

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS
JANUARY 22, 2024

Agenda: 8:30 – Bills
 8:45 – Ross Sullivan
 9:00 – Craig Swinney - Lots
 9:30 – Tony Martin
 10:00 – Suresh Bhakta – Sunrise Hospitality
 10:30 – Jennifer Featherston & Dave Piper – Hospital

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session. Paul Kitzke, County Counselor; Amy Tharp, County Clerk; and RoGlenda Coulter with the Hugoton Hermes were also present. Tron called the meeting to order. Joe moved to approve the minutes from the previous commissioner meeting. Pat seconded. Motion carried. Pat moved to approve the county vouchers. Joe seconded. Motion carried. The County Clerk was instructed to draw warrants on the Treasurer chargeable to the various funds of the county for the following amounts:

General	\$	56,081.60
Judicial District	\$	270.00
Road & Bridge	\$	36,437.70
Airport	\$	8,634.55
County Building	\$	-
Noxious Weed	\$	4,608.30
EMS	\$	9,341.37
Fire	\$	2,655.37
Community Health	\$	17,862.78
ARPA	\$	50,803.00
911 Wireless	\$	116.37
Sheriff	\$	45,393.66
Reg of Deeds Tech Fund	\$	286.80
TOTAL:	\$	232,491.50

Bob Brunson with Invenergy was in attendance.

The county commissioner discussed the county bills.

Ross Sullivan was in attendance. He presented the commissioners with the amounts he received for the AA doors from various contractors:

1. Sinco Construction \$2,624.00
2. Harrison Construction \$2,218.64
3. AK Roofing \$1,280.00

The commissioners tabled their decision and asked Ross to contact AK to find out if they have included all of the specs in their bid.

Tony Martin was in attendance.

Craig Swinney was in attendance to discuss the lots for sale around the Pioneer Manor. Craig said he is looking at building a large home and large garage which would also have living quarters in it. The commissioners stated the covenants on the developed lots require any building outside of the house needs to be on the same lot. The commissioners also stated if there are any changes it would be through the City of Hugoton as they have put the covenants on the property. Joe told Craig if he would like a larger lot, to purchase the undeveloped lots outside of the city limits and use those for a house and shed as large as he is looking at. Jim Ghumm came in and said the issue is the size of the developed lots do not leave enough room for a large garage that will also have living quarters and be able to have a decent sized yard. Tony Martin said the city has an ordinance for developed lots stating the dwelling and garage must be on the same lot and the city will have to approve replotting the lots if they want them changed. Craig said he would take the map and let the commissioners know later if he chooses to purchase any lots in the Pioneer Addition.

Jenifer Featherston and David Piper from the Stevens County Hospital and Suresh Bhakta with Sunrise Hospitality were in attendance.

Tony handed the commissioners crossing permits to be signed and approved. Tony gave the commissioners a contract with Terracon to replace Alfred Benesch to review and possibly sign. KDHE is aware of the possible change to Terracon.

Pat made a motion to accept Terracon Companies as the Stevens County Solid Waste consultants. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

Tony also stated he will be starting fees on March 1st, 2024, at the landfill for any vehicle pulling a trailer. The fees will be \$30.00 per ton for the tipping fee. There will be no fees at this time for just a pickup load.

Pat made a motion to approve new landfill fees. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

Ted Heaton and Cuyler Miller were in attendance.

Tony discussed a meeting he had with Glenn Kerbs over the planning and zoning board. He stated the current board members are:

Darin Heger	3 year term	Don Beesley	2 yr term
David Rome	3 year term	Tony Nix	1 yr term
Shannon Crawford	2 year term		

Tony mentioned he heard that Tony Nix passed away over the weekend, so his term is up for re-appointment.

Amy provided statutes for the commissioners about the planning and zoning board stating they are to have no less than three (3) and no more than seven (7) members on the board and to be determined if they will serve a three (3) or four (4) year term.

Pat made a motion to reappoint Darren Heger and David Rome for a four (4) year term, Don Beesley and Shannon Crawford for a three (3) year term. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

The commissioners said to run an ad in the newspaper for two (2) people who would be interested in serving on the planning and zoning board to send in a letter stating why they would like to serve on the board. The two (2) new candidates will serve a two (2) year term. When each of the board members comes up for re-appointment it will then be a four (4) year term.

