

February 14th, 2024  
Reno County Courthouse  
Hutchinson, Kansas

The Board of Reno County Commissioners held an agenda session with Chairman Randy Parks, Commissioner Don Bogner, Commissioner Daniel Friesen, Commissioner John Whitesel, and Commissioner Ron Hirst, County Counselor Patrick Hoffman, County Administrator Randy Partington, and Minutes Clerk Cindy Martin, present.

The meeting began at 9:00 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a short sectarian prayer led by Senior Pastor Ron Mandeville from Medora Community Bible Church.

Mr. Parks read a proclamation for "Keever Auto and Machine Day" on February 14, 2024. Mr. Kever, Jr. accepted the proclamation and thanked the Board.

There was one addition to the agenda item 10B for a 30-minute executive session on non-elected personnel.

**Mr. Friesen moved, seconded by Mr. Hirst,** to approve the consent agenda consisting of items 6A through 6D which includes the: **(6A)** Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on February 9th, 2024, totaling \$1,531,378.06; Accounts Payable Ledger for claims payable on February 16th, 2024, totaling \$1,018,946.16; **(6B)** approve engineering services and authorize the chair to sign the Schwab-Eaton Engineering Agreement for Reno County Water District 101 (Yoder) Project; **(6C)** approve agreement to do an analysis of three separate 457 plans into one plan with USI Financial Consulting for \$5,000 paid out of the employee benefits fund and having Mr. Partington sign the agreement; **(6D)** approve the additional design contract adjustment for \$12,000 toward Phase 2 for the Shooting Range Agreement with Hutton Corporation; as presented by staff. The motion for the consent agenda was approved by a roll call vote of 5-0.

7A. Maintenance Director Harlen Depew highlighted his annual report to the Board. He stated 2023 was a very productive year for the maintenance department. They finished projects in 2023 and have a lot of projects scheduled for 2024. He said the biggest impacts to his department were inflation and staffing. He spoke about long range projects forecasts from CIP giving graphs from 2025 to 2045 maintenance estimated costs highlighting end of life equipment replacements and roofing.

7B. County Counselor Patrick Hoffman requested to identify who would be on the fence viewing board. He also stated the Board needed to set a date and time for the fence viewing as requested by Gary Black. The request was for a viewing the northwest ½ mile of the partition fence in Hayes Township. Mr. Black indicated to Mr. Hoffman that he may at a future date want to run cattle on his land. Mr. Hoffman explained the statutes for fencing and suggested viewing be March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Public Works Director Don Brittain was approved to be a viewer by a motion made by **Mr. Whitesel and seconded by Mr. Bogner**. Mr. Hirst was approved to be a viewer by a motion made by **Mr. Parks and seconded by Mr. Bogner**. Mr. Bogner was approved to be a viewer by a motion made by **Mr. Friesen and seconded by Mr. Whitesel**. Each vote was approved by a roll call vote of 5-0. Mr. Hoffman will be attending the viewing also.

Tim Horst Land Manager representing Ducks Unlimited stated they did not have funds for fencing in the 2025 budget which starts in July 2024. They have CRP on the property for walk in public access to hunters not for cattle grazing. Ducks Unlimited would ask for a fence line survey before installing a fence making sure of the boundary line, if that is what the Board determines.

Mr. Hoffman read the AG-8728 opinion regarding the legal fencing role pertaining to livestock and land by building fences for property owners' use. He said in his opinion Kansas was pro-fencing regarding determining a 50/50 split with a 3-wire legal fence. Mr. Brittain added there were specs for posts also.

There was a brief discussion on cost sharing of 50/50. Mr. Friesen suggested that Mr. Horst may want to resolve the situation before the Commission views the fence because once a determination is made, it is final. He also suggested the Chair and staff determine a date and time without a motion. Mr. Hoffman stated it could be decided after the meeting and he would notify the parties to make it official.

