

**MINUTES OF MEETING
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
9:00 AM Friday, December 6, 2019
Ouachita Room, Ponce de Leon Center**

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present

Pamela Avila
Greg Jones
David Childs
Curt Malone
Cheri Nelson
Bob Pettey
David Whitlow
Jerry Yeric
Jim Zahnd

Committee Members Absent

Mike Hood

Ex-Officio Members Present

Bob Shoemaker

Ex-Officio Board Members Absent

POA Liaisons

Mike Medica, Board Liaison
Leslie Nalley, POA CEO

Other Board Members

Justices of the Peace

Keith Keck, Saline County
Larry Raney, Garland County

School District Liaisons

Dr. Michael Murphy, FLSD
Melissa Speers, Jessieville SD (absent)

HSV Area Chamber of Commerce Liaison

Executive Director (Position Vacant)

Press

Lewis Delavan, Village Voice

OPENING OF MEETING

Call to Order: Chair Pam Avila called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Notified Absences: None.

Agenda: The Agenda was approved with no changes.

Minutes: The minutes of the November 1, 2019 meeting were approved.

GUEST SPEAKER

Greg Mabry, President of the Downtown Hot Springs Business Association

- In the past 5-10 years, the quality of life in Hot Springs downtown has changed for the better. Hot Springs is growing as a destination city and the \$100 million investment at the Oaklawn hotel, casino and racetrack is evidence of that growth.

- Hot Springs' growth has been spurred by a diversity of ownership and investments in the downtown area. The T-shirt shops have been replaced by new businesses and new activities, such as the Chili Cookoff, the Christmas parade, the Running of the Tubs, the St. Patrick's Day Parade and monthly Gallery Walks. Mabry encouraged the Village to participate in these events and hope the City and the Village could work together in terms of promoting the area.
- Mabry thinks the fire at the Majestic Hotel was a catalyst for change in Hot Springs as it increased interest in preserving Hot Springs' landmark buildings.
- That being said, significant issues face Hot Springs especially in terms of how and if the Arlington Hotel, the Army Navy Hospital and the Arkansas Math and Science Building can be restored or repurposed. Further challenges facing Hot Springs include parking, internet shopping and the closure of the Henderson State University Hot Springs Campus.

REPORTS

POA Board Liaison – Mike Medica

- No written report submitted.

POA CEO – Leslie Nalley

- Report deferred until January 2020.

Chair – Pam Avilla

- Introduced visitors; Richard McGrew and Renee Haugen.
- Summarized her report to the POA Board about the work of the GAC.

Member Updates and Reports

Broadband Services and Grant – Greg Jones

- A survey is being prepared to get detailed information from Villagers regarding availability, speed and cost of existing broadband services. This information will be used to support efforts to obtain state and federal grant money to improve broadband service in the Village.

Garland County – Jerry Yerick

- Submitted in writing, attached to Minutes.

Highways (Tri-Lakes MPO) – David Whitlow

- Submitted in writing, attached to Minutes.

Legislative Affairs – Jerry Yerick

- No written report submitted.

Saline County – Curt Malone

- No written report submitted.

Website – Pam Avila

- No written report submitted.

2020 Census Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee – Jim Zahnd

- Report deferred until January 2020.

Benton – David Childs

- Submitted in writing, attached to Minutes.

JP Comments

Larry Rainey (Garland).

- Introduced Richard McGrew, who is a member of the Garland County Quorum Court and is currently running in the special election for House District 22, which encompasses parts of Hot Springs, Hot Springs Village, Jessieville and Malvern.
- Commented on the expanded casino business in Hot Springs and noted that while the County just received \$400,000 from the casino, the business might be problematic for law enforcement in the future.

Keith Keck (Saline).

- Saline County Quorum Court is working on the budget for next year and has flat-lined revenues from this year to next year. While the revenue projections were flat, expenses continue to go up. Therefore, adjustments are being made to meet increased expenses and any initiatives for new spending have been tabled.
- Contracts for remediation of Highway 5 curves will be let in January.
- In addition to the efforts to get state grants for broadband service improvements, meetings are set with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Monday, December 9, 2019, in an effort to obtain federal funds.
- The contract for construction of the Saline County Career and Technical Education Campus was awarded to CDI Contractors of Little Rock. Mark Beach, CDI's Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, is a resident of the Village. The CTE Campus is located on Mountain View Road in Benton and is expected to be open for business by the 2021-22 school year.

School District Representative Comments

Dr. Michael Murphy (Fountain Lake S.D.).

- No report.

Melissa G. Speers, Ed. S. (Jessieville S.D.).

- No report.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Organization Chart of state and local government structures.**
Mike Hood is continuing to work on this project.

- **Difference between corporation and municipality.**
Efforts continue to identify a point person for this project.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Report on GAC and POA BoD Elections.**
Jerry Yerick reported that a sub-committee of the GAC met and determined that this was outside the scope of the GAC's charter. The matter is now being considered by other committees.
- **Quorum Court Dates and Locations.**
As part of the Village's 50th Anniversary Celebration, the Saline County Quorum Court will hold its March 16, 2020, meeting in the Village. Details for the Saline County meeting and dates for a similar meeting of the Garland County Quorum Court are being finalized.
- **Health Services Directory.**
Efforts continue to locate the health services directory that was previously produced, but not distributed.
- **Health Fair.**
CHI St. Vincent has expressed interest in participating in a health fair.

