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WASHINGTON COUNTY

**MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON COUNTY QUORUM COURT**

Tuesday, November 17, 2015
5:30 p.m.
Washington County Quorum Court Room

- 783.1 The Washington County Quorum Court met in special session on Tuesday, November 17, 2015. The meeting was called to order by Judge Marilyn Edwards. She stated that the purpose of this meeting was to continue working on items pertaining to the 2016 budget process.
- 783.2 J. Patterson led the Quorum Court in prayer and in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 783.3 MEMBERS PRESENT: Daniel Balls, Harvey Bowman, Rick Cochran, Robert Dennis, Lisa Ecke, Ann Harbison, Sharon Lloyd, Tom Lundstrum, Eva Madison, Sue Madison, Joel Maxwell, Gary McHenry, Joe Patterson, Butch Pond, and Bill Ussery.
- 783.4 OTHERS PRESENT: County Judge Marilyn Edwards, Chief of Staff George Butler, Treasurer Bobby Hill, Comptroller Cheryl Bolinger; Interested Citizens; and Members of the Press.
- 783.5 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Judge Edwards asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.
- 783.6 **S. Lloyd made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. R. Cochran seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The agenda was adopted as presented.**
- 783.7 REVIEW 2016 BUDGET REQUESTS: Judge Edwards stated that the budgets of the Election Commission, Ozark Regional Transit, and IT Department were requested to be reviewed at last night's meeting.
- 783.8 R. Cochran stated at the November 16th meeting, the Court was talking about the amount expended for voting equipment, understanding a few of the JPs had spoken to people at the Election Commission and came away with the feeling that this was not the basic need for the year, but the best situation. The Court discussed if there was anything that everyone felt could be trimmed that does not drastically affect anybody, and the Election Commission came up. He addressed the Election Commission's small equipment line item of \$420,000 requested for the budget and asked what new equipment would be necessary to purchase for the county while keeping it financially on track. Thereafter, he stated hopefully over the next two years, the Election Commission would get that equipment and for the next general Presidential election, the citizens of Washington County

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would be able to go to the vote centers. He noted that he likes this progressive way to do it, but it comes with a cost.

- 784.1 Renee Oelschlaeger with the Election Commission addressed the Quorum Court stating that she was given some reports about the discussion at last night's meeting and spoke to T. Lundstrum today. She explained that unfortunately when you are at events, sometimes conversations get truncated and things get lost in that conversation and what T. Lundstrum understood from her is not what she said. She did thank T. Lundstrum for his dissenting vote simply, because he was standing on conviction and it takes a lot of courage to stand against everyone else and be the one dissenting vote. She stated she is the one who did not communicate properly with T. Lundstrum and takes on that responsibility herself. Ms. Oelschlaeger reported telling T. Lundstrum that she understands it is a big amount of money, but it is what the Election Commission needs as the bottom line. She pointed out that she is in a department that is as tight as it can possibly be and does everything possible to make sure that every dollar is spent in a way that is responsible to the citizens of Washington County. She further reported that it was regrettable that the impression was given that the office was not unanimous on this decision or there was maybe some uncertainty about what had been presented to the Quorum Court as the need. She stated that there are very few things that are disagreed on at the Election Commission, because this is not a democrat or republican issue; it is the citizens of Washington County that the Election Commission serves. They are mandated to serve the people of Washington County and provide them with efficient and functioning elections.
- 784.2 Ms. Oelschlaeger stated that there was something said about the Election Commission Commissioners and staff that was not complimentary, but she noted that the Court will not find a better staff than the one it has. She explained that the Commission guides the staff; the staff implements procedures; and the Election Commission has a great staff.
- 784.3 Ms. Oelschlaeger specifically addressed R. Cochran's question about how much the Election Commission needs, stating that it did not submit a penny more than what was thought to be necessary and since then, have discovered that it may not be all that is needed. She urged the Court to stand behind the previous approval of the Election Commission budget as presented.
- 784.4 R. Cochran stated that his notes show that in 2006, the Election Commission has 171 automated voting machines; and Jennifer Price

would be able to go to the vote centers. He noted that he likes this reported in 2006, 165 touch screens and three 650's to count the paper ballots were purchased. She noted that she came back to the Quorum Court in 2010 to ask for 12 additional machines at a cost of less than \$25,000 and hoped to get new voting equipment; however, by 2010 the voting equipment was already outdated and she could only purchase used equipment. She stated that she has only come to the Quorum Court once to ask for additional voting equipment and her office currently has 171 automated voting machines.

785.1 R. Cochran stated in the Election Commission's budget request for 2016, she requested 324 of these units and asked why she needed these when she was okay with 171 automated voting machines; to which J. Price explained that she wants to move away from a paper based ballot system. She reported in 2012 the Election Commission spent \$75,000 on paper ballots alone and hopes to transition to an electronic voting base where they do not throw away unused ballots or have to guess how many ballots for a particular precinct she has to order to meet the needs on Election Day. She stated that purchasing the 324 automated voting machines will save the County money in the long run. She explained how she came to that number by looking at the number of people who actually vote on Election Day and running a percentage of 200 based on each machine. She stated in order for the Election Commission to move forward with all electronics, she made the decision to only purchase one of the DS850's, which costs \$115,000, because ideally that machine will only be counting early votes and absentee ballots. 90% of the ballots cast will be on the touch screens. She stated if the Election Commission cannot transition to the 324 touch screens that it needs, then it would in essence cause her office to actually need two of the DS850's at \$115,000 each, because now it would be relying on paper ballots more than anticipated. She reiterated that by delaying the full implementation of the \$420,000 in the long run will cost the Quorum Court more money.

785.2 R. Cochran asked whether he would be able to do a paper ballot on Election Day; to which J. Price responded that the goal is that he will not. R. Cochran stated that this will make his mother very mad. J. Price stated that the Election Commission is offering voting on paper ballots during early voting in the County Clerk's Office and it will have a limited number of paper ballots at the polls on Election Day for Provisionals. She reported seeing with the September 8th Election that in the City of Fayetteville only 32 people casted a vote on a paper ballot out of more than 10,000 votes. She stated she did not receive one phone call from a voter complaining that he or she could not cast a paper ballot but received many

would be able to go to the vote centers. He noted that he likes this compliments that he or she was able to vote at the closest location.

- 786.1 E. Madison stated she had recalled the additional expense if the Election Commission did delay the implementation. She stated it seems to her that the Commission is trying to be ready for a Presidential year and if delayed, it would not be able to do the voting centers for the Presidential Election next year. She stated that if it is done piece meal, then the commission would have to stick with the way it is currently doing things and then implement the voting centers at some later time. It seems to her that if the commission is trying to make it easier to vote, then it would be done on the Election Day with the biggest turnout. J. Price stated in 2016, which will be the Presidential Election year; an estimate of what the voter registration numbers will be at is 120,000, as they are currently at 117,000 registered voters. If Washington County has a 70% voter turnout, that is well over 80,000 people showing up at the polls on Election Day to vote, which is the same amount of registered voters that it had back in 2006 when the Commission first received its voting equipment. The Commission has certainly exceeded what it has done in 2006, which is why it has to ask for the \$420,000. She noted when the state appropriated the funding; it looked at the Election Commission's 2006 numbers and did not have any credit for the growth it has seen in Washington County.
- 786.2 E. Madison stated as the sponsor of the Voting Center ordinance that is up for tomorrow, the Election Commission obviously needs this money and has her full support. She stated if it was to somehow piece meal this money, it is not like the Commission is going to avoid spending it. It just delays the purchase into another year and likely next year's budget, so this is not so much a cost savings, but rather a cost referral. In fact with the additional DS850, it would be more expensive. J. Price stated overall without the full funding with the additional DS850, the commission is looking at needing an additional \$522,000, because by trading in one of the DS850's, it allows her to negotiate and get more touch screens. However, if she has to purchase two, that lessens the total number of touch screens that she can get. She stated she originally requested 81 from the Quorum Court and now that bumps the number up to 105. E. Madison noted that this is an expenditure that benefits every citizen in the county, cities and unincorporated parts of the county.
- 786.3 County Attorney Steve Zega stated that the Election Commission could prove its budget and the burden then would be on those who want to do

something else; so anyone who wants to change the budget needs to come up and speak to the Quorum Court at this time.

