

MINUTES FOR February 28, 2022**BOARD OF CHEROKEE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS****CHEROKEE COUNTY, KANSAS****CONVENE**

Chairman Cory Moates called the regular session of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners (The Board), to order at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, February 28, 2022, in the Commission Room, #109 of the Cherokee County Courthouse located at 110 W Maple St., Columbus, Kansas. Pastor Audie Tash of the Riverton House of Prayer church opened the meeting with prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners Cory Moates, Lorie Johnson, Myra Frazier, County Clerk Rebecca Brassart, Cody Zook Road and Bridge Supervisor, Audie Tash with the House of Prayer and Columbus News Report Reporter Jacob Spencer were present.

APPROVAL of MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Frazier to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2022, meeting as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson. The motion carried 3-0.

ROAD & BRIDGE

Cody Zook, County Road Supervisor, appeared before the Board regarding county road business.

Cody gave The Board his recommendation for raises for Chris Johnson and Nathan Davis due to change of jobs and job titles. The first recommendation was to move Johnson from \$16.25 to \$18.00 due to his new role as the County Maintenance Coordinator. A motion was made by Commissioner Moates to give Johnson the raise. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0. Zook then made a recommendation to raise Davis from \$12.00 to \$14.00 due to his new role as Maintenance Technician I. A motion was made by Commissioner Moates to give Davis the raise. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Cody informed The Board that Johnson and himself had reviewed the applications for the open janitor position He let The Board know that they had hired a new employee for the position. Zook stated they would let The Board know the name of the new employee when the person began, this was due to the new employee giving two weeks' notice to their current employer.

Cody apprised The Board that in mid-2024 that he would be replacing the bridge just east of 1911 E Maple ST, Columbus, KS. He also discussed with the commissioners the issue with the new load rating of 5T on the bridge between SE 30th and SE 32nd on Clem RD. There was some discussion on how to possibly be able to bring the load rating back up. Cody stated had he have known about this load rating issue sooner that he would have planned to replace this bridge before the one on E. Maple ST.

Cody gave The Board a report on the on the recycle trailers, he stated that the county lot would start emptying them twice a week because the city is shorthanded. Cody said the lot will now be dumping on two on Wednesday and two on Friday.

Cody informed The Board that the surveyors are finally beginning to survey the Skidmore area today, February 28, 2022.

Cody informed The Board of the possibility of doing a possible equipment share with the cities. He stated this would allow for the cities to purchase a dump truck for the city fleet and in return this would allow the county to upgrade their current fleet. All trucks that would be available to the cities would be gone through so that the cities know everything about each truck and each truck would be priced accordingly.

Zook consulted with The Board on possibly looking into doing an assessment of the fleet of graders so that he can look at replacing the grader fleet. Zook voiced some dislikes in how some graders have

smaller tires and he also informed the board of his dislike regarding the blade movement. Cody asks The Board if they would like to be there to discuss the graders when its time. Commissioner Frazier stated she didn't need to be there but would like a report on the meeting. Cody stated that he would like for Commissioner Moates and John Collins to be in attendance.

Cody notified The Board that he has been looking into new dump trucks, especially with the possibility of doing the equipment share with the cities.

Cody voiced his displeasure with an article that had been in the News Report recently, he informed The Board and Jacob Spencer of the News Report that the article had shown the county lot in a bad light. There were some other issues with the article as well Cody stated. Spencer stated that after running the article that they had ran an article in the next publication to correct the previous article that had issues.

Zook stated he plans to start ditching soon on the gravel roads and that he knows it will cause some roads to be messy and some taxpayers ditches to be torn up, but he assures the taxpayers that the county will seed the ditches that are torn up. This will help to get a crown back on the roads so that they can drain better.

Cody informed The Board that he had purchased a scan tool so that when there is a county vehicle with issues, that the mechanics at the county lot can avoid having to send it to a local dealership, the tool would now allow for it to be diagnosed at the county lot. This purchase will help save money in the long term.

Commissioner Moates brought to Cody's attention that numerous children in the Riverton school district who ride the bus had been sent home with a letter regarding the upcoming closure of SE Highway 166 at the SE Five Mile Ave intersection. According to an email that Cody had received the closure is going to be from March 2022 to May 2022.

Zook ask for a 10-minute executive session for non-elected personal regarding how he was recently affected. Commissioner Frazier made a motion for a 10-minute executive session over non-elected personnel with the 3 commissioners and Cody to begin at 9:42. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson. The motion carried 3-0.

