



# City of Piggott Clay County Connect Minutes

City Hall  
194 West Court St.  
Piggott, AR 72454

Thursday, June 1, 2023 12:00 PM

**Piggott City Council met in a special meeting on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. at the Piggott City Hall Community Room with Mayor Bradley Scheffler presiding.**

Mayor Scheffler called the meeting to order and thanked everyone or attending followed by roll call.

**Roll Call**

**Those present were:**

Councilmember Tracy Cole  
Councilmember Jamey Parks  
Councilmember Kevin Jones  
Mayor Bradley Scheffler  
City Clerk Nikki Blue  
Attorney Kimberly Dale

**Those absent were:**

Councilmember Jeff Benbrook

**Others in attendance:** Utility Manager-Brian Haley, Justin Welch (Electric Superintendent), Judge Mike Patterson, Sherriff Ronnie Cole, Matt Miller (General Manager, CCC), Enoch Richardson (CCC), Jim Parks

**Clay County Connect:**

Mayor Bradley Scheffler stated that it was his understanding that we were going to vote on Clay County Connect services for Piggott and asks if anyone wants to make a motion. Councilmember Tracy Cole states that she thought that we were going to look over the proposals and decide if we wanted to pursue one of those options and not actually vote for sure. Mayor Scheffler addresses that the motion that was made at the prior meeting by Councilmember Cole was to vote at the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Councilmember Tracy Cole stated that was because we thought that we would have all of the details to make a decision, but we still don't have everything. Mayor Scheffler said that we needed to go ahead and put things to a vote then if we had any discussion, we could do that after. Councilmember Tracy Cole said she was not prepared to vote. Councilmember Kevin Jones said that we haven't even decided which option to choose. He states that we're not saying we're not going with it and we're pretty sure, but we gotta decide which option is best for the city. Mayor Bradley Scheffler tells the council that in that case we need a motion to table the vote to a later date. Councilmember Tracy Cole makes a motion that we table the vote until we are able to pursue and understand the options and then we can choose an option and vote. Councilmember Keven Jones seconded. Councilmember Jamey Parks asked if we were tabling the vote. Councilmember Tracy Cole answered that we were tabling the vote on Clay County Connect until such time we had a chance to go through things and make a decision. Councilmember Kevin Jones explained that we just have to decide which option is gonna be best for the city and that was the only reason they wanted to wait. Councilmember Jamey Parks remarks that if they want to table it, he guesses they'll table it. Those in favor were Councilmember Tracy Cole, Councilmember, Jamey Parks and Councilmember Kevin Jones, none opposed, motion carried.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler asked that since we have Matt (Miller) and Enoch (Richardson) here, if there were any questions for them. Councilmember Tracy Cole says yes, she asks Matt Miller to explain the three options so that everyone understands what they are. She also asks if "option 1" was what was proposed last week where they would put in the fiber in lieu of pole fees. Matt Miller said that was correct. Councilmember Tracy Cole



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continued with, "If I'm understanding correctly, Zach and Justin, at this point our ability to utilize that would only be for the power plant?" Brian Haley responds to her question with, yes, at this point. It would give us the ability to view our existing SCADA system in real time at any location. He explains that currently they have to log onto a computer to see the load, power factor, circuits and that at this point, that is the only thing that makes this feasible. Councilmember Tracy Cole asks for confirmation that the water department would not be able to benefit from this. Brian Haley confirms and states that the water department's system will not incorporate into a fiber-based system. So, for that they would need to go with a different system. Councilmember Tracy Cole says, "So if I understand this correctly, this is something, in the future, if we had the right equipment would be a good thing, but currently we don't have the right equipment?" Brian Haley responded with no; we could not utilize it immediately.

Councilmember Tracy Cole then addresses Matt Miller and asks if we don't choose that option now, would it still be on the table in the future to where we could renegotiate or if this is a one-time deal only? Matt Miller responded with it would depend on how many sites, or points of interest because he needs to design the fiber so that it has that capacity.