- 787.1 A. Harbison stated that she supports the money that the Court has already approved for the Election Commission and as voting is one of the most important things that citizens do, she thinks it would be counterproductive in trying to piece-meal this.
- 787.2 R. Dennis asked if the municipalities and cities pay for the use of these machines when they have elections; to which J. Price responded for a special election, they are billed for the cost of the poll workers, paper ballots, and the RTL paper that goes into the touch screens. With regards to the General Election, the county is responsible for one-half of the cost and then the cities, based on a percentage of votes cast, pay for the remaining part of that. She stated that her department also returns money back to the County by getting funding for the primary, and billing the Special Elections. The County receives well over \$350,000 for the elections that are held. J. Price reported that from the September 8th Election that the County just had, she billed the City of Fayetteville's cost to \$40,000, which is for the actual cost and not for use of the machines. In response to a question from R. Dennis whether there would be a cost included in using the machines, especially as the Commission goes forward; J. Price stated that her department administers the elections, so there is not a use of the machines. She stated she does not believe that she can legally charge a fee to the cities based on the machines to recoup costs that the county is spending.
- 787.3 County Attorney Steve Zega stated that generally speaking, for the County to charge, especially the cities within the county, there has to be a specific statutory authority or Legislative enactment in order to do this. He noted that elections basically fall to the county to administer and also to the State as the overall administrator at the Secretary of State's Office. Therefore, no matter what the election is, the Election Commission will count the ballots here. If there is a Special Election for a Lincoln Alderman, the Election Commission is counting the ballots in Fayetteville, Washington County. While Lincoln would pay the actual cost for that, it does not pay what amount to machine rent, because the Election Commission is not statutorily authorized to charge for it. He stated that the Commission is statutorily authorized to charge the direct cost for Special City Elections for administering the Special City Election or School Board Election. Further, there is a direct cost in owning these machines and that falls to the County.

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- 788.1 Election Commission Commissioner Bill Ackerman stated this is an unusual situation that the Commission is coming to the County Quorum Court to ask for funds to purchase this equipment, noting that ten years ago the State paid for the cost of equipment. This year it did not, but instead allocated \$30 million to be divided between 75 counties. He stated that not all counties are equal and Washington County was shorted \$420,000 and the need to purchase the equipment required to do the job that the Commission has been mandated to do. He stated consequently, this is the first time in anyone's time serving on the court, that the Election Commission has come for money for equipment. He stated that the County cannot charge the constituency, cities, and communities a fee for using the equipment, because there is no law saying that it can do that. The county is now in a position to fund a part of the process for the elections in order to get it up to speed. He further noted that the Commission is only coming up to current necessary needs for equipment and there is no margin in the process for the future growth in the county. The Election Commission is looking at an acquisition that will last it 10-15 years. He stated the saving grace is that this equipment can be updated while the old equipment could not be and as it grows, it may have to come back to the county and ask for help to serve the increased growth in voting population accruing in Northwest Arkansas. He stated that the Court is not aware of all the internal discussions going on between his office, the Secretary of State, and Governor's Office trying to get budgeting needs met, and when it is basing its contribution to the 2006 numbers, that leaves the Commission ten years behind the curve. This is because the County is in the mix.
- 788.2 H. Bowman stated that the Election Commission is making a very compelling case for this budget and asked if it anticipates coming back next year, then what kind of request would it have for equipment. J. Price responded that 2016 is the Presidential year with no incumbent running, an expected 70% voter turnout, plus the 80,000 or more ballot cast on Election Day, so that is the year that the equipment will be needed. She stated that 2018 will be for the Governor's race, so the Commission will not be coming back to the County for the next five years. J. Price further explained that there is no update for the equipment that the County currently has and there are certain parts of that equipment that you cannot order anymore; however, she stated that the new equipment and software can be updated. She stated when she gets the 324 express votes that is what she needs to go to almost a paperless election and that would not necessitate the Commission buying the extra DS850; however, if 60% of the cast ballots on Election Day are expected to be paper, then the Commission will need a second machine to count those paper ballots.

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She recalled in 2012 for the Presidential Election, the commission had a two-page ballot and had three 650's running at that time. The ladies who were running the machines started at 8:30 a.m. and did not end until well after 2:00 a.m. and the Commission does not want to find itself in that situation. Especially if it will only have one counting machine that is a single point of failure. She stated that the DS850 will run with the new equipment and can be updated as well.

- 789.1 In response to a question from H. Bowman regarding 90% of voting taking place on the day of the election leaving 10% out there voting early and absentee ballots, J. Price stated that would be paper ballots. She stated the Commission is looking at 40% early voting, but if focusing on a paper based election, then most of the ballots will be cast on paper. He asked about the savings if the County only had one week of early voting instead of two weeks; to which J. Price responded that the County Clerk's Office is mandated to be open for the two weeks for early voting and it is her office where the paper ballots have been and traditionally will be. She noted when talking about the 2016 Election and an expected 80,000 plus voters, the Commission wants people to vote early because regardless of how many poll workers there are and the equipment it has, there will be unprecedented long lines. She stated that she sees an ebb and flow with early voting at the various polling places that are maintained for consistency as far as operating hours.
- 789.2 T. Lundstrum stated that part of his problem with this whole thing has been the process; a year or so ago the Commission added more voting sites and then needed more poll workers and machines. His opinion is that the State could cut some of this expense if it would just slow some of this down. He stated that \$420,000 is a lot of money when the County has departments whose whole budget has been turned down and reduced; the Court is giving a bonus to employees this year instead of a raise, but will spend \$420,000 on voting equipment.
- 789.3 B. Ackerman stated being on the Election Commission has been a new experience for him, but all of its problems come from the Legislature and the Secretary of State's Office. He stated that the Court has to deal with the constituents of Washington County and gets thrown in the middle with the responsibility, but with very little oversight, which is a bad scenario. He stated that everyone has a job to do that is mandated outside of the Election Commission and Quorum Court's control. The commission has no control over the growth of the voter population in Northwest Arkansas, which has been increasing over the last ten years. He pointed out the only time the Election Commission comes to the Quorum Court is when

the State says that it must get something approved by the County's Quorum Court to move forward. The Election Commission works very closely to its budget; it has no reason to have excess dollars anywhere since J. Price only budgets what is needed. He noted that when the County gets money back from the commission, it is because it has charged fees to the cities that it holds special elections for. He stated the budget changes every two years and this is the first year since 2010 that the Quorum Court has been asked to fund equipment.

