

March 8, 2022
Reno County Annex
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held the agenda session at the Annex Conference Room with Commissioner Ron Hirst, Commissioner Ron Sellers, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Patrick Hoffman, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present. Chairman Daniel Friesen was in attendance via zoom.

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

Commissioner Friesen commented on the tragedy in our community with the Cottonwood Complex fire. He thanked and praised the emergency management team and all the rural fire districts along with other counties firefighters and first responders. He thanked Sheriff Campbell and his staff for all they did to save lives. Governor Kelly flew in and met with first responders. She stated that she would support any efforts at the state and federal level to help with fire mitigation issues. Thank you to the community and county support agencies that are assisting with the fire victims.

The Board thanked Commissioner Friesen for his comments and thanked everyone who assisted with the fire.

There were no public comments.

There was one item added to the business section of the agenda: 7A1 Local Disaster Declaration. **Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers,** to amend the consent agenda. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of items 6A through 6L, including the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on March 4th, 2022, totaling \$324,578.62, claims payable on March 11th, 2022, totaling \$489,452.58; and also consisting of pending Added, Abated and Escaped Taxation Change Orders numbered 2022-162, 164, 167-168, and 173; approve reappointment of Christine Vargas, Olivia Kite and Mark Mains and appointment of Quinton Moore to the Reno County Health Department Advisory Board effective 1/1/22 to 12/31/2024; approve appointment of Travis D. Friesen to the Reno County Public Transportation Commission for a 3-year term commencing on January 1, 2022 and ending on December 31, 2024; approve appointment of Verton Miller as Trustee to Grant Township Board;

approve agreement with Kirkham Michael for Engineering Services to perform the Biennial Routine Bridge Inspections of the FAS & Off-System Bridges for a total of \$32,882.0; approve Public Works purchase of a 2022 1.25 ton 4X2 Dodge Ram 4500 Crew Cab and Chassis from Allen Samuels, Hutchinson, Kansas, for \$50,714.00 after trade-in of a 1991 Ford F700 with approximately 145,000 miles; approve Public Works purchase of a 2022 Bobcat S770 Skid Steer from White Star Machinery, Wichita, Kansas, for \$47,420.80 after trade-in of a 2002 Bobcat 873H with 5,648.2 hours; approve Public Works purchase of a 2022 Komatsu Wheel Loader from Berry Tractor, Wichita, Kansas, for \$169,464.00 after trade-in of a 2002 JCB ZX with approximately 8400 hours; approve purchase of 2 (two) 2022 Ford F-250 Crew Cab 4X4 trucks from Midway Motors for the Solid Waste Department in the amount of \$75,830.00; approve purchase of a 2022 Caterpillar 150-15AWD Motor Grader for the price of \$307,761.45 including trade-in from Foley Equipment, Wichita, Kansas, for Solid Waste; approve Administrative Services Agreement with Ranson Financial Group for Sewer District Nos. 201 (Yoder) and 202 (HABIT) and authorize the chair to sign, as presented by staff. The consent agenda motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Emergency Management Director Adam Weishaar recommended approval for an extension to the Declaration of Local Disaster until the end of March 2022 and asked for support by the Commission to implement a burn ban until the end of the month. He gave a wildfire update stating on Friday responders had a preplan fire task force and response to a large fire meeting. The winds were expected to gust up to 40-50 miles per hour and forecasted to switch from southwest, to southeast, then north westerly for Friday and Saturday. He stated Saturday afternoon a large fire broke out and the first units found fire on both sides of 4th Avenue and Willison Road. He requested fire taskforces from the state, and a second airplane to assist with water drops. Simultaneously, there were Sheriff Deputies, Police Officers from Hutchinson, Haven, Buhler, South Hutchinson, and Kansas Wildlife and Parks evacuating residents who were in the immediate path of this fire, that was dubbed the Cottonwood Complex Fire. He spoke about the local disaster in our community regarding the Cottonwood fires that consumed 12 square miles before being stopped approximately two miles into Harvey County. 35 homes, 92 outbuildings, and 110 vehicles were a total loss with the death of one man, and damage to 22 homes and 8 outbuildings. Temporary livestock pens were set up by the ag extension agent for lost livestock. He said firefighters would remain in the area until the fire was 100 percent contained, and noted that as of Monday it was at 70 percent contained.

As in any large disaster, the VOAD-Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters will be managing the long-term recovery piece of this fire. Several support agencies have been set up along with a 2-1-1 number to donate for fire victim's needs. He warned Reno County was in an extreme fire danger alert across the county with the dry conditions.

Mr. Sellers had Mr. Weishaar read the Declaration of Disaster for the public. Mr. Sellers read a partial news article on fire conditions in the State of Kansas from the State Fire Management Officer for the Kansas Forest Service, Mark Neely that backed up what Mr. Weishaar was speaking about for fires. Mr. Sellers was in support of the declaration and ban.

Mr. Friesen was briefed on the fire danger stating Chief Beer thought a ban should be applied to the lower risk areas also. Mr. Friesen understood the Ag operations could not burn if there was a burn ban in place however, this was for the good of the county as a whole, so he was in support of the declaration and ban.

Mr. Sellers stated all the commission was in support of Ag burning however, the risks to the county was too high at this time.

Mr. Hirst commented that CRP fields had a date to be burned by and maybe there would be an opportunity by the end of March for farmers to comply with the burn date.

Mr. Friesen suggested Mr. Partington communicate with the local FSA office regarding an extension of time on the burn date situation on CRP.

Public Works Director Don Brittain gave his annual report. He briefly spoke about county crew projects, bridge, mowing/sign, dirt and weeds, contracted projects, high risk rural roads projects, Yoder water district, Yoder and HABIT sewer districts rehabilitation, and the KDOT agreement (K14/96 Northwest Passage). The Board asked several questions pertaining to the oil prices, amount of mileage for asphalt, supplies, and labor.

Youth Services Director Shelly Bredemeier met with the Board for her annual update. She highlighted several areas on both the shelter and detention sides. Mr. Sellers commented on an Interfaith Housing project to house High School students that were 18 years old and above. Ms. Bredemeier was not aware of this project and would check into it for some of the students. Mr. Hirst was not aware of the Intake/Assessment helping parents with resources for children.

Health Department Director Karla Nichols met with the Board to recommend approval for the Health Department's Aid to Local Grant Applications in the amount of \$1,249,538.65. **Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers,** to approve the local grant application and sign the document for the grant as outlined by Ms. Nichols. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Partington mentioned half of the monthly department reports were attached in the agenda packet. He briefly reviewed the financial report stating the county funds were in good shape. He asked the Board if they wished to join the KCCA for \$1,095 dues, by consensus the Board declined since they belong to KAC.

Mr. Hirst read an email from Senator Roger Marshall sent from Katie Sawyer. He said it was important to be responsible when burning and sent a special thanks to all who helped with the fires.

Mr. Partington was instructed to address a letter to FSA regarding an extension date for CRP burning.

Mr. Friesen reiterated his feelings on the fires saying it was important to take responsibility and he believed burn education was needed for all residents in rural areas. He asked Mr. Hirst to attend the March 13th meeting and bring up to the Senator's staff about the Ag issue for burning CRP grass. He thanked the community for its work.

At 10:15 a.m. the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 22nd, 2022.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date