

Wabaunsee County Commission

Wabaunsee County Courthouse, Alma, KS

Regular Meeting Minutes February 22, 2021

The Board of County Commissioners meeting in session Monday, February 22, 2021. In compliance with the CDC guidelines to maintain social distancing Commissioners conduct and record the meeting over ZOOM. Members attending were Rodney L. Allen, Joel S. Fager and Nancy L. Hier. Chairman Fager called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. County Attorney Tim Liesmann and County Clerk Abby Amick were in attendance in person, others joined via zoom.

Commissioner Hier moved to approve the minutes of the February 8th Commission Meeting, Commissioner Allen seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Hier reported that she had been doing Department Inventory Inspections.

Mowing Contract

County Appraiser Ryan Michaelis joined in person to discuss the annual mowing contract. County Attorney Tim Liesmann presented an updated contract with Dustin Seivers using the same rates and terms as the previous year.

Commissioner Allen moved to approve the 2021 mowing contract with Dustin Seivers, Commissioner Hier seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Fence Viewing Petition

A Request for a Fence Viewing was presented to the Commission. Attorney Liesmann explained the procedure for a petition for a fence viewing. The Commissioners can appoint a designee to view the fence, take photos and report back. Liesmann interprets the statute to read that landowners on each side of the fence are to share in the responsibility of maintenance. The location of the fence was not included in the petition. Commissioners appointed Thayne Bush and Tim Liesmann to follow up with the petitioner for more details and report back to the Commissioners.

SPARKS and Economic Development Update

Economic Development Director Jim MacGregor joined in person. MacGregor presented a SPARKS report showing that all of the funds allocated to Wabaunsee County have been spent. MacGregor is working through the final reporting and the audit process. MacGregor also presented a fact sheet regarding Transient Guest Tax. He is working with the State to gather more information for the commissioners to consider implementing a Transient Guest Tax.

MacGregor reported that he has been meeting with the developer and the utility companies associated with the Plaza on the Flint Hills at the intersection of Hwy 99 and I-70. The developer plans to have the facility open later this year, they will be updating the Commissioners as plans progress.

MacGregor shared that the Network Kansas E-Community Revolving Loan program would be moving back to Economic Development from K-State Research & Extension, and that Tourism would likely move in the coming months. MacGregor shared that the Smithsonian Exhibit that is coming to

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Wabaunsee County this spring will include a Tourism Map of Wabaunsee County, his department would like sponsor the printing of the map. The map will be distributed widely throughout the community and to visitors, it will be useful well beyond the timeframe that the exhibit is open. The printing cost is \$500. Commissioners agreed to the sponsoring of the printing of the map and agreed that the map is a benefit to tourism across the county.

K-State Research & Extension Update

Agent Stephanie Melhus joined in person and Agent Bernadette Trieb joined via zoom. Agent Melhus shared the monthly agent reports. Agent Melhus announced that they will be doing some virtual poultry programming, including hatching out chickens with a live feed over the internet. Commissioner Hier asked about the source of information that Melhus uses when answering pasture lease questions, Melhus shared that agmanager.info provides statistics on average leasing rates, lease agreements, etc.

Agent Trieb gave an update on SHICK and Medicare results. She had two volunteers, Sam Carr and Mary Reed Spencer, that helped with reviewing the plans and enrolling residents. They assisted 321 beneficiaries this year, saving them a total of \$144,165. Trieb also provided supply bags to the mobile food pantries and Harvesters distributions, including recipe cards, hand sanitizer and hand washing information.

Building Committee

Attorney Tim Liesmann presented a proposal from P1 for a dryer vent replacement on the 4th floor. This would allow for a front window to be back in use, and for duct work to be cleaned up and rerouted. The building committee has met and approved the proposal costing \$2,498. This will not require any change to the existing project contract. The Commissioners gave verbal approval.

Asphalt Project Bids

10:00 a.m. Road & Bridge Supervisor Thayne Bush held the Bid Opening for Old K-10 Road project.

The following bids were opened:

Bettis Asphalt \$1,279,937.59

Mount Carmel Stabilization \$862,025.00

Coughlin Co \$837,349.80

Bob Bergkamp \$973,194.00

Rock Solid Stabilization & Reclamation \$948,968.07

Bush will review the bids and make a recommendation to the Commissioners at the March 1st meeting.

