



**COMMISSION BUSINESS SESSION MINUTES
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 26, 2024 6:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Nolte called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

2. INVOCATION

Recited by Theresa Leaming

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited

4. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Nolte requested the Clerk to call the roll.

A Quorum was established by the following roll call vote:

Commissioner Nolte – Here
Commissioner Withington – Here
Commissioner Lawson – Here
Commissioner Wagner – Here
Commissioner Johnson – Here
Commissioner Thompson – Here
Commissioner Carpenter – Here

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Agenda as printed.

Commissioner Johnson – Yes
Commissioner Thompson – Yes
Commissioner Carpenter – Yes
Commissioner Withington – Yes
Commissioner Lawson – Yes
Commissioner Wagner – Yes

The motion Passed.

6. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

- 2024-274 Honorary Resolution September National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month/Commissioner Wagner

Commissioner Wagner spoke about Resolution 2024-274 and why it is important to be aware of this issue every month and every week.

Commissioner Withington spoke regarding Suicide Awareness Month.

Ann Stepp, with Moms Demand Action, spoke regarding National Suicide Awareness Month and local resources that are available.



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Meagan Nielsen, Beacon Mental Health Youth Prevention Specialist, spoke regarding local resources available.

The Commission paused for presentation of the Honorary Resolution and pictures.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 2024 Tax Levies

Commissioner Nolte opened the Public Hearing for the 2024 Tax Levies.

Dianna Wright, County Administrator, gave a brief opening and overview of the 2024 Tax Levies.

A Member of the DDRB (Developmental Disabilities Resource Board) spoke regarding the 2024 Tax Levies and gave a brief overview of what the DDRB does and the services they provide.

Commissioner Nolte closed the Public Hearing for the 2024 Tax Levies.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

- 2024-275 Approve Invoice Payments for Clay County for the Period of September 14, 2024 to September 20, 2024/Accounts Payable
- 2024-272 Approve Transfer of Ownership of K9 Duke to East Lansing, Michigan Police Department/Sheriff
- 2024-277 Approve Labor Agreement Between Clay County, Missouri Road & Bridge and Teamsters Local 41/Road & Bridge

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Consent agenda as printed.

Commissioner Johnson – Yes
Commissioner Thompson – Yes
Commissioner Carpenter – Yes
Commissioner Withington – Yes
Commissioner Lawson – Yes
Commissioner Wagner – Yes

The motion Passed.

10. REGULAR AGENDA

- 2024-276 Approve Invoice Payments for Clay County Prosecutor's Office for the Period of September 14, 2024 to September 20, 2024/Accounts Payable

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-276.



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Commissioner Johnson – Yes
Commissioner Thompson – Recused
Commissioner Carpenter – Yes
Commissioner Withington – Yes
Commissioner Lawson – Yes
Commissioner Wagner – Yes

The motion Passed.

- 2024-ORD-30 Setting Tax Levies for 2024/Auditor

Victor Hurlbert, Auditor, spoke regarding Ordinance 2024-ORD-30.

Commissioner Withington made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-ORD-30.

Discussion took place.

Rick White, A Member of the DDRB, spoke regarding Ordinance 2024-ORD-30.

Commissioner Withington – Yes
Commissioner Johnson – Yes
Commissioner Thompson – Yes
Commissioner Carpenter – No
Commissioner Lawson – Yes
Commissioner Wagner – No

The motion Passed.

- 2024-ORD-31 Setting Outside Tax Levies for 2024/Auditor

Discussion took place.

Commissioner Wagner made a motion to amend Ordinance 2024-ORD-31 to put Mental Health to 0.0808, DDRB to 0.969, and Senior Services 0.0403 which is their max ceiling.

Discussion took place.

Commissioner Wagner – Yes
Commissioner Johnson – No
Commissioner Thompson – Yes
Commissioner Carpenter – Yes
Commissioner Withington – Yes
Commissioner Lawson - Yes

The amendment Passed.



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Commissioner Wagner made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-ORD-31 as amended.

