

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS  
JANUARY 13, 2025

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

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session with all members present. County Attorney Paul Kitzke, 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	\$	250,343.32
Fair Funds	\$	37,000.00
Judicial District	\$	120.03
Road & Bridge	\$	69,285.49
Airport	\$	4,734.00
Services for Elderly	\$	87,718.50
911 Wireless	\$	18,000.00
Noxious Weed	\$	11,788.42
EMS	\$	13,686.95
Fire	\$	15,384.38
Community Health	\$	18,003.97
Library	\$	73,077.75
Hospital	\$	450,000.00
Alcoholic Treatment Fund	\$	2,700.00
Comm Health Grants	\$	561.54
Library Emp Benefits	\$	33,095.00
Treasurer's Tech Fund	\$	29.98
Clerk Tech Fund	\$	863.64
ROD Tech Fund	\$	1,182.25
Sheriff	\$	51,055.44
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,138,630.66</b>

Rodney Kelling came in and asked the commissioners if there was someone designated to clear the runway off after a winter storm, explaining the medivac plane could not land because the runway had

snow and ice on it. Rodney told them the ambulance had to take the patient to Liberal's airport to be flown out. Shannon mentioned when he was on the airport board the airport was responsible for the runways, but the county did help if needed.

Rodney is planning to encumber remaining funds to help with the purchase of the SCBA's. He is roughly \$70,000.00 short of the current estimate but is hoping to get a cheaper cost by getting bids for the new equipment.

Paige Bolin with AES Clean Energy came in and informed the commissioners they are going to attend the school board meeting this evening to get the donation portion of the contract for the schools approved. She also discussed issues on the road contract, in case of a dispute by the road manager concerning damage to the roads, the commissioners have the final say. AES is requesting a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) party who is neutral to determine which party or how much of which party is responsible for repairs to the roads. Paul will speak with Glenn Kerbs and ask about a neutral third (3<sup>rd</sup>) party paid for by AES. Paige said they are working towards fall or the early fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) quarter to do the groundbreaking and have all the solar farms completed by 2027-2028.

Bob Brunson with Invenergy was in attendance.

Joe made a motion to appoint Tron Stegman as the commissioner chairperson. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Tron made a motion to appoint Joe D. Thompson as the commissioner vice-chairperson. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Joe made a motion to approve of the commissioner meetings to be held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month unless a holiday occurs then meetings will be on the following business day. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Joe made a motion to appoint The Hugoton Hermes as the official county newspaper for Stevens County. Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Shannon made a motion to appoint Citizens State Bank of Hugoton to be the primary depository and Dream First Bank in Hugoton as the secondary depository. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

Jayme Rich came in to find out if Paul had a chance to investigate writing off taxes. Paul does not have an answer yet. Jayme and Amy asked Paul if the authorization form is acceptable for the commissioners to sign and file for unclaimed funds from the state. Paul approved of the authorization letter and the commissioners signed it.

Tony Martin was present along with Tony Mellini from Terracon, and Road & Bridge employees Roger Beesley, Chad Bennett, and Robert Rich. The R&B employees received their longevity

recognition, as they were not able to attend the previous meeting when others received their recognition.

Tony Mellini is working with some engineers to protect Scout's gas lines running under areas of the landfill to determine the best ways to cross over them with heavy loads without damaging them. Tony Mellini said Terracon is finally at the contracting stage with Stoppel. He asked about waving the performance bond since they are a well-known company and would save the county around one percent (1%) of the costs. Paul suggested keeping the performance bond to protect the county. Tony Mellini will finalize the contract with the bond between the county and Stoppel.

Discussion over various ways to protect the gas pipeline suggests the cost would not be cheap and the county is looking at \$125,000.00 to \$195,000.00 to keep the pipeline protected. This project will be bid out once the engineers can come up with a suitable plan.

The commissioners asked if the land contract with the agriculture lease for the property by the landfill will encroach on that property and if so, how much. The thought of roughly thirty (30) acres will be affected by the landfill pit digging. The commissioners will contact Jim Kraisinger and work on restructuring the contract and Amy Jo was informed to hold the lease check if Jim comes in to pay before they restructure the contract.

