

**PERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

July 8, 2024

The Perry County Council met on the above date at 4:00 p.m. as was duly advertised. Council members in attendance were David Etienne (DE), Stan Goffinet (SG), Kelli Harding (Kelli), Keith Huck (KH), Gale Garner (GG), and Paul Malone (PM). Auditor Kristinia Hammack and Sheriff Alan Malone were also present. There was no *Attorney* or *News Representative* present.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

PM made the motion to accept, seconded by GG. Motion carried 6-0.

FUNDING OF PROSECUTOR'S OFFICES ADDITION AT COURTHOUSE

PM stated that although there have been meetings regarding this addition as well as being published, he has received some phone calls regarding questions from citizens in the county who are not on social media. Questions included the total cost of the project, a breakdown of the cost for building and parking lot, and how the project manager will be paid as a percentage or by the hour? Also, the moving cost to relocate the Prosecutor's office or do they get new furniture? He also received a suggestion to post the diagram of this addition at the courthouse, library, Michael's Market, or places the public can view it. Another suggested running the numbers to build versus lease, as well as renegotiate the lease costs.

PM stated that given the fact that many people in the County have not been able to absorb all the information, PM made a motion to table, seconded by KH. KH stated that there is such a lack of information that he feels the Council cannot vote on it on this date. He also stated that it was not until the Commissioner's meeting that he was made aware that the floorplan had been changed.

Kelli responded that if someone is receiving questions such as these, those people should be directed to the people or places who can get that information to them or provide it to them. All of this information is public records.

Kelli stated that this addition has a timeframe for when it has to be done. Approval of funding is needed before it can begin, or do not approve the funding and the project is void. PM asked why does it have a timeframe, and Kelli responded that can be ascertained in the documents. These documents can be requested in writing, and KH stated that these documents should be public without having to request them.

DE stated that most of the questions that PM presented does not take care of what the Council wanted to accomplish. The Prosecutor is being relocated at the Courthouse to increase efficiencies. PM stated he is aware of this, he presented questions that had been given to him by the general public. Kelli stated she is doing everything she can to make the public aware of what is going on in County government.

KH stated that unless he missed a meeting, he has not seen the drawing for the addition. Kelli asked if he requested the drawings? KH responded that he is an elected official and should not have to request a copy. If the Council approves funding, he stated that they should be given that information. Kelli responded that the Commissioner's statutory duty is to make decisions that impact the County buildings, and the Council's statutory duty is the funding.

DE stated that this project has been discussed since September 2023. PM stated that now that numbers have been given out, the general public now has questions. Kelli stated she has received many phone calls and has had personal interaction with citizens who express their appreciation of these efficiencies. These funds are a result of overtaxing in prior years when the jail was built, and they are restricted. They can only be used for certain things. By using these funds, it will offset funds in the County General fund to pay rent. KH stated he feels that they should be aware of the final costs, and Kelli stated that was given in a previous Commissioner meeting. KH responded that the parking lot has not been bid, and Kelli asked Commissioner Randy Cole if the parking lot was included in the bid. Cole stated that the current parking lot is in terrible condition. In order to make the new parking lot look like the old parking lot, the plan is to take the entire parking lot and resurface so that the addition parking lot will be seamless. The parking lot was not included in the bid for the addition. The cost of asphalt in the Fall is unknown at this time.

Cole reiterated that this Prosecutor addition is a new building, it is not being included in the current Courthouse. It requires nothing to be changed in the Courthouse. There will be a firewall between this addition and the back wall of the Courthouse. The fourth wall on the structure will not have to be built, it will have an independent heating and air conditioning system, and the access will be from the outside. This will bring efficiencies to the Prosecutor's system.

GG asked if the parking lot for the addition is in the bid except for the asphalt, and Cole confirmed this.

PM questioned the total amount that would be spent for the addition and parking lot, and Cole stated that the existing parking lot will be more expensive due to all the curbs it has.

SG stated he feels it makes sense to move the Prosecutor to the Courthouse property.

Kelli agreed.

Mike Bruggeman made a public comment regarding his concern as to how the money was moved to the Capital Project fund. This is taxpayers' money and to tell everyone it is not taxpayers' money, no charge to the taxpayers, is not true.

PM made a motion to table, seconded by KH. Motion defeated 4-2.

Kelli made a motion to approve the funding for the Courthouse addition to be paid out of the Perry County Capital Project Fund, seconded by SG. Motion carried 4-1-1. PM abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m. CST.

PM made a motion to adjourn, seconded by KH. Motion carried 6-0.

Minutes approved this 25th day of July, 2024.

President, Perry County Council

Minutes prepared by:
Kristinia L. Hammack, Perry County Auditor