- 790.1 B. Ackerman stated that the Election Commission is there to do a job that it is mandated to do and that is to work with the County in the best way it can and as efficiently as possible. Its operation is truly insignificant when it comes to the operation of the County and that is by design. He stated that the Commission is antiquated in the process at this time. He realizes \$420,000 is a lot of money, but he knows that the Court has gone over this budget with a fine-toothed comb and sharp pencil; and if the Election Commission cannot get it to this degree, then it will not function. He noted if the Commission cannot get this equipment approved at this time, it will cost the County about \$180,000 extra by delaying the approval of its budget as presented; and that still does not get rid of the \$420,000 obligation.
- 790.2 T. Lundstrum stated that he has a little experience with the Election Commission during his nine years on the Quorum Court; his son served on it for about 20 years. He stated when the Commission increases the number of polling places; it also increases the number of poll workers and equipment. This is increasing what it costs the County to run the polling places. He stated he has a problem with the State dumping this stuff on the County, and the Court needs to work harder on the Legislature to get some laws passed and correct some of this. He appreciates the good job that the Election Commission has always done.
- 790.3 H. Bowman stated that he believes the Election Commission has made a strong case in support of their budget as presented.
- 790.4 J. Patterson stated that he has been on the Quorum Court for 13 years and this is one of the things that come along that puts the Court in a position that it does not like to be in. He stated the 2016 election will be the most expensive election the County has ever had and it will be paid for out of the taxpayer's money. The County is operating with a smaller percentage of tax money, so somewhere there will have to be some changes made. He thanked the Commission for what it does and will continue to support the budget as presented.

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- 791.1 Judge Edwards noted that she handled elections for 26 years and when she first started, she wrote the votes in a book. She has since watched a lot of progressive growth and for the County to have 80,000 people voting in 2016 is an absolute awesome problem to have. She stated that the Court approved the Election Commission budget earlier and she does not believe it needs to take another vote.
- 791.2 R. Cochran thanked the Election Commission for coming back in tonight as it did refresh the Court's memories and he believes the budget will stand as it was originally approved.
- 791.3 T. Lundstrum stated that Ozark Regional Transit (ORT) has been asked to return to discuss its budget. He reported a few years ago the County was giving \$25,000 a year to ORT. When the ½ cent sales tax passed statewide, the amount increased to \$120,000 and now is at \$123,000. He would personally like to see the amount reduced back to the \$25,000 that the County originally gave ORT.
- 791.4 E. Madison stated she wants to speak strongly in favor of the ORT budget and once the ½ cent sales tax money started coming to the county, she was the one who proposed using this money. ORT was able to dedicate a route out into rural parts of the county as a result of this funding. She stated if the County was to reduce funding to the amount suggested, the route would be gone.
- 791.5 Joel Gardner, Executive Director of Ozark Regional Transit, addressed the Quorum Court stating that without the \$122,970 allocated through the Quorum Court, which is matched with another \$25,000 from Lincoln, Prairie Grove, Farmington, Greenland and West Fork, the rural route would be gone starting January 1st. He also stated that the associated demand response and para-transit, which are the smaller vehicles that run throughout the county to help people with disabilities, is also run with these funds and they too would be diminished significantly. He stated that the cost of running the demand response is 4-5 times higher than it is the fixed route, because it has more people in bulk; even though it is a larger vehicle with lower gas mileage. He stated if ORT goes back to the smaller vehicles then there is no precedent set on who gets priority because it will lose the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ¾ mile corridor, which gets preferential treatment to people with disabilities. It will be on a first come, first serve basis and ORT will start setting itself back a good number of years on how it is performing transportation in Northwest Arkansas. He noted that education and employment are the biggest things that riders are using ORT for.

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- 792.1 E. Madison noted that the sales tax was passed in 2012; and with some controversy, a ¼ cent sales tax was put on the ballot in May of that year that would have been dedicated to transit. However, it did not pass. She stated that part of the reason people opposed the tax was because in November of that year the ½ cent statewide sales tax was on the ballot, which was for more general transportation purposes. The Northwest Council came to the Quorum Court and asked it to do the ½ cent sales tax with the promise to support ORT in having a small part of that money go to transit, and this tax was passed. The County put its proceeds from that sales tax toward transit. She stated that the Court talks often about economic development, and having transit options is very critical for economic development. If the Court is ever hopeful for truly being a region of economic development with companies wanting to locate here, then there has to be a public transit option. She urged the court to look at the grand scheme of things while understanding that this is a small amount of money and part of a sales tax that transit was one of the dedicated purposes for. She also pointed out that this has an impact on citizens in the cities that the Court does not always have an opportunity to provide a direct impact to. She stated that she is fully supportive of the ORT budget as presented and previously approved.
- 792.2 L. Ecke concurred with E. Madison stating that besides this transit system benefiting people who have no other way to get to school or their jobs, she sees our veterans, the elderly, the disabled, and the mentally handicapped going to work at Lifestyles using this transit service.
- 792.3 T. Lundstrum stated it would be a little easier for him to support this transit service if it was going south into the unincorporated portion of the county. He noted that this transit service runs through Prairie Grove, Lincoln, Farmington, the south portion of Fayetteville, Greenland and West Fork; and he would like to see these cities pay more than \$25,000 for it since they are the ones getting the most benefit from it. He stated that he believes mass transit is a good thing where the usage is sufficient to support it, but he watches these ORT buses closely and believes that they are near empty every time he sees them.
- 792.4 J. Gardner responded to T. Lundstrum stating that he has heard the argument about empty buses and concurs that there are times when buses will be empty, but ORT still needs to maintain the service so that when the times do come up, it is ready to serve. He compared it to fire departments and police departments that at times of the day are not functional and are not being called out to service. He stated that this is

something growing and developing in Northwest Arkansas and economic development resolves around a good transit system.

- 793.1 T. Lundstrum stated that he is not talking about cutting the funding, and would still give \$25,000 for the county's portion of it; however, the cities that the buses are driving through should pay a more proportionate amount.
- 793.2 J. Gardner stated that ORT started the initiative two years ago of "Twenty for Transit" which was 20% of the turn back funds going toward transit, and Springdale and Fayetteville stepped into that. Washington County wanted to do 10% for transit and this trickled down to the smaller communities who also wanted to do 10% as Washington County was doing. He stated his belief is that if Washington County would have agreed to do 20% two years ago, that the smaller communities would have also done 20%.
- 793.3 T. Lundstrum recalled when J. Gardner's predecessor came looking for his ¼ of a cent, it was estimated that the ¼ of a cent would probably produce about one million a year, when it actually produces \$8 million. J. Gardner's predecessor was looking for \$16 million a year, which both agreed was too much money. He stated that kind of set a bad taste in his mouth for the transit, but after visiting with J. Gardner he does respect him as an individual and the job he is doing. However, he still believes that the county is paying a little more than it should because it is mainly the people from the smaller cities who are riding that bus. He stated he will not make a motion to cut this budget, because he would rather see somebody else make that motion; his feeling is that there is probably not enough support to cut the budget anyway.
- 793.4 A. Harbison stated that she supports this transit system, which is the backbone to develop a transit system and economic development for the county. She stated that the Court has to educate its people to ride the transit, which is gradually happening.
- 793.5 R. Dennis asked J. Gardner to review the routes with him again; to which J. Gardner responded that this particular route that Washington County funds is traveling directly from West Fork, straight north on Hwy. 71 to Greenland, ties into Lot 56 with two of its other routes, and also the University routes and does transfers, then heads westbound to Farmington, through Prairie Grove, and out to Lincoln. This route "620" is funded by Washington County and the smaller cities. He stated with that route, ORT has the Demand Response Model, which used to be called

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"Dial a Ride." This model was used to individually pick up people, who have ADA qualifying events that do not allow them to walk to a bus stop or upstairs, etc.

