

REGULAR MEETING RUSH COUNTY COUNCIL June 12, 2024

The Rush County Council met for the regular Rush County Council meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. with County Council Members Charlie Smith, Denny Corn, Amy Grocox, Janet Kile, Kyle Gardner, Carl Harcourt and Scott Barnes present. Auditor, Tammy Justice and County Attorney Leigh Morning were also present.

Councilman Charlie Smith called the Regular Session to order at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner roll call was called at 9:00 am with Ron Jarman and Kenny Aulbach present.

Minutes of the May 8, 2024, Regular Session meeting was presented. Denny Corn made the motion to approve the minutes. Seconded by Amy Grocox. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Commissioner Kenny Aulbach left the meeting at 9:04 am and returned at 9:12 am.

HIGHWAY

- Superintendent Jerry Sitton requested approval from the Council to apply for the CCMG 2024-2 grant in the amount of \$1,500,000.00 with a county match of \$375,000.00. The purpose of the grant is to hot mix resurface 5 miles of 900 W. from 900 N. to 1200 N. and 100 N. to US 52. Scott Barnes moved to apply for the CCMG 2024-2 grant. Seconded by Kyle Gardner. All were in favor. Motion carried.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Chuck Kemker requested approval from the Council to transfer funds from 8113.30002.00000.0000 Travel to 8113.20010.00000.0000 Supplies in the amount of \$1,165.35 and from 8113.30005.00000.0000 Misc. Services to 8113.20010.00000.0000 Supplies in the amount of \$468.27. Denny Corn made a motion to approve the transfer. Seconded by Amy Grocox. All were in favor. Motion carried.

RECORDER

- Auditor Tammy Justice for Recorder Debbie Richardson requested approval from the Council to advertise for an additional appropriation for fund 1189 Recorder Records in the amount of \$50,000.00. Janet Kile moved to advertise for the additional appropriation. Seconded by Carl Harcourt. All were in favor. Motion carried. Councilman Charlie Smith inquired how the Commissioners could sign a contract without proper funding. County Attorney Leigh Morning stated if the funding was not approved, the contract would be voided.

COURT SERVICES

- Director Ashley Stevens requested approval from the Council to apply for the Justice Partners Addictions Response Grant in the amount of \$32,000.00 with no county match. The purpose of the grant is to provide financial

assistance to local jurisdictions using a Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) approach to enhance collaborative partnerships between the local criminal justice system and behavioral health care providers to address opioid use disorders/substance use disorders. Scott Barnes moved to approve applying for the Justice Partners Addictions Response Grant. Seconded by Kyle Gardner. All were in favor. Motion carried.

ARPA

- Auditor Tammy Justice advised the Council that the remaining ARPA funds must be obligated and have an invoice to be compliant, an ordinance will not be sufficient. Councilman Scott Barnes commended the Commissioners, Council and Auditor for the balance of One (1) Million still left in that fund. Commissioner Ron Jarman stated a determination on fiber would not be made until September or October. Councilman Scott Barnes recommended having a third option to fall back on, but the ARPA committee would have to bring a recommendation to the Council. Human Resource Director Jodi Harr advised they would call an ARPA committee meeting and report back to the Council.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Director Jodi Harr updated the Council regarding open enrollment for health insurance.
- Director Jodi Harr advised the Council that the Liability Insurance carrier has required the county to have and document Workforce Harassment Training and Policies. Harr advised the Council that Workforce Harassment and FMLA training is scheduled for June 26, 2024, at 10:30 am in the assembly room.
- Director Jodi Harr advised the Council she has been working with the Open Resource Center to offer Excel spreadsheet training for county employees. Harr advised she has the funds in her budget to cover training of 20 employees for four (4) weeks at one (1) hour per week training.
- Director Jodi Harr updated the Council regarding the part-time hourly wage stating the personnel handbook says there are to be three (3) employee advisory appointments on the personnel committee. The Commissioners have requested names of interested individuals and they will make the appointment at their June 17, 2024, meeting. Harr advised she has emailed her HR Resource Group and Rush County department heads asking for their input.
- Director Jodi Harr discussed with the Council Clerk Angie Buckley's wages for 2025 when she is no longer an elected official. Discussion was held. Amy Grocox made a motion when there is a change in employment, for any elected official, or exempt or non-exempt employee, the person will be paid according to the job classification schedule. Seconded by Scott Barnes. All were in favor. Motion carried.
- Director Jodi Harr updated the Council regarding a challenge to the Department of Labors decision to raise wages for exempt employees.

