permanent record.

A motion to approve the minutes from February 22nd, March 6th Regular Meeting, and March 9th Special Meeting was made by Bob Curry; seconded by Joel Lowe. Motion carried 3-0.

A motion to approve Payroll-\$247,964.46 was made by Mr. Lowe; seconded by Mr. Curry. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve Regular Claims-\$424,112.97 was made by Mr. Lowe with noting two discrepancies he would further look into; seconded Mr. Curry. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve Out of Cycle-\$18724.20 was made by Mr. Lowe; seconded by Mr. Curry. Carried 3-0.

Copies of the Payroll, Absence Balances, Monthly LOW Financial Report, Cumulative Docket Summary, and the Commissioners Funds were provided for review.

Old Business

Paycor-Mr. Burton related that they had sent the Paycor Payroll request to Council for funding approval, and it was postponed. They have done further investigating and are going to move forward with Paycor for Payroll, Time Management, HR, and Onboarding and remove the original proposal using ARPA Funds. Attorney Dana Kerr had contacted State Board of Accounts to clarify that Contract Services line item in their Courthouse Fund that already has appropriated funds could be used for the Paycor Contract, it is allowable. He also related that they have received a guaranteed letter from Paycor that if it was not a good fit for Owen County the county could end the contract and part ways. Mr. Burton related he had spoken with the auditor, and she agrees that something has to be done. Ms. Reeves agreed that this has been in discussion for four years and it did go to the council with other possible options. If they are moving forward, she and her staff will do their best to make it work and knowing that going into it is a double manual entry process and that she has been given a second position to help with it as this was new territory for all of us. She reiterated that "if" it wasn't working for any reason that they would listen to her. Mr. Burton added that the timeline for implementation would be 10 weeks. Time Clocks are on a rental basis. He also added that he spoke with three Council and some department heads this week and they agree. Also added by Burton that if LOW wasn't going to cooperate with us in this process that they should be looking into the financial software next. Mr. Lowe related that he had spoke with many and all agreed that something needs to be done; but that there are other options on the table and wants to see more research done. Mr. Burton noted that this has been four years long and that they had looked into other companies and the LOW quote was for time management only, not payroll.

Mr. Burton stated that they had voted on it a month ago and that they are only voting to change the Funding. Ms. Reeves related a couple more things; one was that she needed copies of whatever the letters and agreements were that they were referencing. Second, where were they at with the checking accounts, it had been related to Paycor that they could not touch the county accounts and that Christina had talked about an invoicing process. Mr. Burton added that was part of the implementation process. A motion to pay from contract services and drop the Funding from ARPA was made by Mr. Curry; seconded by Mr. Burton. Motion carried 2-0-1abstention/Lowe.

New Business

DNR Timber Sales letter of award was presented for distribution to County Fire Departments. The amount received for 2023 was \$36,100.74. Ms. Reeves related that Patricksburg Fire Department was not on the list. Cris Lunsford had made contact with DNR to verify their status and they are now up to date. A motion to appropriate \$3008.40 to the departments listed and to include Patricksburg was made by Mr. Curry; seconded by Mr. Lowe. Carried 3-0.

Highway Department-Greg Melton and Chad Walker were present. Mr. Walker distributed folders of information. Little Flock Road pending rain forecast. After the compacting process road, it will be re-paved. Romana Road Project was related that two residents' properties were infringed upon and asking for a solution. Attorney Kerr was asked to look into an already approved contract with a contractor to now do in-house work. A "Call Out Schedule" list for employees was presented for approval for the remainder of 2023. A motion to approve the list was made by Mr. Lowe; seconded by Mr. Curry. Carried 3-0.

Copies of three Road Certification requests were presented. A motion to add Old Porter Ridge Road-.54, Blue Gate Drive-.08 and Wood Pecker Lane.47 to the County Highway inventory was made by Mr. Lowe; seconded by Mr. Curry. Carried 3-0. Noted was the correction to the date and signed by all three with the motion.

He next related the hydraulic pump had gone out in their roller and requested to not get rid of it and build a new one. Mr. Burton said no motion was needed as there was no change in inventory.