Tony said the planning and zoning board would like to hold a public meeting at the Memorial Hall January 31st, 2024, and another one in February. Tony said he would like to have the county attorney in attendance and Glenn Kerbs will possibly be in attendance as well. This meeting will go over the solar and wind farm discussions and regulations.

Suresh Bhakta with Sunrise Hospitality was in appearance. Tron told Suresh the county commissioners have waived penalties and interest on the back taxes and is allowing Sunrise Hospitality to pay the back taxes in monthly installments for sixty (60) months. Suresh asked if the back taxes could be spread out into a ten (10) year term and the commissioners said five (5) years is the longest they are willing to go. Paul will draw up a contract and get a copy to the county treasurer.

Jennifer Featherston and Dave Piper with the Stevens County Hospital were in to discuss the hospital's phone system. Dave said he would like to know if the county is willing to help pay for the system and how much. Dave also stated they are not looking at a cloud-based system because of paging and if there is a power outage. Dave stated the state and Medicare informed them the hospital needs to get an alarm on their vaccine/medicine refrigerators to be able to accept Medicaid and Medicare payments from the state and federal government. The commissioners agreed to pay up to \$100,000.00 for the phone system and the rest is up to the hospital to pay. Dave said the financial are up through November, which is positive, however there are many products which are at end-of-life and the hospital board will have to view the priority of those items to start working on replacements. Pat told Dave and Jennifer it is hard to determine if the county's valuation is going to go up or down each year so it is hard to predict how much can be appropriated. Pat stated years ago when the county's valuation was doing good, the hospital and Pioneer Manor were able to have a decent appropriation of six (6) mils but since the valuation is poor, the county is paying more than the six (6) mils to help which unfortunately is not what the hospital had been used to in years past. Jennifer said she is trying to be transparent about the hospital finances in hopes it helps people understand the situation the hospital is in. Dave said the fire sprinkler system in the hospital will possibly need to be replaced in 2025. Joe told Dave and Jennifer to find out the cost for the system and get it to the commissioners before budget time so they can see what can be done to

help pay for the replacement. After further discussion of costs, the commissioners agreed to pay for the Pioneer Communications bills for the new phone system and Hancock's will be the hospital's responsibility. The total cost of the Pioneer Communications bills to be paid is \$107,126.32.

Ross Sullivan came back in and stated AK Roofing was not using all the specs for the AA building doors and stated the new quote is \$2,980.00.

Pat made a motion to accept the lowest bid from Harrison Construction in the amount of \$2,218.64, for the AA building doors. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

Ross told the commissioners the septic tank at the wellness center has backed up into the facility and he is currently having someone try to locate the tank and get it cleaned out.

Amy asked if the MOU with the museum needs to have a legal description or address included since the Stevens County Gas and Historical Society also own property under their own board. Paul said putting the block on the MOU should be sufficient.

Amy called the treasurer's office to ask a tax question and Jayme was out of the office for the minute so Misty Peitz, deputy treasurer, came in and told the commissioners the back taxes on county property needs to be paid first before current taxes. She will ask Jayme if the Sunrise Hospitality can pay 2023's first half of the taxes along with a payment of back taxes.

Amy said the Eco Devo board is asking if the county can appropriate another \$5,000.00 this year to help with funding. Pat stated there will be no more appropriation to entities this year because the budget has already been set and to request more taxes on the 2025 budget.

Tron said a property owner called and asked about the interest on delinquent taxes due to a name change not being handled properly. Pat stated it is up to KDOR, not the county and Angela said the property can go into the tax sale. Tron reiterated the property owner needs to get an attorney, pay the taxes or allow the property to go on the tax sale.

Joe brought up a discussion about a grocery store in Stevens County. No one knows where the hold up is on the proposed purchase of the current grocery store if the back taxes are too high or if there are other legal issues.

Abatement Orders for 2023 taxes numbered 29 through 35 were reviewed and approved by commissioners and given to the County Treasurer; total valuation removed 21,179 with a relief assessment of \$2,871.32.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Tron Stegman, Chairman