- 794.1 R. Dennis asked if Elkins or Tontitown could join this route; to which J. Gardner stated that they could. He would personally look at connecting Springdale through Tontitown and out to Siloam Springs, which would get the casino involved for its workers as well as John Brown University for its college students, etc. He explained that ORT cannot just build a route because of the cost, noting that running out to Elkins and back would be a \$140,000 annual burden on Elkins, which he does not think could support it. However, like ORT has done in Springdale with George's, who is fully funding its public transportation, ORT could partner with other communities and/or businesses/industries to support this route for public transportation. He noted that ORT has a trial route in Rogers with Ozark Mountain Poultry, who is fully funding this public transportation, so ORT is building coalitions of other supporters other than just the tax payers.
- 794.2 R. Cochran asked what the fee per passenger was for this route; to which J. Gardner responded that ORT charges \$1.25 for a one-way trip. In response to his question of what the revenue was for that route last year, J Gardner reported that ORT had 4,482 riders on that route in the past year, with some riders paying \$1.25 for a one-way trip and some paying \$30 for a monthly pass. He stated that ORT is getting an average of 80 cents per verified ride, which comes out to \$3,585.60 in revenue. He reported that transfers are free. In response to R. Cochran's question of how much the five cities contribute to the program; J. Gardner reported that ball park estimates would be that Lincoln - \$2,000; Prairie Grove - \$8,000; Farmington - \$8,000; Greenland - \$4,000; and West Fork - \$5,000 for a total of \$25,000 so the County is basically paying 4 to 1.
- 794.3 R. Cochran asked whether ORT can cross state lines; to which J. Gardner stated that as the fixed route transportation provider in Northwest Arkansas, ORT is tasked with two things. First, covering the entire organized area; and secondly, as the rural transportation provider for Northwest Arkansas as designated by Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department. He stated that ORT can develop fixed routes that will cross state lines so long as it stays on that fixed route. He stated that it cannot be on intermittent stops throughout an area, but needs to have actual developed fixed route locations, timed stops, etc., which allows ORT to get across state lines. He reported that he has developed interstate intrastate fixed routes in three states now. J. Gardner stated

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that he hopes that these smaller communities will increase ORT's funding in this next budget cycle.

- 795.1 R. Cochran stated he is torn on this issue because he does also see a lot of empty buses, but it may very well be the time of the day. He is aware that the buses running up and down I49 are full to capacity at times, because of class schedule at Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC), which funds this route by 50%. He would expect that there are quite a few people who are buying a pass, being picked up at Lot 56, and are either going to the University of Arkansas or up to NWACC. The student population is kind of his deciding point to support the budget that the Court has already approved, although he is frustrated that the County does not get as much bang for its buck. He stated he is aware that ORT's rates are quite low and that it gives special deals to those who are truly in need or are ADA qualified, which is a good thing. He commended J. Gardner for the growth he has brought in since beginning a couple years ago as it is very heartening to know that although the County is spending a lot of taxpayers' money, it is something that people will look at us to provide and is good for our local economies.
- 795.2 S. Madison stated that Northwest Arkansas has an embarrassing number of homeless and borderline homeless people who will gravitate to the cities for these services. She reported she is on the Board of a non-profit that owns Washington Plaza Apartments in Fayetteville and there is an ORT bus that comes to these apartments and picks up on Deane Street. A lot of people live there because it is on a bus route and this service is invaluable to single mothers and the poor. She noted that the buses go to the Health Department, and she believes that the County is better off if it has a pregnant mother with access to the Health Department to be seen by a doctor. She believes that this is a service that in some ways benefits all of society.
- 795.3 S. Lloyd stated that she is a Special Education teacher who understands the ADA and supports the bus transportation. She verified with J. Gardner that for Route 620, the County is giving \$122,970, and in 2014 ORT had 4,482 participants, which equates to \$27.44 per rider.
- 795.4 Judge Edwards stated that if there was no further discussion or motions, she is assuming the consensus is that the Court will leave the ORT budget as it stands.
- 795.5 R. Cochran thanked J. Gardner for coming back in to speak to everyone and reviewing some of the concerns that the Court had.

- 796.1 **A short recess was taken at this time.**
- 796.2 B. Ussery stated that he asked that IT Director John Adams come back before the Quorum Court because they voted down his request for items in his budget. He stated that part of the Court's responsibility is to invest in the future. J. Adams had brought some things forward that he believes would be a great investment for the County and if they spend a little money now, they will save a lot. He has asked J. Adams to explain the two major things that he had; investing in infrastructure and the personnel that should save the County a considerable amount of money.
- 796.3 John Adams, Director of IT, addressed the Quorum Court stating if they can put the fiber connection in between the north and south campuses, he expects that they may save \$54,000 a year which is almost cutting a lot of their internet in half. He stated that Cox will have to sharpen their pencil on it, but the long term investment will save \$1 million of the life of this fiber. He reported that they also asked for two backup devices, one each for the north and south campuses. He noted he is at 80% capacity on backups which means that anything added to the system will exceed the capacity for them to be able to backup. He stated that failure to buy the backup devices means he will either have to come back to them next year for more hardware or start saying no to backing up certain things at the various different offices. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office is putting a lot of information online right now which increased from 80% toward the 100% mark.
- 796.4 J. Adams further reported that he had asked for two people to come on board in the programming department to help them with two projects that they immediately want to take on. One being SunGard which is a financial package that was put in and supposed to interact and interconnect all offices such as HR and Purchasing. He stated that it has done a fairly decent job of connecting these things together, but here it is five years later and they have a new product they want to upgrade to and that upgrade next year will cost them close to \$500,000 and today, since this system was installed, they still have components within that they have not got to work. He explained by building this in-house, they can customize this application to, pointing out that every time they call SunGard for a specialized report, it costs them \$534 per report regardless of how long it took them. He stated they can customize these things based on department needs and in a lot of cases, this information is all shared by HR, Comptroller, and Purchasing. J. Adams stated by doing this project, they will be able to save the \$500,000; and they have an annual maintenance fee of \$35,000 that they will be able to save. He stated that

the big area where they will be able to save is to have the ability to customize things within the program at the request of these offices.

- 797.1 J. Adams further stated they have another project that was outsourced some time ago that is costing them between \$45,000 and \$50,000 a year and with these two additional people, they would be able to bring that in-house the first year and would save them \$50,000 a year. The cost for those two persons would be \$127,506 per year which is the total compensation package. He stated the more of these applications that they can customize within the county and provide, they save money, the employees add efficiency, they are able to get information much faster, and the reporting that they have is much more instant. In some cases, they can even put this information on the website for much more transparency.
- 797.2 J. Adams stated that the IT Department is always seen as a cost department, but truly for this county, they save money by supporting every other department 24/7. He stated because they have the software that can alert them to problems, they are able to keep the equipment up and going. He stated without the backup devices and fiber, they will continue to have their internet prices increase. He stated as they need more bandwidth between north and south campus because of more files and information being transferred, and then they will have to ask Cox for additional band width. He stated by installing these fiber strands, he can go from 100 megabytes right now up to 10 gigabytes.
- 797.3 E. Madison asked about cost for the fiber optic; to which J. Adams responded the fiber optic would cost \$150,000 and this is a one-time cost. He added that this will be buried to help protect it from weather such as ice storms and snow. He stated that Cablevision who works for Cox would do the installation, obtain the easements and right-of-ways, and the cost of fiber is included in the price. He stated that there should not be any annual costs that would come thereafter unless they have to move it. J. Adams explained the savings of \$54,000 a year would be taken away from Cox's link between north and south campuses. He stated if they do not put this in place, the alternative is to continue to pay Cox and be at their mercy as far as a cost for increasing service and at some point the way their network is designed, they may have to move them to a different fiber line at the County's cost. He noted that this fiber optic line should have a life of 20 years and he can turn up and have a lot more bandwidth capabilities than they currently have without having to go back to Cox. He explained that they currently have a lot of problems at night with their backups getting them pushed up here and they are experiencing slow

sluggishness with some of their applications, and this line would include backups during the day, phone and internet traffic, and other applications.

