

March 9, 2021
Reno County Courthouse
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held the agenda session with Chairman Ron Hirst, Commissioner Daniel Friesen, Commissioner Ron Sellers, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

The meeting began at 9:10 a.m., delayed by technical difficulties, with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a short sectarian prayer led by Pastor David Dubovich, Park Place Christian Church.

Interim Health Officer Karen Hammersmith updated the Board on opting out of the Governor's Mask Mandate. Mrs. Hammersmith gave COVID statistics and said they have given 5,100 first doses and 2,000 second doses to date through the POD's. The partners have been so helpful, and she was thankful for all their support with vaccines. She said the recommendation by the medical collaborative is to "Not opt out" of the Governor's Mask mandate at this time as it may be premature since the push was to get more vaccine out in the community and revisit the mask issue in another month. Next month they are moving into Phase 2C vaccinating high-contact critical workers.

Commissioner Hirst visited Texas and observed how their "opted out of masks" went over while he was there. He noticed most people wore masks if needed and no complaints.

Commissioner Sellers commented to keep the mask mandate. He stated the doctors, schools and businesses had not opted out.

Commissioner Friesen mentioned the letters from health partners and his concerns were when we do get rid of masks. He looked at mask graphs for the county and the state seeing the impact. Mrs. Hammersmith replied that medicine is a science. We are educating and looking at historical events to look to the future. Mr. Friesen stated we are on the downside of the curve and wanted to know if there is any evidence from other counties showing that removing masks has made a difference in their communities. Mrs. Hammersmith stated she felt masks have helped and Dr. Pauly had documentation that they do work.

After a lengthy discussion on masks and vaccines, The Board decided the mask issue would be on the agenda either on March

30th or by April 13th agenda meeting when more residents have been vaccinated.

Health Department Director Karla Nichols clarified the vaccine schedule for Phase 2 with no date from the state to move into Phase 3 at this time.

There were no public comments.

Additions to the agenda: Mr. O'Sullivan asked for a second executive session for a privileged legal matter with legal counsel about the lease county had for a firing range with a proposed new contract between the City of Hutchinson and Sheriff's Office on that property, and a third executive session for a privileged legal matter concerning litigation on the Pretty Prairie Wind Energy and proposed zoning regulations. He said on each of the executive sessions we will go into regular session then go into the next, after the third session ends the meeting would adjourn for the day with no formal decision on the issues.

Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of 7A and 7B. The Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on March 5th, 2021 of \$214,542.34 and claims payable on March 12th, 2021 of \$503,913.57 as submitted and consisting of pending Added, Abated and Escaped Taxation Change Orders numbered 2021-226 and 233. The motion was approved by a roll call vote 3-0.

Hutchinson Fire Department Chief Steve Beer gave a presentation on the 2020 Annual Report. He stated the Hutchinson Fire Department practiced data/fact driven performance and had an ISO Class 1 rating. He said they had a great team and were the best firefighters and very dedicated people. Chief Hanna gave data for the last three years. Mr. Hirst inquired about the training. Chief Beer replied the firefighters had extensive training that followed performance indicators since it was very dangerous work.

Interim Director Shelly Bredemeier gave a presentation reviewing the Annual 2020 Youth Services Report. She stated that 2020 was a very challenging year but all the employees stepped up. She did an overview of the report.

County Administrator Randy Partington spoke about the Commission becoming a member of the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce. He stated during the January 30th special

agenda meeting, the Board requested information on membership costs. He provided three options. **Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers**, to approve option 1 for joining the Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce with the Cornerstone membership at a cost of \$2,775. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0. Mr. Sellers commented that it was important to be a part of the Chamber and to get staff involved.

Mr. Partington also gave an explanation on the audio/video proposal for the Annex Conference Room to be able to host commission meetings. He had a cost proposal for option one from McClelland, Inc. for \$30,500 matching the Public Works conference room audio/video recording capabilities with equipment that includes the mobile Tricaster system. **Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers**, to approve option one by McClelland, Inc. for \$30,500 as outlined by Mr. Partington. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 10:53 the meeting recessed for seven minutes.

The meeting reconvened with all Commissioners, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

At 11:00 a.m. Commissioner Hirst commented on the next item for Commercial Wind Energy Conversion Systems Proposed Regulations.

Jason West 303 N. Mayfield, Geo Chemicals Sterling Group Mfg. was in favor of wind energy projects for renewable energy stating oil and gas would run out eventually, so we need to find and use other resources. Fifty years from now will we look back and ask was Reno County open for business.

Commissioner Friesen was not ready to make a vote at this time.

The Board made more comments on wind energy opting to wait on a vote for more information. **Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers**, to table the vote until the April 13th, 2021 agenda meeting however, Mr. Hirst would like to vote in the March 30th meeting. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 2-1 with Mr. Hirst opposed to the April 13th date.

County Administrator report and Commissioner comments:

Mr. Partington had three items to comment on: 1) all department monthly reports were in the agenda packets for the commission to review. 2) year to date thru 2/28/21 fund balances that he went through and explained expenses on the 2021 year-to-date report. He said all departments were doing well on spending. 3) Fifth Tuesday agenda meeting in March the mask mandate would be discussed along with the fee study by Solid Waste presented by SCS.

Mr. Friesen requested Randy to get a first draft of the proposed agenda on Tuesday with a cutoff Wednesday/Thursday. Mr. Partington could email the draft.

Mr. Sellers continued to compliment the Health Department for the excellent vaccine disposition, we commend the medicine Shoppe for giving vaccines from the educational group, they are good citizens. Commend Chief Beer on the excellent fire department. Youth Services report was great and hope the citizens know the great job all departments do for the community. What is the plan for a new HR Director? Mr. Partington replied taking applications until the end of March then interview in April. Mr. Friesen asked if it would be possible for the new HR Director to also be a Deputy County Administrator, something to look at. Mr. Partington replied it was an option.

Mr. Hirst commented on the importance of quality in our department heads and employees. He brought up the temporary burn ban put in place for a day, he would like further conversation.

At 11:40 a.m. County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan read the request for a motion to recess into an executive session for a period not to exceed thirty-minutes for a discussion of a privileged legal matter with the County Counselor concerning the counties firing range lease and a new contract proposal with the City of Hutchinson for the firing range. No binding action is expected following the executive session following which time the Board would return to regular session and entertain a motion to go into a second executive session or adjourn for the day. Concerning the first executive session he was requesting the County Administrator Randy Partington and Under Sheriff Shawn McHaley to remain. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen,** to go into executive session as Mr. O'Sullivan requested. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 12:10 pm Mr. O'Sullivan advised that they came out of the 30 minute first executive session; **Mr. Hirst motioned**, to go into the second executive session for fifteen-minutes in order to confer with legal counsel on a privileged legal matter concerning pending litigation of the Pretty Prairie Wind case and matters concerning proposed Commercial Wind Energy Conversion System zoning regulations. Mr. O'Sullivan then asked that he and county administrator Randy Partington remain for the meeting. No formal action is anticipated following the meeting, at which time the Board will resume its regular meeting and adjourn for the day with no third executive session. **Mr. Friesen seconded**. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 12:30 p.m. the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 23rd, 2021.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date