Councilmember Tracy Cole stated, slightly as a question, today we know what we would want to connect, but we couldn't fully utilize it. Brian Haley said that ideally the city would want to use it for many things (which he went through along with what it could do) but explained that would be expensive and down the road and continued with we would have to have access to some kind of fiber to be able to do that when we get ready.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler stated that we didn't currently have access to the wastewater plant or to Heritage Park in which Brian Haley confirmed. Brian Haley described what we currently had in place. He also stated that he was not that familiar with SCADA systems and could not say what it would cost to implement at this time.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler asks Matt Miller to go through the options and explain. Matt Miller goes through explaining the 3 options that he supplied to the council. *The options were broken down into examples of costs, services that would or would not be included (internet, phone, technical service) and locations provided, as well as with and without pole fees. The council members were left with uncertainties and unanswered questions.*

Councilmember Tracy Cole then addresses Attorney Kimberly Dale with a question about fair trade. She states that option 2 and 3 are fairly easy to compare from a fair-trade standpoint since they include the same pole fees that the others pay but asks how we make sure to protect ourselves if we go with option 1 in valuing it to say that it's "like" services. Attorney Kimberly Dale uses the example of a situation in Oak Grove recently where they were offered a deal from a company, similar to the options presented here. Oak Grove in turn gave the other company the ability to extend the same offer. The other company was not willing, but they were provided with a chance to do so. Attorney Dale went on to say that all long as there was transparency and that it was known, she thinks we'd be ok.

Attorney Kimberly Dale stated that she sees this a lot with broadband companies coming in and trying to work with the need of the municipalities.

Councilmember Kevin Jones addressed Mayor Scheffler and Brian Haley saying they probably knew more about what the city's needs were and asked their opinion. Brian Haley said that he also hadn't had time to digest the options yet. Mayor Bradley tells Councilmember Kevin Jones that if approved, our attorney will have to review the final contract along with Clay County Connect's attorney. Brian Haley adds that we need time to look at it and look at each option. We also need to look at it from the utility standpoint and there is going to be some operational issues if they're in our power space and we need to weigh those options based on how we do our day-



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to-day work. Councilmember Tracy Cole asks for confirmation that all the options require them to be in our power space. Matt Miller confirms.

Brian Haley said they would review all the options and get a report back to the council weighing the pros and cons and provide additional information so that the council would have what they needed to make their decision.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler asked if there were any questions from the public for Matt Miller.

Jim Parks stepped forward. Jim Parks went back to 26 years ago when he along with George Forrest put in the first dial-up internet in Piggott. He told of how it grew and grew fast until 2 and a half years later when the phone company brought in DLS. He said he was the 2<sup>nd</sup> one to sign up and knew then that his dial-up would be going away, so he sold his shares. He expressed how copper is going away and that fiber is the direction we need to move towards.

County Judge Mike Patterson asked for someone to read allowed the options they were given. Councilmember Kevin Jones offered him a copy that was extra on the table, but he preferred for them to still read aloud.

Matt Miller then read all of the options to the public and council.

County Judge Mike Patterson told the council that there are 2 counties out of the 75 that have 2 courthouses, and we were one of them. He said there was 26 miles between courthouses and stated that we pay \$1,000 a month for 1 circuit and the jail also paid \$1,000 for 1 circuit. He said that if this company can come in here, they could get by for \$169.95 (he believes) for each circuit, so that would be a big savings for the county, and we are all part of the county. He said he would appreciate it if we could get everything worked out and that it looked like there were some good options there. Although we may not be using everything there, we would eventually.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler thanked the Judge and asked Sheriff Ronnie Cole if he would like to say something. Sheriff Ronnie Cole said that he thinks we need to be business friendly. He said not only \$1,000 a month for the jail and the courthouse, but what about other businesses in town. They would be getting \$831 savings a month which would almost be enough to put new tires on his officers' vehicles. He then stated again that we needed to look at it as business friendly.

Mayor Scheffler called on Duane Dutka. Duane Dutka asked if this would be available to all businesses and residents of town. Matt Miller and Mayor Scheffler confirmed. He then asked what the cost to residents be and what speed they would have. Matt Miller said: 100mbps = \$69.99, 500mbps is \$89.99, and 1 gig is \$109.99, all with no data caps or throttling with symmetrical service. Matt Miller explained their redundant system in more detail.

