

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS
JUNE 24, 2024

Agenda: 8:30 – Bills
 8:45 – Sarah Steele – conference call
 9:00 – Courtney Leslie – Hugoton Police Dept
 9:15 – Luke Grubbs – Soil Conservation
 9:30 – Tony Martin – Public Works
 9:45 -
 10:00 –Cammie Heaton – Community Health

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session. Amy Tharp, County Clerk was also present. Tron called the meeting to order. 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	\$	102,075.37
Judicial District	\$	1,628.67
Road & Bridge	\$	48,843.21
Airport	\$	7,993.31
Airport Grants	\$	5,891.00
Services for Elderly	\$	116,017.00
Noxious Weed	\$	4,513.52
EMS	\$	8,126.24
Fire	\$	1,774.10
Community Health	\$	15,194.45
Hospital Maint. Fund	\$	500,000.00
Sheriff	\$	40,460.18
Library Emp Benefits	\$	31,519.00
ARPA Grant	\$	19,750.00
Fair Fund	\$	36,850.00
911 Wireless	\$	116.69
Emp Misc W/H	\$	200.00
Reg of Deed Tech	\$	4,202.20
TOTAL:	\$	945,154.94

Ross Sullivan came in and told the commissioners he is concerned with the charges on the Trane bill, specifically the \$70.00 parts charge and the \$1,600.00 labor charge for eight and a half (8.5) hours instead of the five and a half (5.5) hours which was the correct amount of time the Trane representative was here. Pat said he would call a representative of Trane and discuss with them the issues of the new chiller at community health. He will address the problem of the lines and filters

not being cleaned and blown out before and during the installation to make sure the system would run correctly. Ross told the commissioner he spoke with a local person about installing a window unit in the metal shed where the mower and tools are kept so he can work out there when the temperature rises. He said the cost will be \$1,260.80 for the unit and installation. The commissioners agreed. Ross suggested possibly finding someone local with the ability to work on the Trane heating and air systems. Discussion about possible HVAC schooling was held.

Sarah Steele, a tax consultant for the county, was called to discuss the KDI arrears and Pat asked about receiving the back taxes during the liquidation land sale. Sarah said the county will receive any back taxes during bankruptcy before any financial institutions, and there are only six (6) months left of the year to revoke the remainder of their exemption. Sarah told the commissioners to have the county attorney contact the law firm out of Wichita who handles Stevens County tax sales and work on making sure they are aware of the back taxes and the possibility of KDI filing bankruptcy. If the property is sold, the taxes will be a part of the sales cost which will go to the county. Pat asked if any of the financial companies are responsible for the taxes and if the county can go after the financial institutions to collect back taxes. Sarah said no, due to the fact the IRB and financial institution are separate. Sarah suggested contacting Wichita and inform them of payments due and let litigation happen, better to get started now instead of waiting. Trustees appointed on the IRB's will need to have a more active role in the company as the city is the one who issued the bonds with KDI.

Bob Brunson, Rodney Kelling, Tony Martin and Stacey Woods were in attendance.

Hugoton Chief of Police, Courtney Leslie, came in to discuss a medical bill which was received on an inmate which she feels should be the county's bill, not the city's. Courtney stated there was a Jail statute passed last year to cover this issue, stating if someone appears under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, certain conditions will require the police to take the individual to the hospital to be medically cleared. She stated the city police arrested an individual on March 2nd and took him to the jail for booking. Then undersheriff Steers came in and escalated the situation with the arrested person, telling the officers they must take the individual to the hospital for a psychological evaluation. Courtney stated the officers took the individual to the hospital and numerous tests were run, which caused the hospital bill which is now in question. Due to the statute, Courtney does not believe the city police are responsible for the bill. Tron said he had previously spoken to Paul about the situation and Paul stated it is a county bill, not a city.

Luke Grubbs with the Stevens County Soil Conservation District came in with a budget request of \$34,000.00. He apologized for taking so long to submit their request due to changes in the office. Luke also stated the state is offering a stipend to grant equal to or a bit more than what the counties are paying for soil conservation appropriations.

Darin Heger was in attendance.

Rodney Kelling came in and told the commissioners the propane tank will possibly be installed this week and questioned what to do with the old generator. Rodney said the panel is bad, will not start

manually but still runs, that he has been unable to obtain the correct parts for it yet. Tony said road and bridge has the old generator from the community health department, but the engine is cracked. Pat suggested possibly putting it on PurpleWave or another auction/bid site.

Tony and Darin presented the commissioners with the regular planning and zoning regulations. Pat made a motion to approve the revised planning and zoning regulations as presented. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

Darin said they may go over the regulations next year and make sure there are no changes needing to be made after the revisions. Tony explained the conditional use permit is attached to the land if it is completed and fulfilled. If the conditional use project is not completed it will be vetoed.

