

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS
JULY 11, 2023

Agenda: 8:30 – Budget Workshop – Theresa Dasenbrock & Tiffany O'Rourke with Lewis, Hooper and Dick, LLC

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a special meeting for budget workshop. Amy Tharp, County Clerk was also present. Pat called the meeting to order.

Cammie Heaton and Tony Martin were in attendance.

Theresa and Tiffany reviewed their audit of 2022 and stated the county was in compliance with financials. Tiffany stated there are several outstanding checks to be cleaned up, make sure contracts and agreements are in the minutes, encumbrances need to have invoices or written agreements for what the encumbrance is for. They told the commissioners to the sales tax needs to be filed in a timely manner as well as deposits to the Treasurer. Tiffany stated the MOU with the airport has not been followed and suggested a meeting with the airport board should be conducted to review the MOU and the airport should be submitting monthly reports along with properly tracking the airport petty cash fund. Theresa stated there are over \$50,000.00 in the Register of Deeds Tech Fund and suggested anything over that amount can be transferred to the county to be used for office equipment.

Theresa and Tiffany reviewed comparatives with other surrounding counties. Pat stated there are many drastic changes with valuation and he feels the public and other government agencies do not understand how southwest Kansas works. Theresa said in the past if the valuation went up, the county would put the excess into reserves but since the tax lid and Revenue Neutral Rate occurred, it will not help. Theresa stated the Stevens County Foundation Board should be able to help with taxes on raised levies, the commissioners agreed but stated the foundation board does not feel it is compliant with their regulations.

Theresa suggested the county should watch the public notices in the newspaper to catch any Board of Tax Appeals issues that might arise so the county can be prepared. Theresa also informed the commissioners they should have at least an annual meeting with department heads to go over their budgets either at a quarterly mark or halfway through the year to discuss where the departments are at on their budgets and discuss issues of why excess spending might be occurring. Theresa also suggested the county clerk should have a quarterly report for the general departments for the commissioners to review to make sure departments are staying compliant within their budgets.

The Pioneer Manor bond was discussed, and it was agreed to pay off what is left this August instead of carrying the loan until 2026 as it would save the county \$78,000.00 in interest. The commissioners agreed and instructed Amy to pay off the Pioneer Manor in August when the bond is due.

The hospital is held at six (6) mils and whatever the commissioners decide to appropriate, the remainder goes to funding the Pioneer Manor. The library is held at two and a half (2.5) mils while the Library Employee Benefits is not held at a certain mil. Theresa stated the City On a Hill payments can come out of the Special Alcohol Liquor Fund if the commissioners choose. The commissioners agreed to pay City On a Hill out of the Special Alcohol Liquor Fund and to pay at one increment instead of throughout the year.

Theresa went over each department budget, and some were raised due to costs in salary changes for COLA from last year and some department budgets were lowered to keep the county at a level where taxes will not be raised due to the county.

Shelby Martin was in attendance and told the auditors and commissioners she has not been able to submit sales tax to the state because all the issues have not been resolved. Shelby stated she cannot log in to file but submits amounts to Jayme of what the sales tax should be. Jayme Rich came in and stated Shelby will need to contact the state and get a form F7 and resubmit it. Theresa asked if anyone else can log in and do the filing for state taxes. Jayme said it would be unadvisable due to the checks and balances for each department. Theresa advised Shelby to resubmit the form and do what she can to get online and submit sales tax as the state only gave an exception through March. Theresa stated there can be some severe fines and if the state chooses, the state can remove the commissioners, county treasurer and county clerk from office.

The commissioners agreed to raise the revenue neutral rate from the actual of 71.935 to 80.853 due to the valuation increase it will not change taxes the county takes in for operations. The revenue neutral rate hearing will be scheduled for September 11, 2023, at 8:30 AM with the budget hearing following.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Pat Hall, Chairman