

REPUBLIC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES

MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2023

The Republic County Commission met in regular session on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. at the Republic County Courthouse. Commissioners present were Edwin Splichal, Melvin Jeardoe and Doug Garman. Clerk Kathleen Marsicek was present to record the minutes. Deb Hadachek from the 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 in Belleville, offered Morning Prayer.

Commissioner Splichal made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Garman made a motion to approve the minutes from January 3. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Accounts payable vouchers were approved in the amount of \$206,021.55 for billbacks to 2022 and \$271,255.39 for 2023.

Judge Regine Thompson swore in re-elected Commissioner Edwin Splichal.

Commissioner Jeardoe made a motion to appoint Commissioner Splichal as the Chairman for 2023. Commissioner Garman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Justin Ferrell, County Attorney, joined the meeting.

Commissioner Garman explained how the commissioners derived the wage for the position of County Attorney. After reviewing the wages from several counties and duties of the County Attorneys within those counties, the wages were averaged and the value was compared to what the Republic County offers as a wage.

Clerk Marsicek presented Resolution No. 2023-1, Wages of Elected Officials for 2023.

- County Attorney \$61,740.00
- County Sheriff \$60,000.00
- County Treasurer \$52,500.00
- County Clerk \$52,500.00
- County Register of Deeds \$45,500.00
- County Commissioners \$17,500.00

Commissioner Garman made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2023-1. Commission Jeardoe seconded the motion which was made unanimous by Commissioner Splichal.

Clerk Marsicek presented a letter to appoint Cindy Buer as the Norway Township Trustee.

Commissioner Garman made a motion to approve the appointment of Cindy Buer as Trustee in Norway Township. Commission Jeardoe seconded the motion which was made unanimous by Commissioner Splichal.

The 2023 annual commissioner appointments and Resolutions for Republic County were presented for approval.

Resolutions number 2023-03 to 2023-16 were presented as follows:

- Resolution No. 2023-03 Raymond Raney as 911 Coordinator
- Resolution No. 2023-04 Raymond Raney as Half time Director of communications
- Resolution No. 2023-05 Raymond Raney as Half time Director of Emergency Management
- Resolution No. 2023-06 Jeff Beikmann as Assistant Director of EMS
- Resolution No. 2023-07 Raymond Raney as Flood Plain Manager
- Resolution No. 2023-08 Raymond Raney as Hazardous Materials Advisor
- Resolution No. 2023-09 Faye Jones as Director of the Health Department
- Resolution No. 2023-10 Ken Robbins as Highway Administrator
- Resolution No. 2023-11 Mike Nondorf as Noxious Weed Director
- Resolution No. 2023-12 Raymond Raney as Radiological Officer
- Resolution No. 2023-13 Raymond Raney as Safety Officer
- Resolution No. 2023-14 Ken Robbins as Solid Waste Director
- Resolution No. 2023-15 Ken Robbins as Transportation Director
- Resolution No. 2023-16 David (Levi) Whitley as Director of EMS

Commissioner Jeardoe made a motion to approve the Resolutions. Commissioner Splichal seconded the motion. Commissioner Garman made it unanimous.

Commissioner Garman made a motion to approve the appointments. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Commissioner Splichal made it unanimous.

Commissioner Splichal made a motion to appoint both The Belleville Telescope and the Courtland Journal as Co-County Newspapers. Commissioner Garman seconded the motion. Commissioner Jeardoe made it unanimous.

Commissioner Garman made a motion to approve the permission to travel for Faye Jones to attend NCKHCC Preparedness workshop in Salina on January 13. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Commissioner Splichal made it unanimous.

Commissioner Splichal made a motion to change Commissioner Jeardoe from alternate representative to the Pawnee Mental Health Board to primary representative. Commissioner Garman seconded the motion. Commissioner Jeardoe made it unanimous.

The Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK) emailed a request for Republic County to Proclaim January as Stalking Awareness Month as well as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Commissioner Garman made a motion to approve the proclamation. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Commissioner Splichal made it unanimous.

Sandee Swanson, Register of Deeds, introduced to the Commissioners, the new Deputy Register of Deeds, Olynna Pierson. Swanson also presented a 2022 year-end review of documents processed and the on-going record preservation and back-indexing projects.

- The total amount of fund transactions for the Deeds office was \$79,102.75.
- The total number of documents recorded for the year was 1,179, which included 58 different document types. Of those recorded documents, 167 were received via eRecording.
- All the scanning and imaging of the historical document books has now been completed. Those pages which have already been grouped into documents are in the back-indexing queue ready to be verified and indexed. The office back-indexed over 6,000 documents in 2022 and there are currently over 65,000 documents still sitting in the back-indexing queue. Once the final 110 books, which were recently scanned, are grouped, they too will join the back-indexing queue.

