

March 8, 2016  
Reno County Courthouse  
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners met in agenda session with, Chairman Dan Deming, Commissioners James Schlickau and Brad Dillon, County Administrator Gary Meagher, County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a short sectarian prayer led by Commissioner Deming.

April Root, 4001 E. Eales Road, Hutchinson in Yoder Township, addressed the Board about her concerns with gunfire by the bridge over the Arkansas River near her home. Her concern was safety of residents in the area around the south and north sides of the bridge where someone has been going over the dike to shoot at junk they have setup as targets. Mrs. Root has previously made several calls to the Sheriff's office reporting the gun fire and would like to request larger signs and better enforcement. She thanked the commission for listening and Mr. Deming informed her that he would look into the situation.

There were no additions to the agenda.

**Mr. Dillon moved, seconded by Mr. Schlickau,** to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on March 11th, 2016 of \$719,318.57 as submitted and also consisting of pending Added, Abated and Escaped Taxation Change Orders numbered 2016-407 through 410, 412 through 418, and 420 through 423. Next item directs the chairman to sign minutes for February 2nd, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23rd, 2016 as submitted. The last item on the consent agenda was to appoint the new Director of Emergency Management Adam Weishaar, to South Central Kansas Homeland Security as Reno County's Representative effective March 10, 2016 through December 31, 2016. The motion was approved by a 3-0 vote.

County Administrator Gary Meagher updated the Board on the Mortgage Registration Tax and Recording Fee report. He stated both were up from the same time in 2015. The year to date total was \$89,391.69 up by \$6,678.39 from February last year.

Aging/Transportation Director Barbara Lilyhorn met with the Board to explain the Reno County Area Transit (RCAT) route service. She stated the route and para transit buses operated with a 5311 Federal Grant from Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). They provide five fixed routes in the Hutchinson and South Hutchinson area where a resident can waive their hand and the driver will pull over in a safe location for you to ride. The routes are from the Hutchinson Mall to the RCAT Transit Station and you can change buses at either location. The route through South Hutchinson runs about an hour and comes by the RCAT station to change buses if they choose to. She explained that by law the para transit buses operate for people who find it difficult to access the fixed route buses to have the same service level or better. Mrs. Lilyhorn then explained the para transit buses operate up to three miles outside of Hutchinson along with the door to door service. To receive this type of specialized service you must qualify by going through an application process since this is a national program. She went over the rates for riding the bus either fixed or para for all age groups. In 2013 when Prairie Star was in the site planning stages of their new facility, Mrs. Lilyhorn stated RCAT was asked to partner with Prairie Star in deciding the best location for service at their new building. It was decided that the east side was the best option and not the front of the building. RCAT had installed a bench for patrons and was considering putting up a shelter for their protection over that bench as well.

In response to comments made by Commissioner Dillon criticizing Commissioner Deming's recent Hutchinson News column criticizing RCAT's response to Prairie Star's drop off and pick up concerns, Mr. Deming said that Prairie Star and some of their elderly patients called asking to have consideration to move the drop off location so they did not have to traverse the in inclement weather conditions. Mrs. Lilyhorn stated that Prairie Star was under new leadership which expressed concerns for patients being picked up on the east side and would prefer having front door pick up under the canopy. She went on to explain that they had run into a similar situation at the Hutchinson Clinic with limited space to pick up and drop off under the canopy. She continued that after some discussion with Prairie Star, a decision was made to have a drop and pick up on the east side of the building. She explained that patients see the bus then make their way to the east side bench for RCAT to pick them up. RCAT determined it was not safe to pull up front for the fixed route but would continue front door service for para transit riders. She stated with the potential volume of traffic they will continue to use the designated area from the plat design. Mr.

Dillon asked why this was on the agenda, was there a problem. Mrs. Lilyhorn replied that it was going smoothly until the hot weather hit. She had also stepped off the walk for customers and came up with 90 to 100 feet for them to get to the east side pickup location. She recommended today leaving the RCAT location on the east side as was originally planned in the beginning.

Commissioner Deming commented that if the commission wanted to consider changes, Prairie Star should be invited to an agenda meeting for a further discussion of their concerns. He had previously had a private discussion regarding the pickup point with Mr. Meagher and Mrs. Lilyhorn and received no satisfactory results. He has received calls from riders complaining about the distance. He said the distance was measured at 200 feet.

Commissioner Dillon stated he was willing to discuss the issues with all parties in an agenda meeting. Mr. Dillon was upset and critical of the newspaper column that Mr. Deming wrote in the Hutchinson News, saying this was unprofessional and improper for a county commissioner. Mr. Dillon contacted another county administrator outside of Reno County and asked his opinion of criticizing department heads. That administrator felt that any commissioner has the right to express his opinions regarding county matters in a newspaper column. Mr. Dillon stated that he felt it was a bad idea to take such action because:

1. The intimidation of county employees that could result if they felt their disagreement with that commissioner on an issue might result in adverse comments in the newspaper.
2. County employees would never be satisfied with the explanation of their position in such an article, regardless of the intention of the commissioner to adequately explain the issue.
3. Commissioners are part of the county organization and should address all unresolved issues to the commission as a whole.

Mr. Deming indicated that he felt a commission meeting was not the proper forum to bring up the issue and he had tried to resolve the matter privately. Mr. Schlickau responded by saying that a commission meeting is the absolute proper forum for the discussion to occur, where everyone involved can participate and express their opinion. Mr. Schlickau stated that as a result of Mr. Deming not getting what he wanted, he resorted to making a personal attack through print. Mr. Schlickau described Mr. Deming's tone as "contemptuous, malicious and self-

serving." He referred to a prepared document stating that Mr. Deming either states or implies that if someone has a differing opinion to his, then that person is clearly wrong. Throughout his column, Mr. Deming uses disrespectful and dismissive language, by stating that RCAT personnel do not exhibit "logic" or "common sense" and have "a general bureaucratic attitude."

Mr. Schlickau continued by making note that Mr. Deming disregarded principles outlined within the "Ethical Code of Conduct for County Commissioners" and Resolution 2015-04 that was unanimously approved by this board "Prescribing the Roles of the County Commission." Mr. Schlickau stated that employee morale was poor as a result with staff thinking "who is next?" Mr. Schlickau continued by stating that our dedicated employees deserve a leader, not an intimidator. In conclusion, Mr. Schlickau requested that Mr. Deming discontinue writing editorials as a "community columnist" on county matters involving personnel not discussed at a commission meeting.

Information Services Director Mike Mathews and Community Corrections Director Randy Regehr met with the Board for their regular scheduled meeting. Both discussed various issues not requiring action from the Board. Mr. Regehr will be returning next week to explain all aspects of the drug court.

At 9:50 Commissioner Schlickau excused himself from the meeting. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Deming continued with the RCAT discussion.

At 10:10 the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 15th, 2016.

Approved:

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Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

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Reno County Clerk  
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Date