REMINDERS & CALENDAR

Next POA Board Meeting: 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 18, 2019, Ouachita Room, Ponce de Leon Center.

Next GAC Meeting: 9:00 a.m., Friday, January 3, 2020, Ouachita Room, Ponce de Leon Center.

GAC Committee Reports - Dec. 6, 2019

Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization Report – David Whitlow

The Tri-Lakes MPO Policy Board did not meet in November 2019.

Planning and transportation Information below should be of interest to residents of Hot Springs Village:

- In early November ARDOT opened bids on the 5.8 mile extension of the Kind Expressway. Three bids were submitted. McGeorge Contracting of Pine Bluff was the apparent low bidder. The company stated that the work could be completed in 890 days. McGeorge's bid was for \$75.15 million. Some early work could begin by the end of 2019.
- Governor Asa Hutchinson and other state leaders have launched a campaign to keep a half-cent sales tax in place for road needs. The current tax is set to expire in 2023. The ballot initiative will be a top priority for passage by the state.
- The environmental studies portion of the Southwest Trail Project was recently completed. A draft environmental assessment has been completed and submitted to ARDOT for review. The final alignment has not been set, however a preferred alignment will be completed and recommended by early 2020. When completed, the proposed alignment will be submitted to the public for review and comment.
- Two bridge replacements on Highway 7 North over Bear Creek and the South Fourche are nearing completion. Both are near Hollis, Arkansas. Completion is scheduled for May 2020.

Hot Springs—Jerry Yeric

The more than \$120 million of the 2020 budget includes \$1.5 million in change orders for the city's public safety communications system project, a consequence of the former Army and Navy General Hospital's unavailability as a host site for a critical repeater in the system's microwave network. The building's strategic perch overlooking downtown Central Avenue would have allowed radio signals to reach into and out of downtown and also cover the Highway 70 east area. The development and delay of finding a new location is estimated to cost the city an additional \$1 million dollars.

County Judge Darryl Mahoney told justices of the peace last month that the delayed rollout of the city's communications system is affecting radio coverage north of the city. A dead spot in the Fountain Lake area will persist until the city's system goes live.

Segregating firefighters gear worn at fire scenes from the firehouse's living quarters is a relatively new practice. Avoiding constant exposure to the carcinogens the gear absorbs outside the station is critical to managing cancer risks. This will be an expensive endeavor and would take 10-15 years to complete in Hot Springs.

The Hot Springs Board of Directors voted to freeze sanitation rates next year, a price hold the city said is partially owed to next year's addition of new accounts in recently annexed areas adjacent to Lake Hamilton.

The Hot Springs Advertising and Promotion Commission approved its 2020 budget and the city's 2020 marketing plan. Visit Hot Springs CEO Steve Arrison presented a summary of the 2020 commission budget, which projects nearly \$9.7 million in revenues, including nearly \$6.9 million in tax collections.

Garland—Jerry Yeric

Garland County Quorum Court elections will have 4 of the 13 seats contested.

Dist. 3 Esther Dixon D* George Pritchett R

Dist. 4 Larry Williams D Jimmy Young R*

Dist. 9 Cortney McKee D Matt McKee*

Dist. 10 Lee Crawford D and Jim Sorrells R*

The salary for JP is \$8,588.

*Denotes incumbent

State Representative District 22

Three people have filed for the special election on March 3rd to serve the remaining year of Mickey Gates term: Richard McGrew R, Jack Wells R, and Judy Bowers L.

For the general election primary there are three Republicans who have filed: Richard McGrew, Jack Wells, and Richard Midkiff. The winner of that election will be elected for a full term.

A mutually beneficial pact between Garland County and the city of Hot Springs will stretch the former's paving budget and secure easements for the latter's raw water transmission line. The county has agreed to let the city put part of its 17-mile long raw water line in county right of way. In return, the city will rebuild and overlay county-maintained roads affected by the project. County Judge Darryl Mahoney said the city will pay the full cost of rebuilding and

overlying Cozy Acres Road, where the city hopes to begin installing the 42-inch line early next year.

The Quorum Court approved a resolution, which the Hot Springs Board of Directors adopted earlier, calling for the area's congressional representatives to develop a funding plan for securing the Army-Navy building and keeping the utilities on after state funding expires at the end of June.

The 2019 millage rates the Garland County Quorum Court ratified included a rollback for the rate the city of Mountain Pine assesses for its general fund. Mountain Pine is the only taxing entity in the county with an adjusted 2019 millage rate.

The 5 mills will drop to 4.9 on tax bills the county will send out in February, the result of the total value of real and personal property inside the city's corporate limits increasing by more than 10% from the 2018 to 2019 tax years. The state tax code calls for a rollback when a tax base's total value increases by more than 10%.

Benton GAC – David Childs

The primary news is that the bids will be opened for construction of the Career Training Center on Thursday. Ground breaking should be in December and classes should start in Fall 2021.