

August 18, 2020
Reno County Courthouse
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held the agenda session with, Chairman Ron Sellers, Commissioner Ron Hirst, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present. Commissioner Bob Bush attended via phone.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner announcements:

Mr. Sellers commented that after last week's discussion regarding mandated masks for K-6th grade, he stated that the Commission said masks had to be worn in Reno County in the educational situations. He said the Attorney General stated the final decision should be up to the school boards.

County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan confirmed that was correct that the Kansas Attorney General said a form of home rule exists for public schools to control the affairs of their districts until that opinion is overridden by a district court decision. Mr. O'Sullivan would recommend the Commission consider that as an appropriate interpretation of the law.

Mr. Sellers received emails from parents or staff of Trinity and Holy Cross schools about receiving any relief money. Those schools are to apply, and Mr. Meagher and Mr. Deardoff would get in touch with them with an application for the next round being paid to non-profit and private schools. County Administrator Randy Partington said it is part of the \$1,089,000 of grants for non-profits and private schools. They should contact Mr. Partington, Mr. Meagher, or Mr. Deardoff for the application.

Mr. Sellers final comment was instructions for the people wanting to speak about the mandated mask issue on resolution 2020-22. Mr. Sellers thought they may not have a majority of the Commission to support reversal with the medical experts and Health Officer on board supporting the mandated masks in Reno County. Because of their opinions, he would not reverse his vote. Mr. Bush stated that he would not address the masks; he would support the medical community and not reverse the mask issue.

Interim Health Officer Karen Hammersmith briefly went over statistics for surrounding states, Kansas, and Reno County. Reno County has 482 positive cases, with 263 recovered, 218 active cases and one death. Of those active cases the Hutchinson Correctional Facility has reported 160 of the 218 cases. We do have three to four clusters in the community, and she gave a testing rate of 6.6 percent, noting that it is staying steady. Mr. Hirst asked about trend data for mandated masks. Mrs. Hammersmith did not have an answer at this time.

Hutchinson Clinic Lead Physician Scott Pauly met with the Board giving his percentage as 16.9 positive testing for the symptomatic people, not A-symptomatic being seen at the Hutchinson Clinic. He also commented that their total numbers have increased. He spoke about watered down data when infused with other illnesses. With schools opening, numbers could be different depending on wearing masks, social distancing, and washing hands. He talked about turn around responses on rapid testing. He stated that masks work, so he recommended wearing them. Goal metrics from the state are out there and they are strong recommendations.

Emergency Management Director Adam Weishaar met with the Board and gave an overview of the 171-day timeline since the beginning of COVID-19. He said Reno County has a declaration in place until December 31, 2020. He clarified the number of cases at the Hutchinson Correctional Facility as 148 not 160 but noted that this was an estimate at this time not hard numbers. The Governor's Disaster Declaration is set to expire on September 15th, 2020, which is subject to change, but does play into the mask mandate of Reno County's #20-52 and expires at the same time. He spoke about an article posted on August 16th in the Kansas City Star regarding Secretary Dr. Lee Norman's graph he posted, where the data accuracy was in question. The Star along with Wichita State University confirmed his data was accurate. PPE's are in good shape, but they are still trying to find gloves. They are ordering 500,000 three ply masks looking at 30 to 45 days for delivery.

County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan clarified the mandated masks to be worn in Reno County was not ordered by the Commission but by the Governor's Order #20-52 on July 2nd, 2020. The same date the Governor's Order was issued, July 2nd, Reno County issued resolution #20-17 indicating mask wearing was not mandated then on July 14th resolution #20-20 rescinded the order from July 2nd. That means Reno County does not have any mandate or order in affect for wearing masks leaving the Governor's

Order in place. Mr. Sellers stated Reno County does not have an order mandating masks but is following the Governors Order. Mr. O'Sullivan replied that was correct.

Public comments:

Dawn Drisel, 34 E. 24th, Hutchinson is a physician and medical researcher. Her concern is about wearing masks and the increase in the number of cases and spoke about the manipulated graphs by the Secretary, Dr. Lee Norman. She found 4 studies regarding masks and thinks we are fear mongering. She had graphs showing mask wearing and comparing cloth masks numbers to wearing masks in different countries. Reno County masks have been worn for five weeks and our cases are rising. She was not in favor of masks and had data to back her opinion.

There was one addition to the consent agenda: item 7d was changing the vacation of a portion of Mohawk Road scheduled viewing on resolution #2020-22 under paragraph 2 for Ron Sellers, Ron Hirst and Bob Bush who were appointed as viewers of said road, substituting Public Works Director Don Brittain for Commissioner Bob Bush who could not attend, adding to action items 8b Letter of Support for IdeaTek grant request. **Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Bush,** to approve these two changes to the agenda as presented. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Bush moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst, to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on August 21st, 2020 of \$1,049,824.71. Next item directs the chairman to sign minutes for June 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 25th, 26th, and 30th, 2020 as submitted. Next item was for Community Corrections Kansas Department of Corrections Juvenile Services Reinvestment Grant Application. Last item on consent agenda was the substitution of Don Brittain for Bob Bush at the Mohawk Road viewing today at 11:00 a.m. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Bush signed off the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Sheriff Darrian Campbell, Captain Shawn McClay, and Behavior Health Supervisor Audra Goldsmith accepted the nomination by way of Proclamation, for Reno County to become a Stepping Up Innovator County. Sheriff Campbell gave a brief overview of the program that began in 2018 with a proclamation signed. The initiative is to identify those with a serious

illness that come into the correctional facility and stated that 75 percent are in jails across the nation. There are 19 counties across the United States identified as an Innovator county, and he noted that we have been excepted as the 20th county in the nation for our efforts at the Reno County Correctional Facility.

