

August 24, 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 Steve Gill, Turon Community Church.

Health Department Director Karla Nichols gave a COVID-19 update on numbers. There have been 8,554 cases of which 330 are active cases, 145 deaths and our 14-day positive test rate was 17.51 percent and is a higher percent than Sedgwick County's. 27,795 Reno County residents have received one dose of the vaccine which was 44.1 percent of the population. Back to school immunizations were the big push. She explained the booster dose was a supplemental dose given to those whose immune response has weakened over time. The dose would be available around September 20th, 2021, the same time that the flu shots become available. She explained the additional dose was to be administered at least 28-days after the second dose and recommended for those immunocompromised people due to health conditions or medical treatments. She did clarify that if you had a Pfizer vaccine the booster should be Pfizer and the same with Moderna. She spoke about the guidance from KDHE on options provided to schools. She said get vaccinated, get a COVID test if you are ill, follow a treatment plan and stressed the mitigating measures the community could do to help keep them healthy.

Hutchinson Regional Medical Center Vice President and Chief Business Development Officer Chuck Welch gave an overview of the number of patients in the hospital stating that the hospitals dashboard for COVID was up and live and they are posting vaccinated/unvaccinated numbers. He spoke about the nursing shortage effecting our community. He said the use of monoclonal antibodies was a good option if it is administered early. The hospital is at capacity at this time with the staffing shortage condition they have and noted that they are trying to rectify the shortage situation.

Mrs. Nichols stated Hutchinson Clinic Lead Physician Scott Pauly was the medical consultant expert assisting the Health Department on COVID issues. Dr. Pauly explained about the Health Department partnering with medical consultants on issues regarding COVID and other medical diseases. He stated that we have great care facilities in Reno County with the clinics and hospital and explained the monoclonal antibodies treatment. He then discussed schools, how they are coping with COVID and the collection of data.

The Board had a few questions for Health Officer Karen Hammersmith about the number of students quarantined and risks of that quarantine. She also explained the Health Officers position with isolation and quarantines since it was one of the mitigating ways to control a virus. The school districts could use the Stay-N-Play guidance options from KDHE to work with your Health Department or they could go follow their own decisions. She said with the updated guidance for COVID-19 prevention, which wanted to keep kids in school, it was recommended to do universal masking for staff, students, and visitors regardless of vaccine status, and she stated that many of the school districts were working with the Health Department.

Commissioner Hirst thanked The Health Department and their medical partners for their hours of hard work and all they do for the community.

Commissioner Friesen had two requests; one was to move item 12 up on the consent agenda, but the Board wanted to continue with the current agenda as it stands. The second request was a motion to make an agenda item for a future meeting placing it under new business item 9A. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst,** to approve the amended agenda. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

County Administrator Randy Partington requested to table current agenda business items 9A by Interim Chief Bobby White for the purchase of a new Fire District No. 3 brush truck for a total not to exceed the cost of \$130,000 and declare the used 1996 fire brush truck as surplus to be sold to another Reno County fire district. The new cab and chassis will be purchased from Allen Samuels at a cost of \$44,950; and contracting with Emergency Fire Equipment to build and outfit the truck at a cost of \$83,175.28 by Chief Bobby White. Business item 9B for the purchase of a used 2000 Central States pumper truck from Rice County for Reno County Fire District No. 6 at not to exceed cost

of \$45,000; and declare the 1985 Peirce Pumper truck as surplus to be sold on PurpleWave.

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 20th, 2021, totaling \$1,149,208.64 and August 27th, 2021, totaling \$505,304.86 as submitted. **Resolution 2021-16: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTS AND REPORTS TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENTS OF K.S.A. 75-1120a.** **Resolution 2021-17: A RESOLUTION 2021-17 PROHIBITING THE USE OF ENGINE BRAKING ON PORTIONS OF NORTH PLUM STREET AND EAST 56TH AVENUE** as presented by staff. Next on the consent agenda was minutes of meetings for July 27th and August 10th, 2021, for the Chairman to sign. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0. Mr. Friesen thanked the efforts of the northeast group near the 56th round-about (George, Brad, and Theron) for coming in. He said he appreciated their work with the 30 plus signatures on a petition they gathered and the work by this commission to solve the situation with engine braking in that area.

