

JENNINGS COUNTY COMMISSIONER MEETING
September 4, 2025, 9:00 A.M.
Annex Building

Matt Sporleder, Shane Boswell, Alex Zimmerman, and Charlie St. John were present. Matt opened the meeting at 9:02 am with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The county attorney started with the Reassessment bid that was tabled in the last meeting. After his review, the lowest responsible and responsive bidder is Tyler Technologies. Alex's recommendation is to award the contract to Tyler Technologies. Shane made a motion to accept Tyler Technologies bid. Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Judge Bright, Judge Smith, and Magistrate Doran bring a proposal for a county referee position to the commissioners. The commissioners and the council would need to approve adding this new position. HB 1144 eliminated the counties' magistrate position effective December 31, 2025. Judge Bright said that Magistrate Doran has brought immeasurable value to the courts since he started in July. Judge Bright said that they are trying to seek grants to fund most of the referee position and the county contribution would be minimal. Matt said that the commissioners were presented with a lot of information, and he isn't prepared to vote until he does a little more research. Matt would like to see what the revenue source is going to be; how much of the salary is going to be expected to be from Jennings County taxpayers? Will there be jail overcrowding due to a court backlog due to the magistrate's position being eliminated? These are some things that Matt would like to see when the magistrate comes back. Shane also would like to see data on how many cases are seen monthly by Smith, Bright, and Doran. Matt told them that he appreciates them and all the work they do for the county.

Mark Dove asks to speak and wants to give a history lesson to the commissioners. When Mark started practicing law in 1982 there were eight private practicing lawyers, and quickly after that, there were ten. Jennings County had one judge (Larry Greathouse). He had a lay city court judge, Joe Kipper. He ran the city court part time. There were 23,000 people in Jennings County. Mark and Mike Rodger did the DCS work and the public defense work. Webster was the one prosecutor that also worked as a part time deputy and a civil lawyer. There were two ladies that ran the DCS department. Now, fast forward forty years: The population has gone up to 27,000. One judge used to do the job that three judges do now. Over four decades, we tripled the judge power but barely raised the population of the county but also tripled the salary of the judges. Mark says that Doran has done a great job, but he has taken all the hardest cases off Gary and Ellie and still pays them the same amount of money with the smaller case load. Mark said there is no question that two judges can do this job.

There was an Opioid Settlement Agreement approved a few meetings back, we just need signatures this meeting. Shane made a motion to sign the agreement, Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Shane made a motion to sign and approve the Court Reform Grant Ordinance, Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Bill Elmore, President of ARC is asking for the Community Building at no charge on October the 22nd. This will be for a Halloween Dance for the disabled. Shane made a motion to allow Bill to use the building free of charge, Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

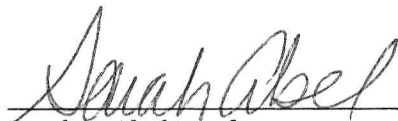
HR submitted a travel request for Jerry Shepherd. No cost to the department. Shane made a motion to approve, Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Jerry is seeking permission from the commissioners to apply for some upcoming grants. The National Security Priority Grant is up to \$250,000.00. The second grant is a salary grant. This grant reimburses fifty percent of Jerry's salary. The third grant is a nonprofit grant. Jerry doesn't have one certain thing in mind yet but is thinking about the fire department. No match money is needed. Shane made a motion to allow Jerry to move forward with the grant process. Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Shane made a motion to approve payroll and claims. Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

Shane made a motion to approve prior minutes, Charlie seconded the motion, passed unanimously.

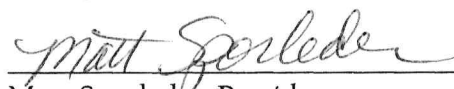
Charlie made a motion to adjourn at 9:53 am, Shane seconded the motion, passed unanimously.



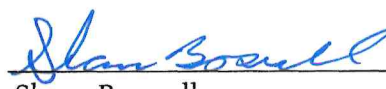
Sarah J. Abel, Auditor



Charlie St. John



Matt Sporleder, President



Shane Boswell