United Way President Lisa Gleason, 3800 Foxfire, Hutchinson, KS, thanked Mr. Bush for being a part of our council. This is an honor for our community to reduce mental health in our jail. Others are looking to our county to learn and mentor other communities. She named some of the people and agencies involved with this program and named what had improved.

Behavior Health Supervisor Audra Goldsmith addressed the Board on the benefits of having a mental health program. Mental Health data collection supported by Stepping Up are helping to identify policies and treatment to inmates in our jail. Treatment services within the jail like medication management which is provided by Horizons Mental Health Services, and group therapy for behavioral modification, helps with what coincides with mental illness. She handles crisis work at the jail to help inmates cope with emotions that are not always positive.

Reno County Jail Captain Shawn McClay met with the Board to explain that he agreed with what Ms. Gleason said. It really does help with the community and agencies coming together to correct some of the mental issues. He believed some of the inmates should not be in our jail system.

Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to accept the proclamation for the declaration of Reno County to be announced as a Stepping Up Innovator County as discussed. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 2-0.

Mr. Sellers read the Letter of Support for IdeaTek's grant application to the SPARK Task Force. It is a local company applying for CARES Act grant funds to enhance broadband service in Reno County for telemedicine, telehealth, remote work, and remote learning abilities. Founder Daniel Friesen was in the audience and he appreciated the commissions support. He said IdeaTek would help with a desperate need found in Reno County during the COVID pandemic. **Mr. Hirst moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers,** to approve the Letter of Support for IdeaTek. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 2-0.

Commissioner Hirst asked the Board to also support other providers. He stressed not to limit Reno County to one local company but extend the opportunity to any companies. Mr. Sellers clarified that IdeaTek had asked the county for a Letter of Support for a grant process not favoring, so in the future others could ask for support also.

County Administrator Randy Partington addressed the Board regarding a letter received from New Beginnings for \$50,000 to assist with the renovation of Meadow Lark Commons, 100 E. 2nd Avenue, Hutchinson, KS, to become a detox treatment facility. They had brought the request to the Board last year or beginning of this year. The Commission wanted to wait until budget time. There is a line item for New Beginnings and was moved to the General Fund line.

Mr. Hirst remembered a previous commission meeting discussing putting money into a project for economic development positives. They chose not to put county money into something we do not own or have control over, because there were other avenues to receive funds. He was not in favor of putting money in a building which we do not have control over or know the future of. He suggested that we need to look at different avenues. Mr. Sellers stated he thought moving the funds into the general line item was the correct way to go until their concerns were addressed, however he agreed with some of Mr. Hirst remarks. The Board decided after a brief discussion to wait for Mr. Partington to get more details from Ms. Gonzales and report back.

Mr. Partington stated an email was sent by Mike Garrett, CEO of Horizons Mental Health Center regarding former Health Officer Nick Baldetti's position on their Board. In the email Mr. Garrett was inquiring if Mr. Baldetti would remain on the Board. His term began January 2020 and will end January 2023. Mr. Sellers stated that the Board by consensus, wanted a Reno County employee in the position on the Horizons Board to represent Reno County. He stated that he or another commissioner would be willing to be a temporary interim until a Health Director could be hired. Mr. Hirst agreed with Mr. Sellers being interim and asked Mr. Partington to advise Mr. Garrett.

Mr. Partington spoke about the CARES Act money to the SPARK Task Force committee and about the \$12.6 million applications approved last week. He said they were refining the numbers internally and the numbers had not changed. After Leslie

Roederer worked on the report, it was sent off before the deadline and a confirmation email was received. He gave you a new revised copy of the summary for the amount on non-profit and private schools approved, showing what was approved by the Board at \$1,089,498.54. Applications could be accepted in September and brought back in October for the Commission to decide on. The committee will review the applicants qualified expenses and make recommendations to the Board.

Last item for Mr. Partington was an agenda item request to put in place a new resolution to be less stringent to the Governor's Order reinstating resolution #2020-17 from July 2nd, 2020 that took away the mandatory use of masks. He asked if the Commission wants this on the agenda. The Board did not want to change the resolution at this time, and they did not want it on the agenda for next week. Mr. Sellers stated that in his opinion and after hearing from the medical staff, that masks do make a difference.

Commissioner Sellers asked for an update on marketing money. Mr. Partington said they are still working on strategies on wearing masks. Mr. Sellers asked about the Communications Specialists job and when will the interviews begin. Mr. Partington replied that they have good applicants and the phone interviews would begin next week with five or six. The panel can narrow down to 3 or 5 to bring the applicants for in person with the hope to start someone by early October. Mr. Sellers asked to have a memo sent to the Commission when the process is completed. Mr. Hirst stressed informational data only on the marketing.

County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan explained vacating a road and gave a brief description of the process stating a public hearing would be held the next week after which a decision would be made by the Commission. He went over the new scale house facility at the Landfill and what will be happening on Mohawk and Clark Roads.

At 10:36 the meeting adjourned until 11:00 a.m. where they will meet at the intersection of Mohawk and Clark Roads to view the vacation of a portion of Mohawk Road. The Board will return to the courthouse and adjourn until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 25, 2020.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date