

COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
FEBRUARY 21, 2023
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Stephanie Campbell, President
Jay Alcorn, Vice President
Danny Wallace
Larry Parker
Keith Berry
Wayne Huffman

ATTORNEY:

Trudy Selvia

AUDITOR'S OFFICE:

Kristina Berish

AUDIENCE:

16 Individuals

The Putnam County Council met on February 21, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. Meeting was held at the Putnam County Courthouse. Stephanie Campbell opened the meeting with the pledge to the flag.

EMS ADDITIONAL

Director Kelly Russ Director presented:

1170-30303-0157 Repairs & Maintenance \$16,986.71

TRECS money received, asking to appropriate to pay for unexpected truck and sewer repairs.

Alcorn made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EMS RAISE

Director Kelly Russ said her request to give her 5% raise to Deputy Chief was tabled at the last meeting for more information. She had emailed the Council requested documentation. Wallace made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EMS LIT RATE

Kelly Russ emailed information on next steps. Russ said the Auditor was advised by budget advisor Jacque Clements to hold off until later in the year to decide on rate. October is the filing deadline. Council does want to move forward but wait until further research and information.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADDITIONALS

Administrator Joni Young presented:

1186-18888-801	Salaries	\$7,314.37
1186-10121-801	Social Security	\$453.48
1186-10128-801	Medicare	\$106.04
1000-18888-0068	Salaries	\$1,254.75

Appropriate monies not used that was appropriated last year, would use to pay compensation time and matching benefits.

Alcorn made the motion to approve the 4 additional. Parker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1168-10124-857	PERF	\$2,900
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Berry made the motion to approve. Alcorn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

BAILIFF FOR MAGISTRATE

Judge Bridges came to the meeting requesting a new position for the 3rd courtroom. They need a bailiff for the magistrate. They have tried to make it work on the small staff they had for security, but it is no longer working. Commissioner Woodall said the Commissioners were researching other counties to see their security and to plan for our county. Magistrate receives constant threats due to the cases she sees. Something needs to be done for security. Tabled until further research.

SURVEYOR TRANSFERS

Greg Williams presented:

1202-30367-0116	Maps	1202-20206-0116	Op. Supplies	\$5,000
1202-30367-0116	Maps	1202-30471-0116	Per Diem	\$1,500

Berry made the motion to approve. Parker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

PLANNING ADDITIONAL

Lisa Zeiner presented:

1180-30360-400	Miscellaneous Services	\$31,567.65
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Parker made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

CLERK ADDITIONAL

Tabled until next month, Clerk not able to attend meeting.

HIGHWAY ADDITIONALS

Engineer Jim Peck presented:

1176-10122-702	Health/Life Insurance	\$220,000
1135-10122-709	Health/Life Insurance	\$30,000
1176-40410-702	Purchase Motrim	\$60,000
1176-30414-702	2023 Road plan	\$500,000

Berry made the motion to approve. Parker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EXTENSION OFFICE TRANSFER

Mark Evans presented:

1000-10112-011/Part-time 1000-10218-011/Program Coordinator \$2,000

Alcorn made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Effective March 1, 2023.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – TAX ABATEMENT DIXIE CHOPPER

Director Kristin Clary presented tax abatement Resolution No. 2023-02-21.

Campbell read resolution aloud. Berry made the motion to approve. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

SHERIFF ADDITIONALS

Matron Tresha Clearwater presented:

1000-10113-0005 Deputies Salaries \$52,716

Only need 25K due to a deputy being gone for military reasons. Wallace made the motion to approve. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL PLAN

Jason Semler with Baker Tilly came to present their findings. One of the more concerning findings was the county general fund. The county is spending more than what they are bringing in, in this vein it will eat up the operating balance quickly. Encouraged the county to look at what is getting paid out of county general and move whatever you can to another fund/budget. The sooner, the better to help the cash flow. The county can also help the cash flow by increasing user fees and LIT rates.

COMMISSIONER ADDITIONALS

Auditor Berish presented:

1237-50622-0068 Opioid Grant Restricted \$170,100.42

1238-50622-0068 Opioid Grant Unrestricted \$72,096.52

9143-50631-0068 ARPA Grant \$2,314,731.78

Appropriate the new opioid funds the county received and to appropriate the remaining balance as of 12/31/22 in the ARPA account.

Parker made the motion to approve the 3 additionals. Huffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4946-30303-0068 Repairs & Maintenance \$209,000

Demolition cost for the old Jones Elementary School.

Wallace made the motion to approve. Parker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

RAISE REQUEST FOR HIGHWAY OFFICE PERSONNEL

Rick Woodall said they had submitted for an increase in salary for several individuals last year and all but 2 were approved due to not enough Council members present at the meeting to make the approval process meet the quorum requirements. He was coming before the Council to address the two office positions:

	2022 Salaries	2023 (adjusted) Salaries	
Administrative Asst.	\$42,080	\$48,392	15% raise
Secretary	\$38,405	\$44,165.75	15% raise

Woodall said they had done away with a position last year, Bridge Foreman because they found the individual was not doing the responsibilities and they now had a Highway Engineer that specializes in bridges.

The Commissioners did have the two office personnel going after reimbursements to the county for damages to guardrails and signs. They had recouped \$26,249.38. There is another 19K to go after, but the office was told to not do it since it was not in their original job description and the Council had denied the pay increase so it was sitting on their desks.

Alcorn questioned why Woodall would have the personnel stop doing a job they obviously had time to do since they were able to absorb it and continue doing their own work without working extra hours to do so. This was money coming back to the county which would help fund the highway budget. He did not understand the logic in that just because they did not get what they wanted, still have a job to do.

Campbell called for a motion, Alcorn said since he made the motion last time he would start it again. Alcorn made the motion to approve Administrative Assistant salary be increased to \$48,392 and the Secretary to \$44,165.75. Huffman seconded. Campbell asked the Auditor to call for a vote: Wallace – aye, Alcorn – nay, Berry – aye, Campbell – nay, Parker – aye, Huffman – aye. The motion passed with a vote of 4 to 2.

Auditor Berish stated she did not disagree with the new salaries for the two positions, in the workforce with their job descriptions this was most likely in the ballpark of where they should be. And the two individuals do a great job for the county. However, it still came to question increasing two employees who already made more than most other county employees with comparable or harder jobs. And now, the Council just made the gap that much wider.

Example – the Auditor has 3 deputies in her office making 35K and they just made a secretaries’ salary 44K. How do you justify the difference? It should not be about that a department got rid of a position, and in this instance it was a position they admitted they did not need to begin with. Or it came down to an office having “fluff” in their budget to transfer to salaries.

Another example, they made the Administrative Assistant salary 48K, that is more than the Plan Commission Director, the GIS Deputy, the Payroll/HR Deputy, Chief Deputy in Clerk's Office...who do their position for the entire county and not just a department.

The moral of county employees is at a low point the way it is regarding their wages and feeling like the boards do not care. The motion they just passed, will now make it worse. We are already losing great employees because they do not feel appreciated, and they can find another job making more money and we lose the training/experience of that person.

The county is doing a wage study but that appears to be around 8 months before you will get results and then it will be a matter of how to fund it.

SHERIFF ADDITIONAL

Auditor Berish presented:

1000-10117-0005 Attorney \$15,000

To pay for attorney for first half of 2023. Alcorn made the motion to approve. Parker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES

January 17, 2023 – Parker made the motion to approve. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN

Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Wallace seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Stephanie Campbell, President

Jay Alcorn, Vice President

Danny Wallace

Larry Parker

Keith Berry

Wayne Huffman

**Attest: Auditor's Office
Kristina Berish**