

November 1, 2022

The Board of Ellis County Commissioners met in regular session at 8:30 am Tuesday, November 1, 2022, in the Commission Chambers, at the Administration Center, 718 Main Street, Hays, Kansas. Chair Robert “Butch” Schlyer called the meeting to order. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners present: Chair Robert “Butch” Schlyer, Commissioner Joe Leroux and Commissioner Neal Younger. Also present were County Administrator Darin Myers, County Counselor Bill Jeter and County Clerk Bobbi L. Dreiling.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no changes to the order of business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There will be one executive session.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

Chair Schlyer asked for any changes to the draft minutes of October 18. No changes were given; the draft minutes was approved as presented.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Leroux Second Younger

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

Payment Voucher Claims

- Payroll #21 dated October 2-October 15 and October 21 in the amount of \$471,406.95
- Vouchers dated November 2 in the amount of \$210,381.16
- Purchase Card dated October 21 in the amount of \$51,184.71
- Enterprise Lease dated October 20 in the amount of \$12,653.17

Disposition: Motion passed by a voice vote of three to zero

ISSUES FROM PERSONS NOT ON THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Gemini Jr 4-Hers asked the Commissioners for approval to once again decorate the tree in front of the Courthouse for Christmas. The commissioners all gave their approval.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES

Human Resources Coordinator Jennifer Taylor introduced three new employees: Roy French with Public Works as a truck driver, Kyleigh Benear with the Treasurer’s office as a Motor Vehicle/Tax Collection Clerk and Tura Clement in the Appraiser’s office as an Appraiser 1. Mike Fields was promoted to a Paramedic Lieutenant with EMS

ADAMS BROWN REMODELING

Brian Dewitt of Adams Brown gave an update on the remodel job that is being done on the second floor of the County Administrative Building. He is hoping that it will be completed by Thanksgiving. Schlyer questioned Dewitt on the noise that he noticed while he was voting yesterday. Dewitt indicated he did not think the noise was that loud and thought it was Glassman Corporation that was making most of the noise. Schlyer also said he wanted to make sure the remodeling that was being done was up to code and that permits were being taken care of for the work being done. Dewitt said he assumed that the general contractor was taking care of all of this. Both Leroux and Younger asked that they keep in

contact with the County Administrator on the progress. Myers commented to Dewitt that he spoke with Buildings and Grounds technician Greg Erbert and Erbert said the noise was coming from the floor grinder as they worked on the glue on the floor. Myers said the Clerk was getting multiple complaints from the voters and this needs to be taken into consideration as they are working.

DSNWK GRANT LETTER OF SUPPORT

DSNWK Access transportation Director Wade Kruse is asking the Commission to sign a letter of support. Each year, ACCESS Transportation uses the county's subsidy payment for grant matching capabilities with the Kansas Department of Transportation. In the Ellis County's 2023 General Fund budget, the commission approved a \$50,000 allocation to ACCESS Transportation. The Commissioners all agreed to sign the letter of support.

RPM SPEEDWAY TRACK SURFACING

RPM Speedway Promoter/General Manager Chris Sutton is asking the Commission to approve the use of the Ellis County Public Work's Department to assist in the resurfacing of the county-owned racetrack at the Ellis County Fairgrounds. This will include, but not limited to changing the elevation of the surface to assist in the drainage of surface water from the track to the drains, and reshaping/moving dirt in the corners of the racetrack. The RPM Speedway is one of only a couple facilities in Ellis County that is open 6 months a year, brings in out of county sales tax dollars, and provides an economic boost to the city and county. RPM Speedway feels this improvement will make the facility a place where race teams, and spectators will continue to enjoy what the facility offers them. Costs can be absorbed into the public works budget as this is estimated to only be a couple pieces of equipment and manpower lasting 3-4 days. Sutton passed out to the Commissioners the soil test that was done on the dirt. Basically, the dirt is not any good and that is what causes all the dust and the shape of the track not holding. The salt levels are very high, magnesium levels are low and the calcium is high. He is planning on bringing in compost from the City of Hays and also some chemical that will be tilled in to make the soil better. They have put in new speakers, amps, safety lights and a score tower. Nutriant Ag will come in and take care of the soil to get it where it needs to be. Schlyer asked how often the dirt needs to be maintained. Sutton said it will need to be maintained at all times and a surfactant will need to be added to the water until they can get new dirt. Curt Hoffman from the Public Work's department was called up by Schlyer and was asked if this is something that the department could handle. Hoffman said it was. Younger commented that since Nutriant was a supporter they should come in mid-season and test the dirt and also take a look at the pit area and try to get that corrected in the future. Leroux said this would enhance both the safety of the drivers and the spectators and if Public Works is able to help out, then he would approve this request. All three commissioners approved the request.

