

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS  
DECEMBER 20, 2024

Agenda:      8:30 – Bills  
                  8:45 – Rex - Building  
                  9:00 – Longevity of employees  
                  9:15 – Edgar Ortúñoz – OC Quality Custom Homes  
                  9:30 –  
                  9:45 –  
                  10:00 –  
                  10:30 – Steve Lewis - Museum

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session with all members present. County Clerk Amy Jo Tharp and RoGlenda Coulter from the Hermes were also present. Tron called the meeting to order. Joe moved to approve minutes from the last meeting. Shannon seconded. Motion carried. Joe moved to approve the county vouchers. Shannon 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	\$	111,323.26
Co. Building	\$	3,623.08
Judicial District	\$	1,938.41
Road & Bridge	\$	38,370.01
Airport	\$	12,402.61
ARPA	\$	109,738.50
911 Wireless	\$	116.69
Noxious Weed	\$	4,863.42
EMS	\$	8,535.36
Fire	\$	5,656.33
Community Health	\$	15,451.67
Treas Tech Fund	\$	152.52
Sheriff Special	\$	7,305.45
<u>Sheriff</u>	\$	34,763.24
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>354,240.55</b>

Rodney Kelling came in and informed the commissioners it is time to appoint someone to be the Southwest Kansas Homeland Regional Council Member for Stevens County. Rodney said the appointment is for two (2) years.

Joe made a motion to appoint Rodney Kelling as the SWK Homeland Regional Council Member from Stevens County. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Rodney informed the commissioners he is over on one line item in his budget and explained it is due to a health insurance issue between the community health department and EMS. Amy told the commissioners the revenue and expense will not reflect in a single line item, but the overall budget is fine.

Rex came in and told the commissioners the water fountain on the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) floor is having issues draining due to the p-trap being full of coffee grounds, reporting he and Pat Hall worked on the fountain drain and there was no clear resolution for a fix. Rex asked if he could remove the water fountain, cap off the lines, and put something decorative in its place. He stated the courts have a drinking water supply without the fountain. The commissioners agreed to remove the water fountain and cap the lines.

Rex said he plans to see how much it would cost to have someone clean the upper windows at the courthouse. The commissioners discussed with Rex whether Unifirst should keep the services for rugs and rags at the courthouse or have the county purchase rugs, and have Rex clean them periodically. The commissioners decided to have Rex contact Unifirst and see if they will honor their proposed rate for the five (5) year contract. Rex mentioned he went through his inventory list to get it prepared for 2025 and noticed the hedge trimmer and carpet shampooper were missing. Amy told him she thought both were broken and had been discarded. The commissioners told Rex to purchase a hedge trimmer and shampooper for the courthouse.

Rex communicated to the commissioners he reached out to Service Janitorial about getting on a revolving contract for some of the paper supplies (toilet paper, paper towels). V&B Construction called Rex last Friday and told him they would meet up with him to inspect and discuss what can be done about the hallway by the Memorial Hall doors to keep water from coming in. Flatlanders repaired the snow blower at no cost due to it still being under warranty. Amy and Rex asked the commissioners if they wanted to start replacing tables in the Memorial Hall with the plastic ones. The commissioners first agreed it would be a good idea but then later recanted as the rectangular tables are sturdy and have lasted and the plastic ones do not seem to hold up. Amy asked if it would be beneficial to at least swap the round tables with plastic ones since they are heavy to move around compared to the rectangular ones. The commissioners agreed.

Ted Heaton, Tyler Anderson, Kyrie Esarey, Cammie Heaton, Lori Rome, Phillip Thompson, and Tom Torrey were in attendance.

The commissioners acknowledged Stevens County full time and part time employees who have reached longevity anniversaries:

10 Years: Tyler Anderson (FT), Kyrie Esarey (PT), Cammie Heaton (FT), Tom Torrey (PT)

20 Years: Robert Rich (FT)

25 Years: Chad Bennett (FT), Phillip Thompson (PT)

30 Years: Roger Beesley (FT)

40 Years: Lori Rome (FT)

Courtney Leslie with the City of Hugoton Police Department came in and informed the commissioners there was an accident between a sheriff vehicle and a city police vehicle on November 1<sup>st</sup>. She mentioned she would like to get her vehicle fixed and had contacted Ted Heaton and TJ Steers and had only heard back from TJ. She remarked the repair cost is around \$800.00 to \$900.00 and would like to get it taken care of. Courtney would like to get information about the county's insurance and a report of the accident. Amy said she will send over the information she has received and stated she still has not heard back from KCamp on the issue yet.