At 10:05 Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen, to open the budget hearing for the purpose of hearing and answering objections relating to the proposed use of all funds and the amount of ad valorem tax for the 2022 County Budget. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 10:08 There were no comments from the public.

At 10:12 Mr. Sellers, seconded by Mr. Friesen, closed the Public Hearing on the 2022 County Budget as presented in the agenda. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Commissioner Sellers commented that the budget discussions were very constructive, talking with departments for two days and coming up with a budget that was fair to taxpayers. The Board agreed with Mr. Sellers comments. Mr. Friesen asked about two points from the budget.

Mr. Partington gave explanation of the tech plan from the Register of Deeds and a plan for the District Attorney to reduce paper use. The Register of Deeds (ROD) did provide a report using \$50,000 from her tech fund and requesting a part-time employee. In discussions with the IT department, it was decided to use IT staff for the position using funds from the General

Fund and other line-item adjustments instead of the ROD tech fund. The IT person would be a records management position, digitizing records within the ROD and 5th floor. The ROD would use a part-time employee for customer service within her office.

Commissioner Sellers agreed with the use of an IT staff person for digitizing instead of having a dedicated person in the county departments.

Commissioner Friesen agreed with using IT, and asked if the District Attorney, the Register of Deeds, and the IT Department could provide a summary of digitization work and the percentage completed. The other budget request was an increase request from The City of Hutchinson or the collaborative Emergency Communications Department and noted that the increase requests did not go through the committee per agreement between the city and county. Mr. Partington stated that Mr. O'Sullivan had reached out to the City of Hutchinson to straighten out following the agreement. Mr. Hirst agreed with Mr. Friesen on the non-payment of agreement. Mr. Partington recommended working with the city with the modules, transferring funds of \$50,000 into another line item until the agreement is followed, and paying for the few in place.

The District Attorney discussed using less paper but stated it would be very hard for his department to go paperless, but he would try to reduce paper where they could. They have requirements that require paperwork but noted that traffic is paperless.

At 10:15 Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst, to approve adopting the County 2022 Budget as presented in agenda. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 10:20 Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen, to open the Revenue Neutral Rate hearing for the 2022 Special Districts Budgets for the purpose of answering objections of taxpayers relating to the Revenue Neutral Rate. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 10:23 There were no comments from the public.

At 10:28 Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to close the Public Hearing. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 10:28 Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to open the budget hearing for the purpose of hearing and answering objections relating to the proposed use of all funds and the amount of ad valorem tax for the 2022 Special Districts Budgets. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 10:29 there were no comments from the public.

At 10:30 Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to close the Public Hearing. The motion was approved by a roll call vote 3-0.

Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve **Resolution 2021-18: A RESOLUTION TO LEVY A PROPERTY TAX RATE EXCEEDING THE REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE FOR ALL RENO COUNTY FIRE DISTRICTS AND FOR CERTAIN SERWER DISTRICTS.** The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen, to approve the adoption of the Special Districts 2022 Budget as presented. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 10:30 the meeting recessed for five minutes.

At 10:35 the meeting reconvened with all Commissioners, County Administrator Randy Partington, County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

Human Resources Director Helen Foster met with the Board to recommend a 2021-2022 Health, Dental, and Supplemental Insurance health plan provider with Benefits Management LLC/ProviDR's Care Network. She introduced Benefits Committee member Detective Sergeant Keaton Berger and USI Benefits Broker Rick Beins. She said October 1st, 2021, was the start of the new plan year ending September 30, 2022. USI negotiated the whole benefits package rates with Blue Cross Blue Shield and mirroring the same benefits for employees and went out to market. Mrs. Foster said that the provider encouraged offering a non-qualifying High Deductible Plan that would not be eligible for an HSA account and spoke about raising the stop loss. The market came back with a provider Benefits Management LLC/ProviDR Care Network for doctors and pharmacies. There was a bid that came in at a 3.22 percent from the current plan saving the county and employees three percent across the board. She said the committee also recommended Delta Dental for the counties dental plan and would keep the county would be keeping Vision Care Direct. We will have only one enrollment plan period not

