

February 14, 2022

Miller County Quorum Court

Journal of the Proceedings

The Miller County Quorum Court met in a regular session on February 14, 2022, at Texarkana City Hall. Judge Harrison called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The opening prayer was given by Justice Cowart. The Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag was recited by the body.

**Roll Call:** (11) Justices of the Peace were present: Justice Cowart, Justice Darden, Justice Green, Justice Haltom, Justice Hickey, Justice LaGrone, Justice Pender, Justice Nettles, Justice Standridge, Justice Toombs, Justice Watkins. 11 Present 0 Absent

A Motion to approve the Consent Agenda by Justice Pender and seconded by Justice Hickey. Voice Vote- all ayes Motion carried without opposition.

**Agenda:** A Motion to accept the Agenda Justice Pender seconded by Justice LaGrone, Voice Vote, all Aye's Motion carried without opposition.

**A. Constitutional Officers Reports:** Judge Harrison stated that they had there Judge's meeting and they talked about the 911 consolidation and the way it stands right now Miller County is going to have to join the Cog, she also stated she asked to be put on the March agenda to appeal to the board to let us have PSAP in Miller County, the way it's looking I don't know that we are going to get that but we are going to try. She stated that they also talked about the infrastructure bill what's coming down its not going to be passed out like the other two, like the last two passed the Covid and the ARP money this is going to the state and we have to apply to the state for the money for each project and one thing they did say is that it is going to be on a per need basics and the first thing they are going to look at and this is out of their mouth was they will look at the millage rates, they said the first thing that they are going to do is if you are not taking full advantage of the your millage rate you will not get any money it will go to the counties that are doing all that they can to take care of business so hopefully that will change otherwise the only way I think we will get any is if we apply strait to the federal government per case it's like a grant. The other thing was the inmate housing the state, county judges and the sheriff are going to the legislators to ask for a increase in housing for our state inmates, currently it is 32.00 a day and we are going to be asking for 63.00 a day that the state senate had our legislators pull 10 counties and Miller County was one that they did pull and according to all of our budget for housing the average was 62.00 to house but they are going to ask 63.00 and see if they can meet half way.

**B. Committee Reports:** Justice Haltom talked about the Jail and Finance committee had a joint meeting and the purpose of that was to address the situation with the City on the felons and misdemeanors and we came to an agreement 50.00 on felons and 42.00 on misdemeanors and the city has already voted to pass theirs and we have an ordinance tonight for us to authorize Cathy to enter into this agreement which I think is fair and excitable and that what we tried to do the city with us and we worked with them to come to a mutual agreement which will benefit the city and the county, with that I am very pleased that we have some representation from the city here tonight Terry Roberts is here and the city manager Jay Ellington, and I appreciate them coming and appreciate your effort and I want to commend the county judge for her part and the sheriff, Mark Lewis and everybody needs to be congratulated. Along those lines let me give you some good news. most the time we are talking news we give out bad news. So, I want to give you some good news we had an inspection of JDC state inspection and in the past we have not faired real well on that inspection but we passed this one with flying colors. I want to commend the staff and John Wilson and judge for there efforts out there. we had our meeting out there a couple of weeks ago and I have never seen that facility look as good as it did. I am very proud of the job they done. Along the lines we also got word that Mark sent me a message that they had their meeting with the state board on the addition to the jail and we have been approved phase 1 which is good news. We also did have an inspection of the jail and except for being understaffed we came out smelling like a rose which is unusual. Again, the staff, the warden, the sheriff the responsible workers that do the job the people that do it every day I want to commend them, when you get a good clean slate, it is worth being noted. Along the line of that I did, I will share this we did not know this the other night this we had a short brief pre meeting with the City Manager and he has agreed to meet with us on the JDC we feel like were close to making some kind of agreement that will help not only the county but the city as far as the JDC is concerned so I am very optimistic of that very pleased that the city again has come thru we want to work with you and I know you'll want to work with us and I appreciate that so that's the report for the jail committee. Justice Pender stated he just wanted to echo what John said about the juvenile center. I have been involved in the juvenile center since the day it was built, and it looks better than it has ever looked really shined.

**C. Comments from the Public:** None

**D. Old Business:** None

**D. New Business:**

1. Appropriation Ordinance – 2021 Budget Road asphalt and numerous transfers and it was brought through the committee unanimously it does not require a second and I would ask that the clerk read the ordinance, the clerk read the ordinance. Justice Pender made a motion to pass the ordinance seconded by Justice Cowart. Voice Voter All Aye`s, Motion carried without opposition. Roll Call Vote 11-0 Appropriation Ordinance 2022-1
  
