

January 5, 2021
Reno County Courthouse
Hutchinson, Kansas

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

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a short sectarian prayer led by Gary Getting, Elliott Mortuary via phone.

There were no additions to the agenda or public comments.

Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Steffen, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on January 8th, 2021 of \$637,867.61 along with CARES Act Spark monies approved of \$187,574.06 as submitted and also consisting of pending Added, Abated and Escaped Taxation Change Orders numbered 2020-977, 980 through 983 as presented by staff. Agreement with New Beginnings, Inc. for partial funding in the amount of \$50,000 for the Meadowlark Commons Project. This motion covers consent agenda items 6A, 6B, and 6C only. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

New Beginnings, Inc. President and CEO Shara Gonzales addressed the Board giving a brief history on their first tax credit project, Meadowlark Commons for low-income housing at 100-102 East 2nd Avenue. They were able to purchase the building for \$1,500. 40 agencies throughout the county had been looking for an addiction and substance abuse treatment center so they have worked with SACK for years and approached SACK to see if they would be interested in a detox center. She said they needed \$526,000 for renovations to the building to make a detox center. She made a request from the City of Hutchinson and Reno County for \$50,00 each to go toward the fire suppression system and the fund balance was raised by donations and fundraising. The project was started on December 14th and is expected to be completed in March. New Beginnings will not be operating the detox center, SACK will be in running the facility.

Substance Abuse Center of Kansas CEO Harold Casey briefly explained the operation in Wichita and how they hope to operate the detox center in Hutchinson. He said Wichita State University does an analysis each year to determine the cost

savings for the last five years showing savings of up to \$500,000 a year. The detox center assists Police and the community helping people to get the treatments they need without sitting in a hospital or jail. The largest cost to the center was for staffing, and he stated that Sedgwick County contributes the building and state grants help with the difference.

Reno County resident and former Reno County Sheriff Randy Henderson spoke about working with inmates and the narcotics unit before he started working with Mrs. Gonzales, Judge McCarville and 40 different entities on this project to get people off the streets and get them help they need.

Commissioner Hirst clarified about putting county funds into a private building within the City of Hutchinson stating that we are putting money towards the detox facility only. Commissioner Steffen commented this was not his money to spend and was a very unusual request. He said he did not feel comfortable using taxpayer's money and will not support it. Commissioner Sellers was in favor of the project since Reno County is giving a small amount to get it off the ground to take care of people in our community. Commissioner Hirst stated a stipulation should be added that if this project is not operating within ten-years, it would give back a portion to the county.

Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve item 6D on the consent agenda for the agreement with New Beginnings, Inc. for a partial funding in the amount of \$50,000 for the Meadowlark Commons Detox Project as outlined. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 2-1 with Mr. Steffen opposed.

Human Resources Director Renee Harris met with the Board to recommend approval to extend the Reno County Emergency paid sick leave (RCEPSL) through March 31, 2021. She gave a brief explanation for the extension request for the Federal COVID program that ended December 31, 2020. The program originally allowed employers the option to give each employee 80 hours to use for COVID or if they were quarantined, provided they met the requirements. We had 108 employees who took advantage of the program and said that 8,686 hours were used through December 31, 2020. This is an extension of use for the 80 hours if not used by March 31, 2021. We will follow the original program guidelines and we are asking employees to provide documentation of testing or quarantine as they originally were required. We will track those employee hours under a designated G/L. She said that private businesses were able to take tax credits but

not government agencies, so the hours were paid from the county budget. This allows department heads to let the employee quarantine and not worry so much about pay and departments have those hours charged to that departments budget.

Mr. Steffen moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst, to do 40 hours maximum instead of the 80 hours, and cutting the time in half for part-time employees. He thought that was a fair compromise by cutting the hours in half for all employees. Mrs. Harris replied that she had not thought about 40 hours because she was recommending extension of the 80 hours. She said it mostly affects new hires who would not have had the chance to build up sick leave time. She went over how accrued sick leave accumulates. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 2-1 with Mr. Sellers opposing.

Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve the extension of Reno County Emergency Paid Sick Leave (RCEPSL) through March 31, 2021 amending the hours for full and part time employees as discussed in the previous motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Information Services Director Mike Mathews met with the Board to discuss the county's broadband and phone service. He said the bandwidth for our internet was outdated and not fast enough. He was still reviewing the phone system since the county's had been installed ten years ago with a digital system and a PRI internet line. He explained that CTA supports our current system and two other bids for consideration were from Cox Communications and IdeaTek. Both offered 1 gigabit connection which was 2 times faster than the current 300mg. All three vendors would supply a hosted IP telephony system meaning no hardware for the county to support or ever need to replace and noted that the main difference is in the delivery method of service. IdeaTek would be plugged into our system and Cox would run new cable lines separately to both phone and computers. Both companies offer an app for cell phones where you can receive or call with a code, just like if you were in the office making the call which was a nice feature. IdeaTek had an up-front/one-time charge of \$19,605 (of which \$15,000 would be toward phones) and a monthly charge of \$5,530 for 60 months. Cox had no up-front charges and a monthly charge of \$8,069.05 for 60 months giving the first 2 months free. Long distance was included in the quotes from both companies. After some additional discussion on the systems cost, the Board voted. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst,** to approve the bid for the IdeaTek system as outlined asking Mr. Partington and Mr. O'Sullivan to present a

contract per the proposal discussed today. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

County Planner Mark Vonachen presented for approval Planning Case 2020-14, a request by Adam and Maria Post and Lee Olsen to vacate a 30-foot-wide future street easement located on Lots 5 and 10, Block 1 of Rolling Hills Subdivision with property addresses of 2325 E. 56th Avenue and 1900 E. 54th Avenue. He said there was no response from utilities or public comments. The Staff and Planning Board approved with a 6-0 vote. **Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers,** to approve the Planning Case 2020-14 as outlined by Mr. Vonachen. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

County Administrator Randy Partington commented on the monthly Fire Chief's meeting Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Training Center on 4th Avenue. Next was an update on the Landfill bid opening and Pre-construction Courthouse meeting Thursday January 14th, 2021 in the morning.

Commissioner Hirst asked about being finished with Bower Communications contract. Mr. Partington replied it ended in November. He wished all Happy New Year and "Positive Forward".

Commissioner Steffen quoted "Government is a watchdog to be fed not a cow to be milked". He spoke about Senate committees and introduced bills. This was his parting comments as he moves up to the State Senate.

At 10:25 the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, January 12th, 2021.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date