Commissioner Wagner – Yes
Commissioner Johnson – No
Commissioner Thompson – Yes
Commissioner Carpenter – Yes
Commissioner Withington – Yes
Commissioner Lawson – Yes

The amendment Passed.

11. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Chapter 100 Economic Development Incentives/Administration

Dianna Wright, County Administrator, gave the Commission a brief introduction to Chapter 100 Economic Development Incentives.

Sid Douglas, with Gilmore & Bell, P.C., spoke to the Commission about Chapter 100 Economic Development Incentives

Discussion took place.

Dianna Wright, County Administrator, spoke regarding funding agreements with developers and shared the Administration will be coming forward with a Funding Agreement from a Developer.

Discussion took place.

- Focus Area Update; Infrastructure/Road & Bridge

Dianna Wright, County Administrator, spoke regarding the Focus Area Update and said this would be part one of the Infrastructure update.

Terri Griffen, Road & Bridge Administrator, spoke regarding part one of Infrastructure.

Discussion took place.

Terri shared with the Commission this would be her last presentation as she is retiring and she introduced Pat Klein as the Interim Road and Bridge Director.

The Commission thanked Terri for all she has done for Clay County and wished her well on her retirement.



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12. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

- Meetings Schedule
- Commission Business Session October 3, 2024 6:00 PM

Dianna Wright, County Administrator, reminded the Commission and the public that the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan is out on the website. You can go to Claycountycompass.com and we are soliciting public comments and we encourage everyone to go to the website and take a look and provide us information. Also, the County will have a booth at the Liberty Fall Festival over by the fountain. We will have our consultant there who has been working on the Comp Plan so another opportunity to get information to our citizens and also we'll be having information there about job openings that we have and also sharing information about the Senior Property Tax Relief Program that is available. We will take comments on the Comp Plan through the end of September and hard to believe that is next week, so again, we hope people take a look at that and provide us information. Last but not least on behalf of staff, kudos to Terri and we wish her all the best in her retirement. Terri has been a joy to work with and she has a lot of passion about bridges, roads, and stormwater culverts and about the County as a whole and we appreciate that. She was here last night and gave a presentation to the Citizens Academy, she is tonight giving a presentation and I am going to try to get one more out of her, maybe tomorrow I don't know. We do wish her all the best and don't be a stranger and stop by and see us.

13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Carpenter wanted to briefly address an issue that matters to him, he is a big personable believer in freedom across realms from free market capitalism all the way to freedom of religion. He thinks they are the foundation underpinnings of this County and really can't think of anything more important in terms of what to preserve of the government then those things. When we had the discussion a couple years ago to bring back the prayer he expressed some unease at that time. Along the lines of essentially he gets everyone's perspective and respects the heck out of it and what he said at the time was he was okay with bringing back the prayer if we keep it broad enough to where it doesn't attempt to place one religion above the other because we have people in this Country of all faith and of no faith. Comments that suggest that America, and he will paraphrase to the best of his ability, but that America will only survive as a Christian nation, he thinks is inappropriate for government meetings. Of course ever more so to use the occasion to engage in politics, so he is deeply uneasy about our opening invocation done today and he felt compelled to share that with everyone and if they will hear his concern made in good faith and he hopes we can do better in the future.

Commissioner Johnson wanted to give a heads up to his fellow Commissioners for a topic he asked be placed on the Agenda for next week for discussion. Commissioner Lawson brought it up briefly tonight but they had discussed last month or so, we had talked about some of the nonprofits that come in here and ask for government money to help support their endeavors and he had raised the question if that is something that we should be doing. He asked that it be brought back up next week and he is going to put something down on paper for everyone to see in advance and no its not philosophical differences and he appreciates that and there is nothing wrong with that but there is just philosophical differences on how we govern and how we use taxpayer money. He just wanted to give everyone a heads up that this is going to be coming next week and he hopes to get something on paper tonight and get it out to everyone as soon as possible. It does look like the amount of money that we actually



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reduced tonight in taxes, around two hundred thousand dollars, in the general fund is about roughly what we have been giving to these nonprofits over the last year or two. We will look at those numbers again, he just wanted to give everyone a heads up. There is nothing underhanded here, it is coming next week and we will be able to discuss it and take it from there.