- 798.1 E. Madison asked J. Adams about the two programmers that he wants to hire who would be writing software and rewriting SunGard in-house. He noted that the first project was the other website would take them about 8 months and the SunGard replacement will take about two years. With the SunGard cost savings at \$500,000 for the product plus the \$35,000 for maintenance fee that they would not be realizing for another two years.
- 798.2 The \$50,000 savings per year on the other software is the product that has been outsourced for the Assessor's Office where they get their titles, deeds, taxes and other information. He stated that they already had this written, but needs some modifications and the reason it got outsourced was because they did not want to pull forward to buy the software required to do that, and the new Assessor has asked him to bring it back in. He stated besides the yearly savings, any customizations they need to make can be made on the fly. E. Madison stated that she recalls that SunGard cost them a lot of money, so she is questioning the wisdom of having made that investment and then changing so quickly to bring it in-house.
- 798.3 E. Madison asked about the other website projects referred to; to which J. Adams explained that there are other projects that would bring back some of the outsourced software back in-house. He noted in the Assessor's Office, they can bring in some to do in-house, but he does not want to name vendors at this time because until they agree that they are going to do this, he does not want to create a negative relationship with them. J. Adams reported that the DataScout project in-house would be operational in 8 months, and there would be two projects during the first two years. He stated that for a lot of the DataScout stuff, they get their data from us so they already have it pretty much pieced into place and a lot of the framework around the application ready, so they just need to fix a few things and get things up. He stated that they also want to reach out to some of the Assessor's customers to see how some of them like it because when they went from their product to the outsourced product, there were a lot of complaints that continue to be made, so they want to work with them to get the product to what they need in their view. J. Adams stated that other projects include Apprentice for the Collector, and some ACT products and DataScout for the Assessor, SunGard for the entire County and Right Track in two parts for the JDC and Juvenile Court.
- 798.4 E. Madison stated she has tried to work with SunGard and found out it was very sophisticated software and stated she looks at that and thinks

that they might be better off paying someone else to do it; to which J. Adams responded that they still have not been able to get SunGard to work in a lot areas and getting some of the framework that he talked about, when they first visited with SunGard some of the other vendors came forward utilize a lot of the Microsoft product that they have accessible to them because of their budget, so the .net framework and share point would be the core of this and a lot of these are modules that are customized for their specific needs.

- 799.1 E. Madison stated that this sounds great to think that they could replace all of these expensive software packages with things that they build in-house with two relatively inexpensive employees. She is wondering if it will work because they cannot possibly duplicate SunGard and that they would be better off paying someone else to do it.
- 799.2 J. Adams stated when they started with SunGard, one of the big problems they had was with their programmers coming in and trying to understand their needs or how county government works, and so they had to get them to understand the county's processes to ensure that they got what they wanted. He stated with having it in-house, they already understand how these things work, what works, and what they need to put in place, and working with the various departments, they can come up with a workable solution. He further stated he has been in IT for over 20 years and he has done these types of projects before, putting the right people in place at the right time to do this project will work and, though there may be some stumbling along the way, they will complete it successfully.
- 799.3 E. Madison stated she thinks the notion of savings is good but she feels like it is a little uncertain and a little far off for her right now and that right now may not be the time to do this. She further stated she does not have a good feel for the fiber optic line expense and how it will really impact the day-to-day user.
- 799.4 S. Lloyd asked if there were other counties putting in their own fiber optic lines; to which J. Adams responded that Benton County has their own, having installed it four years ago. The City of Bentonville has had their own fiber lines for 10-15 years; the City of Fayetteville has some of their own fiber and also leases some fiber; and a lot of businesses have their own fiber as well. As far as the DataScout in-house, Benton and Pulaski Counties do it in-house but the other smaller counties do not have the IT staff to do that. J. Adams further explained that if they do the DataScout and fiber lines in-house, they would get rid of SunGard except for historical information, but as time went on, they would be able to get it

completely off the premise. During this time, once they bring up their product, they will not have to pay SunGard any support or maintenance fees. S. Lloyd questioned whether they had invested a lot in SunGard already in learning the county's processes and J. Adams asked HR Director Lindsi Huffaker to speak to this as she is one who has to work with SunGard often.

- 800.1 Lindsi Huffaker stated that there are definitely issues with SunGard, some that will not be resolved. She stated that they do not have an online application and she does not foresee that anytime soon with SunGard. They will have to outsource it and coordinate with another vendor in order to get that because even though they sold it to the county, they cannot produce it. She stated they have some struggle with employee online which was resolved except for one area of issue.
- 800.2 J. Adams stated there is a county team that meets with SunGard once a month to talk about issues and opportunities and in five years, they have not got the applicant online going. SunGard has all kind of excuses and reasons and they also have a lot of turnover. He stated SunGard has not been a great partner; they do not understand the county and do not really want to understand them. He recalls they even called the President of SunGard to talk to them because they were not able to get the items that they believe they paid for, and they had paid for applicant online and had the document and proof. SunGard did not have any record of it and did not give him any of the license keys or application software for it, so they had to fight with the company to get it. He reported that it did not cost them any additional money and SunGard provided applicant online, but it did not work. He stated he feels comfortable assuring them that his IT programmers would be even better than going to other experts.
- 800.3 A. Harbison stated that she knows this is important to write and get these programs and a lot of this is plowing new ground. She stated if they can do it in-house they should give it a shot and believes in the long run they will save money by doing this. She pointed out that installing the fiber optic lines for \$150,000 with them currently paying Cox over \$100,000 a year for their total internet bill and \$54,000 for the link, they could pay for the fiber optics in three years. She stated they need to give the IT Department the opportunity to do this and for the Court to invest in the IT Department believing that they will hire qualified programmers and that this will be successful.
- 800.4 R. Cochran stated his experience in IT is over 30 years of writing custom applications. Looking at the projects that J. Adams is proposing, they are

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big jobs, but he does not see any of them that are enormous tasks. He noted on the packages that they have done on their own; one in the Planning Department has been done where they chose to be co-developers and then take it on with no maintenance costs thereafter and only maintain it for changes in operations of the business office. He noted that there are a lot of application developers out there working for industry and businesses which they do for one reason; it is more economical for them to design a package that fits their business plan exactly as they want it and can change it when they want it. They hire a staff, pay them a salary, and get this done at a reduced cost to their company which is the bottom line.

