

May 4, 2020

The Board of Ellis County Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 p.m., Monday, May 4, 2020, in the Commission Chambers, at the Administration Center, 718 Main Street, Hays, Kansas.

Chair Robert "Butch" Schlyer called the meeting to order.

Commissioners present: Chair Robert "Butch" Schlyer, Commissioner Dustin G. Roths and Commissioner Dean F. Haselhorst.

Also present were Interim County Administrator Darin Myers, County Counselor Bill Jeter and County Clerk Donna J. Maskus.

The meeting opened with everyone standing and saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

No changes were given to the order of business.

#### **APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES**

Chair Schlyer asked for any updates to the draft minutes of the regular meetings of April 13, 20, and road tour on April 22, 2020. With no updates given, Chair Schlyer stated that the April 13, 20 and 22, 2020 meetings are approved as presented.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion: Haselhorst Second: Roths

To approve the Consent Agenda items A-G as presented, including the following.

##### Payment Voucher Claims

Payment voucher claims dated May 5, 2020, for \$362,624.05.

##### Payroll Voucher Claims

Payroll voucher claim dated April 24, 2020, for \$235,554.86.

Payroll voucher # 9 claim dated April 21, 2020, for \$166,641,94.

##### Tax Adjustments

Tax Adjustment numbers 2020000121 through 2020000122.

Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_ The motion passes by a voice vote of three to zero.

#### **ISSUES FROM PERSONS NOT ON THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

No issues from persons not on the order of business.

#### **REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE, CITY OF ELLIS – BILL RING, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

Bill Ring, Public Works Director, had a request to assist the City of Ellis with a paving project.

They annually have assisted cities with their paving projects. The County is asked to furnish employee time and equipment used during the project.

Motion: Roths Second: Haselhorst

Moved that the Commission approve the Public Works Department to provide assistance to the City of Ellis with both equipment and labor on their paving project. The City of Ellis will furnish the oil and rock.

Disposition: Motion passes by a voice vote of three to zero.

#### **COVID-19 UPDATE AND OFFICE OPENINGS – DARIN MYERS, INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Darin Myers, Interim County Administrator, called on Health Services Director Jason Kennedy to update the Commission on the current COVID-19 situation in the County.

Health Services Director Jason Kennedy stated that reopening County offices should be fine with everyone continuing using good hygiene, hand washing, social distancing of 6 feet between people, if you are sick to stay home and those directions by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The current Governor's Plan must be followed as we are in Phase One of the plan. The County may make additional regulations, but they must have less impact than the Governor's Plan.

Kennedy feels that they have tested close to 300 individuals for the COVID-19. Ellis County has had eight COVID-19 cases which is at an average rate of 3%, extremely lower than the state's average. We have had no new cases for 17 days. They have trained 17 contact staffers to do the testing. They had requested 2800 test kits and have received 500 test kits as of this date.

Schlyer asked Kennedy if a vaccine is provided by the end of the year if there a plan to vaccinate our community. Kennedy stated that no direction has come from KDHE but when the vaccine is available, they will follow the KDHE guidelines. He encouraged those with questions on the COVID-19 to go into the Ellis County website under Health Department.

Darin Myers, Interim County Administrator, stated that on this date the COVID-19 County plan is to be reviewed. It was decided that offices will be opened Tuesday, May 6, 2020, except for the Courthouse which comes under the State of Kansas Supreme Court Orders. Chair Schlyer asked that all employees do take precautions and use sound judgement. Myers stated that all will return to normal work schedules, and to eliminate the "Pandemic Pay" for County personnel except for the Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff Ed Harbin stated that they are working twelve-hour shifts during the COVID-19 until the end of May. Commissioners had no problems with this schedule.

## **2020 PAY ADJUSTMENTS – DARIN MYERS, INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Darin Myers, Interim County Administrator, discussed the 2020 salary adjustments. Myers stated that the proposed adjustment for employees in steps one through four including those that were not included earlier from steps five and six. The proposed adjustment for these salaries would be a total cost of \$60,514, which is \$79,684 less than what was budgeted. This would conclude the Evergreen Study Plan. The COLA has been identified as 1.6% for all County employees. This does not include the seven elected officials and department heads that received raises in January 2020 as well as the County Attorney's Office. Myers stated that he would recommend that the new County Administrator work on a new employee pay plan.

