

July 13, 2021
Reno County Courthouse
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held the agenda 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.

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

Commissioner Hirst read a proclamation declaring July 2021 as "Park and Recreation Month". Director of Marketing and Development for Hutch Recreation Commission's Amy Conkling accepted the proclamation and thanked the Board for their support. She also thanked the Board for their support with the Arts and Humanities Council.

Commissioner Sellers commented that he served on the HRC Board for nearly eight years before the Reno County Commission. He thanked HRC for the great job they do with Parks and Recreation for the community.

Commissioner Hirst thanked them for their programs and parks along with Cheney Lake.

Health Department Director Karla Nichols and Health Department Assistant Director of Clinical Services Karen Hammersmith gave a COVID update stating the variant was not in Kansas yet. Mrs. Hammersmith spoke about upcoming vaccine clinics. Mr. Friesen had alert level updated questions. Mrs. Nichols stated they follow the CDC standards and explained school alerts were color coded. Mr. Friesen requested the alert level plan be on the agenda for August 31st, 2021.

Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst, to place the South Hutchinson bridge on the business agenda as item 7E. The motion was denied by a roll call vote of 1 to 2 with Mr. Sellers and Mr. Hirst opposed to adding 7E to agenda. Mr. Sellers wanted greater detail and to hear from county staff before voting on Mr. Turner's request. Mr. Hirst suggested Mr. Turner take the opportunity to contact Public Works Director Don Brittain, County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan, and County

Administrator Randy Partington for a meeting to review this subject.

New South Hutchinson City Administrator Mr. Joseph Turner addressed the Board about the replacement of the South Hutchinson Bridge on Scott Blvd. east of Reno County Public Works estimated to cost \$700,000. At issue, he said was who has the responsibility to maintain the bridge. He gave a brief background of an agreement he claimed existed since 1986 wherein the county maintained the connecting link. He believed the county was responsible for the bridge until around 2012 when an agreement, 08-01, was terminated by the county. He suggested a possible 50-50 split for the cost of replacement of the bridge. Mr. Turner said that the Public Works heavy trucks were limited to turning right not left from their facility using Avenue F in South Hutchinson and claimed they were at least partially responsible for breaking the water lines with their heavy traffic flow.

Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of items 6A and 6B which consisted of the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on July 9th totaling \$70,105.52 and July 16th, 2021, totaling \$972,357.60 and **Resolution 2021-13;** appointing Cindy Rehlander as Interim County Appraiser for a period not to exceed six months as proposed. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Melissa Romme with Adams Brown Auditor/Certified Public Accounting Firm and Jami Benyshek Auditor Manager reviewed the 2020 Audit Report with the Board. Mrs. Romme stated the report was an unmodified opinion, which was good and had no findings to note. There was a brief discussion on the reserve fund of \$5 million for Solid Waste in the event of the landfill closure. Mrs. Romme and County Financial Specialist Leslie Roederer explained the Solid Waste project costs. Ms. Benyshek spoke about the Governance Letter stating Reno County had a clean audit and thanked the county staff for their help for a smooth audit. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen,** to approve the 2020 Audit Report as presented requesting the Chairman's signature. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0. The Board thanked Mrs. Roederer for her assistance. Mrs. Roederer stated in 2014 when she came to the county the cost of the audit was \$60,000 with 13 to 15 items that needed to be addressed, currently the cost was \$34,000.

At 10:30 the meeting recessed for five minutes.