two different dates. They were also adding a new benefit option to make it more enticing, long-term care and critical illness. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen,** to approve the 2021-2022 Health, Dental and Supplemental Insurance provider as recommended by Mrs. Foster and consultant. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Beins briefly reviewed the Benefits Management employee rates along with pros and cons of changing the current insurance provider. He spoke about reserve funds being adequate or growing, county savings, and stop losses. He spoke about the Fair Market Health and supplemental insurance. There was an added 3rd option: non-qualified high deductible health plan with the Fair Market Health added to the plan. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen,** to approve staff and managements proposal to implement the new rate schedules for employees and county as outlined by Mrs. Foster. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve the recommendation of the Benefits Committee to add a 3rd plan option, the Non-Qualified High Deductible Health Plan with the option for utilizing the Fair Market Health. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen, to recommend moving our dental plan to Delta Dental as our provider. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to approve recommendation to add Critical Illness and Long-Term Care option to the supplemental insurance package as outlined by Mrs. Foster. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

The Board thanked the Benefits Committee and the County Administrator for their assistance on the insurance packages.

Mr. Friesen made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sellers, to take from the table the CWECS zoning regulations recommended by the County Planning Commission and place it on the September 14th, 2021, agenda, and direct staff to reconcile final thoughts of the commissioners into a proposed final draft of those regulations as well as draft any other appropriate resolutions that may be desired by a majority of this commission. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen to not allow any public comments in the discussion on the September 14th agenda meeting since they have all had written, verbal, and emailed documents from pros and cons regarding the wind energy regulations. The public was welcome to submit comments and questions before that date. The motion was approved by a roll call vote 3-0.

At 11:10 County Administrator Randy Partington stated he would be meeting with Public Works Director Don Brittain regarding sewer rates for Sewer District 201 and 202 in September recommending they move more of the bond cost to be a user fee. He commented that some users paid amounts on their property tax and user fees. He said there would be meetings next week for Directors to meet with The Arnold Group to discuss the pay study and job descriptions.

Commissioner Friesen commented on a request to add a compression sign near K61 and commented that he will be touring the hospital this Friday. Eagle Radio let him know it was hard to produce the meeting on their radio station and stated that we are working on this.

Commissioner Sellers said he was at third Thursday and handed out literature on three versus five commissioners. He said that most people were not aware of the election and noted that it may be difficult to get the word out before November. He was excited about the bridge south of Nickerson being opened back up. He asked for an explanation from Mr. Friesen about having 4 percent less population, since Mr. Friesen thought we were growing economically. The Chamber of Commerce manager said 52 percent of all U.S. counties lost population.

Commissioner Hirst commented that in his opinion if the state of Kansas wanted to attract young families, they would have to streamline the issue of childcare facilities, making sure they are safe but not overregulate them, costing these facilities so much money to comply that most can not afford to hire qualified help. He agreed with the Chamber to attract people we need more childcare. He did agree that the Nickerson bridge was nicely done and the 43rd Street Bridge is also coming along.

At 11:25 Mr. O'Sullivan requested a motion to recess into executive session with the Board's legal counsel on a privileged legal matter, that being the authority of the Health Officer to issue quarantine/isolation orders and the Health Officers

authority to pursue mitigation of the spread of contagious/infectious diseases. He further stated that he expected the executive session to last not more than thirty-five minutes with no formal decision expected. He further requested District Attorney Tom Stanton and County Administrator Randy Partington to be present for the executive session. **Mr. Sellers moved, seconded by Mr. Friesen,** to approve the motion as requested. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 3-0.

At 12:00 p.m. the meeting returned to the regular session and adjourned until 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, August 31st, 2021.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
cm

Date