

Wabaunsee County Commission
Wabaunsee County Courthouse, Alma, KS
Regular Meeting Minutes July 27, 2020

The Board of County Commissioners meeting in session Monday July 27, 2020. 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 Jim Suber. Chairman Fager called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following department heads were in attendance either in person or by Zoom. County Attorney Tim Liesmann, Health Administrator Ray Finley, Road & Bridge Supervisor Thayne Bush, Emergency Manager Amy Terrapin, Custodian Jenny Henderson, Register of Deeds Marcy Merritt, Appraiser Ryan Michaelis, Undersheriff Brett Wilson, Treasurer Karen Callaway, and County Clerk Jennifer Savage.

Other business

Commissioner Suber made a motion to accept the resignation of Robert Morgan as Maple Hill Township Trustee. Commissioner Fager seconded, motion passed 3-0.

Commissioner Suber made a motion to at the recommendation of the Maple Hill Township Board to appoint Jim Foresman to fill the position of Maple Hill Township Trustee that was vacated by Robert Morgan. Commissioner Fager seconded, motion passed 3-0.

Department Head Meeting

Health Administrator Ray Finley updated on the COVID cases in the county, currently there are 39 cases, 38 in recovery and 1 active, the state shows high new cases, but hospitalizations are down with 308 deaths to date. Finley said there is a high recovery rate.

Undersheriff Brett Wilson said they have hired 3 new deputies and 2 have started at the police academy.

Appraiser Ryan Michaelis said he received the 2019 final ratio and Wabaunsee County is setting at 93.1 for residential and 93.3 for commercial, both in the acceptable range. County Attorney Tim Liesmann gave a building update, he said the building committee has met and came up with final recommendations to sustain the building. The primary goal was to keep water out of the building. P1 group provided a bid with alternative bids.

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Liesmann said the base bid included replacing the roof, HVAC for the entire building and masonry for the entire building. In addition, alternative bids were for fixing, sealing, and repairing windows, remove top stones and put in metal flashing to keep out water and HVAC for 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors. The final recommendation from the building committee is the base bid plus additional masonry repair to include install flashing in addition to estimated \$20,000 in boiler repairs, the next step is to let P1 Group know what the final scope will be and line up funding.

Paxico Ordinance Issues

Paxico resident Carolyn Mathews questioned where the City of Paxico ordinances are filed and she was advised with the City of Paxico. Mathews is concerned with the speed of vehicles and who manages the law enforcement for speed control for the county road that goes thru Paxico. Mathews provided a prepared statement citing Standard Traffic Ordinance for Kansas Cities: Paxico, Kansas. Mathews also questioned the Paxico City Council and how they are paid, how it is managed, and would like to see the speeding issue addressed. Mathews said she is here to stay and wants to understand how city government works in Paxico because “it has been a three-ring circus”.

Wabaunsee County Fair

Fair Board President Mary Reed Spencer invited all three Commissioners to the Fair Tuesday evening at 7 pm for the livestock area ground breaking ceremony, she said during they will honor long time county resident and previous Extension Agent Darold Marlow and his brand will be placed on the banding board.

Federal Grant for Suicide Prevention

Deanna Pierson said she is working with USD 329 who will be making application for a Railroad Trespassing Suicide Grant for up to \$100,000 from the Federal Railroad Administration. Pierson provided information explaining the grant and asked the Commissioner to sign a letter of support. Commissioner Fager said he would rather review the information prior to signing and asked what the commitments for signing are. Pierson said just the letter of support. Commissioners will review the information.

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Noxious Weed Department

Tonya Hensley said she had visited with our insurance agent and was told they cannot insure renting out the truck. County Attorney Tim Liesmann said if the insurance company is recommending against renting it out the county should consider and go along.

Hensley also discussed spraying of weeds around bridges, culverts, and crossings that she had been previously asked to spray by Road & Bridge Supervisor Thayne Bush. Hensley asked who is responsible for weed control on township roads. Liesmann said he thought Bush was talking about just around crossings that was the county responsibility. This has been a topic of discussion several times, I believe it is still not determined who will be taking care of spraying brush at these crossings.

Mask Policy

Bill Clark USD 330 Superintendent, Brad Starnes USD 329 Superintendent and County Health Administrator Ray Finley met for a discussion on the mask policy. Clark said they wanted the feel from the Commisisoners on the order for masks being worn in schools at all times as other counties are making adjustments to the executive order.

Commissioner Allen said he does not want to be a punching bag for the school districts and feels it is up to the Superintendents to make that decision and he would defer to Finley on what his opinion is. Finley said he feels some adjustments can be made like wearing masks in the hallways, when transported but the masks could be off in classrooms when students are seated at their desks, but if they get up to put the mask on. Finley said the teacher could take the mask off in front of the classroom but if they walk around the classroom, they would need to put it back on. Finley said they can be taught how to properly put a mask on and take it off and certain things would need to be addressed like persons with medical conditions.

Discussion was held concerning how many students are planning face to face instruction and how many would be remotely. Clark said that was a question that was being asked at enrollment but said 5% are not returning to school. Commissioner Allen asked what the superintendents would like to do, they said they had board meetings this evening. Commissioner Allen said he is for whatever to make the school and students safe.

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2021 Budget Preparation

Randy Gassman was in attendance to discuss 2021 Budget Preparation, Commissioner Fager said he wants to bring up the subject of wages. Fager said he has researched 6 similar counties so far and compared elected officials' wages and determined in Wabaunsee County the Commission wage is lower than other counties and the others are higher. Fager would like to set elected officials' salaries according to the position and not the person and could take into account longevity. Fager said typically the highest paid is the County Attorney which is not the case here and thinks it should be. Fager would also like to see the County Clerk wage paid 75% out of General Fund and 25% out of Election Fund. Fager feels these should be reviewed.

At 11:00 a.m. Commissioner Suber made a motion to adjourn until 9:00 a.m. Monday August 3, 2020. Commissioner Fager seconded, motion passed 3-0.

Minutes approved this _____ day of August 2020.

Joel Fager, Chairman

Rodney L. Allen, Vice-Chairman

Jim Suber, Member

Attest:

Jennifer A. Savage
Wabaunsee County Clerk