Commissioner Wagner wanted to wish his sister Christine a Happy Birthday, she probably isn't watching, but if you see her tell her I said it. He also wanted to wish everyone a safe and fun Liberty Fall Festival. And because they are only a couple games away from post season, go Royals!

Commissioner Lawson one of the people who was the biggest proponent on prayer before Commission was her. She was raised in a Catholic home, prayer was paramount. You went to mass every Sunday, you didn't miss it. If you didn't go to mass, you didn't get to go out and play, it was one of those things. This Country was founded on the Christian principals, those men who wrote the Constitution, all those things they did to give us the values that we have and the freedom that we have were all done on Christian principals. If somebody comes up here and says a prayers, and they pray to our lord Jesus, god bless you I am happy you do it. We have had rabbi's and I believe every denomination in here and she has respected everyone single one that has come and prayed to us because prayers to God, however they are sent, are of value. She will tell you this, she is sick and tired of us trying to be so inclusive, if she goes to Iran, do you think that they say "Oh that is a Christian, we have to be careful what we say, lets not offend her by praying to Allah". So here in this Country she thinks we better get back to our Christian principals and she is not ashamed of what she is, she is not ashamed that we have people come and pray to our Lord and she is not going to make a bunch of concession for everyone else. She respects their religion, they can pray however they wish, but she is doesn't want anyone to limit what we do in this court room, in this United States of America and forgot how we were founded and what our principals were.

Commissioner Withington agrees with what Commissioner Carpenter said he hopes that Commissioner Nolte will support what we said also. What was said during the invocation today was political and he is not just saying that because he supports Maggie for State Senate. If what was said was said about any person on here then he would be saying the same thing, so this is not the time or place for a political statement. He also hopes staff will tell whoever comes back that this is not the time or place during Invocation for political statements to be made.

Commissioner Johnson spoke again and said he does not disagree about political statements being made, but he is going to call a spade a spade, if you will, because Commissioner Withington made a political statement himself. He purposely did that and threw out the name of the person who he supports.

Commissioner Nolte reminded the Commission not to address another Commissioner, but just to make your comment and not direct it to other Commissioners.

Commissioner Johnson noted that everyone gets his point.

Commissioner Withington just wanted to make it clear he was not giving a shout out to a candidate, that he was just making a point.



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Commissioner Nolte reminded everyone this is comment time and if another Commissioner wanted to address a comment he does allow that. Each Commissioner can express their comments and not comment on each others comment.

Commissioner Johnson said it is obvious we have a Senate race going on, and Presiding Commissioner Nolte is in that race. There is different people up here that have a preference for one or the other, that is a fact. We are trying to keep that neutral up here, at least we were, and there is obviously something mentioned in the invocation that upset some people, and he gets that, he is with them on that no matter who it was. If we would of left it at that, then that was fine, but if you are going to give a shout out to your candidate then the rest of us should be able to give a shout out to our candidate. That is not how we should do that here.

Commissioner Withington just wanted to make it clear that he was not giving a shout out to a candidate, he stated an example. He also said to the entire Commission that if it was said to anyone up here he would of felt the same way. He was not just giving one person a shout out and he thinks our Presiding Commissioner should be reiterating this to other people that they should not be using the invocation to make political statements.

Commissioner Nolte reminded everyone this is comment time. We make the rounds and if a Commissioner would like to readdress a comment he does not find that out of order, he finds it appropriate, but we need to make sure we are addressing not one another, but we are making comments in this way. He is not going to add to where we have gone because it just is not appropriate, he thinks the points on both sides have been made and he has no other comments beyond that. That would be engaging in comments and we are not allowed to legally do that.

14. RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned at 8:20 PM.