Commissioners had concerns with the current unemployment numbers in the County with the loss of jobs due to the COVID-19 that influence the cost of living and merit pay. Chair Schlyer stated that these figures were based on when the economy was a lot more positive in the County. They wish to conclude the Evergreen Study Plan but questioned the COAL pay at this time. Myers stated that the COAL a pay had helped keep the salaries with the current job market.

Commissioners decided to table this matter and discuss it again on July 13<sup>th</sup>.

## **ROAD IMPROVEMENT BOND – DARIN MYERS, INTERIM COUTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Myers stated that they have viewed several road and bridge improvement projects at the April 22<sup>nd</sup> Road Tour. They are looking at possible bonds with a 5-year rate at \$2,788,750 or a 10-year rate at \$5,361,500. He asked if the Commission would like to invite the Bond Agency Ransom Financial to discuss bonding options for the County. He asked to look at June 15<sup>th</sup> in having Ransom Financial at a Commission meeting.

Roth questioned which projects would be priority as they look at options increasing the life of a bridge. To partnership with the City of Hays on 48<sup>th</sup> Street and the Northwest Corridor Business Project. Also, on Cathedral Avenue if to take repairs to Catharine Road, the need to widen or re-deck a bridge project, Bridge 120 over the Saline River and other road projects.

Public Works Director Bill Ring stated that he and his staff would prioritize and get a cost estimate for road and bridge projects. Ring was asked to add another five to ten more projects to the list. Then the Commissioners would need to finalize that list and decide on the bonding needs and which projects to proceed with.

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT – INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DARIN MYERS**

Interim County Administrator Darin Myers reported that the concession and speedway areas at the fairgrounds has been completed. The Courthouse bathroom remodeling project is completed. He

announced that the 2022 Kansas Fire Fighters Conference will be hosted in Ellis County. Myers stated that May 14 and 15<sup>th</sup> will be the Budget presentations. Myers was pleased to report that for the first time in ten years the County has a budget surplus.

### **COUNTY COMMISSION REPORTS**

Haselhorst reported that the Kansas Association of Counties (KAC) Board sent a letter to the Governor asking to extend the County property tax deadline. He had received a telephone call from Representative Dr. Roger Marshall asking about the farming and oil situation in Ellis County. Marshall had just completed his time helping with the COVID-19 testing at Ford County and now will have to quarantine.

Roths thanked Public Works for the Road Tour as it was very interesting. He was pleasantly surprised in the way that things looked, as the Public Works Department probably receives the most complaint calls.

Roths voiced concerns on a summer newsletter in full colored print, glossy stock and had concerns with the information that was shared from the County Treasurer. He questioned if this was a political ad paid by the taxpayers. He stated that he will be reviewing her upcoming budget items under printing and binding cost. The Commissioners questioned spending the taxpayer's dollars on this type of expense.

Chair Schlyer had no report.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion: \_\_\_\_\_ Haselhorst \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_ Roths

To go into Executive Session, under the exception to the Kansas Open Meeting Act, pursuant to the non-elected personnel matter exception with the subject in hiring of the County Administrator to be discussed during executive session for fifteen minutes with the three Commissioners, County Administrator Darin Myers and County Counselor Bill Jeter.

Disposition: \_\_\_\_\_ The motion carried by a voice vote of three to zero.

The Executive Session started at 6:16 p.m.

The Open Meeting resumed at 6:33 p.m.

Chair Schlyer stated that no action was taken.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Chair Schlyer stated that the meeting will adjourn at 6:33 p.m.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, May 11, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., Administrative Center, Commission Chambers, 718 Main Street, Hays, Kansas.

BOARD OF ELLIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

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ROBERT "BUTCH" SCHLYER, CHAIR

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DUSTIN G. ROTHS, COMMISSIONER

DEAN F. HASELHORST, COMMISSSIONER

ATTEST:

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DONNA J. MASKUS, COUNTY CLERK