

UNION COUNTY FISCAL MEETING  
March 23, 2021

All supporting documents to these Minutes may be found in the office of the County Judge/Executive.

The meeting opened at 9:00 a.m. with a Prayer by Judge O’Nan, and the Pledge to the American flag.

The Union County Fiscal Court met in regular session with the Honorable Adam O’Nan presiding. Due to the Corona Virus the Union County Fiscal Court met in the upstairs Courtroom so that social distancing could be practiced and the meeting was livestreamed on Facebook. Magistrate’s present were Wyatt, Floyd, Ricketts, Byrnes and Clements.

The minutes from the March 9, 2021 meeting were accepted as read.

Judge O’Nan opened Court by stating that Gary Sheffer, Superintendent of the Water District, came in and talked to him this week. They are in need of a new air conditioning unit. The cost in going to be roughly \$5000, maybe a little less. They also have some upgrades that need to be made to the building. The Water District rents the building from the County for \$500 a month. Gary wanted to know if the County would be interested in selling the building to them. Judge O’nan stated that he didn’t have a problem with selling the building to them since they are another special governmental entity. He stated that we could get an appraisal and come up with a price that’s fair for both sides, knowing that there is work that needs to be done, or we can continue on the path that we are on. He said that he thinks it may be prudent for them to own their own building and that he’s not sure what the benefit of the County being in the rental business might be. He asked the Court what their thoughts were.

Another property the Judge mentioned to the Court in regards to selling, is the house in front of the museum. It’s an empty house that’s been abandoned for quite some time. He said that he had been in it and it’s not terrible but with it being uninhabited, it will go down fast and we certainly don’t want varmints in there that close to where we are going to be doing some renovations at the museum. He asked if the Court knows of any purpose that it serves for the County to own it, if they had any ideas of what we could do with it other than just let it keep depreciating, or if they would be in favor of selling it? He said that there may be some interest from the people who live right there around it, to buy that property.

Magistrate Clements stated that the Water District had mentioned wanting to purchase the building they are renting from us in the past but nothing ever materialized from it. He said as far

as he was concerned, we could get a fair appraisal on it and offer it to them for fair appraisal value. Magistrate Floyd said that he would be in agreement to sell it as well.

Judge O’Nan entertained a motion to start the process of getting an appraisal and to come up with a tentative agreement with the Water District, obviously with guidance from our County Attorney, Julie Wallace and that it would come back to the Court for final approval. Magistrate Clements made a motion, seconded by Magistrate Floyd, motion carried.

The Judge stated that the empty house in front of the museum is not as pressing but he wanted to hear the Court’s thoughts about it. Magistrate Clements said that his initial thought was that, because it is adjoining property, he would hate to sell it. The Court has talked about doing some road work by the house and he would like to keep the property at least until we decide what we are going to do out there. Judge O’Nan said that that would be wise because of the upcoming renovations that are going to go on out there since we don’t really know what that’s going to look like just yet. He just wanted to bring it to the Court’s attention because we don’t want to be part of the problem with blighted properties. He said that we will get started on the Water District building and hopefully we can come back to Court with the latest information at the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Next on the agenda, Judge O’Nan stated, was the jail vote. The Judge said that at the previous request of Magistrate Ricketts, the Court agreed to run a 6month trial with the inmates being housed in Webster County, before making a decision on whether or not to close the jail. At the end of February, the trial was complete. With the Magistrates having all numbers from the trial presented to them it was time to make a decision. Judge O’Nan invited Jailer, Shawn Elder to come before the Court to give his thoughts on how things have gone in the last 6months, any of the tweaks he’s made and how he sees us moving forward. Elder said that as far as the transports, everything is going excellent. He hasn’t had any complaints from any law enforcement. Law enforcement has not had to wait one time for transport. He said that they were extremely busy this month and that they’ve already done 53 new arrest transports, with the average being around 45. They’ve had 15 Court transports this month as well. They have also served 35 papers this month and that’s not counting the ones they made contact with and they picked up the papers for themselves at the Sheriff’s office. From Webster County’s aspect of it, as of today, they are housing around 27 of our inmates, with the average being around 32 and he has had no complaints from them. Elder is very pleased with the way things are going right now and in order to help the County build up their reserves, he thinks that closing the jail would be the best decision at this time. Elder suggests, that the County build up its reserves in the next 10-20years and then possibly build a new Correction Facility, if it is feasible.

Magistrate Ricketts made a motion to close the jail, seconded by Magistrate Wyatt. Before the final vote, Judge O’Nan opened it up for discussion.

