

February 4, 2020  
Reno County Courthouse  
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners met in agenda session with the roll being called: Chairman Ron Sellers, Commissioner Ron Hirst and Commissioner Bob Bush present, along with Interim County Administrator Bill Hermes, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a short sectarian prayer led by Pastor Tim Kraft, First Church of God.

There were no public comments.

Commissioner comments:

Commissioner Hirst congratulated Emergency Management Director Adam Weishaar for his award certificate of service relating to the floods presented by the City of Hutchinson Fire Department. Also, County Planner Mark Vonachen for putting the information on the website for the proposed zoning coming up on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 regarding the southeast portion of Reno County.

Commissioner Sellers commented that the state was acting on the earthquake situation looking into information for the cause. Representative Jason Probst was helping to get answers. The new County Administrator Randy Partington starts February 17<sup>th</sup> and he was looking forward to working with Mr. Partington. He thanked Youth Services Director Bill Hermes for his work and support after stepping in when Mr. Meagher retired saying how helpful he has been. Finally, he asked Health Department Director Nick Baldetti to explain about an important grant the county received.

Mr. Baldetti mentioned last week about a public release from the Bureau of Justice Assistance under the U.S. Department of Justice regarding world response to rural opioid epidemic grant that Reno County received. Reno County was one of twenty-one communities that was rewarded with this grant funding. He said they applied a month or more ago and have now been awarded a two-year span award for \$750,000 to a Tri-County Agreement with Reno County, Barton County, and Harvey County. This award was a stepping-stone with the accumulative work of the Drug Impact Task Force for the last year and a half by setting up a plan for the community to move forward toward substance abuse and misuse in that community. The grant process is beginning

with six months' work called the planning phase where they expend \$100,000 towards planning. Then moving into the implementation phase for the next year and a half. The work will consist of two mandatory requirements and working with various agencies that work together. He mentioned Seth Dewey who is going to be the Reno County Project Coordinator and liaison coordinator agent for Barton and Harvey Counties on this grant.

Interim County Administrator Bill Hermes had Maintenance Director Harlen Depew give an update on the damage to the courthouse from the last earthquake. Mr. Depew stated that damage was minimal, and the largest issue was with the counterweights on the automatic elevator causing the bulk of the expense. He talked about the dome cracks being sealed back up and cracking on walls in the interior. After speaking with the Reno County insurance agent and adjuster from Travelers, along with several others, it was determined not to be in the best interest for the county to file a new claim for this incident because the damage would not meet the deductible. We have filed an incident with the insurance in case something else developed, but no claim was filed at this time. He walked the building with Structural Engineer Brent England and found no structural damage. Mr. England is finalizing the details on the steel truss structure reinforcement to be reviewed by the Historical Society. He thanked the Commissioners and Representative Probst for investigating the cause for the earthquakes centered in Reno County. He was concerned from a facility maintenance standpoint, the effect on public and private buildings if they continue and noted it could financially impact our community.

Commissioner Hirst commented that he was contacted by Lloyd Armstrong who had a complete set of architectural plans for the courthouse that could be used for a backup.

There were two additions to the agenda; agenda item 9a was watching a five-minute Kansas Department of Transportation video on highways and Mr. O'Sullivan asked to place on agenda item 7c for a general release of claim from a sub-contractor who damaged a bridge on Herren Road. **Mr. Bush moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst,** to add these items to the agenda. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

**Mr. Bush moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst,** to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on February 7, 2020 of \$1,062,719.92 and consisting of pending Added, Abated and Escaped Taxation Change

Orders numbered 2020-42 through 61, 63 through 72, and 74 as submitted. Next item was a reappointment of Bob Hickman and Sara Weathers to serve on the Reno County Health Department Advisory Board for 3-year terms from 2/4/2020 to 12/31/2022. Final item directs the chairman to sign minutes for December 3rd, 10th, 17<sup>th</sup>, 23rd and 31st, 2019 as submitted. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

County Clerk Donna Patton met with the Board to recommend approval to destroy 2017 City/School Election materials at Sonoco with Election Clerk's Brooke Koehn and Alisha Johnson as electors present. **Mr. Bush moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst,** to approve destroying 2017 City/School Election materials as presented by staff with electors and a third person present to witness them being destroyed. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