CERTIFIED MEDICAL ASSISTANT

Health Director Kim Reel is asking the Commission to change a position in Ellis County's Health Department. She is asking the 1.0 FTE Medical Billing Specialist position to be reallocated to a 1.0 FTE Certified Medical Assistant (CMA). With this role, it would be possible to meet the necessary requirements for the invoicing and administrative work, as well as help with immunizations and vitals. In addition to clinical training in the medical sector, medical assistants often receive office and administrative training. The suggested paygrade at 108 is one paygrade below the current medical biller and should result in a cost savings. This choice would enable more cross-training in many sectors and support long-term personnel objectives at ECHD. There are very few medical assistants in the western half of the state, and this may result in a very small application pool. Due to this, she suggested a

Medical Assistant position be opened in addition to a 1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant post, with the understanding the best applicant will only be hired for one of these roles. Priority will be given to medical assistants. The need is justified by the rise in patients they have been seeing, collaboration with USD 489, and the creation or addition of programs that will eventually be supported by grants. This would be a full-time role within ECHD at 40 hours per week. It would be less than the amount the medical biller had previously filled in the budget. A salary survey was conducted by 8 agencies to determine a wage for the Medical Assistant position in coordination with the Human Resources Department. Depending on the position hired, the starting salary with benefits for an administrative assistant is \$66,735. A CMA salary and benefits would be \$67,292, and the current billing coordinator position salary and benefits are approximately \$70,352. Schlyer asked what the hourly salary is for an Admin Asst and a CMA. Reel said the Admin Assist position would be around \$16.35 per hour and a CMA would be around \$17.49 an hour. Younger said he likes the CMA idea. Leroux asked if there was a possibility to recruit someone at a higher rate to get more applications. Human Resource Director Jennifer Taylor said that at the level 107 they are above the starting rate for the CMA position. She said it was not so much the wages, it is the pool of workers that are not available.

Motion: _____ **Younger** _____ **Second:** _____ **Leroux**

I move to approve the Certified Medical Assistant or an Administrative Assistant to replace the previous billing position.

Disposition: _____ **Motion passed by a voice vote of three to zero.**

CDBG UPDATE

Emergency Manager & Assistant Fire Chief Lyle Pantle updated the Commissioners on the WSKF Architects and CDBG Funding. Late in 2021, the commission approved the Fire Department to procure architectural information for a combined Emergency Services building in the City of Ellis. WSKF Architects has since provided the architectural information, as well as completed a needs assessment. Also provided was a budgetary cost estimate for use in determining a project budget. *This contract was to also include a suitable location for the designed building. This item was not included during the discovery, needs assessment, or budget estimate. This project was to coincide with the application for CDBG funding, through the Kansas Department of Commerce. The competitive grant funding is open annually for certain areas, to which a Public Safety facility would normally have fallen into. In early June, the KDOC made a public notification that certain portions of the public facilities category would not qualify for funding in the grant period of 2023. A public comment period was opened and attended, but no questions were answered, directly relating to incurred costs or impacts to those already in the application process. It was indicated though, that this was a one-year hiatus. It has since been confirmed by KDOC personnel, that the combined Public Safety facility, would not be an eligible project for the current grant cycle. There was no confirmation that the category would expand back to the normal public facilities, that have qualified in the years prior. Upon the completion of this year's grant cycle, more information will be requested, to see if a public safety facility will be eligible. The total cost for this project so far is \$6,000 to WSKF Architects for the above items. If the competitive grant is won, \$600,000 in funding from KDOC would be available. If the budgetary estimates hold true, cost to Ellis County would be from \$900,000 - \$1.35 million. The commissioners thanked Pantle for the update and said they would like to see this come to fruition in the future.