Magistrate Floyd said that even with the \$300,000 the County would be saving by closing the jail, we're not even taken into account the thousands of dollars we would be saving from not having to do all the repairs that would have to be done if it were to remain open. Jailer Elder said that the building is in bad shape. We would have to put on a new roof, the A/C units would probably have to be replaced in a couple of years and much of the concrete would have to be busted up in the back of the jail in order to repair the plumbing/sewer.

Judge O'Nan pointed out, that because we close the jail today, does not mean that the County would never be able to house a detention facility moving forward. Elder stated that if the jail were to close, we would not lose our waivers, we could open another one at any time.

Magistrate Ricketts stated that we as a Court are charged with making fiscally, responsible decisions and he clearly thinks that this is the correct decision.

Magistrate Clements asked, if the vote to close the jail passes, does this mean Elder is completely out of the facility? Elder stated that he could still operate the transports from there but he cannot house inmates for over 96 hours in the facility.

In regards to the new EOC building, that will be housed at the Sykes building, Judge O'Nan stated that Jailer Elder worked with them and brought some really good ideas about having 2 cells at the EOC building that will provide him the same luxury, as far as weather delays or anything that might come up where he could house inmates for that limited amount of time in the new EOC building, as well. The Judge is expecting that when the EOC building is complete, the Jail building will not be utilized for any Jail transports. They will all be moved out to the EOC building.

Magistrate Clements asked if we would be able to shut off more utilities to the Jail building if it were to shut down? Jailer Elder said that they are using the very basic utilities in the front of the building until they can move.

Judge O'Nan said that he has talked to Judge Henry in Webster County and they are very pleased with how everything is going. He added that Jailer Elder has been a critical part of this process, from the jump start, which was around 2018. He has brought information, he's brought ideas, he's brought thoughts and Judge O'Nan appreciates the partnership that they have, working through this.

Magistrate Floyd wanted to make sure that everyone was aware that we still have our programs that allow inmates to work in the county. Judge O'Nan stated that he believes that the Justice Department had it worked out to where the inmates could start that process of working in the County, but the Department of Transportation came in and said, not so fast.

After the discussions, the motion was carried.

Judge O'Nan reiterated that the closing of the jail is not a Jailer Shawn Elder issue. Shawn has done remarkably well under the circumstances that he has over there. He's gotten a lot of good out of that building and we appreciate him very much and look forward to continuing to work with him.

At this point, Judge O’Nan stated that we need to extend our contract with Webster County. He will speak with Judge Henry, to make sure he is in agreement with how the contract is drawn up. He will also talk to County Attorney, Julie Wallace and they will get more details and have that information for Court next Tuesday night, March 30<sup>th</sup>, at our night meeting.

Judge O’Nan stated that next on the agenda was the Seven Gums Road name change. He then let Magistrate Wyatt explain this since it was in his district. Wyatt said that Keith Hendrickson had talked to him last year about changing the name of this road. The reason being, was because whenever they had to have farm equipment or supplies delivered, the seven was throwing the GPS’ off, because the deliverers would enter the seven as the number 7 instead of spelling it out. Judge O’Nan said that the process was handled by our County Attorney sending letters to all of the residents living on that road. The Court has no objections to changing the name and literally, all we are doing is removing the seven and it’s now going to be called Gums Road. Mr. Hendrickson asked if the name could be changed to something better? The Judge explained that it could not be changed at this time because the letters that were sent out to the other residents stated only that Seven Gums Road was being change to Gums Road. To change the name to something entirely different would be a whole different process.

The Judge then presented to the Court 3 Memorandum of Agreements. The first MOA was for the Debt Service Bond Payments Project in the amount of \$446,272. Magistrate Floyd made a motion to approve said MOA, seconded by Magistrate Byrnes, motion carried.

The second MOA was for the Jail Contract Housing Project in the amount of \$400,000. Magistrate Ricketts made a motion to approve said MOA, seconded by Magistrate Byrnes, motion carried.

The third MOA was for the 911 Dispatch Services Project in the amount of \$563,060. Magistrate Floyd made a motion to approve said MOA, seconded by Magistrate Wyatt, motion carried.

Judge O’Nan then presented a HB 352 Resolution Amendment for the Moffit Lake Cabins. Magistrate Wyatt made a motion to approve said Resolution Amendment, seconded by Magistrate Byrnes, motion carried.