Tony Martin informed the commissioners there are some chemicals in the noxious weed department's shed which need to be disposed of correctly and will possibly cost the county some funding.

Ted Heaton, TJ Steers, Duane Topliss, Judy Heaton, Kim Mauk, Tina Salmans, Betty Rosel, and Damon Simmons were all in attendance.

District Magistrate Judge Damon Simmons swore in the newly elected officials for Stevens County:

Ted Heaton – Sheriff

Shannon Crawford – Commissioner District 2

Tron Stegman – Commissioner District 3

Paul Kitzke – Attorney

Zilpha "Betty" Rosel – Register of Deeds

Amy Jo Tharp – Clerk

Joe made a motion to approve ***Resolution 25-01, financial statements and reports for year end 2024 confirm with GAAP requirements.*** Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

Amy presented the commissioners with information on renewing the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) and she had sent out emails to the commissioners and Paul for review. The commissioners agree to get the NRP started as soon as possible. Jan Leonard had gone around last year to the cities (Hugoton and Moscow) and the USDs (209 and 210) and acquired signatures for the approval of NRP.

Amy asked the commissioners if March 10<sup>th</sup> would be a good date to have the encumbrance letters reviewed. The commissioners agreed.

Amy said Lewis, Hooper & Dick would like to hold the budget workshop on July 8<sup>th</sup>. The commissioners agreed on the date.

Amy stated the City of Moscow still has about \$911.00 to spend on their appropriated ARPA funds and this would leave the county with enough to pay for a single audit. She said there are also remaining funds which need to be spent before the end of this year. Amy would like the funds to be spent no later than May.

Amy asked the commissioners if they had time to review the transmission line information which was sent out several weeks ago and if they would like to do a resolution to not allow such lines to cross through Stevens County. Joe had heard the government had taken the transmission lines off the table and was dissolved. He does not see where a resolution is needed currently.

Amy told the commissioners some people are asking about the lots in the Pioneer Addition which are outside of the city limits. She would like to know if there are any covenants as well as the purchase price and sizes of the lots. The commissioners said the lots are \$5,000.00 per acre and are platted, so there are no covenants at this time and no specific time frame to have a house built by. Paul suggested if anyone wants animals (chickens, cows, goats, etc.) on those acres, they speak with the City of Hugoton and find out if that would be allowed. He also advised that interested parties speak with Tony Martin about building permits and inspections. The commissioners mentioned there are rights-of-way which need to be allowed as well.

Amy informed the commissioners there is still a department which is not returning signed bills and will possibly be receiving shut-off notices. There are also some timesheets which have not been turned in and payroll needs the end of year timesheets to finish that portion of 2024 final reports. Amy said there have been no deposits made to the treasurer from the above-mentioned department as well as sales tax receipts since October.

Amy asked if the commissioners would approve of giving Eco-Devo the \$5,000.00 tourism check recently received. The commissioners approved to pay the funds to Eco-Devo at the next commissioner meeting.

Amy asked if there is anything needed to be done on the cotton gin's tax appeal. Paul said Angela was waiting to hear back from PVD. Joe stated he feels it is worth pursuing and needs to be handled as soon as possible. Paul will reach out to Angela and see what has been discussed and contact an attorney who is more knowledgeable with the Board of Tax Appeals.

Amy presented the commissioners with ***Resolution 25-02 – Commission's desire to disorganize townships within Stevens County, except for Moscow Township.*** Joe made a motion to approve ***Resolution 25-02.*** Shannon seconded. Motion carried.

The commissioners agreed to hold a public hearing for dissolving county townships on February 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM in the commissioner's meeting room.

Abatement Orders for tax year 2024 numbered 34 through 42 were reviewed and approved by commissioners and given to the County Treasurer; total valuation removed 62,506 with a relief assessment of \$9,228.27.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

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Tron Stegman, Chairman