Lastly, was concern for the expected incoming storms and high rain totals predicted and that he had crews out preparing for it high water signs etc.

Resident Ann Zier presented a request for the county to take over That Road. Mr. Melton was to go inspect and bring it up to standards with an added motion from Mr. Lowe; seconded by Mr. Curry to adopt as part of county road inventory. Carried 3-0.

Elected Officials/Departments-

EMA Director Jack White began with relating that the final phases of the Hazard Mitigation Plan were being completed and asked to work with Mr. Kerr on adoption process, all agreed.

Secondly, he asked why the EMAC Advisory Board Roster had not been put on the agenda, noting he had submitted the information on time to be on there. The list had been approved overwhelmingly by the LEPC. Mr. Burton said we decided to take it off since they had other issues to discuss with him today and they can deal with it at the next meeting. He also said he had talked with the attorney about the number of people on there and we could get into a situation, in an emergency matter with too many people being on there making good decisions. Mr. White noted that the EMAC does not really have a lot of involvement in a time of a declared emergency. This group provide direction from their particular discipline with requests. He then asked about the positions-civil air patrol in the county, acknowledged, there is not. Mr. Lowe confirmed that two members had left the board (Burch/Reeves) and that he has two individuals qualified to replace them, confirmed yes. Reeves noted that it was due to her job and that she absolutely supports Mr. White and the EMA and LEPC. Attorney noted that there is not a limit to the number of members on the board and a list of qualified members and that the advisory can make recommendations. Mr. White said the list mirrors the LEPC Disciplines. Mr. Burton said he personally does not have a problem with the list. Mr. Curry asked for clarification that the Health Department appointment-Allan McBride was as the PHEP position and not 911, confirmed yes by McBride. A motion to approve the EMAC Roster was made by Mr. Burton; seconded by Mr. Lowe. Carried 3-0.

Next Mr. White asked for clarification on the moving of the Emergency Management Office and the plan with the garage facility. Burton listed several items beginning with the building has been down for 1½ years, RQAW was looking at solutions, Meeting Room and Sidewalk has been determined not to be ADA compliant, receiving grants if not ADA compliant, and pending replacement of the new roof and new wall. They have tried to provide him with plenty of room and he can't operate while the construction work is being done. Also noted was that he had been asked from the Town Richard Lorenz and Jon Stantz how long will the sidewalk be closed. Mr. White asked So was this temporary and he will be allowed access to the meeting room. Burton added that they have given him an adequate building with a basement to operate out of during this time. Cutting costs/expenses at the armory have also been discussed. Jack again asked was this temporary and would he have access to the garage area. Burton related that long term conversation about this move has been to

downsize their obligation to the armory with roughly six thousand dollars already in costs this year. They have a Veterans and Maintenance Office down there and would like to get those shut down to save this county some money and that is their intent. They have moved many offices over the years, he used his old office as an example and feels they have given him room except for parking his truck outside. He noted that the Town has designated the first three parking spaces for this office too, and that he had been asked from the Town Richard Lorenz and Jon Stantz how long will the sidewalk be closed. Daycare operating out of the armory and the sidewalk being closed has caused them concern too and safety for the kids.