- 801.1 R. Cochran stated from the standpoint of employing more people to do that and having a pretty good laundry list of packages that they can be working on. J. Adams stated the only time he can anticipate these programmers having any help desk type of work would be on applications that they have written. He further stated for the first time he will have the opportunity to cross train his employees on these builds so in the absence of the programmers, they can work them.
- 801.2 R. Cochran stated as far as the return on investment for the fiber line, they have \$1,080,000 in Cox expense for a one-time charge of \$150,000 and to him this is a slam dunk. As far as hiring the programmers, this is always tough for them, and even though J. Adams has asked for two, he thinks that one would be appropriate. He noted that originally J. Adams had asked for \$375,000 for the backup devices and verified that the \$225,000 was for the backup.
- 801.3 J. Adams stated that he looked into doing off-site backups and some of the vendors he talked to would charge \$7,000 a month to just backup their stuff through the cloud which is just storing it somewhere in case they ever need to retrieve it.
- 801.4 **R. Cochran made a motion to fund fiber optic installation at a cost of \$150,000 in the IT budget. R. Dennis seconded.**
- 801.5 H. Bowman stated that since J. Adams started with the County, the IT Budget has increased ten times by substantial numbers. He believes that most of the requests he has had for them in the past has gone right over most of their heads. He stated even though they have handled this budget in addition to last year's numbers, they will still be down about \$2 million from where they closed out last year and this is his primary concern. He believes if they go slow with this and take each area one

step at a time, he believes they can approve all of them and the fiber optics seems to be the most favorable at this time.

- 802.1 J. Adams stated that he used to be a consultant and once a project was over, he was done and if they needed anything further, it was an additional cost. He stated even at the county they do not have just 1-2 projects, but have a number of projects and these six are just a small number that they have talked about. He stated that they can continue to keep these people working on projects, customizing some of the changes they want and reported that Assessor Russell Hill had requested something and was told that was on their plate for three years. He stated that they should not have to wait three years to make something change for this office. He stated they can continue to save money by customizing their applications in house and providing better information and even reports for things. He stated if they hired independent consultants to come in and do this it would be just like SunGard, once they turned it over, it is ours and the problem they often have with that is that there is lot of translation that can be lost sometimes, even though they do the best they can to communicate what they need.
- 802.2 B. Ussery stated that it is quite apparent that the payback will be very good on the capital items. He noted what they did for the Planning Department by integrating a number of departments were a large program that was very successful.
- 802.3 J. Adams stated that they also completely wrote the software at the Coroner's Office and Environmental Affairs Office without any outside assistance and they are really successful programs. He stated that they incorporated within the Road Department and Planning Department and they are currently working on a program for the Treasurer.
- 802.4 S. Zega pointed out that there was a motion and second on the floor to fund the fiber optic installation and discussion has gotten away from that.
- 802.5 J. Maxwell asked J. Adams to estimate over the 20-year life of the fiber optic cable between the north and south campuses, what he believes the maintenance and repair would be per year for 20 years; to which J. Adams responded his experience with fiber optic is once it is put into place, unless disturbed or destroyed, they do not have any maintenance. J. Maxwell asked if there was a disruption, what would he anticipate the cost to the county be for fixing that disruption either; to which J. Adams responded that they have had one disruption since he has been with the county when they were building the parking deck, a backhoe pulled it up

and it was fixed within 2½ hours and Cablevision internet could provide that service, but he is unaware of that cost.

- 803.1 J. Maxwell stated under their current circumstances, they pay that fee if something happens to Cox's line; to which J. Adams stated that most of the fiber lines that he has had, when there was destruction, they had their own fiber splicing kit to splice it themselves, but there is no one currently trained for that besides himself. J. Adams stated when he adds a connector, it costs about \$600, but that is covered in a switch. He stated that ultimately he feels comfortable saying that the county will have no cost to maintain this fiber line over the next 20 years.
- 803.2 S. Madison stated that the only reason she came tonight was because she thought they were going to try to trim some things from the budget and they seem to be going in the opposite direction, so she will be voting against this funding.
- 803.3 R. Cochran stated that the line item that pairs up with our internet connection and the fiber was originally budgeted at \$150,000 and that was with the fiber in his budget, and asked if \$150,000 was an accurate number for next year with this fiber installed. J. Adams stated that they will be able to save some of that depending on when Cablevision Internet can put it in and once he signs the contract with Cox he will know those exact figures at which time he will return to the Court and they can take out any excess.
- 803.4 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to fund the fiber optic installation.**
- 803.5 **VOTING FOR:** B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, G. McHenry, and B. Pond. **VOTING AGAINST:** L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, and J. Patterson. **The motion passed with eight members voting in favor and seven members voting against the motion. Funding of the fiber optic installation was approved.**
- 803.6 B. Ussery returned to the point he was making, originally they had a number of big projects under their belt so that something like this should not be that big of a challenge, but will only take time. He stated once they have these programmers, they will be free to work on a number of other projects that will save them money.

- 804.1 B. Ussery asked J. Adams to review the back-up servers that he is requesting at a cost of \$225,000. J. Adams stated that he is currently at an 80% storage capacity and the back-up devices will be able to spread that back up to a number of years and this is for the remaining capital item dollars. He further noted if they do not purchase the back-up servers now, in June 2016, they will have to come up with a contingency to save what they are not going to back-up.
- 804.2 **B. Ussery made a motion to purchase the back-up servers at a cost of \$250,000. R. Dennis seconded.**
- 804.3 J. Patterson stated when they hired J. Adams they started hiring employees and since then questioned what those hires are currently doing; to which J. Adams responded that they have over 3,000 help desk calls per year and the majority of his staff does that, and they are upgrading a lot of those operating systems that are downstairs.
- 804.4 J. Patterson noted that there is talk about saving all these departments time, time is money, and money is employees, but no one has come to them with an employee that they did not need any more because the computers have decreased their work, but yet J. Adams is increasing his employees again. He stated that this is moving too fast for him and he will be voting against this capital request.
- 804.5 R. Cochran stated looking back at the original request, the total for these two capital items was \$375,000, so instead of the back-up servers costing \$250,000, it would be \$225,000 and he offered it as a friendly amendment.
- 804.6 **B. Ussery and R. Dennis accepted R. Cochran's motion as a friendly amendment.**
- 804.7 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to purchase back-up servers at a cost of \$225,000.**
- 804.8 **VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, D. Balls, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, and B. Pond. VOTING AGAINST: H. Bowman, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and J. Patterson. The motion failed with six members voting in favor and nine members voting against the motion.**
- 804.9 B. Ussery addressed the two programmers that J. Adams is requesting to hire at a cost of \$127,506, asking how much he anticipated saving the first year; to which J. Adams responded in the first year they will save \$50,000

on the DataScout project and they will be working on the SunGard project which they will not have to spend the \$500,000 on.

