

Saline County Intergovernmental Council Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023

County Judge Matt Brumley called the Saline County Intergovernmental Council Meeting to order on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. in the OEM (911) Conference Room. Those in attendance were as follows:

Honorable Matt Brumley, Saline County Judge	Honorable Eddie Jones, Bauxite
Honorable Clyde Crookham, Haskell	Honorable Mike Kemp, Shannon Hills
Honorable Tom Farmer, Benton	Honorable Rhonda Sanders, Bryant
Honorable Crystal Herrmann, Alexander	Honorable Kim Schane, Traskwood
Doug Curtis, Saline County Clerk	Kolton Jones, Saline County Attorney
Robin Wilkinson, Deputy County Clerk	Jerry Cohen, OEM Director

Roll was called.

Agenda 1- Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mayor Tom Farmer to approve the Minutes from the October meeting. Seconded by Mayor Kim Schane. Minutes approved.

Agenda 2- Discussion of Alternative Solutions for distribution of Act 833 funds

A copy of the Minutes from Saline County Firefighters Association meeting from 2014 was handed out to all and the board discussed the history of the current points system. Prior to the current points system, equal amounts were being distributed to every department in Saline County but those with less population were getting the same amount of funding as those with bigger populations. Furthermore, fire departments with territories that were in multiple counties were receiving Act 833 funding from multiple counties, leading to those fire departments receiving more money than others that are located wholly within Saline County. Thus, the points system was created so that funds would be distributed more fairly and favor the departments with service areas completely inside Saline County.

Mayor Kemp noted his desire to keep distribution as is, stating that smaller departments can't afford to lose money and do not have the resources that Benton and Bryant do. Other members commented their support of the need for a new plan and pointed out that some departments are not responding to calls but still receiving 100% funding and citizens not getting responses as quickly as needed. The Council discussed that the lack of response may be due to the lack of volunteerism and that the fire chiefs are doing their best. Judge Brumley stated that everyone should work together and do what is best for the Saline County residents and raised the question as to whether a response standard should be set for distribution of Act 833 funds.

OEM Director Jerry Cohen stated that in talking with the departments, most agreed that it would be helpful to see a reduced number of medical response calls so that unless it is a life-threatening emergency the fire departments would not be called. This would lower the volume of calls which would especially help during the hours when emergency response personnel are limited. Doing so would also reduce costs and help to preserve and free up resources for other calls in which response was needed. Judge Brumley encouraged each department to create a list of the type of calls they are able to respond to and to communicate that to OEM.

Jerry Cohen recommended forming a taskforce to come up with a plan to be presented to the Intergovernmental Council. Judge Brumley recommended that OEM lead this taskforce. Motion by Mayor Farmer to create said taskforce and for OEM to lead taskforce. Motion seconded by Mayor Rhonda Sanders. Motion passed. Further discussion and recommendations are to be brought forward at the next meeting which will be held on December 19, 2023 at 2:00 pm. Motion to adjourn was made by all. Meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.