

August 10, 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 Pastor Mike Rose, South Hutchinson Methodist Church.

Chairman Hirst thanked the support given to the NBC Baseball teams that played at Hobart Detter Field.

Fire District #8 Fire Chief Lyndon Ropp was concerned with the 5 Bugle report and recommendations. His main concern was the hiring of an outside person for all the rural fire districts. He felt there was a need to make changes but was uncertain with the direction the county was going for a county wide district and said the Board should pay the chiefs more instead of hiring the countywide person. He wanted to know if the question could be on the ballot whether the public wanted this person or not.

Tyler Ryan, 7712 E. Sun City Road, asked the Board where on a timeline was the wind energy regulation discussion. Mr. Sellers would address Mr. Ryan's question in his commissioner's comments.

Commissioner Friesen requested the addition under the business item 7B for Jake Brake signage at Plum Street and 56th Avenue.

Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of items 6A through 6D which consisted of the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on August 6th, 2021, totaling \$902,547.17 and August 13th, 2021, totaling \$804,71.46 as submitted. Next was an agreement with the City Tele-Coin Company, Inc. to provide telephone services for inmates at the Reno County Correctional Facility, the 2021 Annual Review and Revisions to the South-Central Kansas Solid Waste Management Plan, and a Letter of Understanding between Reno and Rice County WIC partners regarding shared registered dietitian services as presented by staff. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Friesen requested moving item 6C to next week's agenda so he could review the changes made to the South-Central Kansas Solid Waste Management Plan. Commissioner Sellers had concerns on page eight of item 6C for the population decline numbers.

Solid Waste Director Megan Davidson explained that the SC Kansas Solid Waste Management Plan was making changes to the names on the membership list only. The Plan had to be sent to KDHE by the end of August, so she would like it to be approved today. She explained the population numbers were from the five-year plan and that there is three years left before the numbers will be updated. Mr. Partington clarified the decline of the population numbers were from the census. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst**, to approve the revisions to the South-Central Kansas Solid Waste Management Plan as outlined. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Health Department Director Karla Nichols gave a COVID-19 update stating that there were a few changes made from KDHE since the last report given to the Board. Mrs. Nichols gave a presentation that followed a three-item response plan; vaccination, testing, and precautions, and explained the testing to treatment and lowering the age for vaccinations. Mrs. Nichols reiterated that the Health Department was following the KDHE guidance on alerts. "Prevention is the key to good health", and stated precautions the community could do to try to keep them healthy.

Health Department Assistant Director of Clinical Services Karen Hammersmith updated the Board on COVID clinics around the community, businesses, and schools. There was to be a clinic this Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Health Department.

Hutchinson Regional Medical Center Chuck Welch gave an overview on the number of patients in the hospital along with the (Delta) COVID related statistics. He spoke about the nursing shortage effecting our community and nationwide and that many Hospitals are in a state of deferral. He mentioned the use of monoclonal antibodies, an injected protein to help boost the immune system and assisting the body to combat COVID. Mr. Sellers asked Mr. Welch to communicate with the Board often with their information. Mr. Friesen requested clarification of

deferral. Mr. Welch explained deferral meant they could not take patients for various reasons.

Mrs. Nichols finished her Health Department update. There was a discussion on alert level status with Commissioners encouraging the Health Department to use simpler alert levels.

Commissioner Friesen mentioned that two weeks ago the Board spoke about a COVID policy. He said he would like to see less focus on strict numbers, more on what is happening in the field, and make it less complicated.

Chairman Hirst stated in his opinion the Reno County Board of Public Health acting as County Commission supports the Health Departments recommendations regarding any outbreaks and thanked them for assisting to keep the public safe. He was in favor of the Sedgwick County approach to alert levels regarding their hospital status.

Mr. Friesen spoke with Sedgwick County about their three levels, (green, yellow, red). The Sedgwick County Manager coordinates with the lead physicians, other staff, and patients at the hospital to determine their three colored alert levels. He would like to see a simpler status like Sedgwick County.

Mrs. Nichols wanted to communicate to the public to get vaccinated and stated that they are working on education to the public for staying out of the hospital. She would bring back comments in two weeks.

Mr. Friesen wanted to make a policy for health orders from the Health Officer. Chairman Hirst was not in favor of making any policy, because a final decision on any order is up to the commission. Mr. Friesen asked Mrs. Hammersmith if she was able to issue health guidance and recommendations using her authority as Health Officer outside of this commission's authority.

Mrs. Hammersmith explained hers were recommendations and not a requirement other than an isolation or quarantine which falls directly under the Health Officer stated by law. She spoke about Senate Bill 40 and all orders, policies, and mandates come from the County Commission or the Board of Health. She is very clear to say it is a recommendation, and that they are following CDC and KDHE guidelines. There was a large discussion and explanation of quarantine guidelines for the upcoming school year and stated that some schools will use last year's recommendations and others may use a modified version.

Commissioner Friesen spoke about engine braking from over 30 concerned citizens around the 56th Avenue and Plum round-a-bout area. Jake Braking is to help slow down a heavier or semi-trucks. Mr. Partington spoke about a resolution to restrict engine noise with signs and the problems to enforce those regulations. Undersheriff McHaley spoke about the honor system and commented that it would be difficult to enforce unless the officer is right in the area.

County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan explained what was allowed is the use of Jake Braking with a muffler. If you use Jake Braking without a muffler it is a traffic offense that the Sheriff's Office would be able to enforce under state law, however the officer would need to be there to witness and identify the individual and be able to testify that was what was problematic.

Public Works Director Don Brittain spoke briefly about rules and regulatory signs that require a resolution. Mr. O'Sullivan stated there was a difference between regulatory and informational. **Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers,** to have the county counselor and himself work together on a drafted resolution bringing it back to commission for consideration on engine braking at the round-a-bout in two weeks. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

County Administrator Randy Partington reviewed the financial reports and mentioned the department reports. Mr. Sellers had questions on the Clerk's Office and Register of Deeds reports. Mr. Partington answered the revenue neutral rate question and the concern of the Register of Deeds, and a request was for a digitized record plan for that part-time employment question.

Commissioner Sellers commented that he has a special meeting tonight on the bridge project. He responded to Lyndon Ropp's concerns by stating the commission as a whole took the report and advise from county administrator, taking the right direction for rural fire districts since we need change within those departments. He asked if applications were being taken for the new position. Mr. Partington stated that next year in January 2022 they will begin the hiring process. He supported the Chairman to put the wind ordinance to be placed back on the agenda. Mr. Partington stated they were looking at the 1st or 2nd meeting in September for this to be put on the agenda. He has local individuals to provide a citizens committee willing to

work on a positive output to represent the county as a whole. Mr. Hirst stated it was not his position to not instruct people how to vote on the two more commissioners but would like people to investigate for themselves. Mr. Friesen stated Mr. Sellers wanted to have a committee for pros/cons facts and he was in favor of a committee.

Commissioner Friesen found that all Fire Chiefs agreed that things needed to change and appreciated Mr. Ryan's comments on Wind Energy. He agreed that a decision needed to be made and he committed to seeing it solved prior to the November election. The sewer issue needs to have staff start generating funds at a reasonable rate. Mr. Partington explained the funds, costs, and property taxes along with user fees.

Commissioner Hirst stated he would like to see property tax come down and increase straight user fees for sewer districts and maybe get two months deposit. The 5 Bugle report was a good report and showed improvements could be made.

At 10:55 a.m. the meeting adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 24th, 2021.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date