

August 9, 2022
Reno County Annex
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held an agenda session with Chairman Daniel Friesen, Commissioner Ron Sellers, and Commissioner Ron Hirst, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Patrick Hoffman, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a short sectarian prayer led by Pastor Tim Adrian, Westside Baptist Church.

Deputy County Clerk Jenna Fager updated the Board on an error discovered on Friday with the hand count audit on eleven precincts from the in-person advance voting. She said some of the rotations on the State Treasurer's race were not correct. In lieu of the few wrong rotations for the walk-in advance, County Clerk Donna Patton decided to do a full hand count audit on all walk-in advance votes. Mrs. Fager explained the provisional process and she recommended the Commission extend the previous Primary Election Canvass from Thursday, August 11th to Monday, August 15th at 9:00 a.m. County Clerk Donna Patton was in the audience. **Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst,** to approve the recommendation from Deputy County Clerk Mrs. Fager to change the date and time to Monday, August 15th, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Sellers requested to add to the business agenda for an Economic Development Incentive Fiber project for IdeaTek. The Board by consensus would add the item as 7A1. Mr. Friesen stated it would be a conflict of interest so he would abstain when the decision comes up.

Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of items 6A through 6D including the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on August 5th, 2022, totaling \$172,546.27, claims payable on August 12, 2022, totaling \$1,101,815.89; authorize the County Administrator to sign title to 2005 GMC Sierra (Maintenance #4) with VIN #2GTEK13T851341234 to complete the purchase of a 2022 Ford Maverick which as previously approved; authorize the County Administrator to sign title to 2009 Lincoln MKX (Health Department #38) with VIN #2LMDU68C08BJ39353 to complete the

purchase of a 2022 Ford Maverick; approve Reno County Fire Administrator truck purchase from Midway Motors for \$46,828.00. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Friesen left the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

Mr. Sellers introduced IdeaTek General Counsel and Director of Broadband Advocacy Ethan Capland who gave explanation of a Letter of Support for a possible grant from the State of Kansas. His request was for community support to install fiber optics in Reno County with those funds. He said a pledge from Reno County for a contribution between \$15,000 to \$24,000 would expand Broadband in rural areas of the county that need internet. The application would affect 600 premises for approximately \$3.3 million dollars with a grant match from IdeaTek of \$600,000. He said there were a couple of options; per approved premise, i.e., \$40 would be a pledge of \$24,000 from Reno County, going down to \$25 per premise equals \$15,000. The rural areas could have different connections to have access to internet in their area however they have limitations. He stated fiber optic broadband is scalable and reliable and will push more data through them in the future. The Board discussed wireless options, hybrid fiber versus fiber optics.

President/CEO of Reno County/City of Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Debra Teufel spoke about the economic impact in the rural area and what broadband means for Reno County. She gave some background on a project the Chamber partnered with IdeaTek on in 2020, that project was completed in 2021 with fiber optic cables. She read a statement from the Farm Bureau National Organization "The American Farm Bureau Foundation" regarding Broadband. Ms. Teufel spoke about the grant being funneled through Greater Hutch funding that seed basic services to Reno County from a line-item allocation in their budget called Community Development Initiatives. She said the application needed to be submitted by August 18th, 2022. She spoke about the rural Industrial Park south of South Hutchinson.

Mr. Hirst questioned the proposal for the funds to come from the \$50 thousand given to Greater Hutch Development Fund. Mr. Sellers had a strong opinion that education was important. This was part of the Chambers Economic Development items and should be up to the Chamber to decide where the funds come from on behalf of Reno County. Mr. Hirst agreed about the importance of education in rural areas.

Mr. Partington said this year's request by the Chamber from the county was \$50,000 dollars and the Chamber's request for next year was \$84,000 to cover the cost of special projects. After a long discussion the Board agreed to leave this in the hands of the Chamber with no extra funds from Reno County and stated any vendor should have the opportunity to be awarded this service in the county. Mr. Capland will work with Mr. Partington and Mr. Hoffman on the Letter of Support.

Mr. Friesen returned to the meeting at 9:53 a.m.

Emergency Management Director Adam Weishaar discussed the Wildfire Mitigation through the Fire Management Grant. He stated it would affect 1,375 acres costing \$1.3 million in the high-risk areas. Mr. Partington stated Reno County's 10 percent local match would be \$323,000 out of the reserves. Mr. Hirst thought 25 percent should be the homeowner's responsibility instead of the Reno County taxpayers.

City of Hutchinson Fire Chief Steven Beer agreed with Mr. Weishaar about the private landowners not wanting them on their land. He said they offered classes to educate people after fires and very few attended. Cedar trees were the largest high-risk areas and said that most people used the cedar trees for hunting. He would like to see a corridor developed of 500 feet instead of 85 feet around properties, but it would have to be a joint effort with landowners. Mr. Friesen would like to see a plan submitted to the Board. The Board had a large discussion on fire mitigation with Mr. Weishaar and Chief Beer. They recommended to reschedule one month from now with questions from the Board compiled by staff on a summary page.

Human Resources Director Helen Foster met with the Board to recommend the Premium Schedule for 2022-2023 Health Insurance Plan Year. She stated there would be a new health and dental Administrator keeping the rates flat with no increase. **Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers,** to call for the question. The motion was approved by a roll call vote 3-0.

Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve the Premium Schedule for 2022-20223 Health Insurance Plan Year as presented by staff. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Partington gave a presentation for discussion on the 2023 Budget. The Board discussed cuts to the budget.

At 11:20 a.m. the meeting recessed for five minutes.

The meeting reconvened with all Commissioners, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Patrick Hoffman, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

Mr. Partington had no additional comments to the agenda packet for the financial report and monthly department reports for the Commission to review.

Commissioner Comments:

Mr. Hirst gave congrats on an award to The Cosmosphere. He mentioned potential lodging, and the Yoder Water District #101 meeting at Journey Church on Yoder Road at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, August 11, 2022. He thanked the vendors of the Farmers Market and all the people who support the Markets.

At 11:30 a.m. Mr. Friesen moved to go into executive session until 11:45 a.m., with the county administrator, county counselor, and Harlen Depew joining the governing body in the executive session, and the executive session is justified under KOMA because the subject is a preliminary discussion of potential acquisition of real estate by Reno County, **Mr. Hirst seconded the motion.** The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 11:45 a.m. Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst, to extend the executive session for 5-minutes until 11:50 a.m. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 11:50 a.m. Mr. Friesen moved, to go into executive session until 12:05 p.m., with the county administrator, county counselor, and Don Brittain, joining the governing body in the executive session, and the executive session is justified under KOMA because the subject is a preliminary discussion of potential acquisition of real estate by Reno County, **Mr. Hirst seconded the motion.** The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 12:05 p.m. the meeting returned to open session and adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 23rd, 2022.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date