Judge O’Nan asked the Court for their approval of HB 810 for elected officials training pay. We have 4 individuals that have completed their 40hour training benchmarks. They are Magistrate Clements and Jailer Elder for the amount of \$4,372.96, Magistrate Byrnes for the amount of \$3,279.72 in the fall, and Sheriff Arnold in the amount of \$3,372.96. Magistrate Wyatt made a motion to approve these expenditures, seconded by Magistrate Floyd, motion carried.

Judge O’Nan brought before the Court a recommendation for the hiring at the Road Department. He said that Magistrate Ricketts, Magistrate Wyatt, himself, along with Road Foreman, Tony Ratley interviewed 5 applicants for the Road Crew position. After the interviews the hiring committee brought forth the recommendation to hire Brad Blakeley, as an equipment operator. He said with approval, Brad will come to us from the Kentucky State Highway Department at a rate of \$15.50 an hour. Because of an open spot that had never been filled from the past, Judge O’Nan also recommended that we hire Steven Bryant as a general laborer at \$14 an hour. Both individuals have their Class A CDL license and all open positions at the Road Department will be filled if the recommendations are approved. Magistrate Wyatt made a motion to approve said recommendations, seconded by Magistrate Ricketts, motion carried.

Judge O’Nan then stated that when the Court approved to hire Tony Ratley as the new Road Foreman, he was hired as an hourly employee. The Court talked about making him a salary employee but we need to define that by the hour for auditing purposes. The Judge recommended that the Court approve Tony Ratley’ s hourly rate of \$21.48 which is the same rate as the former Foreman, Mike Schmied. Magistrate Ricketts made a motion to approve the hourly rate of \$21.48 for Road Foreman, Tony Ratley, seconded by Magistrate Wyatt, motion carried.

Judge O’Nan recommended that the Court hire, Tom Robinson as a part-time employee for 3 days a week at the Recycling Building at a rate of \$11.50 an hour. Magistrate Floyd made a motion to approve the hire, seconded by Magistrate Byrnes, motion carried.

Next on the agenda is the Henshaw Fire Department. Judge O’Nan then turned it over to Magistrate Ricketts for him to present. Ricketts stated that at the first meeting in February he raised the issue of his desire to construct a new Fire Department in Henshaw. There was a lot of work to be done at that time before it could be addressed but since the work has been completed, he wanted to now address where we are and hopefully get something moving in that regard. He introduced Matthew Williams who is the Chief of the Henshaw Volunteer Fire Department and Tom Stevenson who is a founding member of that department and a lifelong supporter. Ricketts stated that the County has been able to secure property for the construction of the new Fire Department through the generosity of Mr. Stevenson, who volunteered to provide some acreage to build the new structure. Magistrate Ricketts made a motion to approve the construction of the new Henshaw Volunteer Fire Department, seconded by Magistrate Clements, motion carried.

Magistrate Clements said that after meeting with Magistrate Ricketts and Fire Chief, Matt Williams he thinks it’s time to get Henshaw a new building.

Judge O’Nan clarified that this beginning process gets us on record by saying that we approve of the building. We will get with Sean Sheffer, who still has the building specs of the

Waverly Fire Department project and this will be a good starting point that we can talk about. We'll also talk to Chief Williams about how the building will actually look. All of these decisions and numbers will come back before the Court for approval and Coal Severance Funds will be used for this project. The Judge said that it's good to see good things happening for those people that work hard and protect that end of the County and that it's also good when we have people that want to be a part of the process by donating a plot of land. He said that for Tom to do this, in memory of his brother and someone that was really important to the Henshaw Department, is a huge step and that we acknowledge and appreciate him for that. He stated that it will take a little time to get some specs, then we will bid this out and get started on the construction. He told Chief Williams that he appreciates all that he's doing to revitalize the Department in Henshaw.

All claims are to be paid as presented.

Judge O'Nan stated that he had checked with our Regional Health Director, Clay Horton to see where we were as far as COVID vaccinations in the County and the progress we're making. He said that Clay reported that as of today the total number of doses administered is 4,102. The total number of people who have had both doses is 3,020. The Judge stated that these numbers do not include anybody that was vaccinated outside of the County. He relayed that there were 40 plus vaccination slots available today and that you could get on the website at [deaconess.com](http://deaconess.com) to make an appointment. They also have 80 plus slots open for Thursday. He said that Governor Beshear announced yesterday that Kentucky has had 10 straight weeks of declining cases and the lowest positivity rate in months.