County Planner Mark Vonachen was present to give explanation for Planning & Zoning Case #2019-13 a conditional use permit request by George and Jennifer Miller to expand an existing dog training and boarding facility at 6019 S. Victory Road near Burrton, Kansas. He stated they currently are R-2 Suburban Residential District zoned for 36 dogs and would like to increase that number to a maximum of 152 dogs. There would not be any breeding of dogs on the premises only boarding and training. On December 13, 2013 the County Commission approved a Special Use Permit for this property limiting the number of dogs to 36 as requested by the owner in their application. The owner would like the expansion project completed by spring. He went over the nine factors and nine conditions of the Planning & Zoning Commissions 7-0 vote for approval. **Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Bush,** to approve Planning & Zoning Case #2019-13 a conditional use permit request by George & Jennifer Miller to expand an existing dog training and boarding facility for a maximum of 152 dogs with the nine factors and nine conditions as approved by Planning Commission. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan gave explanation of a General Release of all Claims negotiated by Public Works Director Don Brittain for \$5,000 worth of damage done to a bridge on Herren Road in Salt Creek Township by Nowak Construction Co. Inc. He said the vehicle was over the weight limit causing damages and the repairs would be \$5,000 and this release was limited. He recommended approval for this settlement agreement for \$5,000 between Reno County and Nowak Construction Co. Inc. for damages to the Herren Road Bridge

24.35 and authorize Interim County Administrator Bill Hermes to sign the release when compensation was agreed upon.

Public Works Director Don Brittain said this issue was caused back on August 2, 2019 when the subcontractor, Nowak Construction, damaged the bridge with an overweight load. They agreed to pay for damages and turned it into their insurance company who denied the claim. After discussing the situation with the owner, he agreed to pay the \$5,000 damage to the bridge. He said Public Works replaced the deck on the bridge extending the life of the bridge another 10-years plus since it was not on the replacement plan. **Mr. Bush moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst**, to approve the agreement/general release as described by Mr. Brittain for \$5,000 to repair the Herren Road Bridge. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Health Department Director Nick Baldetti met with the Board to discuss the Kansas Association of Local Health Department's (KALHD) initiative to seek an increase to the state formula funding for public health in the Kansas State Budget and Reno County's role. He gave background information on the Drug Impact Task Force for substance use and abuse in our community arriving to the \$750,000 grant. He spoke about a health assessment questionnaire which showed the top two concerns of residents in Reno County, 1) was drugs and 2) safety in their community. On October 26, 2017, The Department of Health and Human Services declared opiate and substance use as a public health emergency for the United States. As a result of the declaration funding became available through the Federal level, then passed through the State level, and Reno County received an Opiate Response Grant that was a pass-through funding source from the Center for Disease Control of \$65,000 for planning initiatives in 2018 and 2019. He stated because of the work of the Drug Impact Task Force and planning the community benefited by two additional funding streams for opiate use and misuse in our community; one is CDC pass through grant for \$50,000 the other Bureau of Justice Grant for \$750,000. He discussed in depth the scope of the public health initiatives for opening a twenty-four-hour social detox center in this community since the hospital and jail facilities were already being used for detox.

Retired Sheriff of Reno County Randy Henderson also a member of the Drug Task Force Panel spoke about working with addiction since 1988 when he became Sheriff in 2002 and is still working with addiction. A common denominator with addiction is that people want to get well but have no resources to accomplish that. He spoke about health issues dealing with detox for the

person trying to detox on their own. Mr. Henderson had been working with several other people during the past twenty-years to get a detox facility for this community. He spoke about a study by Amanda Hullet, Hutchinson Hospital from October 2015 through May 2016, that found together the hospital and jail were spending five million dollars annually on drug and alcohol abuse detox. Reno County has a serious drug problem and financial impact to the community. He explained about the SACK program referencing Harold Casey from SACK and Reno County Correctional Facility SACK Director Michael Hill have been working with SACK at the jail since 2015. He noted that Summit Facility "Break Through" medical detox program is complimented by the Correctional Facility program not in competition.