OPERATION GREEN LIGHT – RESOLUTION 2022-16

Ellis County Administrator Darin Myers asked the Commissioners to approve a resolution supporting our County's veterans as part of the Operation Green Light.

Motion: _____ **Schlyer** **Second:** _____ **Leroux**

I move to approve Resolution 2022-16 showing support and appreciation of our Nation's veterans.

Disposition: _____ **Motion passed by a voice vote of three to zero.**

Resolution No: 22-16
Resolution of the Board of Ellis County Commissioners
Supporting Operation Green Light for Veterans

WHEREAS, the residents of Ellis County have great respect, admiration, and the utmost gratitude for all of the men and women who have selflessly served our country and this community in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who served in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by our citizens; and

WHEREAS, Ellis County seeks to honor these individuals who have paid the high price for freedom by placing themselves in harm's way for the good of all; and

WHEREAS, Veterans continue to serve our community in the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, religious groups, civil service, and by functioning as County Veteran Service Officers in 29 states to help fellow former service members access more than \$52 billion in federal health, disability and compensation benefits each year; and

WHEREAS, approximately 200,000 service members transition to civilian communities annually; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 20 percent increase of service members will transition to civilian life in the near future; and

WHEREAS, studies indicate that 44-72 percent of service members experience high levels of stress during transition from military to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, Active Military Service Members transitioning from military service are at a high risk for suicide during their first year after military service; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties encourages all counties, parishes and boroughs to recognize Operation Green Light for Veterans; and

WHEREAS, Ellis County appreciates the sacrifices of our United State Military Personnel and believes specific recognition should be granted; therefore be it

RESOLVED, with designation as a Green Light for Veterans County, Ellis County hereby declares from October through Veterans Day, November 11th, 2022 a time to salute and honor the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform transitioning from Active Service; therefore, be it further

RESOLVED, that in observance of Operation Green Light, Ellis County encourages its citizens in patriotic tradition to recognize the importance of honoring all those who made immeasurable sacrifices to preserve freedom by displaying a green light in a window of their place of business or residence.

ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Ellis County, Kansas, this 1st day of November 2022. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ELLIS COUNTY, KANSAS.

