

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS  
NOVEMBER 25, 2024

Agenda:        8:30 – Bills  
                  8:45 – Cammie Heaton  
                  9:00 – Rex Evans  
                  9:15 –  
                  9:30 – Tony Martin  
                  9:45 –  
                  10:00 –  
                  10:30 –

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session. Paul Kitzke, County Attorney and Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk, were also present. Tron called the meeting to order. Joe moved to approve minutes from the last 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	\$	112,820.99
Co. Building	\$	525.00
Judicial District	\$	800.00
Road & Bridge	\$	74,678.99
Airport	\$	2,122.15
ARPA	\$	18,198.00
911 Wireless	\$	116.59
Noxious Weed	\$	4,266.96
EMS	\$	10,625.02
Fire	\$	1,929.30
Community Health	\$	13,792.51
GIS Equipment	\$	4,170.66
Diversion	\$	379.64
Sheriff	\$	72,658.16
TOTAL:	\$	317,083.97

Shannon Crawford was in attendance.

Pat said he contacted V&B Concrete and scheduled an appointment to meet about the concrete outside the Memorial Hall. Pat said V&B Concrete did not show. Amy said she contacted All Glass out of Liberal and Mitch told her he would be in either this week or the next to look at the front (south) doors of the courthouse.

Cammie Heaton came in and reported there is a confirmed positive of whooping cough in the county. She said the second-grade class did a body fair and the high school freshmen are doing tours of the community health department. Cammie also stated she will need to transfer funds from the community grant fund into the community health fund for salary, since some of the health department's wages are from grants. She said she has orders coming up for vaccines, especially RSV and has already done several vaccines at the care home. Cammie stated that in prior minutes Amy mentioned her wage increase was covered by the PHEP grant and Cammie wanted to clarify that most of the grant will cover her wage but there is enough in her budget to cover the overage of the salary amount.

Cammie said she was approached a while back about the possibility of Project Hope using the back half of the community health building. She states she has reservations about the idea as there will have to be a wall built to divide the two offices. The commissioners agree that at this time it would not be wise to have Project Hope in the community health building due to HIPPA.

Pat brought up the email from Amy Rich stating there is a department who is still not getting completed and signed time sheets in for payroll and said he feels if there are no time sheets there should be no pay. Amy Jo reiterated that if a department is having issues, whether it is computer related, personal, etc., there needs to be some sort of communication so her office can do the job that is required.

Rex Evans was in. Tron said he had spoken with Rex on the phone, after the first candidate for the position declined, and relayed the pay is \$21.00 per hour. Rex said he would be able to work at that wage, but he would still have to keep his coaching position at the high school unless his wage is \$22.00 per hour. Pat mentioned the insurance being paid for a family plan by the county and Rex agreed it was a perk.

Joe made a motion to hire Rex Evans for County Facilities Maintenance Supervisor with a starting pay of \$22.00 per hour with the job duties as described in the job description. Tron seconded. Motion carried.

Joe asked if Jayme Rich could come down and go over the most recent tax sale.

Jayme came down and told the commissioners every parcel sold for more than was anticipated. She reported there were three (3) parcels of land and about one hundred twenty (120) parcels of minerals. Joe said there was a person who purchased some of the property but there was a mix up on the title work. Jayme stated the title company which was used did not get all the title work completed and about two (2) parcels did not get caught until later, but the issue had been resolved. She said the county received about half (1/2) if not more than what was owed on delinquent taxes for all properties sold. Joe asked when the next sale would be, and Jayme said it depends on how many people pay off their delinquent taxes. She said she sent letters out to inform people that their property will be on the next tax sale if it is not paid, and hopes it will get tax payments coming in. Jayme said the hotel has not paid anything since July but did get their 2019 taxes paid in full. She

said from 2023 to 2024, \$932,000.00 has been received for real estate delinquent taxes just by having tax sales.

Tony Martin came in and said he has concerns with the City of Hugoton electric department. He stated the flashing traffic lights on the Hooker/Moscow, Optima/Hooker, and Evans/2<sup>nd</sup> pose issues if the city is unable to help. He said the city would be quick with sending someone out to make repairs if the lights quit working. They did it in a quick and timely manner and did not charge the county a fee. He said now, it's up to Pioneer Electric and he is curious as to how much that would cost and if they will be able to make repairs in a quick manner or if it will take longer since they are in Ulysses. Tony said he looked up solar lights for those intersections and was quoted at around \$1,200.00 per light. Pat asked if solar lights were really needed, and Tony said something needs to be at those intersections due to the high risk of accidents. Tron agreed with Tony about the solar lights leading up to those intersections. The quote Tony received for six (6) red flashing lights, six (6) amber flashing lights and solar is \$15,780.00. Tron and Joe approved the flashing lights and solar signs and told Tony to get them ordered.