- 805.1 B. Ussery asked how much he anticipated spending the next year on the other projects that these programmers will be working on once the first project is finished; and J. Adams responded that they would be starting another project that would save them approximately \$20,000 a year; and then the Right Track project will save the county \$28,000 a year in maintenance fees only.
- 805.2 B. Ussery asked if they could get by with one programmer, to which J. Adams responded that he could, but it would be tough to cross train everybody so when the programmer was out, someone could take their place and it would mean some of these projects would be a little slower.
- 805.3 **B. Ussery made a motion that they hire two additional programmers at a cost of \$127,506. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 805.4 J. Maxwell asked if J. Adams has people on his staff currently that have the competencies to do this kind of program he is talking about; to which J. Adams responded that he does have qualified people, they just do not have the time
- 805.5 J. Maxwell stated because of the cost savings it seems to him that is something IT should be moving up their priority list with or without these employees; to which J. Adams stated that with or without the additional programmers, IT will be working on this, but it will just take a lot longer and they may not be able to get to SunGard. J. Adams stated that SunGard and DataScout would be at the top of his priority list because it will save a lot of money.
- 805.6 J. Maxwell asked if they would have benefited by having already started the process with SunGard; to which J. Adams stated when he came here five years ago, they have done a lot coming out of the 13th century into the 21st century with tons of equipment that was antiquated and could not be used. Employees and offices did not have the capacity to even collaborate together via phones or e-mail. He stated that it has taken five years to bring all of these projects in and they rebuilt the entire infrastructure and rebuilt a lot of the requests for the hardware and software side of things; and now as they have started to mature as an IT staff, they have already looked at some projects to get their skill sets up and ensure that he has the right people in the right place. They have been working on the Environmental Affairs and the Coroner systems

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which were higher priority because they had nothing at the time. He noted that SunGard was not a priority until they said it would cost them more money to upgrade it, and they are charged every time the Comptroller's Office needs a report.

- 806.1 L. Ecke asked if J. Adams approached the Assessor's Office or JDC, or did they approach him about doing these projects; to which he responded that he was approved by them about doing these projects; Assessor Russel Hill, Norma Frisbee with Juvenile Court, and Jeane Mack of JDC approached him about doing these projects.
- 806.2 L. Ecke stated that she will not vote for the two programmers until they receive some verification that the County Assessor and JDC contacted John Adams. She stated that they are being above board and she wants to make sure that conversations were correct and that they are on the same page.
- 806.3 S. Lloyd stated she feels like J. Adams is selling this right now with all the savings and requested that the savings be shown in his budget if they approve these things.
- 806.4 R. Cochran stated that the two positions that he has requested, a programmer and system analyst, would either of their positions computer software design tech have the opportunity to move into those slots; to which J. Adams responded that they do not have the skills.
- 806.5 R. Cochran asked if there was the possibility to bring in an intern from the University of Arkansas; to which it was noted that this is not legal. E. Madison stated that there are a lot of lawsuits right now over interns needing to be paid, but as it goes toward course credit, they can only intern for free.
- 806.6 J. Adams stated that he has checked into interns at NTI and they do not pay their interns and he does not feel comfortable bringing them in for a long project and not paying them.
- 806.7 R. Cochran stated that he was not thinking about a long project, but to take some of the work load off of his existing staff so they can put more time on the projects that will pay back.
- 806.8 J. Adams stated that he does not believe this was an option because those interns are just learning and are in an environment where they

should have learned a lot, but there are a lot of things that he would hope they had from job experience.

- 807.1 A. Harbison asked about the savings on SunGard; to which J. Adams reiterated that it is \$500,000 for the product and \$35,000 a year for maintenance. She stated that this is another one of those things that in another three years will have paid for itself and she does not believe they can do any better than that, so will be supporting this.
- 807.2 E. Madison asked about the type of program SunGard was; to which J. Adams responded that it is Accounting/HR/Purchasing/Customer Relations Program. He explained that SunGard provides lots of different modules in their product; one being purchasing so they can issue purchase orders, p-card which is a custom product; applicant and employee on-line; and accounting.
- 807.3 E. Madison questioned since they have a contract with SunGard, why would not it breach the contract for the County to pay for something they did not get; to which Chief of Staff George Butler stated that they thought several times that SunGard was getting close to breach of contract, but they did not ever pull that lever for the simple fact that once that letter was written and signed by him as the County Attorney back then, everyone would clam up, so they resolved things the best they could. He noted that the software contract is notoriously vague and trying to interpret everything that everybody thought it would cover was a tough task.
- 807.4 E. Madison stated with regard to the \$500,000 cost they have been talking about, she realized that they already purchased SunGard and currently is only paying an annual maintenance cost; to which J. Adams responded that to upgrade to the new product that is their estimated cost.
- 807.5 E. Madison questioned whether they had to upgrade to which J. Adams responded that the current product has an end of life giving them another two years and they can continue to use the software program after it is no longer supported, but he does not know a month that goes by that they do not call them for some sort of support, to fix or adjust something.
- 807.6 E. Madison stated that the \$500,000 is a potential savings and the \$35,000 a year is the only expected savings, and they could expect to see those savings in the 2017 budget and for DataScout, they would see savings in the budget in 2016.
- 807.7 **T. Lundstrum called for the question.**

- 808.1 **Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to close debate.**
- 808.2 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, J. Patterson, and B. Pond. VOTING AGAINST: L Ecke. **The motion passed with fourteen members voting in favor and one member voting against the call for the question. Debate was ended.**
- 808.3 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to hire two additional IT people at \$127,506.**
- 808.4 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, D. Balls, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, A. Harbison, and B. Pond. VOTING AGAINST: H. Bowman, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, and J. Patterson. **The motion failed with six members voting in favor and nine members voting against the motion.**
- 808.5 S. Madison reiterated that she came tonight expecting that they were going to try to trim or make some difficult decisions about the budget that they have all worried about being a little short on reserves. She stated at one of their early budget meetings, they were issued what she considered to be a threat by the University of Arkansas that if they did not pick up the slack on the Extension Service, they were going to cut their Extension Service and they fell for that threat. She recalled that this is the same institution that overspent a budget in one department by \$4.1 million several years ago. She would like to revisit that issue if they can determine what that amount was that they were threatened with, stating she believes it to be \$60,000 that was allowed for this budget..
- 808.6 **S. Madison made a motion to consider Extension Office employees requested. S. Lloyd seconded. The motion passed with fourteen members voting in favor and one member voting against the motion. The Extension Office employee budget request would be considered that night.**
- 808.7 Bernie Kurz, Director of the Extension Office, stated that the initial budget request was for \$222,000 which was to support the staffing prior to some changes that they had at the office with some resignations and one promotion to another county, which left them three people shy. He stated that the Court had been supporting the staffing with \$97,705 in past several years and no changes had been made in salaries for staffing; and at this time the same amount of staffing was up to \$222,000; and the

Court had previously approved that request at \$157,000 which allows him to hire two staff members back, though he would be one short.

- 809.1 S. Madison stated that she would think that the work of their Extension Service would be of extreme importance to the University as a land grant college. She stated her dismay that the Division of Agriculture chose to manipulate their finances in that way and that they have fallen for it. She stated that the Extension Service does valuable work and they all know that, but she thinks that it is time to perhaps take stand and not be treated this way by the University.
- 809.2 B. Kurz stated that they must understand that the University of Arkansas campus in Fayetteville is totally separate from budgeting processes within the University's system. He stated they are sisters to them in the organization, but are totally separate and their budget and monies never mix.
- 809.3 S. Madison stated she understood the nuances of that, but nevertheless the University system within its operation had a unit that overspent a budget by \$4.1 million that was a shock to everybody and here they are talking about \$60,000 for the Extension Service.
- 809.4 **S. Madison made a motion to reduce the County Extension Service budget by \$60,000 that they originally approved because of the manner that they were threatened. S. Lloyd seconded.**
- 809.5 A. Harbison stated that they have approved this budget and B. Kurz has no control over the University of Arkansas and their budgeting process, and it has fallen to the County to pick up the difference which they did. She believes to come back and reduce it after they have already approved it because someone in the Vice-Chancellor's position collected \$4 million on this campus and it was misappropriated does not have anything to do with the Washington County Extension Office. She concurs that the State of Arkansas should have picked it up, but they did not. The County has picked it up and has the money to do it.
- 809.6 B. Kurz in response to a statement by R. Cochran noted that both sections of the State Legislature approved Extension Service budget, but it was cut in the revenue stabilization process.
- 809.7 R. Cochran stated his recollection of this budget meeting was that the county would fund two employees, one short of what was requested, and that both of their jobs was to get the State to pay attention and for them

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not to have this expense next year. He stated that he will support their joint decision as it is work for both of them to do to get the State to wake up and understand the value of what the Extension Office does and we are not agreeing to fund this amount next year because he recalls it is a one-time deal. R. Cochran stated that he will vote against S. Madison's motion and will support the Extension Service budget as previously approved for one year.