Ted Heaton verbalized the county has a \$500.00 deductible and it would be ridiculous for the insurance to cover such minor damage.

The commissioners discussed the newly proposed MOU with Flora Foods. Joe relayed that Paul explained the MOU still has the current stipulations but allows food production in the MOU and approves the document.

Joe made a motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between Flora Foods and Stevens County as presented today, December 20, 2024. Shannon seconded. Motion carried. The commissioners and county clerk signed the MOU with RoGlenda Coulter as notary.

Joe called Rodney on speakerphone and asked if the LED lighting at the EMT building was completed. Rodney replied the lighting was replaced in the conference room and meeting room. He mentioned he would like to eventually get the lights replaced in the hallway and offices as well.

Edgar Ortuño with OC Quality Custom Homes was next on the agenda and presented the commissioners with ideas of a contracting project on some of the Pioneer lots. He stated with a Rural Housing Incentive District program (RHID), he can build more affordable homes. Unfortunately, homes cannot be built for under \$250,000.00 due to inflation caused by the pandemic. Edgar said he can put a package together for state incentives and have the county attorney create an agreement to get licenses and applications from the state. Edgar would like to begin building and developing on four (4) of the lots as soon as possible and eventually keep expanding with the help of RHID. Edgar remarked the first thing which needs to be done is for the county to get RHID.

Amy asked the commissioners if they have a replacement for Shannon on the planning and zoning board. They replied they are still trying to find out who to appoint as a replacement. Amy asked if they had thought of who would replace Seth Gillespie on the hospital board, and commissioners commented they are trying to find someone from the Moscow community.

Neal Gillespie and Jonathan Pearcy from Eco Devo came in.

Amy said Jan Leonard asked if the county would reconsider starting the neighborhood revitalization plan. The commissioners agreed it would be a good idea and asked Amy to see what documents she can gather for Paul to review.

Tron asked Jonathan and Neal if there was anything they needed. They responded that they wanted to discuss the county doing another neighborhood revitalization plan which had just previously been answered. Neal said he wanted to discuss the Eco Devo budget by stating the work Jan Leonard does as a part time employee and traveling from Goddard to Hugoton is immensely appreciated. The Eco Devo board would like to see more funds for Eco Devo and slowly restore the budget to what it was because when Jan retires, they will have to find a full-time person to replace him. Joe said the Eco Devo budget was cut by the county due to the valuation dropping. At this time, they would like to request an extra \$5,000.00 per year. Tron informed Neal he was just getting ready to inform the other two commissioners about a \$5,000.00 check the county received for tourism from Boot Hill Tourism. Neal commented there is a tourism board for Stevens County, and he had heard of the funds. The commissioners entertained the idea of using the \$5,000.00 received for tourism to give to Eco Devo.

Steve Lewis and Jim Bell with the museum were in attendance. Tron told Steve the Buddy Heaton Exhibit was nice and impressive. Steve commented there was a great turnout. Steve then said he came to the meeting due to the idea of the county having to bid out the county owned lots that have been part of the museum. Joe expressed he knew the county sold property to other people in the past with only having the purchaser come in stating they are interested and then the county places an ad in the newspaper for a public hearing instead of going through a bidding process. Steve mentioned adverse possession. Joe said he would consult with Paul and see what can be done and the commissioners said they will not let the property go if it must be bid out.

Amy asked the commissioners if they were going to give employees a COLA for 2025.

After further discussion amongst the commissioners regarding a COLA, Joe made a motion for all Stevens County employees to receive a three percent (3%) COLA for 2025 effective January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, pay date. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Added and Abated Orders were reviewed and approved by commissioners and given to the County Treasurer; for tax year 2024 numbers 19-26 and 28-33, with a total valuation of 52,690 removed and tax assessed -\$9,793.44; and number 27 with valuation added of 276 and a relief assessment of \$50.60. Total valuation of -51,385 and total tax assessed -\$9,742.84.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

---

Tron Stegman, Chairman