Tony said there is a landfill meeting at 9:15 AM at the landfill.

Tony told the commissioners they will need to review and approve of the conditional use permits from Travertine Solar. He stated Glenn Kerbs will be sending copies of the agreements for the commissioners to look over and hopefully decide on them at the next commissioner's meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

Tony requested an executive session for ten (10) minutes over current litigation. Joe made a motion to go into executive session for ten (10) minutes over current litigation, Tron seconded. Executive session began at 10:17 AM with Amy Tharp in attendance and ended at 10:27 AM.

Tony stated he is going to the KAC meeting in Wichita and hopes to visit with Kirkham Michael about road maintenance and make sure everything is covered with the conditional use permit with Travertine Solar. Tony also mentioned if someone wants to protest the solar farms, they are instructed to send letters to the Stevens County Clerk explaining their protest. Tony stated he hopes everything is ready by December 9<sup>th</sup>, so the commissioners can approve and sign. The planning and zoning board requests Tron not to sign as he has interest in the solar farm. Joe said he would like to have one (1) meeting before finalizing this agreement as he would like to discuss the tax exemptions. He said he would like to see something in the agreement that at the end of ten (10) years of being exempted from the tax roll and having a pilot program the county will continue to pay the difference if the pilot program is more than the taxes. Also, if at the end of ten (10) years the government decides to make renewable energy tax exempt for life, he would like to see the energy companies continue to pay at least three percent (3%) of their earnings.

Tony said he received a call from an upset individual about the landfill. He stated this person loaded up junk feed at the grocery store and went to the landfill to dump it and the landfill employees turned this individual away due to the moisture recently received. Tony said he spoke to the landfill

employees, and they stated they did not turn anyone away. Tony elaborated that what happened was that the person driving to dump the feed had gotten stuck and the landfill employees had to help pull them out.

Amy asked the commissioners for a final decision on whether they want Nex-Tech to continue with the Microsoft 365 account until the contract is completed or pay off the rest of the contract which is around \$11,000.00 and have Leading Edge take control. The commissioners agreed to allow Nex-Tech to continue with the Microsoft 365 contract until it expires.

Jayne Rich came back in and asked if she was allowed to write off taxes that are older than twenty-five (25) years for personal property, gas royalties and heavy equipment (16/20). The commissioners agreed.

The commissioners asked Amy if the coroner fee per autopsy is \$3,000.00. Amy stated the transport from Hugoton to Topeka is \$3,000.00 and the autopsies range anywhere from \$1,200.00 to \$2,400.00. Shannon asked if the autopsies were the county's responsibility. Amy replied, any unattended death inside the county is required to be paid by the county, however the autopsies involving anyone under the age of eighteen (18) is reimbursed by the state. Pat asked Paul if the county was released from the judicial district for autopsies and if so, is there anywhere closer. Paul said he would find out.

Discussion was had over hospital board replacements due to two (2) members having completed their terms and Shannon will have to resign due to his election into the commissioner position. There have been a few people interested, and they stated they will have to decide soon.

Paul said he believes the commissioners should not give the property to the museum as previously mentioned at the past meeting due to it being county owned and will possibly need to receive bids on it. He said he will investigate the matter further and let the commissioners know what he finds.

The commissioners moved to change the December commissioner meeting from December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, to December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Added and Abated Orders were reviewed and approved by commissioners and given to the County Treasurer; for tax year 2024 numbers 2-17 total valuation removed 3,403 and tax assessed -\$678.16, with valuation added of 2,957 and a relief assessment of \$584.60. Total valuation of -446 and total tax assessed -\$93.56.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

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Tron Stegman, Chairman

After the meeting, Amy Jo swore in the upcoming commissioner, Shannon Crawford, to fulfill Pat Hall's vacancy beginning December 1, 2024.

The county commissioners opened the re-canvassing for the 2024 General Election. No changes made at the re-canvass other than posting the appeals court totals by precinct. Canvass concluded.