- 810.1 L. Ecke stated she wants them to realize that their Extension Service and all 4-H'ers who came to speak to them are the future of this County and she was hoping to find ways to get them fully funded. She stated she will support their budget as is and continue to support the Extension Service because these young men and women are our future and she wants to communicate to them that the Quorum Court supports them even though the State Legislature let them down.
- 810.2 R. Dennis addressed S. Madison stating he appreciates what she said, even though it might be misunderstood, he applauds her for challenging the University. He questioned since they have approved hiring two people, how come one of those cannot be for the 4-H; to which B. Kurz responded that the 4-H agent they did have had to be moved to become their Family Consumer Science Agent because that is a void that they have had since summer, and there is no one else on staff who is trained FCS. He noted that they do have a need to hire an individual that is animal science trained as they are the second largest agricultural county in Arkansas and that is because of livestock. He has not had anyone in his office supporting the livestock enterprise for Washington County for 1½ years. B. Kurz reported the second position he will be filling is the 4-H Program Assistance position which is a lower classified employee which he sees filling the void of having a 4-H agent. He noted that their 4-H Program Assistant that they had until the summer moved on to Texas A&M as a 4-H agent in Texas.
- 810.3 E. Madison stated since they approved this budget, someone raised to her the question whether it should be a tax payer funded proposition because there are a lot of great organizations that help their kids such as Boy and Girl Scouts that are not funded by tax dollars. While she does not doubt the usefulness of the position, she questions whether it should be government supported as it seems more like a non-profit type position to her. She stated that she supported the increased funding previously, but the 4-H component of it has now given her pause.

- 811.1 B. Kurz stated the 4-H Program is a USDA Government Program that has been in operation for over 100 years, and it is science-based with University support and educationally driven. He stated that there is no other organization for youth that is so educationally driven with the science base behind it.
- 811.2 S. Madison stated that part of her dismay has been that they have not made any hard decisions on this budget, but really acquiesced to everyone's requests. To say that they have the money while recognizing that the University of Arkansas does not is somehow out of balance to her. She stated that the University of Arkansas has a foundation that does private fund raising and that they can spin in many different ways; and they have an enormous budget. She stated the fact that the Legislature passed their budget and revenue stabilization did not prioritize it simply means that the State did not have enough money. The University has many sources of money including tuition, federal and private money, so the decision was made by the University of Arkansas that this was not a priority. S. Madison stated the Court is trying to build a county reserve so that there is money when there is a major ice storm or flood, and to take care of surprises that happen in the county. They have struggled to try to do that and they do have pending lawsuits to consider. She realizes this is not that much money, but they need to ask themselves if they are making the hard decisions that they were elected to make. She stated that she loves the Extension Service, but this is a matter of county funding and what their goals ought to be as elected JP's.
- 811.3 B. Kurz stated he wants the Court to know that the University of Arkansas system of the Division of Agriculture is totally separate from the University of Arkansas that we know of as Campus University. He stated that they do not support the Extension Service and they could raise the tuition tenfold and the Extension Service would not see a penny of that.
- 811.4 **A. Harbison called for the question.**
- 811.5 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a voice vote on the call for the question closing debate.**
- 811.6 **The call for the question passed with fourteen members voting in favor and one member voting against the call for the question. The debate was closed.**

- 812.1 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to reduce the previously approved Extension Service budget by \$60,000.**
- 812.2 VOTING FOR: S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, and S. Madison. VOTING AGAINST: B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, E. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, J. Patterson, and B. Pond. **The motion failed with three members voting in favor and twelve members voting against the motion.**
- 812.3 R. Cochran reported that he had one item to address on their budget controls stating that in Budget Control #6 where they talk about the bonus for employees for next year paying it in July and December. He stated in thinking more about this and employee morale, he would propose that they leaving the rest of Budget Control #6 intact.
- 812.4 **R. Cochran made a motion to amend Budget Control #6, changing the payout months from July and December to January and July. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 812.5 E. Madison asked what their anniversary date was for being one-year employed and was that a part of this motion; to which it was explained that none of that changes, only the date the bonuses would be paid.
- 812.6 R. Cochran added that it would be the first pay cycle that is not a regular pay cycle because they need to do bonuses on another week.
- 812.7 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to amend Budget Control #6 as above.**
- 812.8 VOTING FOR: B. Ussery, D. Balls, H. Bowman, R. Cochran, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, A. Harbison, S. Lloyd, T. Lundstrum, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, G. McHenry, J. Patterson, and B. Pond. **The motion passed unanimously. The budget control was amended as above.**
- 812.9 AN ORDINANCE RECOGNIZING REVENUES AND APPROPRIATING MONIES FOR THE EXPENDITURES IN EACH FUND FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS, FOR THE YEAR 2016, AND ADOPTING A BUDGET FOR THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS REFLECTING THE LINE ITEM EXPENDITURES THEREOF: R. Cochran introduced **An Ordinance Recognizing Revenues And Appropriating Monies For The Expenditures In Each Fund For Washington County, Arkansas, For The Year 2016, And Adopting A**

Budget For The Various Departments Reflecting The Line Item Expenditures Thereof, and County Attorney Steve Zega read the ordinance. This ordinance was tabled at yesterday's meeting.

- 813.1 **R. Cochran made a motion to adopt the ordinance. A. Harbison seconded.**
- 813.2 E. Madison stated that she was going to move to table this budget ordinance, because it was 8:30 p.m. and she wants to discuss something as significant as the budget when she is fresh and has not been in a meeting for three hours. She noted that the Court is already meeting on Thursday and believes that everyone needs time to let it soak in.
- 813.3 **E. Madison made a motion to table the budget ordinance until a later date. S. Lloyd seconded.**
- 813.4 S. Zega asked and E. Madison verified that she was not specifically asking for this budget ordinance to be tabled to a certain date or just leaving it indefinite to be brought back off table by motion.
- 813.5 B. Pond asked for a roll call on the motion to table.
- 813.6 S. Zega responded to a question from Judge Edwards that this first reading will count toward the three readings; however, regardless, it either gets read three times at three separate meetings if it does not get ten votes on the first reading or there will be majority votes on the budget at three different meetings.
- 813.7 **With no further discussion, Judge Edwards called for a vote on the motion to table the budget ordinance until a later date.**
- 813.8 VOTING FOR: H. Bowman, R. Dennis, L. Ecke, S. Lloyd, E. Madison, S. Madison, J. Maxwell, and G. McHenry. VOTING AGAINST: B. Ussery, D. Balls, R. Cochran, A. Harbison, T. Lundstrum, J. Patterson, and B. Pond. **The motion passed with eight members voting in favor and seven members voting against the motion. The budget ordinance was tabled.**
- 813.9 CITIZEN COMMENTS: There were no citizen comments made.
- 813.10 ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carly Sandidge', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Carly Sandidge
Quorum Court Coordinator/Reporter