

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS
MAY 4, 2020

Agenda: 10:30 AM PUBLIC ACCESS TO TREASURERS OFFICE

The Board of County Commissioners met in special session with Commissioners Tron Stegman and Pat Hall present. Also present were; Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk; Vanessa Willis, County Treasurer; Jayme Muncy, Deputy Treasurer; Misty Pietz, Treasurer Clerk and via zoom.com - Joe Thompson, County Commissioner; Paul Kitzke, County Attorney; and RoGlenda Coulter, Hugoton Hermes. Tron called the meeting to order.

This session was public by way of www.zoom.com conference to comply with state regulations. There were several people in attendance on the line: Kelsee Burnett, Lynne Webb, Angela Eichman, Paula Rowden, Amy Rich and several other individuals.

Tron asked Vanessa why they will not be opening to the public at this time.

Vanessa told the commissioners she can't wear a mask. She said when she had to go on an ambulance they put an oxygen mask on her and she took it off, said she just can't handle anything on her face. She explained one of her employees can not wear the masks being distributed because it causes her to get welts along her face. Vanessa further explained the motion made Friday stated it is up to the department heads on how they conduct re-openings.

Vanessa said she has no problem doing curbside service or even meet people at the door. To do a drivers license the customer can't wear a mask for the pictures.

Tron asked Paula Rowden if each office could decide to wear a mask or not. Paula said it is not recommended because it puts the employee and customers at risk. She said any form of mask being a bandana, cloth, scarf or other form is better than no mask. She said we need to protect ourselves to keep the county open and set a precedence as well as it is our duty to protect the public at large.

Vanessa said she is not trying to be contradicting but she has not worn a mask since this whole epidemic has started and wanted to know why we don't wear masks when it's flu season but we are told to wear masks for this virus.

Joe said he spoke with a Seward County Commissioner and they are not mandatory in that county for employees but he agrees with Paula in needing to set an example to the county residents.

Vanessa said she will not be opening her office to the public but will be doing curbside service.

Amy Jo asked if the employee has sneeze-guards on their desk if it would allow employees to not wear a mask. Paula said it would protect the employee and public and any face protection is better than none and is actually better to have one of the plexi-glass guards than a face mask as it protects not just the mouth and nose but eyes as well. If we can stop the spread then it is necessary to take the precautions.

Tron asked Vanessa if the two (2) employees in her office wears a mask and she stays in the back office if she would consider opening to the public.

Taxes are due May 10th and Joe said she can meet them at the door, by mail or over the phone. He asked about the drop box and Tron said it was taken down today.

Vanessa said the problem with the plexi-glass/sneeze-guard is the paper being transmitted and money is dirty.

Jayme said she can wear a mask long enough to work with the public who want to come in and only title work has to be done in person, everything else can be conducted over the phone or by mail. Appointment only will help limit the amount of people in the office.

Vanessa said at this time there is a difference of \$376,000.00 in taxes this year but there was one and a half million abated from Seaboard and people are still paying in taxes. Vanessa also stated no one asked her what she needed in a drop box when she requested it and it was put up and now it's being taken down. She said she was under the impression after the initial discussion it was determined the drop box could cost up to \$1,000.00. She feels the drop box would be used quite often but tags won't fit into the one that is currently there. She said she will pay for one out of motor vehicle funds if she has to.

Pat said every office would need a key and who would be responsible for the drop box and checking for items in it. Pat said he is not opposed to the drop box. Pat said most offices in town have a drop box and feels it is a good idea.

Thea Schnittker spoke up and said she doesn't want any of the Register of Deeds customers to put anything in the drop box in case it gets over looked. So there will need to be a sign stating who the drop box is for or omitting the Register of Deeds office.

Vanessa said she will not worry about a drop box since everyone is not agreeing to the use of one.

Joe said Dr. Roger Marshall was in the ER at Southwest Medical Center said the hospital is steady with patients and not yet overwhelmed which is good news and there have been no deaths from Seward County yet. The main concern is National Beef employees and people still getting sick and some end up in ICU but the reports show those patients are doing well.

Thea said their first (1st) appointment of the day the customers mask broke so they gave him an extra one they had on hand.

Vanessa asked about liability with the masks and giving to a customer. Paul said that circumstance would allow the customer receiving a mask from the courthouse employee. He said some circumstances would be allowed just not to give people a mask so they can enter the building, they need to have their own mask.

Pat asked if Phase Two (2) would allow the choice of not wearing a mask. Paul said that question would need to be deferred to Paula and let her choose because Southwest Kansas is now getting the cases where the eastern half is declining in cases.

Jayne asked about out of state or county customers. Paula said the out of state or county was a recommendation but feels just asking about symptoms or if a person has been in contact with someone who tested positive with COVID-19 should be sufficient.

Thea said she noticed in Shawnee County they are allowing pet groomers because it can be done with social distancing.

Paula said she hasn't recognized pet groomers being allowed but will look into it.

The commissioners stated Mike Rickman does not need to come to the courthouse to work and help Ross. They just ask if Elaine Rowden would like to monitor the front door for people dropping items off or have appointments she can do the screening and take lunch from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM. If the courthouse needs to close between those times it can be.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Tron Stegman, Chairman