

December 14, 2021
Nickerson Comm Center
Nickerson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held a special meeting with Chairman Ron Hirst, Commissioner Daniel Friesen and Commissioner Ron Sellers, County Administrator Randy Partington, and County Clerk Donna Patton, present.

Also present were Legislators:

Jason Probst, Michael Murphy, Mark Steffen and Paul Waggoner.

City Mayors:

Adam Wright - Haven
Brice Barker - Willowbrook
Peggy Ruebke - Nickerson
Doug Smith - Arlington
Steve Garza - Hutchinson
Carol Moore - The Highlands
Jake Schmidt - Buhler
Matt Nisly - South Hutchinson
Dustin VanScyoc - Pretty Prairie

Mr. Partington went over a few items of interest to Reno County. SB 87 which is a Countywide Sales Tax question asked for by Atchison County, could have an adverse effect on other counties. He also commented that when the State increased their wages for Community Corrections but didn't increase their monies, the County had to pick up the difference in wages because they weren't budgeted.

Mr. Hirst said he supports Home Rule for Counties and putting Publications online. Mr. Friesen would like to see the vehicle renewal process easier for people to renew online and not pay a fee when they use their credit cards.

Mr. Wright said he was confused about SB 13, the Revenue Neutral Rate bill. Senator Steffen said it was for total dollars budgeted from last year and not by just keeping the mill levy flat. Mr. Hirst asked if the State would be reimbursing the postage for the notices that are required to be sent out per SB 13. Senator Steffen said the cost should be reimbursed by the State next year. Mrs. Patton asked if something could be done about the State's levies, 20 mills for School General and 1.5 mills for the State Education, because this would cause a notice

to be mailed out to every taxpayer next year. He said he would look at what could be done.

Mr. Sellers asked about the 4-year contract for County Appraisers and not being able to fire an Appraiser. If they aren't performing and the County tries to fire them, they can appeal to the Property Valuation Department, which governs them, and they can force the County to retain them. Representative Waggoner said it was his understanding that this keeps Boards from firing Appraisers if they don't put the valuation where they think they should be.

Mr. Sellers asked about the Fire Districts in the County and what can be done to help them. Mr. Wright said Haven has brush truck issues and they need to invest in better equipment. Mrs. Ruebke said their trucks are housed in a cold area and they too have older equipment. They are trained monthly, but they too need newer equipment. Mr. Friesen said it's not unreasonable to ask for newer equipment and asked if ARPA money could be used for this. Mr. Partington stated that ARPA money might be able to be used for that and that Nickerson's Chief has set money aside to build a new building to house their equipment. Mr. Sellers asked about a mandate to ask homeowners for help to protect their property. An example would be to remove dead or cedar trees that are kindling for a fire. Mrs. Moore said she really appreciates the new fire station at The Highlands, and they are requiring landowners to clean up their lots.

Mr. Hirst asked if housing in their cities is an issue. Mr. VanScyoc said there are a lot of houses in Pretty Prairie that are not taken care of. Mr. Wright said they are starting a Rural Housing Incentive District in Haven to help alleviate their housing needs. Mr. Garza said there is a huge issue in the south part of Hutchinson where people can't afford to paint or clean up their houses and they are being threatened with jail time. Mr. Schmidt said there are a lot of rentals in Buhler that aren't being taken care of. Senator Steffen suggested they get in touch with the Department of Commerce and see if they can offer any suggestions or give any help.

Mr. Friesen asked if anyone had any problems with Public Works or roads. Mrs. Ruebke said she has had a few issues but some of them are being taken care of. She said 56th and 82nd are hardly every maintained or cleared.

At 8:00 p.m. the meeting adjourned until Tuesday, December 28, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

Approved:

Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

Reno County Clerk
dp

Date