

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS  
MAY 26, 2020

Agenda:       8:30 – Bills/Minutes  
              9:00 – Courtney Leslie/Hugoton Police - Communications  
              9:30 – Tony Martin – Road & Bridge  
              10:00 – Jan Leonard & Rob Schladetzky

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in regular session with all members present. Also present were Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk and Ro Glenda Coulter, Hugoton Hermes. Tron called the meeting to order. Pat moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Joe seconded. Motion carried. Pat moved to approve the county vouchers. Joe seconded. Motion carried. The Clerk was instructed to draw warrants on the Treasurer chargeable to the various funds of the county for the following amounts:

General	\$	38,893.38
Road & Bridge	\$	78,503.81
Airport	\$	2,531.82
Noxious Weed	\$	4,533.02
EMS	\$	4,885.52
Fire	\$	2,145.16
County Building	\$	60.00
911 Wireless	\$	110.97
Community Health	\$	10,529.63
Sheriff	\$	33,578.25
Emp P/R Misc W/H	\$	46.88
Reg of Deed Tech Fund	\$	223.83
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>176,042.27</u>

Vernon Anderson stopped in to give the commissioners an update on his recent health. He also informed them of what the planning and zoning commission is working toward. He said they are reviewing the International Plumbing Code book and will be adopting plumbing codes in the county to be effective 2021 to comply with the state legislature.

The commissioners discussed the projected valuation for the county and said it dropped due to the oil and gas. The commissioners had a brief discussion on how to manage without raising taxes, such as a hiring freeze, slowing down of road paving among other ideas.

Amy Jo Tharp said there needs to be discussion of the airport but would like to have the discussion when the county attorney could be present.

Rodney Kelling was in attendance and produced ***Resolution 20-04 Declaration Continuing a State of Local disaster Emergency for Stevens County, Kansas.***

Hugoton Police Chief, Courtney Leslie, came in followed by Sheriff Ted Heaton, Undersheriff TJ Steers, Adam Mauk, Brenda Dylissa Hill, Duane Topliss, Christian Heger, Chris Beltz, Tammy Kiley, Lupe Don Juan and other Sheriff employees.

Courtney came in to discuss concerns she has with the dispatch for Stevens County. She said there are at least two (2) incidents where the dispatch mishandled the information going out to law enforcement. One (1) being the evening when the Presto convenience store on Main was robbed and the Hugoton Police Department was unaware of any incident until the next day. The other incident Courtney discussed was when an occupied dwelling was shot into and again, the Hugoton Police were not contacted. Both incidents occurred within the Hugoton city limits. She expressed her concern about the safety of the community and the safety of her officers. She said knowing there was a robbery and a shooting, her officers could have helped locate the suspects and would have been aware of someone potentially being able to cause harm if stopped. She feels this is a serious officer safety issue and the taxpayers are not getting the services they are paying for. She discussed the issues with the City of Hugoton council and they requested all city dispatch calls be dispatched to a city officer. If they are not being given information on calls pertaining to the city, they will redact the amount of money they are helping the county with on dispatch. Officers and sheriff's wear the same type of uniforms and should work together in unity.

Joe said he spoke with Paul to discuss negotiations with the city. Pat said officer safety is paramount.

Courtney said she sent a request of records to the Sheriff Department on April 20, 2020. She further stated she sent a letter dated April 28, 2020, requesting clarification and a copy of the Sheriff's Standard of Operations.

Ted said he was waiting for the Hugoton City Police to send over their Standard of Operations. Courtney said she had already e-mailed it to Ted.

Tony Martin, with the road and bridge department, came in and informed the commissioners he received the Federal Safety Traffic Grant document to be signed by the commissioners and county clerk. There was discussion about different applications for grant money, such as for flashing lights that run on solar power.

Tony said he received a phone call about bailing grass around the ponds. The commissioners said it needs to be done in bids but have decided against it at this time.

The commissioners informed Tony of the severe drop in valuations and asked what could be done to reduce the budget. Tony said possibly forego chip and seal for a year to help save money. Tony

said eight (8) years ago in 2012 they used to do five (5) miles of overlay and now only do a little over two (2) miles and can't see where to cut.

Joe said they will need to look at counties with less valuation to see how they are being ran to keep taxes down. He also mentioned the thought of road closings and maintenance of the roads with the liabilities.

Tony said when the asphalt plant went from diesel to natural gas, it saved the county roughly \$250,000.00. He also stated the county does not do fifteen (15) miles chip/seal like it used to. They will start up chip/seal in July, if they decide to continue to do the chip/seal.

Paula Rowden came in and informed the commissioners she is receiving a state grant for \$15,850.00. This is to support the county health efforts with COVID.

Paula stated she is concerned for the next two (2) weeks due to the holiday weekend. She said she is aware some people are tired of restrictions and hopes there will be no new cases for a while.

Paula was asked by a family in the community if they can have their roping event on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Paula felt if the next phase would take place, then the roping event could be possible as she is not interested in being more restrictive than the Governor's phase. This past Friday, May 22, the number of mass gatherings were no more than 15 people, with some places opened up such as groomers, churches and some other places. She did inform the commissioners using peroxide, bleach water or alcohol would be cheaper to stock the wellness center for sanitizing compared to disinfecting wipes.

Joe asked if the federal government or state had any grants the county could apply for. Paula and Amy said the state allocated a certain amount of money per county and was divided out between the community health department, EMS and elections.

Paula finished by letting the commissioners know she has worked closely with Seward County's drive thru COVID testing and has had the information corrected to reflect Stevens County accurately.

Jan Leonard with EcoDevo and Rob Schladetzky with Fagen, came in to inform the commissioners the new Seaboard phase would bring in roughly 300-400 people. They gave assurances that all are quarantined for two (2) weeks where they are staying, have background checks and drug testing before coming to the community. He said working with the community is important.

The projected opening mechanical completion date would be in 2021, according to the contract. There will be problem areas to be fixed as it is opened, to see what works and doesn't, with hopes to see the plant running smoothly within two (2) years. Rob said ninety-million gallons is the minimum goal.

Amy Jo Tharp asked Jan to stay to discuss the CDBG-CV grant. She asked Jan and the commissioners if they felt the grant application was worth applying for. After a small discussion the commissioners decided to hold a special hearing on June 8, 2020 at 9:00 AM in the commissioner meeting room. This would be to form a resolution to apply for the CDBG-CV grant to help the county's small businesses.

Angela Eichman, County Appraiser, came in and discussed the projected valuation with the commissioners. She said Morton County's valuation dropped again and is looking bad. She said River Rock wanted to get a retroactive tax abatement but did not receive it. They are going forward for tax abatement next year. Right now, she doesn't see many hearings for valuation but possibly protests in the fall. The agriculture value went down. Seaboard getting their abatement caused it to drop.

Abatement Order for tax year 2019, number 256, was reviewed and approved by the commissioners and given to the County Treasurer; Abatement value -5,474 and tax -\$1,086.52.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

---

Tron Stegman, Chairman