SHERIFF

- Sheriff Allan Rice advised the Council that there are issues with One America who is trustee for the sheriff retirement. Sheriff Rice stated he would hopefully have additional information to bring to the Council at a later date.

BELLFLOWER SOLAR

- Auditor Tammy Justice presented the Council with Form CF-1 and Form UD-ERA for approval. Auditor Justice advised the Council Bellflower had invested more money than expected. Kyle Gardner moved to approve the CF-1 for Bellflower. Seconded by Denny Corn. All were in favor. Motion carried.

MISC

- Jon York, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club gave a presentation to the Council. York stated that Rush County used to give \$30,000.00 a year to the Boys & Girls Club and they would like to be considered again at budget time for a yearly donation. Councilman Charlie Smith asked York how the Love Community Center would impact the Boys & Girls Club. York stated the Boys & Girls Club would service a different group of people.
- Councilman Charlie Smith advised the Council that HB 1328 states The County fiscal body may establish a salary schedule that includes a stipend up to \$2,500.00 to be paid to the Auditor and Clerk. Smith stated he was not for the stipend since the Auditor and Clerks wages were higher than other elected officials, and the Auditor was given an Auditor Assistant which no other Auditor had. Councilwoman Janet Kile inquired if the HB was stated as “may” or “shall”. Councilman Denny Corn agreed with Councilman Smith. Auditor Tammy Justice advised the Auditor’s Association would like to hear from Auditor’s on what their respective Council’s decision is regarding the stipend and that the wording in the HB could change from “may” to “shall” in the coming years.
- Councilman Charlie Smith discussed the sheriff’s salary of \$93,000.00, stating it was budgeted at the higher amount in case a raise was given by the state mid-year. Councilman Scott Barnes inquired as to if the contract or wage was the issue. It was stated there has not been a signed contract by the sheriff for two (2) years now. Sheriff Allan Rice spoke as to why he had not signed a contract stating he believes as a second term sheriff he should not be making the state minimum. County Attorney Leigh Morning advised the Council that the sheriff’s salary must remain at \$93,000.00 for the year 2024. Councilman Denny Corn asked the sheriff if he will ever sign a contract. Sheriff Rice stated he would be glad to negotiate.
- County Attorney Leigh Morning advised the Council the DLGF are dragging their feet regarding the LIT rate for the volunteer fire departments stating that hopefully the public hearing can be held at the July council meeting.
- Commissioner Ron Jarman advised the Council there is approximately \$536,000.00 left over from the courthouse roof bond and inquired if the remaining funds could be utilized for replacement windows for the courthouse since the minutes reflected the bond money could be used for exterior maintenance. Discussion was held. Kyle Gardner made a motion to use the remaining funds for courthouse renovations. Seconded by Carl Harcourt. All were in favor. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Kenny Aulbach inquired as to what the Council’s opinion was regarding the Senior Center moving to the Love Community Center. Councilwoman Janet Kile stated her opinion is for them to stay at the current location and she worry’s the community center will not be as efficient for the seniors who frequent the Senior Center.

- Councilman Kyle Gardner inquired if the County employs any remote workers. HR Director Jodi Harr and the present Commissioners advised we did not.
- Councilman Kyle Gardner advised the Council he had received several comments from citizens noticing county passenger vehicles being used after working hours for personal use.

Motion to adjourn was made by Amy Grocox. Seconded by Carl Harcourt. All were in favor. Motion carried.

/Charles Smith/
Charles Smith, Chairman

/Scott Barnes/
Scott Barnes

/Denny Corn/
Denny Corn

/Janet Kile/
Janet Kile

/Kyle Gardner/
Kyle Gardner

/Carl Harcourt/
Carl Harcourt

/Amy Grocox/
Amy Grocox

ATTEST:

/Tammy Justice/
Tammy Justice, Auditor