Harold Casey CEO of Substance Abuse Center of Kansas (SACK) gave a presentation to the Board describing what SACK is and what they offer in their communities. He showed statistics from WSU on cost savings and spoke about interventions and stated that in his opinion, the residential program was sustainable. He stated, "We are committed to helping people and saving lives." He answered questions on detox treatment and rate for prevention. He said they contract with Horizons Mental Health Services, Reno County Health Department, Prairie Star Health Center, Local and State Hospitals, EMS, Police Departments, Fire Departments, and Sheriff Departments and are committed to working with these agencies. They have been in a contract for the last fifteen-years with New Beginnings, investing in the future and are committed to serving the population in Hutchinson and Wichita.

Shar Gonzales Executive Director of New Beginnings stated that New Beginnings has been in business for thirty-years as a 501C3 non-profit local organization. She spoke about Walnut Court Apartments and how it was uniquely financed. She talked about services offered to people with addiction issues. To date New Beginnings has 150 units of housing and with that they own six Oxford Houses out of the 10 in Hutchinson. They have developed partnerships for construction, and investors are paid out and now Walnut Court is the sole owner of their LLC. She spoke about various other finances and reconstruction of Walnut Court housing along with detox services. After 15-years there needs to be a reinvestment happening. At a total cost for plans on the rehabilitation of \$453,000, New Beginnings will cover \$253,000. As the sole owner of Walnut Court, they will be using an Operating Reserve and a Replacement Reserve returned to them of \$103,000 with \$153,000 financing in place. They will license as a detox center. Some of the cost will be for a \$100,000 fire

suppression system, and the other \$100,000 is being raised by the Task Force. She spoke about paying over \$550,000 over the last five years in property taxes to the City of Hutchinson and Reno County. They have used the NRP programs for increasing development.

Sheriff Darrian Campbell gave the law enforcement perspective on this facility and stated that 70 to 80 percent of crimes are related to drugs. He is working with Chief Hooper Hutchinson Police Department, to give people a place to stop the drug cravings and cutting costs on booking people. Saving costs at a facility detox center does help cut staff costs. People there come clean and stay clean in recovery.

Judge Joe McCarville spoke about being the Drug Court Judge and about justice. He must put people in the jail until they can find a place for them to detox which is not very helpful for success and he uses this as a last resort. He spoke about a push pre-trial detention to keep low income people out of jail. Services have been extended with SACK and ten Oxford Houses.

Lynette Lacy, Reno County Leadership Consultant and a member of the Drug Task Force Group confirmed the Task Force was committed to locating funding but were hoping the City of Hutchinson and Reno County will help with their requested portion. They still have another \$100,000 to raise with several members who are actively seeking funds from other people and organizations in the community. She said they were determined to succeed with funding. Mr. Henderson commented they have commitments from several prominent citizens in the community and he was confident of raising the funds.

The Board went on with a large discussion asking questions of members of the Task Force in attendance. The county's portion was a request for \$50,000. The Board supports the request with Commissioner Sellers suggesting Mr. O'Sullivan put together a document for the \$50,000 grant that would protect the county's interest. Mr. O'Sullivan summarized the Board's request asking maybe one to two weeks for the new Administrator to be in office to identify the funding source if spent this year. He asked about the estimated time for construction to see when funding would have to be available to provide protection for the county.

At 11:00 the meeting recessed for ten minutes.

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

Interim Administrator Bill Hermes explained Senate Bill 294 from an email received from Finney County Administrator Randy Partington. He said SB294 would be heard in the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

County Clerk Donna Patton spoke to the Board on Senate Bill 294 from the clerk's point of view listing reasons she was not in favor of this bill.

County Appraiser Brad Wright addressed the Board on Senate Bill 295. He stated there were not many changes that his office was not already doing currently.

The Board by consensus directed a letter to be sent from the Chairman to Senator Ed Berger regarding reasons why they were opposed the bill.

The Board watched a five-minute video from Kansas Department of Transportation regarding highways.

At 11:35 the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 11, 2020.

Approved:

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Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

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Reno County Clerk  
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Date