

REPUBLIC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021

The Republic County Commission met in regular session on Monday, March 22, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. at the Republic County Courthouse. Commissioners present were Melvin Jeardoe, Edwin Splichal and Doug Garman. Clerk Kathleen Marsicek was present to record the minutes. Deb Hadachek from Belleville Telescope observed most of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order and attendees pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Pastor Rick Snodgrass, Crossroads Assembly of God of Belleville, offered Morning Prayer.

Commissioner Splichal made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Garman seconded the motion which was made unanimous by Commissioner Jeardoe.

Commissioner Garman made a motion to approve the March 15, 2021 minutes. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Commissioner Splichal made it unanimous.

Accounts payable vouchers in the amount of \$165,749.40 were approved.

All commissioners plan on attending the Republic County Hospital Board meeting by ZOOM.

Danielle Swanson, Health Department Administrator, announced that Republic County has no active coronavirus cases and Governor Laura Kelly has moved the vaccination schedule to Phase 3 & 4 allowing 16-64-year-old citizens to be vaccinated starting today, March 22, 2021.

Swanson announced that the health department has administered 1,122 prime Moderna doses, 650 Moderna boosters, 28 Pfizer and 109 Johnson & Johnson vaccines so far.

Raney announced additional federal funding will be received in Republic County as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The exact amount that each county, city or township will receive is still unknown but the funds will be handled by the State or Federal contacts rather than the county. The county should receive one-half of the funding within 60 days and the other half 12 months later. The county has until December 2024 to use the money to aid with needs within the county relating to COVID. There will be separate funds to each city, school district and some townships from the State of Kansas. These funds can be deposited in an interest-bearing account however, the final instructions have not been received as to what the money can be used to purchase.

Luke Mahin, Republic County Economic Development, presented information on the Kansas Nebraska Heritage Area Partnership to create a National Heritage Area (NHA) along the border of Kansas and Nebraska. The first NHA was created by President Ronald Regan in 1984 and since then 55 NHAs have been created including one in eastern Kansas along the Kansas and Missouri border called Freedom's Frontier. NHAs have been and will continue to be committed to the preservation of private property rights. The program has always been entirely voluntary and cooperative and are completely supportive of the protections written in the bill.

At 10:05 a.m., Commissioner Garman made a motion to recess into executive session for 5 minutes to discuss non-elected personnel regarding job performance. Commissioner Splichal seconded the motion which was made unanimous by Commissioner Jeardoe. Attending the session were the commissioners and Clerk Marsicek.

The board reconvened at 10:10 a.m., taking no action.

Bobby Lawson, Nathan Craig, Stacey Bowen, and Dan Snyder presented updates from the county shop area, transportation and solid waste.

- Craig presented a price for the steel to replace the supply needed for the bridge repairs on 280 Rd. There was a very large increase in cost of steel sheets for future repairs to bridges.
 - Due to the weather conditions to install the trusses to the new shop building the project has been put on hold.
 - Craig has contacted APAC to repair the poor approaches that were installed in the Fall of 2020 to the bridge south of Scandia and at Republic. APAC recommended additional depth of asphalt to secure a better foundation. The commissioners requested that our engineer contact be contacted for advice regarding APAC suggestion before any contract is signed. Also, the contract needs to account for the county labor and supplies to temporarily fix the approaches until APAC can fix them correctly. This issue has been tabled until next week.
- Lawson announced that 400 tons of cold mix has been purchased for the overlays and patching this summer.
- Commissioner Garman asked that since we are having turnover in employees, is there training, encouragement or additional supervisor support needed to prevent this from happening.
- Commissioner Jeardoe reported that the county auditor recommends that if an employee wants to use their own phone and be paid a stipend it must go through payroll not accounts payable. Bowen is the only employee receiving a stipend. Since Bowen does not want to claim it as income on taxes she will no longer receive the stipend for the time she uses her personal phone for work issues.
- Because of the wet weather the county has been having, Snyder requested that the county add rock to the approaches to the cells at the landfill.
- Bowen presented a list of items to be sold on the Highbanks consignment sale in April.
- Bowen mentioned that there are openings for 2 full-time operators, 1 part-time transportation driver and 1 administrator. Lawson added that he recommends that the county increase their starting wage if the county wants quality operators. Commissioners advised that the budget amounts for wages is set in the prior year when the budgets are prepared but will review request.

Mike Hadachek and Ron Everett from Astra Bank, Eli Pierson from American State Bank and Justin Ferrell, Republic County Attorney visited with the commissioners regarding securing collateral for a mortgage lease for the Republic County Hospital for planned expansion and equipment. Ferrell stated that the hospital building can be used as collateral for this lease. Deb Hadachek stated that the payments will be covered by the building maintenance mill levy and sales tax collected.

Sergeant Andrew Bates, Republic County Sheriff's office, requested that the commissioners send letters to our Kansas Senator and Representative requesting that they do not support HB 2184 to Legalize "Medical" marijuana. The Kansas Sheriff's Association and local law enforcement are requesting support to oppose this bill. Bates is the Republic County K-9 trainer and if this bill passes, our current K-9 will be of little use to search out the other types of drugs only. Bates said you can not retrain a K-9, so it would cost the county extra funds to replace the current K-9.

The commissioners will contact our local legislators regarding this bill.

Levi Whitley, EMS Director, requested permission to attend the Loudoun County Fire-Rescue workshop in Virginia from May 25 to May 28. Whitley was selected to represent Kansas at this training with no cost to Republic County. Permission was granted.

Clerk Marsicek presented information from the Fair Labor Standards Act in regards to K-9 Handler compensation. The issue was tabled until Commissioner Garman visits with Sheriff David Cox.

Clerk Marsicek presented information from Washington National Insurance Company. Washington National is an insurance company that offices the same types of benefits as our current benefits group except that it does not offer any health insurance. The consensus of the board is to remain with our current benefit group.

Commissioner Garman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:50 p.m. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Commissioner Splichal made it unanimous.

The next regular meeting will be on Monday, March 29, 2021, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Republic County Courthouse.

ATTEST: _____
Kathleen L. Marsicek, Republic County Clerk

APPROVED: _____
Melvin Jeardoe – Chair

Edwin Splichal – Member

Doug Garman – Member