The meeting reconvened at 9:52 a.m.

No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

SPECIAL CHECK

County Clerk Rebecca Brassart presented The Board with a special check request for the KCAMP 2022 Annual Contribution which needed to be approved immediately in order for Deana in HR to get the check cut so that Brassart could overnight the check to KCAMP. Commissioner Frazier made a motion to pay the KCAMP invoice in the amount of \$261,588. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson. The motion carried 3-0.

OFFICE HEADS

Thornton

David Thornton County Appraiser came before The Board to present them with a proposal from Postalocity. He stated that there were two options presented from the company. The options are to do a full merge mailing or a partial merge mailing. This mailing if for the county value notices which are required to be sent to the taxpayers of the county. After some discussion The Board decided to go with the partial merge this year. They stated if the partial merge isn't welcomed by the taxpayers, then they can do a full merge next year. Due to the discount in postage this should save the county money in the long term. Thornton did ask the commissioners if they could approve to have a special check cut to Postalocity for the estimated postage. Commissioner Moates made a motion to approve a special check for Postalocity in the amount of \$4209.40 for estimated postage cost. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Bilke

County Register of Deeds Barbara Bilke informed The Board that she has already taken in 41% more fees in 2022 than in 2021. She stated in 2021 her office took in around \$12,000 and in 2022 she has already taken in \$30,000. Bilke stated that her office has done 116 easements for 2022 so far.

Johnson

County Maintenance Coordinator Chris Johnson informed the The Board that he and Clerk Brassart had looked at the carpet in the Clerks Office and that is in dire need of being removed. Johnson stated that he and Brassart had looked under the carpet, and it looks as though they might be able to just refinish the floor under the carpet to bring back the original floor, this would bring tax savings to the taxpayers of the county.

Johnson stated he had spoken with MCR regarding how to avoid the cracking in the exterior walls and they stated that if relief joints were put in place that would help.

Johnson informed The Board that he had spoken with Hartford Steam Contractors, and they recommended upgrading the boilers.

Chris let The Board know that he put the defibrillators up on the wall on the ground floor and the 2nd floor. Johnson stated he still needed to hang the one on the first floor. He stated that he would like to see a class take place so that all the employees can learn how to correctly use them.

Brassart

County Clerk Rebecca Brassart shared with The Board that maintenance technician Nate Davis had shampooed the floors in the clerk's office.

She informed The Board that Chelsea Pillar has been going through old papers clear back into 2021 to make sure that all the obituaries had been correctly entered in the election system. She also stated that Pillar had actively been entering voters as well.

Vickie Hess has still been working on approving statements for County Treasurer Raven Elmore.

Brassart informed The Board Michaela Heistand has been helping the County Treasurer Office with printing the adjusted tax statements and that she had also been helping Deana in HR. Along with doing her everyday duties.

Groves

Sheriff David Groves came before the Board to let them know that in the month of February that the inmate housing generated \$36,470.

Sheriff Groves informed the Board that he has hired several new team members over the past month in Corrections and Communications. They are in the training stages. In addition, he stated the Sheriff Office is still accepting applications for a POST certified Deputy Sheriff and he has one scheduled to attend the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center starting in late March. Groves informed The Board that one of his investigators serves in the Army Reserves and through a very competitive process, has been selected to attend Flight School in Alabama. He will be gone for a period of 14-18 months.

HAMLIN ENERGY- GAS CONTRACT

Mike Williams with Hamlin Energy formally of Pro Energy came before The Board to notify them that Pro Energy is leaving the gas market this will force the County to select a new provider as their gas supplier. Williams informed The Board that he would like to offer his help in selecting a new provider for the Courthouse and the Law Enforcement Center. After some discussion regarding current lengths on the current contracts with Pro Energy, The Board stated that they would get back with him.

