

Anderson County Commission

Regular meeting, April 17, 2017

Chairman Emert called the meeting to order. All Commissioners were present.

Plans for the new General Sessions Court in Oak Ridge are moving forward. The City of Oak Ridge will contribute \$30,000 a year for five years to the operation. Bids for remodeling the Daniel Arthur building were higher than expected. Commission will appoint a Value Engineering Committee to work with the lowest bidder on reducing costs.

Commission voted unanimously to pay \$5,000 for a nonrefundable option to buy the Farley Building, 205 Main St. in Clinton for a new senior citizens center. The money comes from donations to the center. The option expires on July 1, 2017.

The senior center is expected to fund their organization by renting out the event space and 122 parking spaces. Center Director Cherie Phillips explained that she could not guarantee that they could bring in the \$80,000 a year needed to run the senior center.

Dr. Tim Parrot, Director of Schools, urged Commission to contact our State legislators and ask them to oppose any voucher program. He estimates that the system could lose 10% of its students to private schools if were made vouchers available.

Dr. Parrot hopes to reduce the need for fund raising. Each school will receive \$10,000, up from \$5,000, for special projects. Next year the County will sell coupon books for the first time. Books will sell for \$10, of which \$6.50 goes to the school, \$1 goes for the yearly Teacher Celebration, and \$2.50 goes to the company producing the book.

EMS Director Nathan Sweet asked that EMS fees be raised to reduce EMS income shortfall. Commissioners were concerned that the increases would be a burden on citizens.

Commissioner Mead observed that financing EMS services is a challenge across the state. There is currently legislation working its way through state government that will bring state and federal money to help counties. Commission voted not to raise fees.

Commissioner Iwanski pointed out that this month's expenditures include \$37,392.20 to provide outside counsel for County officials being sued by other County officials. He added that the County has spent about \$500,000 on such suits in the last three years and there may be more bills coming. Mayor Frank responded with a defense of the need for the suits. Chairman Emert gave a loud rap with his gavel and called the Mayor out of order.

A representative from ARCADIS explained how the company plans to complete their work on the Blockhouse Valley site. Commission approved the \$123,000 contract to complete the remediation, with Commissioners Fritts and White voting no

~Willa Reister, Observer