

May 7, 2021  
Reno County Courthouse  
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held a study session with Chairman Ron Hirst, Commissioner Daniel Friesen and Commissioner Ron Sellers, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present. Emergency Management Director Adam Weishaar, Emergency Management Specialist Todd Strain, and Fire Chief Bobby White were also present.

At 8:30 Mr. Hirst opened the session.

County Administrator Randy Partington introduced 5 Bugle Training and Consulting Bruce Fuerbringer, M.S., EFO who made a presentation on the Reno County Fire Districts. He spoke about Kansas Fire Service requirements/standards and mandates. He talked about the responsibilities of the Commission as Fire Board. He reviewed the survey he did and gave thirteen issues and other survey outcomes. He suggested each of the commissioners visit all the rural fire stations and communicate with personnel listening to their issues, agree on common goals, and having the Chiefs buy in.

Fire Chief Bobby White said communication and accountability were important. In his opinion they should have a new fire board or overseer to build trust.

A discussion that took place with respect to whether the Board of County Commissioners could delegate its authority as the Fire Board to another entity or entities. County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan stated that in the 1960's the county Commission had appointed advisory boards for each of the fire districts. Their purpose was to advise the county commission, as the governing body of each Fire District, as to the level of emergency response expected by the constituents in each District. He said the advisory boards had no legal authority, but some acted at times as if they had. They were disbanded in the mid-1980's. He advised that Kansas Statutes provide for the creation of a Board of Trustees for a fire district and further provides that the county commission to delegate some of its authority to the Trustees. He said the county commission had never seriously considered appointed Boards of Trustees to manage the Fire Districts.

The Board asked questions and then spoke about the direction they would like to continue with the information reviewed today. They discussed having staff come up with ideas with clear achievements starting the communications with the Fire Chiefs.

Emergency Management Director Adam Weishaar stated he would start by creating a strategic plan then he asked where the Commission wanted to start on the Fire Districts?

**Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst**, for this Board to accept the findings, evaluation, development study and recommendations of the Five Bugle Training and Consulting Report dated May, 2021 and that the County Administrator confer with the District Fire Chiefs on ways to implement the recommendations. The County Administrator's initial focus should be the Mandated Improvements outlined in portions of Article 1, paragraph D. on page 9 of the Report as follows:

Create and adopt a Strategic Plan to set priorities for meeting the County's fire service needs, focus energy and resources to accomplish each priority, strengthen operations and ensure that the fire chief, his/her chief officers, local officers, firefighters, and other stakeholders are working toward common goals. The strategic plan will help establish mutual agreement on intended outcomes and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment.

The Strategic Plan may include an analysis of current fire district boundaries along with any recommended changes, or the development of practices that ensure compliance with current state statutes that regulate how emergency services can be delivered outside a fire district.

The County Administrator should make his initial report to the Board on June 8, 2021. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 11:40 a.m. the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Approved:

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Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

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Reno County Clerk  
cm

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Date