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

County Administrator Randy Partington presented a summary report of the 2022 County Budget with proposed modifications from previous discussions last week. He reviewed the proposed maximum mill levy of 39.498 bringing in \$25,309,526 in taxes with a 5 percent reduction in the mill levy with a Revenue Neutral Rate mill levy of 39.967. Mr. Hirst noted that Reno County may have four months of budgeted cash balance that was not to be used next year. The Board would need to discuss budget questions before August 24th. **Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers**, to approve Reno County's maximum mill levy shall be 39.498 levying \$25,309,526 which is below the Revenue Neutral Rate of 39.967 mills. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen, to set the budget hearing date of August 24th, 2021, for the 2022 County Budget at the regular agenda meeting starting at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Partington stated this is a public hearing where the public could come to speak to the Commissioners about the county budget. He said the county could decrease or hold at the projected budget at the same amount but not increase budgeted items following approval. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Partington proceeded to review the 2022 Special Districts Budget. He commented by adopting the recommended maximum budgets for the special districts two public hearings needed to be scheduled on August 24th, 2021. The approval officially notifies the Reno County Clerk of an intent to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen**, to approve the Reno County's Special Districts budget be set with tax rates totaling 161.206. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve setting for Special Budgets and Revenue Neutral Rates, two public hearings on August 24, 2021, and to approve signatures for the Notice of the Revenue Neutral Rate Intent document submitting the budget to the County Clerk on or before August 25, 2021. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Sellers began the discussion regarding expansion to a five-member commission board Reno County and to

vote whether to proceed with placing a question on the ballot for the November General Election. He stated there were numerous reasons for five instead of three members, one of which was better representation for the county. Mr. Sellers made a motion to place the question of five commissioners on the ballot only to withdraw the motion later after a brief discussion.

Mr. Hirst recommended a special meeting to review details prior to drafting a resolution.

County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan explained what the motion should be. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen**, that this Board proceed with directing county staff to draft a resolution or resolutions dividing Reno County into five commissioner districts for consideration by the Board at its July 27th, 2021, agenda meeting. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 2-1 with Mr. Hirst opposed.

There was a lengthy discussion by the Board on the proposed five-member commission, with legal counsel explaining statutes and the intent of the general election process.

Mr. Friesen made a motion for a resolution to specify intent to vote for two new commissioners occurring next 2021 General Election; if approved, seconded by Mr. Sellers. **seconded by Mr. Sellers**. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. O'Sullivan clarified that the proposed Resolution needed to be drafted would state in the event the voters approved expanding the Board from three to five members at the 2021 General Election, the Board will recommend to the Governor that the newly created Board positions should be submitted to the voters at the 2022 General Election as provided by K.S.A. 19-203a.

Mr. Friesen made a motion stating the intent of this Board was to ensure any additional expenses of a five-member commission would be balanced with cuts from within the budget so no net increase would incur to the taxpayer, **seconded by Mr. Sellers**. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Partington briefly reviewed a summary of the financial reports. He commented on the department updates and the expense by department reports. He said he would be attending the ARP meeting this Friday at 2:30 p.m. for status updates. He inquired if the Board wanted to set a date for a joint meeting

between Reno County and the City of Hutchinson to discuss emails. Mr. Friesen suggested Mr. Partington work with the City Administrator and if needed a meeting could be scheduled July 20th or July 27th, 2021, either day was agreeable with the Board.

Commissioner comments:

Commissioner Sellers commented on last week's budget meetings being time well spent, commented that Drug Court was a wonderful asset for Reno County and people in Fire Districts needed to speak with their local districts if questions arise on their tax statements.

Commissioner Friesen spoke about the good job on the budgets. He would like to discuss sewer rates at an agenda meeting to talk about increasing the rates, follow up comments on 9-1-1 minutes for a better understanding and the South Hutchinson Administrator Mr. Turner fully aware of issues and needing for more flexibilities on certain types of issues. Put on the website all available information concerning a five-member commission removing all other maps except 5, 6, and 7.

Commissioner Hirst was in favor of displaying the three maps on the website and agreed with Mr. Sellers comments on the Drug Court. He appreciated the auditor's comments and how informative they are and gave Leslie Roederer kudos. City of Hutchinson accountant Angela Richards will take out \$15,000 from the budget which will not affect the Rural area. Mr. Turner had dinner with him and Mr. Hirst suggested he get with Public Works Director which he had not done before today.

At 12:00 p.m. the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 27th, 2021.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date