2. Justice Pender stated this is an Ordinance to establish an ARPA Replacement fund. It was approved through committee with an unanimous do pass, I would as the clerk to read the Ordinance, Clerk read the Ordinance Justice Pender stated that it had to be passed on three readings, Justice Pender moved to we pass the first reading and to place the ordinance on second reading title only seconded by Justice Haltom, Roll Call Vote 11-0. Clerk read Title only. Justice Pender moved to pass the second reading and move the ordinance to third and final reading title only seconded by Justice Haltom, Roll Call Vote 11-0, Clerk read Title only, Justice Pender moved to Pass the Third reading seconded by Justice Hickey Roll Call Vote 11-0 Ordinance 2022-2
  
3. Prosecuting Attorney`s Audit- Connie Mitchell had no comments and there was no discussion of the audit. Justice Pender moved to approve and seconded by Justice Haltom. Voice Vote – All Aye`s carried without opposition
  
4. Discussion – Interlocal Agreement between the County and City – Justice Pender asked the Clerk to read the Ordinance. Judge Harrison stated that the County Attorney has sent it back with some not just monetary changes but clarification changes, she asked Carla Jenkins her assistant to tell them which changes they were, Justice Cowart stated that this was for Discussion only, they agreed . Carla stated paragraph two his suggestion was for clarification purposes to add the language (from the point of intake until the earlier to occur of ) Justice Pender asked if that was all the changes, Judge Harrison stated yes, Justice Haltom stated that the lawyer didn`t understand why we were doing two different prices but in reviewing that was the agreement we made so we decided that was our business and to stay with it. we had already agreed with the city so that was the purpose for that try to help them as much as we could. Justice Pender ask if we were going to just wait and pass it next time. Justice Haltom stated that he thinks all that we need to do is to give Cathy the authority, well the Quorum Court needs to give Cathy the authority to sign the interlocal agreement that`s whose name. that what I would recommend that we give the County Judge the Authority to sign the interlocal agreement. I think its been. we have discussed it in committee. committee approved it and if anybody has any questions are any concerns about it now is

a good time for us to do it, that's the reason we put it on here for discussion. Like I said this has gone through committee and the committee has approved the agreement with the city. so they based there vote the other night on our consensus that we were acceptable to it. Justice Haltom made a motion that we authorize the Judge to enter this interlocal agreement. Voice Vote for me to sign the interlocal agreement say aye, all aye's motion carried without opposition. Judge Harrison stated she had one other thing to discuss with, they have it down as a resolution but it's not anything that's going to be new money but the highway department is wanting to work on County Road 290 at the train tracks and the full project cost 280,000.00 they are asking the county to pay 29,000.00 of it. its going to be coming out of my budget so I don't need approval for that I just wanted you to know that. Justice Pender address the Judge with what she had shared tonight it might behoove us to think about bringing our road fund up to the full millage, and that there is no better way to sell that then we may not be eligible for those funds unless we do and I know the road department has had difficulty with a lot of bridges that need so serious attention and its going to cost the county a lot of money I think that's something. I am not someone for raising the taxes if anyone knows me very well probably, we should and I'm sure the city would be happy if we moved the millage back to its original amount so we can take a full advantage of the ARP funds. Justice Haltom asked if we could do that? Judge Harrison said we can't do that I don't think until November. Justice Pender asked if the voter and Justice Haltom stated we just need to look into it and see, I think you have a good point for what I'm hearing from people in the county they won't their roads fixed and right now we don't have the money to do the things we need to do. Justice Pender stated he didn't bring it out today because it would be like whooping a dead horse, those folks coming down from Little Rock don't realize the circumstance that both Miller County and Texarkana find their self in not only are we a border city here that has special problems it creates for us but a city of our class normally have big box stores a lot of sales tax and all those fall on the Texas side we don't have that advantage kind of like Jonesboro or even Eldorado they have there big box stores in town and they generate a lot of sales tax from them that we are unable to do. So, we are probably going to have to take advantage of everything we can in the future to make Miller County float because we really have a hard time with revenue. Judge Harrison said that was what she was telling someone today a lot of people don't realize that with us being a border city and I use Baxter County They are a smaller county than us but they get about 8 million more a year than we do because they are a stand alone city with the Sam's. Home Depot, are all in there city and because we are a border city we have the expenses of a class 5 or 6 county do to our jail. most counties our size only house 140 inmates and we are expanding to 400 so we have the income of a class 3 county and the expense of a larger county so its hard to juggle that. Justice

Haltom asked Mark Lewis if he had a update on the bid date of the expansion of the jail, Mark Lewis stated, not after the last conversation we had. Justice Haltom said even if we got the construction on that in June or July we are looking at next year or the year after before those 60 beds come available and if you look at the audit running over compacity, so year, year and half from now we will really be over compacity, and I don't want to let anyone out of jail, you hear it on the news everyday defunded police I don't want to defund anyone, I want to keep them in jail.

Adjourned: Motion to Adjourn by Justice Haltom, seconded by County Judge,

Recorded 27 min 45sec.

Adjourned 6:28 p.m.

FILED

Attest: MAR 15 2022

MILLER COUNTY CLERK  
SH D.C.

Cathy Harrison

Cathy Harrison, County Judge

Stephanie Harvin

Stephanie Harvin, County Clerk