

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS
JUNE 10, 2024

Agenda: 8:30 – Bills
 8:45 – Dave Piper – Hospital Budget
 9:00 –
 9:15 – Steve Lewis – Museum/firetruck
 9:30 – Marshall Lewis – Southwest Guidance Center
 9:45 - Tony Martin
 10:00 –Bob Brunson - Invenergy

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session. Paul Kitzke, County Attorney, and Amy Tharp, County Clerk were also present. Tron called the meeting to order. Pat moved to approve the minutes from the previous commissioner meeting. Joe 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	\$	123,606.78
Judicial District	\$	554.32
Road & Bridge	\$	84,873.11
Airport	\$	2,772.62
County Building	\$	1,220.00
Library	\$	96,692.25
Noxious Weed	\$	4,499.54
EMS	\$	7,359.05
Fire	\$	3,370.49
Community Health	\$	16,700.14
Community Health Grants	\$	156.00
Sheriff	\$	41,702.97
Airport Grants	\$	15,000.00
Ambulance Bequest	\$	1,200.00
Fire Bequest	\$	1,994.30
911 Wireless	\$	18,000.00
Reg of Deeds Tech Fund	\$	202.60
TOTAL:	\$	419,904.17

Ross Sullivan came in and told the commissioners the air at the community health department is still not cool even with the new chiller due to the screens being full of junk. Ross said no one from Trane has come in since the new chiller has been installed to check on anything and he is surprised they did not blow out the lines prior to installation. Ross said he managed to get one of the rooms

cooler by cleaning the screen but will be going back every day this week to work on the other rooms and questioned having the water tested for minerals that could potentially be clogging the screens. Trane told Ross they might have to investigate a filtration system to help with the lines to keep the junk out. Pat said he will call Mike from Trane and see what needs to be done. Joe asked Ross if he had a chance to look at the Moscow Senior Citizens roof since the repair had been completed or if he had looked at the inside damage. Ross stated he had not been over there yet, and Joe asked Ross to meet him on Wednesday at 8:00 AM.

Amy handed the commissioners a sworn statement in proof of loss which needs signed and notarized for KCAMP concerning the senior centers in Stevens County.

Dave Piper and Angela Piper were in to give the commissioners more information on the hospital and Pioneer Manor budget. Dave said due to the way Blue Cross and Blue Shield work and the hospital not charging updated amounts, many patients will notice a difference in their billing but hope they understand their insurance will cover most of the fees. The hospital is going to try to put an after-care therapy program in at the physical therapy building and hopes it will help with some funds for the hospital. The hospital is also trying to get more people into the specialty clinic and Dave had spoken with a heart specialist to come out for the specialty clinic but there is so much red tape it is difficult. The Pioneer Manor will be raising rates for private rooms for anyone new from \$200.00 per day to \$289.00 per day, to keep the rates comparable to surrounding areas. Dave mentioned he plans to retire in about five (5) years and Angela Piper will take his position as CFO. Dave also mentioned the hospital is trying to work with a company to get more specialists in such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation who will work with Medicare. The budget has been difficult to get figured out due to the medical places who have been hit with hackers as it was keeping the hospital from working on billing for a little over a month. Dave also informed the commissioners the water softener system at the Pioneer Manor went down and they had to replace it which caused more of a strain on the budget as well. Dave said most of the bad debt in surrounding areas is about eleven percent (11%) and Stevens County ranges from nineteen to twenty-four percent (19-24%). Pat asked Dave if the hospital could have the state collect bad debt through state income tax. Dave said they will be looking into that for sure to get debts cleared up. Dave said due to the new laws of credit reports not showing medical debt seems to play a major role in people not paying for medical expenses which hurts the hospital and clinic. A majority of the costs for the hospital, clinic, pharmacy and Pioneer Manor are due to contract labor, medications, and employee benefits (employee benefits eat up at least 34% of personnel costs). Dave said at this time they are restructuring the charity program to only Stevens County residents.

Steve Lewis came in and stated he assumed the county would be paying for the concrete pad to put the fire truck on which the fire department donated to the museum. Steve said the museum had built a building to cover the fire truck and had the concrete pad put in specifically for the fire truck. The commissioners stated they would not be paying for the concrete pad as it wasn't discussed previously and stated any changes or projects to Stevens County property need to be discussed with the commissioners before moving forward. Steve said the commissioners stated the county would pay for concrete work and he thought it would include the concrete pad for the

fire truck. Joe stated if there is any work done on county property it needs to come to the commissioners first (1st) because they have a say what work will be allowed on county property and if the amount is going to potentially be over \$5,000.00, it will have to go through the bidding process. Steve said he would like to know when Rodney is going to get the fire truck delivered as he was told it was being repaired so it can be driven to the museum then was told it will no longer start. Steve wanted to know if someone else from the county could possibly get the fire truck delivered. The commissioners stated they will find out why it is taking so long to get the fire truck to the museum.

