

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS
MARCH 17, 2020

Agenda: 2:00 PM COVID-19
Courthouse/Wellness Center

The Board of County Commissioners met in special session with all members present. Also present were Paul Kitzke, County Attorney; Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk; RoGlenda Coulter, Hugoton Hermes; Paula Rowden, Community Health and County Board of Health chair and Susan Schulte, Stevens County Public Information Officer. Tron called the meeting to order.

People attending the meeting by request were: Stu Moore, USD 209 Superintendent; Adrian Howie, USD 210 Superintendent; Kristi Singer, Heritage Christian Academy director; Boynett Tablate, Stevens County Hospital lab director; Linda Stalcup, Stevens County Hospital and Pioneer Manor director; Billy Bell, City of Moscow mayor; Jack Rowden, City of Hugoton mayor; Paul Nordyke, City of Hugoton; Matt Lamatsch, Hugoton Police; Rodney Kelling, Stevens County Emergency Services director; Stevens County Sheriff Ted Heaton and Ross Sullivan, Courthouse Maintenance director. Others in attendance include: Jean Lamatsch, Kelsee Burnett, Karen Rich, Eunice Schroeder, Stacey Strickland, Alicia Owens, Marcus Howe, Jan Leonard and Judge Paula Sosa.

Tron began the meeting by stating it was informational on the COVID-19 that is affecting the country. He informed the guests that Paula Rowden is head of the County Board of Health which is comprised of the commissioners and health officer.

Paula Rowden told the commissioners and observers there was a timeline the COVID-19 came into the states. She said the first case in Kansas was on March 7th and to date there are eleven (11) known cases within the state of Kansas. There have been other suspicions but have not been confirmed yet. At this time, what is known about the virus is that it spreads from person to person, by close contact, within six (6) feet of each other. The CDC recommends no large gatherings. The longevity of this virus on surfaces is still inconclusive. The best way to prevent not only you getting the virus, but you spreading it to someone who would be most affected, is by hand washing and covering coughs with an elbow or article of clothing so as not to spray the droplets thus spreading the virus.

Paula further stated if a person has come into contact with someone, there is around two to fourteen (2-14) days for potential development with this disease. This is why it is being recommended throughout the country people self-quarantine if they feel they have come into contact with the virus or have any symptoms. There are more positive outcomes than deaths which keeps things in a better perspective. The higher risk individuals are what the community needs to focus on more. Governor Kelly has implemented no disconnect with utilities or internet at this time, along with no mass gatherings of fifty (50) people or more. This includes auditoriums, meeting rooms, facilities, etc. At this time, it is not recommended to close Senior Citizens Centers or Libraries. Calls from restaurants have come in and Paula has advised them to offer curbside delivery, only allow minimum people inside with some tables closed off for the spacing suggestions and constant cleaning to help disinfect. Paula said the best advice she can give is correct information instead of

misinformation in hopes the small businesses can continue to stay successful in the community and still be able to help lessen the spread.

Linda Stalcup stated the Pioneer Manor is closed to the outside. The hospital is currently screening all employees, every shift, every day. Vendors and consultants are not allowed to enter the building and must do all business over the phone or drop off outside the buildings in a designated location.

Joe Thompson asked Paula about the possibility of enforcing individuals to comply with self-quarantine. She said as the Board of Health for Stevens County, they can enact a ruling to enforce quarantine if need be. Paula also said acting as the Community Health Department, they cannot enforce that but can give guidance and help work together.

Linda Stalcup said there are several swing beds in the hospital which can be used for people who have COVID-19 who need the extra care due to their at-risk health issues. She said Boyett Tablate, the lab director, can pass on further information.

Boyett told the BOH his lab is capable of collecting samples and sending them to private labs vs the KDHE. The KDHE has certain requirements in order for them to test samples which requires a fever of 100.4 degrees fahrenheit or higher, respiratory symptoms and flu and strep testing negative. The lab has some test kits for collection but the need for more is there.

Boyett has some suggestions for local businesses and people of the community to help prevent the spread:

1. Businesses or customers should use disinfectant wipes for gas pumps, door handles, card readers, etc.
2. Limit the number of customers per area of a store if possible, or offer curbside assistance.
3. Discourage the elderly from leaving their home and find a delivery system to get items to the elderly; volunteers or a service.

Adrian Howie, with the USD 210, said if the school system is to shut down after the spring break, there is still implementation by the government to feed kids from the ages of one to eighteen (1-18) years old breakfast and lunch. He said it might be a grab and go type of system but meals will still be provided.

Stu Moore with USD 209 said even though things will be different, the school will still go forward as much as possible.

Adrian and Stu both stated, at this time, it looks like there might not be any prom, graduation or spring sports. They will hopefully know more later and if there is a shut down of some type hopefully, it will only be for a week or two.