Tony Martin told the commissioners the asphalt plant is getting worked on and will continue to keep it repaired since it is required by KDHE. Tony said the road and bridge department will hopefully begin chip/seal by July 8th. Pat asked Tony about the tire tonnage fee by Champlain Tires and asked if they pick tires up every month or on an as needed basis. Tony said usually once a month unless there are not enough to justify the trip. Pat stated the current bill seems to be quite large and Tony said the billing also depends on how many tires were picked up and to remember the county charges for disposal of tires which balances out the Champlain Tire costs.

Tron asked about the windmill zoning height changes and how to proceed. Tony said he spoke with Glenn Kerbs and it was suggested to find a time when the planning and zoning board can discuss the changes and also have a hearing the same day instead of multiple meetings to make one (1) change. Tony told the commissioners they will begin to work on road agreements, pilot agreements and other things soon.

Sheriff Ted Heaton and undersheriff TJ Steers were in attendance. Ted informed the commissioners the K-9, Kleio, and Deputy Chris Beltz will be retiring on July 13th, 2024. Ted asked the commissioners for approval of retiring Kleio and allowing Chris Beltz to keep her; the commissioners agreed. Ted also stated Stevens County Sheriff Department will no longer have a K-9 unit at this time and will request assistance from neighboring counties if needed. Ted said he is waiting for Paul to draft a letter to allow Chris Beltz to keep her and diminish any liability from the county for Kleio. Ted expressed his frustration with kids and phones in school causing bullying and crimes against others through their phones and social media. On another issue, Ted said there is a county vehicle which was damaged and is under the impression Hugoton Uptown Autobody is beginning to start the process of retiring the business and he is using the new one east of town. Ted said cost saving has been implemented at the sheriff department by using a deputy to replace jailers when needed instead of hiring a new employee. Pat asked Ted about the constant rotation of new vehicles and was questioning trading them in so frequently due to the vehicle being under 100,000 miles and what Ted's thoughts are of cost saving there. Ted told Pat to cut anywhere but vehicles and stated he had not replaced a jailer and will not hire someone to replace Chris Beltz. Ted stated nothing has changed and is nothing new on vehicle trade-ins in the last thirty (30) years. Joe said a half (1/2) ton pickup is in the shop getting repairs more than it is out on the streets. Pat stated the July 9th budget workshop

would be difficult due to the drop in valuation. Joe stated if it is within Ted's budget to trade-in vehicles on a regular basis, then he has the right if needed. Ted stated he has always stayed within his budget and has never gone over until this past year due to inflation.

Cammie Heaton came in and stated she spoke to Mike with Trane, and he suggested having a water test done at the community health department to see if there is an abundance of sediment in the lines or during installation the chiller got plugged. Ross has been cleaning the screens for a week and they finally have cool air at the health department. Cammie said the lines should have been flushed before the installation of the chiller was completed. Pat said he had spoken to Mike and Mike said he would come down and flush out the lines. Pat will reach back out to Mike and see when and what else can be done. Cammie said there are dead tree limbs and she had contacted the city to see if they could come and trim them out, but the city suggested letting Tony with the county take care of them. Cammie said she contacted Tony, but the county doesn't have the equipment to get into the trees and get the dead limbs trimmed out. Pat suggested Cammie contact Casey Settlemeyer and get an estimate. Cammie asked if anyone had noticed numerous doves/pigeons being dead or dying in the area and stated there was a citizen that had found at least twenty (20) dead in his yard. Cammie said she spoke with Stephanie Smith (Hugoton Animal Control) and there are two (2) concerns with all the birds found deceased. One (1) of the concerns is the feedlots are worried about avian flu and are poisoning the birds and the other concern is a pigeon virus called PPMV1 which can cause distemper in dogs. Some doves have been sent in for testing and Cammie is currently waiting for results.

Aaron Brinkerhoff with Washington National came in and discussed the employee benefits they provide and stated if an employee signs up for one of their benefit packages and the employee after time decides they no longer want the plan, they will get their money back. More discussion over the different forms of employee benefits by Aaron was talked about. The commissioners tabled the decision until later and further discussion.

Pat stated someone with the Stevens County Foundation Board and the board is willing to grant the county \$250,000.00 to help cushion the budget due to the drop in valuation. Joe questioned if the county takes the grant, won't the county have to put money back into the foundation? Pat said he would look into it some more and find out.

Amy said the FLSA was revised by the department of labor changing the salary thresholds. Amy said the current threshold is \$35,568.00 annually and by January 1, 2025, the annual threshold will be \$58,656.00. Amy said three (3) county employees will be affected by this and the only solution is to do raises for those affected to get above the threshold or they will not be salaried. Amy reminded the commissioners of the employee manual which states each department head is responsible for employees exceeding overtime and clocking in and out in real time.

More discussion of the wind farms pertaining to the depreciation of the windmills and the ten (10) year land value limit.

The commissioners questioned if counties could change their deductibles in KCAMP. Amy said she will ask KCamp and see what they say. The commissioners also stated if there is something that needs repaired due to an accident or storm where insurance could be the payee, to find out the cost and if the cost is reasonable to just pay out of pocket without submitting a claim.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Tron Stegman, Chairman