NRP-2022

David Thornton County Appraiser and County Clerk Rebecca Brassart came before The Board to inform them that NRP's for 2022 should have been put into the system in April of 2021. Therefore, the issue is that if the NRP checks are issued it will cause a shortage in funds to many entities. The reason for the shortage is that the NRP's were not being accounted for in the budget process. Thornton ask The Board to push the NRP's to a 2023 payment, by doing this it will allow for all budgets in 2023 to be able to account for the NRP payments and therefore, not cause a shortfall in tax dollar distributions. After some discussion Commissioner Johnson made a motion to push the payments for those NRPs that should have been added into the system in 2021 for a 2022 payment to be pushed to a 2023 payment. Commissioner Frazier seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Touchton Contract

In old business Counselor Coleman notified The Board that he spoken to Touchton Alarms regarding the contract. After some discussion Commissioner Frazier made a motion to change the length of the contract from 10 years to a 1-year length and to mark out the \$600 as we had already paid it to them. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson. The motion carried 3-0. Counselor Nathan Coleman advised The Board to amend the motion to also exclude the confidentiality clause. Commissioner Frazier amended her motion to include removing the confidentiality clause from the contract. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Mercy Repayment

Coleman informed The Board that he had been in contact with Gene Mense regarding the Mercy repayment. Mense advised Coleman that the county could use money out of the equipment reserve to pay the Mercy reimbursement. Treasurer Raven Elmore was present for the discussion. She informed The Board that the amount owed was \$387,982.37. There was a discussion had on whether to pay it all out at once or to make it into two payments. The question was asked if the second payment would carry interest if we went that direction. Coleman stated that would need to be discussed with Mercy. A motion was then made by Commissioner Moates to allow Nathan Coleman to set a meeting with Mercy to check into if we could make an agreement to pay our reimbursement in two separate payments and if interest would be attached to the second payment. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

NRP Payments

Once again it was brought up as to how to handle the NRP refund payments. After much discussion Commissioner Johnson stated she would work with County Treasurer Elmore, County Clerk Brassart and County Appraiser Thornton to draft a letter outlining the requirements needed in order to receive a NRP refund. Once drafted the letter will need to be reviewed by The Board for commission approval.

Tax Sale

Commissioner Frazier addressed Counselor Coleman regarding the properties in Scammon that have delinquent taxes. Coleman stated that after speaking to the appraiser's office that the properties seemed to be residential. He stated one seemed to have had a partial payment in 2018. Coleman suggested that The Board speak to their outside counsel regarding whether these could be placed on the tax sale or why they haven't been placed on it. Commissioner Frazier then asked if we had an update on the tax sale and Coleman replied that the outside counsel was very responsive. Coleman asked what specifically The Board would like him to ask the outside counsel. Coleman stated he would shoot him an email and ask for a timeline and an update.

COMMISSIONERS

FEMA Lease

Commissioner Moates presented The Board with a FEMA property lease renewal for Rick Wammack. A motion was made by Commissioner Moates to renew the FEMA lease for Rick Wammack. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

Rezoning Fee

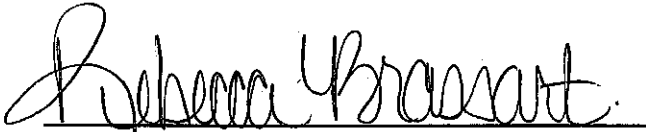
Commissioner Johnson stated she had been contacted by a person asking if we have a rezoning fee. Commissioner Frazier stated that she felt we should recoup the cost we would incur to rezone a city. Clerk Brassart was in agreeance with Commissioner Frazier since the county would be charged by the GIS Consultant who would perform the necessary adjustments in the GIS mapping program.

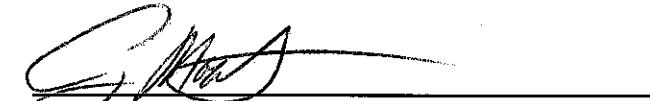
Liberty Utilities

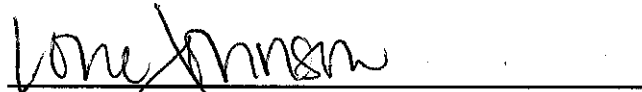
Commissioner Moates informed The Board that he had spoken with a representative with Liberty Utilities and their stand is that they have no interest in Wind Power in Cherokee County. However, if wind power would come to the county, then Liberty must allow them to hook onto the grid. Moates also stated that in researching more on wind power he found that it kills 200-300 birds per year and 200-300 bats per year. He also addressed the issue of flickering caused from the windmills. It was also addressed that we still need to find individuals to speak at the next public comment session.

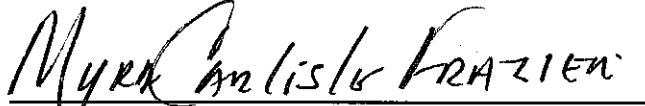
Moates then made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried 3-0.

ATTEST: Resolved and ordered this 7th day of March, 2022


Cherokee County Clerk


Commissioner


Commissioner


Commissioner