Joe asked if there were any thoughts on people coming back from spring break that are in high risk areas and if the school would recommend a quarantine before coming back to school. Both superintendents stated they will be having meetings this week to discuss the thought of resuming school or just holding off another week for the purpose of spring break students coming back.

Paula said most important would be guidelines to follow for areas of concern which would be a fourteen day self-imposed quarantine and help meet the elderly residents needs. Paula said if there are any questions, she is open to the public to call and get correct information and be more educated on this virus.

Jack Rowden asked if Paula had heard if there is a time frame for this to move on. His question concerns banks and the city offices, if they choose to impose a drive-up/thru only route, if there is a time-frame for them to resume regular business.

Paula said it is all dependent on what this virus does and how we can keep it contained to a minimum in the community.

Amy Jo Tharp stated several counties have implemented appointment only for courthouses or having a space between the public and workers to keep the virus at a minimum. Most are continuing to work as normal, just closed access for the public because most work can be done online or by phone. The rare instances when a person needs to come in can be done by appointment.

Paul Kitzke said the Sheriff in Haskell County is screening people entering the courthouse before going on to the offices. Meade County is not having court for four (4) weeks and postponing any cases.

Jean Lamatsch asked Amy Tharp if the courthouse was closing and Amy stated at this time, the commissioners have not given any word on the closing but it will probably be discussed at some point.

Marcus Howe asked what Paula recommends as far as the people who do have a fever but no other symptoms. Paula said she would like to keep a record of those with a fever and be able to follow up with them to see if they need to be screened and if their symptoms warrant a hospital visit. She said the best way is to stay quarantined for fourteen days, drink plenty of fluids and take ibuprofen and Tylenol by alternating to keep fever down. This disease has to run its course however, if you are experiencing respiratory issues, please get to a doctor or hospital. If the public has questions on being screened or feel they need to be, she urges them to contact the Community Health Department to get answers for their questions. The screening kits are at a minimum for the whole community and most people are getting over the virus by the treatment stated.

Linda Stalcup stated the most affected by this disease are those with pulmonary or cardiovascular issues.

Rodney Kelling said he is currently working with the local hospital, health department and law enforcement entities to make sure they have what they need.

Karen Rich with the Senior Center said as of today they have closed down to the public, but will keep the kitchen open to provide meals to the home bound and those who can pick up at the back

door for curbside delivery. She stated they will still deliver food to Moscow so those residents will not have to worry about food.

Pat Hall asked if the Road and Bridge department should hold off on their morning meetings and Paula suggested at this time it would be wise to have them get their daily duties by phone or other means.

Joe Thompson said to implement conference calls for the meetings so others may attend that are not on the agenda and to keep the meetings at a minimum in physical attendance.

Adrian said employees of USD 210 who do not feel well or have a fever or cough, are ordered to not return to work for fourteen (14) days.

Jan Leonard said Seward County is pushing for the workers and or citizens who do not feel well, to stay home to help contain the spread.

Amy Jo Tharp asked the health personnel the best way to sanitize or clean areas for prevention since most stores are out of disinfectants. They said wiping things and areas down with Hydrogen Peroxide, Bleach and water mix, or even Isopropyl Alcohol will help contain the spread of this virus along with not touching eyes, mouth or nose, which is the fastest way to contract the disease.

Ted Heaton said his plan of action at this time, is to keep the inmates separated, especially anyone new who comes in and to do screenings. As far as his deputies, he will make sure they take all the precautions they can at this time by wearing rubber gloves, trying to keep detainees at a distance and separated.

Kelsee Burnett said at this time, the judges can shut down the district court but the clerk will still need to work with the public. She said they will have ways of contact by phone, e-mail and regular mail to continue work.

Discussion continued amongst the commissioners, county attorney, county clerk and other courthouse staff who were in attendance about the possibility of closing the courthouse to the public.

Joe made a motion to close the courthouse for two (2) weeks to the public beginning Wednesday, March 18, at 12:00 PM (noon), with public access by appointment only. Tron seconded. Motion carried.

Joe made a motion to close the Wellness Center down beginning Wednesday, March 18, at 12:00 PM (noon). Pat seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion on how to reimburse or extend Wellness Center patron's funding will be tabled until Monday, March 23rd at the original commissioner meeting date.

Paula suggested closing the Hugoton Recreation Center for a short period of time for the extended break to help prevent the spread. She stated two (2) weeks and re-evaluate to see where this

outbreak is moving. She said she will call the board of recreation and let them know her suggestions.

The commissioners have decided to have a special meeting on Friday, March 20th, at 2:30 PM to continue further discussion on the COVID-19.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Tron Stegman, Chairman