

01-30-2019 Minutes

McDonald County Commission—Minutes

January 30th, 2019

Present:

Bill Lant- Presiding Commissioner

John Bunch - Eastern Commissioner

David Holloway- Western Commissioner

Kimberly Bell - County Clerk

General Business

Commission conducted a phone conference with Rob Smith, Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Commission asked Mr. Smith why McDonald County had been removed from the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA. Mr. Smith stated an American Community Survey had been conducted September 2018 and the results from that survey were the basis for removing our county. Commission asked what could be done to be added back to MSA. Mr. Smith mentioned a Letter of Support to Congressman Steve Womack, Arkansas, would be the first step. Commission will send a Letter of Support to Congressman Womack.

Rod Tyson dropped off paperwork to the Commission to close a portion of Huffacre Road.

Commission met with Seth Kirk. In attendance for this meeting were: Angela Kirk, Luap McKeever, David McEntire, Rob Evenson, Sheriff Mike Hall and Prosecuting Attorney Bill Dobbs. Seth Kirk spoke first stating he has been a life-long resident of McDonald County. He remembers 20 years ago when drugs and illegal activities were prevalent in the county. Kirk stated that when he heard about the Commission's decision to not participate in Ozark Drug Enforcement Team (ODET) he could not understand why the Commission would not want to participate in ODET. He stated some statistics he had researched. Rob Evenson said if it was a money issue, he would pass the hat. Eastern Commissioner Bunch said it was not a money issue. Bunch gave statistics he was given showing ODET had no local drug cases in 2018. He stated the numbers he was given showed a steady decline of local drug cases for McDonald County since 2015. Bunch said he found out the county could still be a member of ODET. He said there are two types of membership. \$4,000 per year to be a voting member and \$500 per year to be an associate member (nonvoting). Associate member would insure ODET would still conduct lab cleanups. Evenson asked the Commission to rethink their decision and be a full member so the Sheriff has a vote on ODET. Prosecuting Attorney Bill Dobbs spoke regarding the lack of communication between ODET, Sheriff, Commission and Prosecuting Attorney's offices. He stated his office was not given information of federal drug cases or supplemental reports that ODET initiated or that stated ODET agents were on the scene of a bust in McDonald County, so he could not give the Commission any information other than there were no local drug cases in 2018. Western Commissioner Holloway stated the decision made by the Commission to not participate in ODET was based on available data and statistics and that information showed 0 (zero) cases out of McDonald County. Seth Kirk stated from the research he had done, there were six Federal cases. Evenson stated he understands now why the Commission made the decision they made, based on the facts they received; however, communication needs to be fixed but it is no reason to lose the tools ODET provides. Sheriff Hall admitted he does not give updates to the Prosecuting Attorney or Commission and that is on him. But he continued by asking the Commission to put ODET back into the budget for 2019. Kirk said there needs to be an open line of communication and a better working relationship between all offices. David McEntire asked who in attendance was from ODET. There were none in attendance. Evenson requested that before the Commission "pulls the plug" on ODET, they meet with ODET agents so they could provide the Commission with information to make a more informed decision. Sheriff Hall contacted Chad Allison with ODET to schedule a meeting. Meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 11, 2019 at 10 a.m.

ADJOURN

Commission will reconvene on February 4th, 2019

SIGNATURES