Robert (Butch) Schlyer, Chair
Neal Younger
Joe Leroux

Attest: Bobbi L. Dreiling, County Clerk

SOUTHWEST ELLIS COUNTY WILDFIRE

County Administrator Darin Myers gave an update of the fire of October 23. Fire crews spent about 12 hours fighting the fire on Sunday until released around 3:00 am. The Ellis County Fire Department was assisted by the Ellis Police Department, Ellis County Sheriff's deputies, EMS, and Public Works, and the Hays Fire Department. During the first couple hours of the fire, and to the extent of which the fire was growing the Ellis County Commission Chair was contacted and asked to declare a state of emergency for Ellis County. This declaration is then passed along to the State so that additional resources, if needed, can be deployed from around the state. The Kansas Forest Service responded to the fire and assisted throughout the day and evening. In doing damage surveys, no homes were lost or damaged in the fire. One farm located along Ellis Avenue lost a metal building and some vehicles. The Ellis County Public Works department had heavy equipment in the area in preparation of the repair work on Ellis Avenue. One padfoot roller was lost in the fire with an expected loss of over \$50,000. An insurance claim has been filed with KCAMP for this piece of equipment. The Kansas Forest Service mapped the area this week and estimated the total fire area between the three counties to be 14,342 acres. Ellis County is estimated to have 10,250 acres burnt per the KFS map. An attachment to this agenda shows the mapped area from KFS. The State Fire Marshall's office is investigating the fire cause and origin. The cost to Ellis County is still unknown. Incident reports will be created for firefighter man hours and insurance claims have been submitted for the Public Works Equipment. Schlyer said we are very fortunate that there were no lives lost, no homes destroyed, or anyone hurt. He thanked all the volunteers and farmers. Younger asked if there is anything that Ellis County could do that would help the farmers for damage done on their equipment. Myers said he would look into what could possibly be done, but these damages could not be turned into the County's insurance. He commented that the Company Chiefs use their own personal vehicles and they were responsible for any damages done to their vehicles, fuel used or miles driven and the County does not cover those expenses. Myers said he didn't know where the line would be drawn on damages. Younger commented the local implement dealers could look at the damage and say the equipment was not that great in the beginning, but they did risk their tractors or discs. Leroux said it was great to see so many agencies and businesses jump in and help.

2023 BUDGET REPORT

County Administrator Darin Myers updated the Commission on the 2023 budget and the mill levy amount. After all the final numbers have been entered, the actual 2023 mill levy rate would be 37.575 or .18 mills higher than 2022. As part of this levy amount, a \$475,000 non-appropriated balance was included to assist in building a larger cash carryover to ensure better financial stability for Ellis County in

the coming years. If this balance was reduced by \$132,000 to \$342,000 this would result in lowering the Ad Valorem taxes collected and the mill levy would drop back down to the 37.283 as presented in the budget hearings. Staff has attempted multiple times over the last week to gain clarification on this process from the Kansas Department of Administration. However, they have yet to return any phone calls or emails. If this process is allowed, staff is asking if the commission would like to reduce the non-appropriated balance down to what is listed above. The Ellis County General Fund budget would not be impacted for 2023. The non-appropriated balance would decrease from \$475,000 by \$132,000 for a new total of \$342,000. The Commissioners agreed that if it is allowed the ad valorem tax can be reduced to lower the mill levy closer to what was estimated.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

County Administrator Darin Myers updated the Commissioners on the HVAC project. It is very close to being done. They had to move a couple of control boxes and it has increased the amount of the project by \$9,000 to have to cut pipe and put valves in. He spoke with Greg Erbert and a change he would like to see is to cut in valves and isolate each floor so that if something breaks, he would not have to shut the entire system down. All the Commissioners were in favor of this. The generator pad is almost complete so they will be able to see what size of fence is needed. The Commissioners said to move forward with the purchase of the valves.

COUNTY COMMISSION REPORTS

Younger attended the KAC meeting and attended a 4-H function. Leroux had no report. Schlyer had no report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: _____ **Schlyer** _____ **Second:** _____ **Younger**

To recess into Executive Session for 15 minutes under the following exception to the Kansas Open Meeting Act pursuant to the attorney-client privilege exception; the subject to be discussed during the executive session is potential litigation. Those persons to attend are Chair Butch Schlyer, Commissioner Neal Younger, Commissioner Joe Leroux, County Counselor Bill Jeter, by phone Public Works Director Brendan Mackay and County Administrator Darin Myers.

Disposition: _____ **Motion passed by a voice vote of three to zero.**

The Executive Session started at 9:42 am.
 The Open Session resumed at 10:00 am.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair Schlyer adjourned the meeting at 10:00 am. The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, the Administrative Center Commission Chambers, 718 Main Street, Hays, Kansas at 8:30 am.

BOARD OF ELLIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ROBERT "BUTCH" SCHLYER, CHAIR

NEAL YOUNGER, COMMISSIONER

JOE LEROUX, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

BOBBI L DREILING
ELLIS COUNTY CLERK