

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS  
MARCH 20, 2020

**Agenda:**        2:30 PM        COVID-19

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, via zoom.com; Paula Rowden, Community Health, via Zoom.com and Susan Schulte, Stevens County Public Information Officer. Tron called the meeting to order.

This session was the first time done by [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) conference with several people in attendance on the line: Kansas Senator John Doll, Kansas Representative Marty Long, Kelsee Burnett, Adrian Howie, Stu Moore, Ricky Tharp, Cammie Heaton, Gina Payne, Tony Martin, Chelle Leiniger, Ross Sullivan, Angela Heger and the City of Moscow.

Those who attended in person were: Sheriff Ted Heaton, Rodney Kelling and Jan Leonard.

Paula Rowden with the Community Health Department said she is in constant contact with the Kansas Health Administration and she has been helping with school closures, guidelines on helping the schools and support for schools. She said she has been reaching out to the local businesses to help reduce potential contamination of the virus. It has been recommended the churches consider suspending services in person until further notice, if their congregation is under fifty (50) she has expressed the concern in room size and sanitizing.

By taking these extra precautions in closing down the wellness center and recreation center, having limited access to the courthouse, community health department, clinic and hospital, Paula is confident this will help slow the spread.

Tron asked if anyone had heard if they felt the county was being to drastic. Several people commented they felt the community is adjusting well and has not heard of anyone being disgruntled.

Paula said she is being diligent on social media to better in form the public on the situation at hand. She feels by doing this it has helped with people and their anxiety. She has had to impose quarantine on a few people and has not received any issues with anyone on that matter.

Joe Thompson stated he has visited with Rodney about what happens if people testing positive and said they will have that person check with those they were in contact with.

Joe asked if there were plans for testing available through the Community Health Department. Paula said she has been working with Boyett at the Steven County Hospital lab about mass screenings. She is currently getting some test kits in and is getting some to the hospital as well.

Ted Heaton and Rodney Kelling both said everything is good on their end and they are doing what they can and taking the measures they are.

Amy Jo Tharp said a question was posed to her about knowing if anyone has been tested for or has tested positive with COVID-19 without going against HIPPA laws. Paula stated she can not give out that information to the community. She did state on [www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus](http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus) a person can request information to their e-mail and the information is updated on a daily basis. This site will show how many cases per county within the state of Kansas.

Paula said just a collaboration from everyone working in the health and emergency services field to people in the community is a big step and help for Stevens County to come out of this in a more positive manner.

Paula said she will be discussing with Paul Kitzke about having ordinances ready in case actions need to be taken for quarantine. Paul Kitzke stated he can help Paula with some research so if the time comes it will be legal and correct.

Amy Jo Tharp informed the commissioners the KAC has suggested designating one (1) commissioner per county to receive updates from health officials within the county to act on certain discussions involving COVID-19. They then can relay information at a commissioner meeting instead of setting up several special meetings to meet with KOMA regulations.

Rodney wanted to iterate about the social media post concerning the National Guard preparing for martial law. He stated it was false information and they are preparing to help deliver goods to communities in light of the pandemic.

Kansas Representative Marty Long said there were several discussions in Topeka the last two to three (2-3) months regarding COVID-19 and the emergency procedures to help combat the spread. He stated the KDHE has been working really well for the state and feels like Kansas has a lead on this pandemic. Discussion of closing bars and restaurants have surfaced and some places are closing some are doing curbside, drive-thru and delivery instead.

Joe stated Stevens County restaurants and bars are self-regulating and feels it is working out well for our community.

Representative. Marty Long said there are three to four (3-4) counties in Kansas which have been given a mandatory shut-down by the county health department directors. At this time Kansas is letting each county decide if and when that should be taken into consideration as most counties are staying diligent with this issue.

Marty spoke about the economic factors in Kansas and said in 2008 in the recession, Eight Hundred Million Dollars were used from the reserve fund in Kansas and it only took eight (8) months to drain the fund. They are looking at One Billion Dollars in the fund with an average of \$330.00 per claimant on unemployment and from this pandemic and the funds will not last long. There is a shorter wait time and processing time for people to be able to receive their funds in a quicker manner. The amount of unemployed insurance time has increased from sixteen (16) weeks to twenty-six (26) weeks.

The State of Kansas is discussing a profit for businesses to help small businesses, restaurants, bars, hotels, conference rooms, etc. This is a loan by the state with no interest and up to \$20,000.00 to help the businesses out. There is no payment for the first four (4) months and only takes seventy-two (72) hours to be approved and forty-eight (48) hours to receive funds with a thirty-six month pay back period.

Joe asked if there were any e-rate funds to help rural citizens. He stated Pioneer Communications is giving free internet to homes with school children that at this time do not have internet access but is concerned how that works out in the rural areas of the county if the state was offering some way to get the connections out to those individuals. Marty said he would look into it.

Kansas State Senator John Doll said he feels the state and counties are handling the pandemic really well and feels it makes the state stronger and better.

Joe asked about the state being in a state of emergency.

Senator John Doll said there is a sense of that due to the materials needed such as medical supplies and equipment to keep the emergency services and medical staff protected. He did elaborate he felt the Governor of Kansas has been doing a really good job and social media can be a good thing but can also be harmful for people.

John Doll said there has been no talk of any martial law for Kansas or anywhere else for that matter. He said if parts of Kansas need help with medical providers, nearby states such as Oklahoma and Colorado have preparations on lending aid to Kansas.

John said several comments have been made about the Governor overstepping her bounds and doing more than is allowed. He said she isn't out to take over the world, she is working with health care professionals and is getting guidance before she makes decisions on what she feels is best for Kansans.

John and Marty said call the state numbers they will help out where they can.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

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Tron Stegman, Chairman