Marshall Lewis with the Southwest Guidance Center (SWG) came in and presented the commissioners with their requested appropriation. Marshall said the state had made some changes about two (2) years ago and now all the staff at the SWGC are trained in veteran culture, they have a substance use provider, and a certified behavioral health clinic. He said they are asking to keep the foundation solid in mental health and requesting the same amount as they are receiving this year which is \$37,975.00. Joe asked how many staff members are working at SWGC and he stated there are about thirty-five (35) in total. Marshall also informed the commissioners there is a federal grant about every two (2) years to help fund mental health in Kansas as well as other state grants and funds they use to keep the center available.

Tony Martin came in and told the commissioners the asphalt plant was inspected by KDHE, and they were told to shut down due to the pit wall being down. Tony said he is hoping to get the wall repaired so they can the asphalt plant back up and running to work on the repair and maintenance of the county roads. Tony also told the commissioners the asphalt plant will now need to get a permit for storm water run-off from KDHE as it is a regulation. Tony said he spoke with Terracon, and they have submitted a liner demo proposal to KDHE for the landfill hoping to not have to put clay in the new pit. There was a small fire in the pit over the weekend which did not cause any damage, but they have to submit paperwork to KDHE for that instance.

Tony requested a ten (10) minute executive session regarding pending litigation. Pat made a motion to go into executive session at 9:58 AM for ten (10) minutes for a pending litigation. Joe seconded. The executive session began at 9:58 AM and ended at 10:07 AM. No action taken.

Bob Brunson with Invenergy came in and stated Mitch Lucas was not able to attend today. Bob said he appreciated what the planning and zoning board and the commissioners did for putting regulations in place and the work which that entails. Bob asked the commissioners to revisit the idea of using a tip height multiplier for the distance to residential instead of a set 2,000 feet. Research shows using the two and a half (2 ½) tip height would scale up and be more in-line with some of the other setbacks. Bob suggested using a statement for a minimum of 1,500 feet or the multiplier, whichever is greater. Joe said it would be more convenient for wind turbines to use the multiplier because of the constant changes. Pat said he does not want to change the minimum distance of residential from 2,000 feet and stated there is a waiver landowners can sign to exclude the 2,000 feet and have the tower closer. Most homeowners complain about the light and not so

much of the sound or other issues. Pat said he is not for changing the distance between a wind generator and residential home.

Joe made a motion to have the planning and zoning board revisit the distance of the wind tower and residential to be modified to state whichever is greater between the height of tower multiplier (using 2 ½ times tip height) and 1,500 feet. Tron seconded. Pat requested if anyone who has a conflict-of-interest state has a conflict of interest in the motion. Joe stated he did not have a conflict of interest. Pat opposed the motion. By majority vote, motion carried.

Pat asked Paul to speak with an attorney or company to see what can be done about the taxes KDI owes before they file for bankruptcy.

Amy told the commissioners the cost for the RNR notifications this year is estimated to be roughly \$16,000.00 and stated the budget for courthouse was raised for 2025 to cover the costs. Amy also told the commissioners this year outside entities raising the RNR will be reimbursing the county for their portion of the costs instead of the State.

The commissioners discussed the fire truck issue, and no one remembers the decision to donate a truck to the museum. Amy showed minutes from April 10, 2023, where it was discussed to donate the fire truck but no mention of the concrete pad.

Amy asked the commissioners if Effie Gaskill had reached out to any of them as she wanted to come in and visit with the commissioners and decided to contact them via email or phone. The commissioners stated they received an email this morning with concerns the county is pulling funding from Citizens State Bank, which is a local bank, and going to another bank which is not local. Amy contacted the county treasurer and she stated she had not pulled any funds from the bank; the commissioners stated the Citizens State Bank is the depository for the county and there will be no changes at this time.

Lynne Webb came in and handed the commissioners a Board of Tax Appeals (BOTA) application which was denied by BOTA. Lynne said it was denied due to the taxes not being paid before taking to the board. The issue with the person going to BOTA has to do with name and address changes and not seeing any tax bills.

Amy asked the commissioners if they were interested in the neighborhood revitalization plan (NRP). Amy said Paul and she had spoken with other counties and received their plans and resolutions but was not sure which is the best course of action. Paul said he is uncomfortable restarting the NRP, by himself, and costing the county money due to an error.

The commissioners have unanimously decided to forgo starting a new Neighborhood Revitalization Plant (NRP) at this time, no action taken.

By motion, the Board adjourned.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Tron Stegman, Chairman