

Owen County Council  
Minutes-April 9, 2024

Meeting was called to order by President Polly Chesser.

Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Present: Polly Chesser, Verl Keith, Amy Casebeer, Nick Robertson, Steve Carrell, Andy Wood, and Anton Neff. Also present, auditor Sheila Reeves.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Carrell; seconded by Wood. Carried 7-0.

A copy of the monthly LOW Financial Report was provided for review.

Public Hearing-Additional Appropriations was opened by Chesser.

A motion to approve the following appropriations: General Fund#1000-232 \$120.00 to Interpreter 1000-232-38000, Firearms Fund#1156-Cash \$12000.00 to Equipment 1156-20700, \$2000.00 to Training 1156-32900, \$6000.00 to Supplies 1156-20100 PSAP-Sheriff Fund#1170-Cash \$30000.00 to Contract 1170-37000 was made by Wood; seconded by Carrell. Carried 6-1/Neff due to the lack of information of the Central Square \$30000 Invoice. Discussion on looking at splitting the PSAP Contract Services between all departments using the system will be determined in moving forward. Hearing closed.

Code Enforcement Officer-

Request given by Gary Burton was for a FT-Code Enforcement/Building Inspector and PT Assistant.

Copies for current and prior years of Building Permit/Complaint statistics was provided for review.

A general discussion regarding funding sources, inspector safety, community perception, community affordability, and legal was given. Seed money for the position could come from the Storage Unit Fund, concern that the units might go away due to pending jail project would then not have monies to assist. Safety without law enforcement, and violations would be considered civil issues filed by the attorney for fees and fines imposed by the inspector/ordinance. A motion to postpone and schedule a joint meeting with the courts/prosecutor was made by Robertson; seconded by Wood. The motion was amended by Robertson to include a public meeting with all stakeholders. Motion carried 7-0.

Jail Project-A motion to call for a joint meeting with the Commissioners on April 22<sup>nd</sup> @6pm was made by Neff, seconded by Carrell. Carried 7-0.

Hamilton Center tabled until next meeting.

911 Radio Proposal

Director Cherie Anderson and EMS Cris Lunsford presented a proposal to provide a Countywide Communications and Paging solution that would provide enhanced two-way radio and voice paging coverage. An overview of the current analog system was discussed and the need to upgrade to digital. An estimated cost of \$300000 for the system and another \$250000 for handhelds and truck mounts was given. Council members discussed the \$342000 in ARPA Funds that were given to them by the Commissioners for project(s). A motion made by Neff, seconded by Carrell to use the ARPA funds for this project. Carried 7-0.

Next Anderson presented Job Descriptions for IDACS & Assistant IDACS Coordinator to be compliant and they will be filled with current employees. This would increase the base compensation component for the Assistant Coordinator Salary going from \$17.089 to \$17.570 an hour.

A motion was made by Wood, seconded by Carrell to approve the job descriptions and position raise. Carried 7-0.

Economic Development-Marce King provided copies of a request for a Letter of Support to explore the possibility of joining in an Economic Development District with Monroe and Brown Counties that could provide a minimum of \$17000 a year to Owen County. A motion was made by Neff to support just a door-opener; seconded by Casebeer. Motion failed with a vote of 2 for Neff, Casebeer and 5-against/Wood, Chesser, Keith, Robertson, and Carrell. Members wanted to review and look at other counties before deciding.

Highway-Greg Melton presented two transfers for corrections from Fund#1173-\$114060 and Fund#1176 for \$114783.70. A motion to approve was made by Wood; seconded by Keith. Carried 7-0. Melton wanted to give an overview of a current Historical Bridge-#61 Millcreek and Tower Road that needs replaced at an estimated cost of \$3 million dollars. Funding options were to be further reviewed with Keith and Robertson to join a committee.

Veterans Service Officer Salary was requested to be adjusted with the part-time position salary as it is higher. A motion to approve Service Officer-\$14.26 and Part-time to \$13.978 was made by Wood; seconded by Keith. Carried 7-0.

Soil & Water Director-Tamara Bingham provided a letter relating to the fact that she had received \$8000 from an AFR Grant. A motion was made by Neff, seconded by Robertson, to advertise for the associated grant fund request at the next meeting for the Contract Services Line Item for \$8000. Carried 7-0.

ARPA Funds-already discussed and approved in the 911 Radio request.

An Additional Appropriation Request was presented from the General Fund 1000-232 to 1000-38000 in the amount of \$240.00. A motion to approve advertising for a public hearing was made by Neff, seconded by Robertson. Motion carried 7-0.

A motion to approve all Salary Confirmations and allow Chesser to sign was made by Neff, seconded by Robertson. Carried 7-0.

No Elected Official or Department Head comments were made.

Public Comments-

Jeff Marks concern with safety of enforcement officer.

Barron Barnett presented a letter against the Economic Development District, no such thing as free money.

Joe Frye spoke about the code enforcement officer and support for the Economic Development District. Norm Warner, Bill Pursell, and Council members briefly re-discussed the Enforcement Officer position again with some of the same concerns for safety, clean-up, and animal enforcement.

No further discussion from auditor or council members was given.

A motion to adjourn was made by Carrell.