

Wabaunsee County Commission

Wabaunsee County Courthouse, Alma, KS

Regular Meeting Minutes February 14, 2022

The Board of County Commissioners meeting in session Monday, February 14, 2022. In compliance with the CDC guidelines to maintain social distancing Commissioners conduct the meeting in person and over ZOOM. Members attending were Joel S. Fager and Nancy L. Hier; Rodney L. Allen was absent. Commissioner Fager called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Health Department Administrator Ray Finley, Road & Bridge Supervisor Thayne Bush, Undersheriff Brett Wilson, Zoning Administrator Noel Sylvester, Economic Development Director Jim McGregor, Emergency Management Coordinator Amy Terrapin, County Clerk Abby Amick and County Attorney Tim Liesmann were in attendance in person and others joined via zoom.

Health Department

Health Department Administrator Ray Finley reported 20 active Covid cases, 0 hospitalizations and 22 deaths in Wabaunsee County. Finley reported that the Health Department will be looking at changing the vaccination schedule, allowing for walk-ins and making services more accessible to the public.

Crosswinds

Crosswinds staff joined the meeting in person; Amanda Cunningham, Executive Director; Megan Adcock, Clinical Director and Katie Jo Connor, Regional Director for Wabaunsee and Morris Counties. Cunningham thanked the Commissioners for the annual appropriation toward mental health. Crosswinds received additional grant funding to focus on getting more individuals access to mental health care during the pandemic with an emphasis on Hispanic and agricultural populations. They will be doing a large marketing campaign reaching all seven counties in their territory. Crosswinds has faced workforce challenges in recent years, and have partnered with the Kansas Leadership Center to offer additional training to their staff. Crosswinds is launching a capital campaign to assist in consolidating facilities around Emporia. They currently operate 5 buildings in Emporia and are looking to combine into 2 buildings. They will maintain facilities in each of the counties they serve. The Wabaunsee County office has a need for additional staff, they are hiring a full-time Case Manager.

Crosswinds has a new program called SOAR – SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery; it is available to residents who need assistance getting benefits. Crosswinds has won 17 of the 19 cases that they have presented, equating to \$120,000 in medical expenses being paid.

Economic Development

Economic Development Director Jim MacGregor and Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program Director Jack Lindquist met with the Commissioners. Lindquist provided a history of the Leadership Program and congratulated Wabaunsee County on being accepted as a member of the program. Lindquist presented a plaque commemorating the event. Wabaunsee County will host its first session in September 2022 with a focus on rural economic development, the agriculture industry and the flint hills ecosystem. Wabaunsee County residents are encouraged to apply, the application deadline is July 17th.

MacGregor reported on the American Rescue Plan Committee projects. The grant application for broadband has been submitted, partnering with WTC. The final projections came in lower, reducing the match by \$25,000. MacGregor presented an agreement with WTC formalizing the project, Commissioners designated authority to MacGregor to sign the agreement on behalf of Wabaunsee County.

MacGregor shared the details of a new grant opportunity; the BASE Grant (Build a Stronger Economy) is focused on infrastructure projects that support economic development. MacGregor proposed making an application for improved water infrastructure at I-70 Exit 328 and along Highway 99 to make those locations

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more suitable for future development. The grant would provide 75% of the project cost, the American Rescue Plan committee will be discussing the opportunity later in the week.

In order to make a strong application, MacGregor needs data to describe the potential of these areas for future development. MacGregor recommends using ARP funds to contract with Retail Research Company to do an analysis of the area. The company also offers a phase two, where they would recruit businesses to develop the sites. Commissioner Hier asked that Exit 341 be included in the study. MacGregor also recommended including a feasibility study for a State Sponsored Welcome Center, if area partners would contribute to the match requirement.

Commissioners agreed to the recommendation of using \$10,000 of the American Rescue Plan funding to pay for the initial analysis with the hope that the grant is awarded, and the funds are reimbursed.

County Attorney Tim Liesmann reported that he is following up on the potential for a K-State student worker to assist with developing Zoning maps under the guidance of Zoning Administrator Noel Sylvester this summer. MacGregor indicated that the cost of map development would be eligible to be included in this grant application.

Road & Bridge

Road & Bridge Supervisor Thayne Bush presented a Request and Petition from the City of Alma to bore a gas feeder line along Highway 99, crossing several township roads in Wabaunsee Township, including Antelope Creek, Hereford and K-18. The township has approved the project. Commissioners signed the request and petition.

Bush shared an invitation to attend the Northeast Kansas County Highway Officials Conference hosted in Jackson County on March 24th. There will be several speakers and opportunities to talk with attendees that would be beneficial to future road projects in Wabaunsee County. Commissioners will consider their schedules. Bush is in negotiations with KDOT regarding the stretch of road that they will be turning over to Wabaunsee County. The Department will begin advertising this week for an Assistant Director of Road & Bridge.

Other Business

County Attorney Tim Liesmann reported that a committee of department heads had been meeting to draft a disposition and procurement policy in response to a legislative audit conducted in 2021. Commissioners were provided the draft for review.

Commissioner Fager moved to adopt Resolution 2022-11 A Resolution Establishing A Policy And Procedure For Disposition of Surplus Property And Procurement of Property; Commissioner Hier seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Commissioner Fager moved to appoint Wabaunsee County Jailer Terry Martin to the Community Corrections Board; Commissioner Hier seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Commissioner Hier moved to appoint Alice Hinck of Eskridge to the Pottawatomie Wabaunsee Regional Library Board of Directors to fulfill the position previously held by Sadie Jensen; Commissioner Fager seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

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Undersheriff Brett Wilson reported that the Sheriff Department has paid off their vehicle loan early and will be looking to replace 3 additional vehicles this year. The vehicles being replaced are pickups with over 140,000 miles on them, they will order the replacements as soon as they are available.

Commissioners discussed scheduling a joint meeting with Pottawatomie County to further discuss the Belvue Bridge grant application, match, and recommendations from the contracted grant writer.

Emergency Management Coordinator Amy Terrapin reported that she is hosting an Incident Command Training focusing on wildfires. The training will last 3 hours and is available to all responders. The training will be held February 24th at the Alma Community Center.

Commissioner Fager reported that he met with the Board of Rural Fire District #2, Emergency Management and the Undersheriff. It was a productive conversation addressing concerns with communication. Rural Fire District #2 was able to get 15 of their volunteers enrolled in Active 911 for text alerts. Wabaunsee County has 106 responders that participate in Active 911 text alerts.

Commissioner Fager reported that the Emergency Medical Responder class for the southern region of the county has 14 people signed up, the deadline is February 19th. The class will be primarily online and the in-person labs will be held at Mission Valley High School.

Commissioner Hier reported on the Extension Council meeting and discussion on Extension Districts. The numbers are still very preliminary, but the initial proposal would be a considerable savings to Wabaunsee County taxpayers.

Commissioner Fager moved to approve the minutes of the February 7th Commission Meeting; Commissioner Hier seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Commissioners reviewed and approved wage change forms, payroll for the pay period ending February 6th and expenses for February 3 – 9, 2022. Chairman Fager reviewed and signed Daily Statements from February 1, 3, 4 and 7, 2022.

At 11:07 AM Commissioner Fager moved to adjourn until Monday, February 28th at 9:00 AM. Commissioner Hier seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Minutes approved this 28th day of February 2022.

Attest:



Abby L. Amick
Abby L. Amick
Wabaunsee County Clerk

absent

Joel S. Fager, Chairman

Nancy L. Hier
Nancy L. Hier, Vice Chair

Rodney L. Allen
Rodney L. Allen, Member