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Road & Bridge Update

Road & Bridge Supervisor Thayne Bush reported that Bridge #35 on West Spring Creek Road was damaged in the 2019 flooding. Bush is asking for approval to contract with Cook, Flatt and Strobel to design the repairs to the bridge at a cost of \$12,400. Bush stated that FEMA should be dedicating funds to assist with this repair. The Commissioners agreed to the contract for design work, Chairman Fager signed the contract with Cook, Flatt & Strobel Engineers, PA.

Bush reported that he has equipment purchases and repairs coming up, including, replacing the old bridge truck, currently a 1991 GMC. He is looking for a used service truck with a crane, space for a welder, compressor and cabinet for the bottles and lines. Bush expects this to be in the \$50,000 range. Bush reported that he is looking to upgrade the 1998 belly dump trailer in the \$35-\$40,000 range. Bush reported that he is looking to replace the pickup that he drives, moving it to the fleet and the oldest grader is due for replacement.

Commissioner Fager asked how the department handled the severe weather last week, Bush reported that a few pieces of equipment gave them trouble starting, but they were able to get things running and keep them running through the cold.

Admin Leave

Commissioner Fager revisited the February 16th closing of the courthouse, stating there was an Emergency Declaration that day. Attorney Liesmann shared that the personnel policy states: "In the event of a Declaration of Inclement Weather, Wabaunsee County will close for non-essential employees during the period of Inclement Weather. Benefits eligible non-essential employees who are scheduled to work may use vacation, sick time, a discretionary day if available, or take a day without pay." Commissioner Allen stated that employees did not have the option of working that day, due to the blackouts, so he would prefer to provide Administrative Pay. Hier pointed out that the Commissioners should be considering changing the policy or considering this as an exception to policy. Commissioners all agreed to providing Administrative Pay for February 16, 2021.

Health Department and Covid Update

Health Administrator Ray Finley joined in person. Finley reported on the Covid numbers for the County: 13 active cases, 14 deaths and 1 in the hospital. KDHE is showing 647 total cases in Wabaunsee County since March.

The Health Department is steadily administering vaccinations, the severe weather caused a lot of rescheduling, they have added a Saturday clinic to catch up. They are planning for a full week of vaccinations again this week, they will administer 200 vaccines (100 first dose, 100 second dose). The Department has been able to minimize their overtime up to this point, but going forward, with the vaccination clinics and Saturday sessions, there may be some overtime accumulated. Vaccinations have moved into the 70 year old group last week, and will move into the 65 year old group soon. The State of Kansas is asking for the School Personnel to be vaccinated immediately. The Health Dept is

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scheduling those now. The Health Department receives 100 initial doses and 100 boosters each week. The drop in Active Cases has helped free up the Disease Investigator's time.

Commissioner Hier asked about people in the older age groups signing up late, Finley stated that as people sign up, they are calling the oldest to be vaccinated first. Finley stated that both of the long term care facilities in the county received their vaccines through someone else, but if any new staff or residents need a vaccine they will be made available through the Health Department. Commissioner Allen asked what our participation level is, Finley reported that the State is seeing 45%, Wabaunsee County is about the same.

Planning & Zoning Commission

Liesmann reviewed the vacant Planning and Zoning Commission seats with the Commissioners. Commissioners will review the options and revisit this on March 1st.

Penn Street Engineering

Liesmann presented a contract with Josh Davis of Penn Street Engineering. Davis has been the engineer for the masonry project and has opened his own firm, the contract is identical to the previous contract with the exception of the name of the firm. Commissioners approved and signed the contract.

Executive Session

At 10:45 am Commissioner Fager moved to enter Executive Session to discuss non-elected personnel and perform Zoning Administrator Interviews until 3:00 pm, Commissioner Hier seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

At 2:59 pm the Commissioners left executive session; no action was taken.

Treasurer Daily Statements for February 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 17 were viewed and signed by Chairman Fager.

Abatements #2020-AB30 for \$78.10 and #2020-AB31 for \$36.00 were approved and signed.

Payroll for January 11th to February 7th was approved and signed.

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At 3:00 pm Commissioner Hier moved to adjourn until Monday, March 1st at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Fager seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Minutes approved this 1st day of March 2021.

Joel S. Fager, Chairman

Nancy L. Hier, Vice-Chairman

Rodney L. Allen, Member

Attest:

Abby L. Amick
Wabaunsee County Clerk