

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS  
JULY 13, 2020

Agenda:       8:30 – Bills/Minutes  
              9:00 – Budget Discussion  
              9:30 – Tony Martin – Road & Bridge  
              10:00 –

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in regular session with Tron Stegman and Joe D. Thompson present. Also present were Paul Kitzke, County Attorney; Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk and Ro Glenda Coulter, Hugoton Hermes. Tron called the meeting to order. Joe moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Tron seconded. Motion carried. Joe moved to approve the county vouchers. Tron 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	\$	150,869.52
Road & Bridge	\$	87,877.79
Airport	\$	6,252.81
County Building	\$	1,390.20
Noxious Weed	\$	7,972.94
EMS	\$	11,035.15
Fire	\$	13,936.18
Alcohol Treatment	\$	3,800.00
Community Health	\$	29,935.61
Community Health Grants	\$	3,150.00
Sheriff	\$	72,838.01
Emp P/R Misc W/H	\$	33.75
Reg of Deed Tech Fund	\$	317.06
<u>TOTAL:</u>	\$	<u>389,409.02</u>

Vanessa Willis came in and asked the commissioners what the starting pay for the new Treasurer position would be. The commissioners said it has not been discussed yet. She also discussed the budget cuts within her office. She said the new Treasurer will be doing the work of two (2) employees and it will be harder to do the work with one (1) less employee.

Joe stated every office is going to have to be run differently due to the large decrease in valuation. Vanessa understands, but doesn't want to cut the driver's license as that is the only service the Treasurer's office provides besides fish and game licenses, which is optional. Joe said he would rather tell people to go elsewhere for their driver license or fish and game license than tell the citizens their taxes have to go up substantially to keep those services. Vanessa told the

commissioners she is going to have to put money into redoing the desks as too many people can stand over the employees which is a violation of privacy.

Rodney Kelling came in and gave the commissioners ***Resolution 20-08, Renew the Disaster Resolution for COVID*** to sign.

Rodney discussed his budget with the commissioners and told them he will probably have to check into closing the fire station in Moscow. He also said if the valuation keeps dropping, he will have to decide which 911 calls/transfers to accept and which ones to reject.

Tron explained to Rodney fifteen percent (15%) was taken off everyone's budget and some budgets lost more than that. Tron said the commissioners kept the salaries and benefits at this point and no one has lost their job or lost insurance.

The commissioners told Rodney the larger departments such as Fire, EMS, Sheriff, Road and Bridge and the Landfill will have to start giving them a five (5) or ten (10) year plan on large projects or purchases so they can start budgeting and working towards those items. Rodney said he can work toward a long-term plan and said by doing that, his oldest truck will be twenty to twenty-five (20-25) years old and should make a good trade in.

Rodney reminded the commissioners he has the funds for a small brush truck and wanted to know if the commissioners want him to wait for that purchase or go forward. The commissioners asked Rodney to wait and see where the county is at the end of the year.

Benny Cabrera came in with Vernon Anderson and discussed with the commissioners the lots he owns along Industrial Road which he purchased in 2015. He said the boundaries were flagged and in place and he hired a company to come in and put in a fence for security purposes. He did not realize at the time, the company put the fence on the county right-of-way by about six to eight inches (6"-8"). He said he did not know the county had a planning and zoning board or personnel to speak with and never meant to encroach on county property. He said he will move the fence if he needs to but won't have the funds to rebuild it and is afraid of having property stolen. Vernon confirmed Benny wasn't even on the county property over one foot (1'). Vernon said he did not know how to handle the situation other than to bring it before the commissioners.

Paul said Benny has not encroached on the neighbor's property and just a few inches on the county right-of-way and at this point, the commissioners should look at what is fair and equitable. He said Benny keeps his property clean and in good condition and came in on his own to discuss his error. Paul and Joe told Benny if there is an issue with a pipe or something needing placed on the county right-of-way, he would have to move the fence and it would be out of the commissioners' hands at that point.

The commissioners allowed Benny to keep his fence where it currently is and will discuss the matter later if there are any other concerns.

Steve Lewis came in and said the budget cut on the museum will be tough. The \$66,000.00 they received last year did not pay salaries or utilities and losing fifteen percent (15%) is not good. He said in 2018 the museum had to use \$21,000.00 in CD's and \$31,000.00 was cashed in 2019. The museum currently has around \$66,000.00 in CD's to keep them functioning. Joe said the museum should discuss the issue with the County Foundation board and see about getting an application to help them for the 2021 year.

Tony came in and told the commissioners the little bit of moisture the county received last night, will hopefully help smooth out some roads. He said he will definitely need to set up some long-term plans for the coming years. Joe said he does not see the department being able to have ten (10) graders in the future and understands it's a bad time but every department has to try.

Tony said he would like to see word get out to the citizens, letting them know the county roads will probably not be as nice as they have been in the past due to the cost restraints.

Phillip Willis and Koda Rich came in and told the commissioners the budget cut to the landfill was mainly for the permits and said the money will have to come from somewhere to stay in compliance with the State. Phillip said he will cut back on the type of chemicals they use for Noxious Weed and try to find a better cost. He will probably have to drop the chemicals used in the city on turf, so citizens will no longer have access to those chemicals.

Phillip informed the commissioners Jim Miller will be retiring by the end of the year and asked if there will be any replacement. The commissioners said there will not be a replacement at this time. Phillip said he will be retiring January 1, 2021 and wanted them to look at Koda Rich as his replacement.

The commissioners told Phillip they might have to combine the Road and Bridge with the Noxious Weed/Landfill like other counties have done to help with cutting costs. Phillip said whoever takes over the Noxious Weed will have to attend a week of school and get state certified. He was planning on sending Koda this year but COVID cancelled any form of certification for the 2020 year.

Joe said the merging of departments is not set in stone but has been discussed. He said he is not sure how it will look, but knows there will need to be changes made to the county departments in order for the citizens to get what they are paying for.

Phillip said he is needing to replace a dozer which has over 16,500 hours logged. He said he can find a used dozer with less than 5,000 hours for around \$150,000.00 to \$170,000.00. The commissioners said they will have to see what is available in the equipment fund or try to figure some way to help.

Abatement Order for tax year 2019, number 257, was reviewed and approved by commissioners and given to the County Treasurer; total valuation abated –9,913 and tax assessed -\$1,921.60. Added Orders for tax year 2019, number 258, was reviewed and approved by commissioners and given to the County Treasurer; total valuation added 9,913 and tax assessed \$1,921.60.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

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Tron Stegman, Chairman