Mayor Scheffler asked Enoch Richardson if he had anything to add. Enoch asked Matt Miller to talk about the process of moving the fiber on the poles. Matt Miller said that it was a struggle because their poles were shorter and it is difficult, but they do have contractors that do that, but hoping to house that internally in the very short term. He said that it would not be an issue working with Brian and his team. He said they are doing that right now with Clay County Electric and they have fiber on nearly every pole, and they would work closely with Piggott to have a good relationship.



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Mayor Bradley Scheffler asked Justin Welch if he had anything to add. Justin said that his job is tasked with maintaining the electrical system through town and that he has to put out of his brain the cost and the speed because his responsibility is our system. He goes on to say that he does have concerns on the strains of our infrastructure and the obstacles of working around that and damaging that.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler asks for more questions and tells Jim Parks to go ahead. Jim Parks speaks and says they he gets calls because of his background in internet and states that everyone he's talked to is pretty excited.

Duane Dutka asks if it's provided at Heritage Park if that meant there would be free wi-fi for guests to go out there to use. Brian Haley spoke saying that the reason Heritage Park was mentioned was for the security cameras, so as far as wi-fi being available, they have not had that discussion.

Teresa Morris (Mann) said that we've heard a lot about the benefits of Piggott but said the benefit to her is for the courthouse and the jail to have the speed to provide the services they need. She continues with, They're bigger than the city of Piggott. They need this to provide the services to the county. We're part of the county and it's a big county. We need them to be able to have what they need to do what they do. She goes on to say that we need to update and upgrade and that it's gonna come eventually and it needs to happen sooner rather than later.

Alan Vaugh said that he has a question because it's something that he deals with a lot as an emergency manager. He then asks if this would benefit our hospital. County Judge Mike Patterson asked to speak on this. He said that back a few years ago the state put high speed internet to the hospital and the schools and wouldn't let anyone else hook onto it. He explains that they have had a different path for the last several years that the average person could not touch. He said that is why they can have the tele-medicine and all the different features at the hospital that we can't do in town.

Jim Parks spoke up and said that unless they have upgraded the schools and hospital, this service would be faster than what they have.

Judge Patterson told of a call he received from a gentleman that had moved to Birdeye, AR and how he was able to run his business from his farm because of having high speed internet available and how grateful he was of that.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler asked for confirmation as to the council wanting to table the vote to a later date. Councilmember Tracy Cole replied that it was just to decide which option would be best. Councilmember Kevin Jones said that it wasn't to decide if we were going to do it or not, but just to decide on which option. Councilmember Tracy Cole stated that if we were to go with option 1, we would need to figure out the details. Then asked that by adding points of interest if it changed the deal in any way. Matt Miller replied that it couldn't be "all inclusive" and that we couldn't come back 10 years down the road and say we wanted to add 15-20 sites, but we can identify like 80% to leave room because he knew we would need to add. Brian Haley said that it was in the future because it was expensive, but if we did want to move to SCADA that fiber is the highway. He says there's a lot of equipment that will need to be purchased, upgrades to existing infrastructure and probably some changes in some meters and he's not 100% sure of what all that entails right now. Brian Haley explains that they just need time to get more information to know what would be in the best interest.



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Councilmember Tracy Cole makes a motion that we pursue the options and come back to the take with a recommendation that we can actually vote on. Attorney Kimberly Dale says that once we get the bare bones of it, we can start the agreement and drafting. Councilmember Tracy Cole states that she knows everyone wanted to vote today, but the more they learned the more questions that needed to be answered before we could actually make an informed decision. Councilmember Jamey Parks seconded. Those in favor were Councilmember Jamey Parks, Councilmember Kevin Jones and Councilmember Tracy Cole. None opposed, motion carried.

Mayor Bradley Scheffler thanked Matt Miller for coming and asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Jamey Parks made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Tracy Cole seconded. With all in favor and none opposed, motion carried.

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Mayor, Bradley Scheffler

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City Clerk, Nikki Blue