8A. County Administrator Mr. Randy Partington inquired if there were any questions on any of the monthly department reports, there were none. He stated Reno County would be hosting the Quad County meeting setting the date as March 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. catered at the Cosmosphere with their CEO Jim Remar as speaker.

Mr. Partington asked the Board to let him know if two or more commissioners would be attending so he could make a public announcement regarding a quorum.

#### 9. Commissioner Comments:

Mr. Friesen invited board members to the Stepping Up Council meeting this Thursday at lunchtime in the Law Enforcement basement. It fits well with trying to help law enforcement and the court system develop a better process with options to putting people in jail. Mr. Parks stated he would attend the Stepping Up Council meeting.

Mr. Bogner spoke about irrigation water at the Rattlesnake area affecting Reno County more than he thought. Reno County may want to become strongly involved by taking some action. Mr. Partington has put out the information and we need to decide what to do, it affects western Reno County more than originally thought.

Mr. Hirst commented on receiving notice of a drug recovery event at Sandhills Event Center next Friday evening. He also seconded what Mr. Friesen said about attending the Stepping Up meeting.

Mr. Whitesel spoke about the deadline to register being February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, for the Presidential Preference Primary election. He also reminded everyone to have a Happy Valentine's Day.

Mr. Parks mentioned the state fairgrounds having an old monument about Reno County with lots of history on the west side of the Eisenhower Building. He was looking into a possible relocation and rehab for the stone monument, moving it to make it easier for more people to enjoy. A Hutchinson Community College history professor had published a book about the history of the Kansas State Fair. Mr. Parks will be speaking with fair board members regarding private funding and will give updates as he gets information.

Mr. Hirst spoke about two to three weeks ago when he and Jake Feil, 12808 E. Irish Creek Rd, Haven made a presentation to the transportation committee. Mr. Feil requested the designation of signs for a mile section of K-96 near Haven in memory of his uncle who was killed in Vietnam, which has been approved by the committee. Mr. Hirst also submitted to the committee a section of K-96 to Nickerson Road to be designated

in memory of "Dead Eye 96 Infantry", which dead eye could not be used, so it would only be called "96 Infantry Division". They would be raising funds once the legislature passes their approval to post the signs. He knew of four people in Reno County that were members of the division.

Mr. Bogner stated there was work at the state level over our ability to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) regarding tax breaks to any businesses and could impair how we fund Reno County in the future. He was not in favor of raising taxes but did not like the legislature tying the counties' hands. He suggested watching very closely this proposal. Mr. Partington replied yes, the way it was written, if passed, the tax exemption may require Reno County's ability to pass a budget above the RNR. Mr. Hirst commented about IRB being tax exempt for 10 years like the ones given to Agri Center and APAC could potentially tie Reno County hands. Mr. Partington said the bill was Senate Bill 468 and was in a hearing today with the senate taxation committee. Mr. Hirst asked about NRP's being affected. Mr. Hoffman had not heard NRP was included.

Mr. Parks attended a legislative forum along with Mr. Hirst at the Stringer Fine Arts Building.

**10A. At 9:55 a.m. Mr. Parks read the motion** for the Board to recess into executive session until 10:15 a.m. with County Counselor Patrick Hoffman, County Administrator Randy Partington, Maintenance Director Harlen Depew, the subject matter to be potential acquisition of real estate by the county and the justification for the executive session is to keep confidential the county's bargaining position for potential real estate acquisition. The Board agreed to amend the time to 10:20 a.m. The motion was **seconded by Mr. Hirst**. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 5-0.

**10B. At 10:20 a.m. Mr. Parks read the motion** for the Board to recess into executive session until 10:45 a.m. with County Administrator, County Counselor, Richele Calvert the County Treasurer, and the Director of Human Resources Helen Foster, the subject matter to be county employee performance and the justification for the executive session is to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel.

At 10:45 a.m. the agenda meeting returned to regular session and adjourned until Wednesday, February 28th, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

Approved:

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Chair, Board of Reno County Commissioners

(ATTEST)

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Reno County Clerk  
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Date