Mr. White again asked are you are taking the garage space away from Emergency Management. Burton replied that it may end up going to Maintenance eventually as their long-term plan, but we've not determined that. They must get him moved upfront to get the work done first and then we'll come back and revisit it all. They have the authority as administrative and don't need a vote to move an office. Kerr added that appoint liaison for offices; who ever the Liaison is for EMA would be the one to work with that and however handles for the building liaison. Not all issues have to come to the commissioners. Mr. White's concern is after the building was fixed, he would lose room for a large-scale event and the ability to receive and distribute PPE and supplies. Burton asked for an opportunity to get the building fixed. He is concerned that nobody has come to him and asked about the space necessary to handle/receive load of supplies. Burton asked for an opportunity to get it fixed. Mr. White said convenience and speed are being taken away from me by putting all his stuff in the basement. Lowe related that he has been contacted by many people and it is his belief that this is a valuable department, and he is not hearing an end resolve and he stands strong for him and this is very disconcerting to him. They need to come up with a Plan to keep him effectively doing his job! Sheriff White stated he can't express enough how important this Building is. He used the Baby Shalynn incident as a prime example of having enough room at a facility 24/7 that included multiple agencies working together to solve a murder case. Sheriff White requested for them to provide him with the exact if not better place. Kathleen Lamb asked why if it is not compromised; why was the Health Dept. moved. Burton related that they were doing covid testing outside on the sidewalk with mortar falling. The nurses and public were not protected and shut it down. The Health Department moved its operations. Why has been empty so long? Burton related that quotes were put out and it now being a public works project it must be properly bid out. Mr. Curry asked for him to be patient with them and added that their hands are tied with the power lines which means shutting down everything including the courthouse would have to be shut down. They asked him to bear with them and be patient. Mr. White said he was being patient but concerned with garage space. He asked if they were willing to make a motion today that says they will provide him with adequate space. Burton said they don't need motion; it has been said here in the public meeting. He was told they would find him adequate space to do his job. White asked who determines adequate? Lowe said White should, he's the Department Head. Mr. Lowe added he supports White 100%, and Owen County should be proud of him and that this is top call here in Owen County. Shelley Edwards asked about a partial solution of opening doorway back up that had been put up to provide safety from health department and covid testing. Barron Barnett referenced Sheriff comments and agreed if it ever is needed; it is there. Andy Wood-Liaison related there is a lot of stakeholders here and it is his recommendation meeting and so all should be involved. Kerr added that a group could advise on the needs. Burton stated it is a Temporary move first, and then move forward. White said it was conveyed to him that maintenance was to take over the garage and he was given two weeks to move upfront. Curry disagrees with his comment. Curry did say that they he had two weeks to move upfront. Biggest thing is that we have this right and control the building as commissioners. We do control the move and if you want to fight us; and to Mr. White he said-- What you are saying--you are more powerful than us? Burton reviewed what they have agreed is to repair the building, have any meetings to discuss the situation, related they were meeting at EMS for now and while getting the building fixed and that he has the whole front part. White is concerned about the access

to garage space and south room-EOC. Burton asked why does he need it and added if an emergency during temporary move they will accommodate him? Mr. White says it is not a meeting room—it is the EOC and in an event is needed. He will be accommodated if it is needed. Polly Chesser asked about checking with the attorney about the advisory committee. She understands that the commissioners can do this, but they want to make sure that he gets to go back into that space. This is for an emergency and the Safety of the Public. Burton asked what if they find him a better location, Polly said Jack needed to be part of the process. Joe Frye related that there is a big difference in a Meeting Room versus and EOC and that what Jack currently has is a gold mine. He was concerned with the upcoming weather-related concerns and the need for an EOC. Burton assured him that Jack will have accommodations. Sam Hobbs first stated he stands behind Sheriff Whites comments. He then asked why it is taking so long to fix the building and listed prior issues that had been given. Burton related that survey and constructional engineering is pending to move forward. Lowe motioned to form a EMAC board to continue, Burton says they already have that board established. Lunsford asked who determines adequate (used prior office as an inadequate example) and that Jack has worked magic and created the EOC on a shoestring and hates to see them take a step backwards. Mr. White asked if any appetite for all what he is asking to open that access to the back garage and condense his area but still have access to the garage and his stuff. Burton said that was possible but wanted to make sure his stuff is secure during this process. Mr. Burton will make sure he has access and a key to the padlock. What date, his phone, IT Computer and all that stuff is in motion to have up there; the sooner the Sheriff can help him is better.

Mr. Lowe introduced Jamie Jo Lowder and asked for her to introduce a program she has been given an opportunity to implement called CREW and mental health concerns. She is to pilot education with County Employees April 5th-4:15pm. Three areas are part of; but is starting with work life balance. Concern with the time being after 4pm and employees after hours. Mr. Melton and Ms. Lamb both agreed with the program but concerned with the hours presented. Lowe supports and is very passionate about it. Kerr said it could be accepted as a “Training Program” and authorized department to attend/participate for one hour training. Burton made the motion to accept this program; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0. She is to reach out to Departments again and get it implemented.

No additional Auditor or Commissioners Comments were made.
A motion to adjourn was made by Burton; seconded by Lowe.