Judge O'Nan said that he had a great meeting with Claudia Eisenmann, the CEO of Deaconess Union County and they have big plans to bring services back to Union County and to be a somewhat standalone hospital. They are under the Deaconess umbrella but are trying to operate independently. The Judge feels that's what a lot of people in the County would love to hear and see. He said that he expects to see changes coming in the near future.

He's trying to schedule a Zoom meeting with Representative Miles and Senator Mills and that will probably happen the first of next week regarding our FEMA application and KYEM, to get everyone on the same page about what's going on and what our next step is.

Judge O'Nan said that as far as bills and budgets are concerned, counties are always concerned about the Bill turn out as far as Coal Severance and that we came out well, maybe even a little better than we did last year. We continue to have that at our disposal and we are very thankful for it.

Magistrate Clements asked if during the Judge's meeting with CEO, Claudia Eisenmann, was anything discussed regarding a Dialysis Center in Union County? Judge O'Nan said that he

reminded her that this would be a great time to start talking about a dialysis center in Union County and he thinks that they really want to do this. We just have to figure out how to make it work.

Magistrate Wyatt expressed his appreciation to Mike Schmied and his road crew for all of the hard work they performed during the snow, as well as for the State and City departments.

Magistrate Ricketts wanted to acknowledge Chuck Adamson at the State Highway Department. Ricketts said that he was having an issue in Caseyville with needing some signage. There are a lot of kids playing out in the roadway and Chuck went down personally and took an engineer from Madisonville with him. Ricketts said that he is happy to report that they put up signage which was way beyond his expectation through that community and that all of the residents are tickled to death.

Magistrate Floyd asked if all of the Magistrates would be able to come up with a schedule for their district's clean-up days in the County and bring it to Court on March 30<sup>th</sup>? He's just wanting to make sure that everyone is on the same page as it is fast approaching. He also stated that he as well thought a lot of Chuck Adamson. He said that Chuck has never not responded when he's had to call on him for assistance. Floyd said that the Bravettes' had a big game tonight and he told everyone that if they were interested in seeing a good game to go to Trigg County or listen to them on WMSK.

Judge O'Nan stated that the Bravettes' have a big night and the Wrestlers have a big weekend.

Magistrate Floyd said that we are so Blessed to have WMSK because if you can't make the event, you can always listen to it.

Magistrate Byrnes wanted to Thank Judge O'Nan and Tony Ratley for the work that was done on Ben Dyer Road.

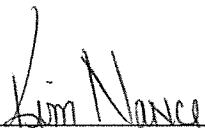
Magistrate Clements wanted to Thank Tom Stevenson for donating the property for a new Fire Department to be built in Henshaw. Clements asked the Judge if there were any updates on the Dozit Landfill or Hwy. 666? Judge O'Nan said they he didn't have any updates but that he and Magistrate Floyd continue to talk with Dozit. He said that he had sent them some information and he's waiting to hear back and hopefully we will be able to proceed soon. Judge O'Nan said that this is something that he works on at least once a month if not more. It absolutely ties in with the Hwy 666 project because if Dozit reopens, the way we handle 666 is greatly impacted. He's talked with people from Riverview and is trying to schedule a meeting in the next 2 weeks with Secretary Gray. There are 2 things that he wants to talk to Secretary Gray about and they are, the remaining


section of Hwy. 56, because we have to get that fixed and all of the right of ways. He said that we have purchased all but 2 of the right of ways and all we like is virtually the construction. He has already met with the Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Mike Hancock once, and since he was one of the originators of the first project, he's very familiar with it. Judge O'Nan said that he and Representative Miles are going to meet with Secretary Gray about that and Hwy 666 to see how we can partner with them to just swing the road around the edge of the property to where we don't inconvenience anyone, except for a small detour around where that road will be. He said that as soon as he has any new information, he will let the Court know.

Magistrate Floyd stated that even though we might not hear anything, Judge O'Nan has worked on this a lot.

Judge O'Nan said that this was a 4 to 5 year out project. It is not something that we're going to deal with in the next year. He said that he is thankful that Riverview approached us early in this process so that we can try to come up with an alternative that works for everybody. He said that the farmers need the access and that we still have to have the access for the flooding on Hwy. 360, right before you get to Uniontown. He's confident that we'll work this out. He's talked to Secretary Gray several times and he thinks that he will be very open to the project but we also know the constraints of the Highway Road Fund. We will just try to work it out as best we can.

There being no further business to come before the Court, a motion to adjourn was made by Magistrate Floyd, seconded by Magistrate Ricketts, motion carried.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Fiscal Court Clerk  
Kim Nance

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Adam O'Nan  
County Judge/Executive