

DESHA COUNTY QUORUM COURT MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

Desha County Quorum Court met September 18, 2025, at 1:30PM at the Desha County Courthouse.

OPENING PRAYER: JP 8, Dollie Wilson

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All

ROLL CALL: Desha County Clerk Desha County Clerk, Valerie Donaldson

JP	MEMBER	PRESENT	ABSENT
1	Troy Jackson Jr	X	
2	G. Lynn Weatherford	X	
3	Patricia Watkins	X	
4	Ricky Helton	X	
5	Hollis Mankin	X	
6	Kenneth Holt Jr	X	
7	Rita Kolb		X
8	Dollie Wilson	X	
9	Norris Sims	X	

I. MINUTES

The August minutes were approved as mailed with a motion to accept by JP 2, G. Lynn Weatherford and seconded by JP 5, Hollis Mankin. All were in favor, Motion passed.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT

A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by JP 4, Ricky Helton and seconded by JP 9, Norris Sims. All were in favor, Motion passed.

III. SHERIFF'S REPORT

The Sheriff's report was read by Miss Faith Starks, a ninth grader from McGehee Public Schools. She won the drawing for "Sheriff for the day." Miss Starks was sworn in earlier by the County Clerk. She toured the 911 Center, Old Jail Museum, both Courthouses, among other places.

IV. OLD BUSINESS - None

V. NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 2025-10. A resolution supporting Senate Bill 437/ ACT 945 concerning windmills. The resolution was read by County Clerk Valerie Donaldson.

A motion to accept the resolution was given by JP 2, G. Lynn Weatherford and seconded by JP 9, Norris Sims. All members present agreed, 8-0

CB King Schools recently received approval for a \$2,043,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). While the county's consent was required for the grant to move forward, the funds will be managed entirely by CB King Schools and not by the county. The grant will allow the school to enroll an additional seventy-five children and create eighteen new jobs. After discussion, a motion was introduced by Hollis Mankin and seconded by Dollie Wilson to allow CB King Schools to apply for and manage the grant. The motion carried unanimously with an 8-0 vote. No resolution or ordinance was enacted at this time; the approval was recorded only in the meeting minutes.

During the meeting, Prosecuting Attorney Frank Spain also presented a request for additional financial support to expand his staff. Spain explained that his office currently has one Victim Witness Coordinator, funded through a state grant. This position is responsible for guiding victims through the court process, assisting them with required documents, and ensuring their presence in court, often when travel is required from outside the county. Spain stressed that one coordinator is not sufficient, given that he serves five counties and manages cases before two circuit judges. At times, simultaneous trials make it impossible for one person to cover the responsibilities adequately. Spain expressed concern that the grant supporting his current coordinator is not guaranteed in the future, as state funds are becoming increasingly limited. To address this, he requested \$6,000 per year from each of the five counties in his district, or \$500 per month. These funds would not be drawn from the counties' general budgets but instead from the Law Library Fund, which is maintained by the county and supported through the Administration of Justice Funds. Spain noted that counties should expect an increase in this revenue stream moving forward.

Judge Smith raised questions about the funding distribution among the five counties, pointing out that Drew County—home to Spain's office—contributes 15% of his budget while Desha County contributes 23%, despite Drew's population being 35% higher. Spain explained that the allocation was set by state law in 1985 and acknowledged that the formula is outdated. He advised that any adjustments would require action from the state legislature. Judge Smith indicated he would consult with the county's state representatives and senators before taking further steps. The discussion then turned to Spain's available resources. Patricia Watkins clarified whether Spain had funds that could temporarily support the additional position. Spain confirmed that his office maintains a drug forfeiture fund from seized assets, which could sustain a second coordinator for approximately two years. However, he emphasized that he preferred not to rely on these funds unless necessary. Spain acknowledged that his office could continue with only one coordinator if required, but he emphasized that hiring a second would allow his team to provide the highest quality service to victims. Watkins noted that, given current economic challenges and declining revenues, compromise may be necessary, and the office might need to continue operating with a single coordinator for now. She recommended that the County Judge and County Attorney review Spain's proposal in greater detail so that all members could better understand the specifics. Lynn Weatherford asked whether existing funds in the Law Library account could be used to support the request. Spain replied that he believed so, though the matter would need to be verified. The decision on Spain's request was postponed for further review and discussion at a later date.

The 2023 Audit report was discussed. All Quorum Court Members received a copy, and were pleased with the report. A motion to accept the report was made by Hollis Mankin and seconded by Ken Holt. All were in favor, 8-0.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

- VII. ADJOURN** A motion to adjourn was made by G. Lynn Weatherford and seconded by Dollie Wilson. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Approved: _____

County Judge

Date: _____

Attest: _____

County Clerk

Date: _____