Swanson requested an explanation as to how the wage increases were determined. Department heads were tasked with presenting to the Commissioners wage studies for their office positions and their proposed 2023 budget, by June 1. Swanson was told that her budget was approved, yet her wage request, which was supported by her budget, was not met when Commissioners made their final salary determinations.

Commissioner Garman explained that the commissioners did review the information presented however some of the increases requested were extremely large and the commissioners decided to split the increase over a couple years instead all at once. The board will review the difference in the request and what was actually given to each employee this year when working on increases for 2024. It is important that we provide a comparative wage for employees and department heads to hire and maintain quality employees.

Swanson suggested that the commissioners should have discussed the decisions with each department head in person before the newspaper printed all the information.

Commissioner Splichal expressed gratitude for the work done in the Register of Deeds office to supply access to these historical records online.

Ken Robbins presented for review, Highway, Transportation, Bridge and turbine project information:

- The weekly community concerns and projects completed report.
- Adam Richardson and Jim Barrett representing NextEra joined the meeting to announce a public gathering at the Kallman Center on Tuesday, January 10 from 6 to 7:30 for a general question/answer update on the High Bank Wind project.
- Richardson also explained that the ADLS towers are dedicated to communicate with the turbines if there is a need to turn on the lights of that tower.
- Jim explained that the article in the paper with concerns about two sets of lights on the turbines only applies if the height of the tower is over 699 feet tall. All of the planned towers will be well under that height.
- Jim also stated if any local person is interested in applying for positions with this project contact the central office.
- Robbins reported that the county will install yield signs instead of additional stop signs at the intersection of 300 Rd and Penn.
- County road 260 to 270 on Elm will be closed this week.
- Washington County recycling will accept recycling from Republic County starting next week and this does NOT include glass.
- Robbins presented a Compliance Plan for the High Banks Wind Project from High Banks Wind, LLC.
- Robbins presented a detailed list of hours dealing with the wind farm project for 2022.

Sarah Steele, Gilmore & Bell, P.C., visited with the commissioners regarding the options of supporting an Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) for Central Valley Ag (CVA).

- The IRB assists the business to apply for exemption to sales tax on goods purchased to build the project and allows a property tax exemption on the structures not the land of the project.
- Property exemption can be in the amount up to 100% of the project for up to 10 years for each phase a bond is issued. It can be for less than 10 years.
- The process is two parts:
 - Obtain a cost benefit analysis of the project.
 - Resolution from the county to agree to support the project.
- Then the County issues a bond to the business.

At 10:55 a.m., the commissioners moved the meeting up to the District Courtroom to hold a public hearing in regards to the proposed IRB request for CVA.

At 11:00 a.m., Commissioner Splichal opened the public hearing. Attending the hearing were the commissioners, Sarah Steele, Wes O'Bannon, Sara Moravek, Todd Allen, Jenny Russell, Kurt Childs, Jeff Holling, Curt Frasier, Deb Hadachek and Clerk Marsicek.

O'Bannon, CVA project Manager, explained there will be four phases of the proposed CVA project over the next 3-10 years.

- Phase 1 estimated cost is \$30,000,000 to be completed in the first 18 months.
- Phase 2 estimated cost is \$10,000,000 to be completed within the first 36 months.
- Phase 3 estimated cost is \$10,000,000 to be completed in the first 48-60 months.
- Phase 4 estimated cost is \$10,000,000 to be completed in the first 72-96 months.

O'Bannon stated that the estimated cost depends on the cost of materials when that phase is started.

Commissioner Jeardoe made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2023-2 to approve moving forward with the IRB process for CVA. Commissioner Garman seconded the motion which was made unanimous by Commissioner Splichal.

Commissioner Splichal closed the public hearing and announced that the commissioners will return to the commissioners' boardroom for the remainder of the meeting.

At 11:40 a.m., Commissioner Splichal made a motion to recess into executive session for attorney client privilege consultation for 10 minutes. Commissioner Garman seconded the motion which was made unanimous by Commissioner Jeardoe. Attending the session were the commissioners and Sarah Steele.

The board reconvened at 11:50 a.m., taking no action.

Raymond Raney, Communication Director, requested clarification of his wage increase. Raney also requested an increase for Joe Herrick, part-time dispatcher that was not on the original wage sheet.

Levi Whitley and Jeff Beikmann, EMS department, presented updates from the EMS department.

- Paris Yungeberg is now a certified Paramedic.
- An EMT class started on January 4, 2023 with 2 students.
- Whitley requested permission for Beikmann to attend a Medicare Cost Reporting Conference in Oklahoma City from February 14 to February 15. He also requested permission for himself to attend CISM Class in Ellis County EMS in Hays from February 13 to February 14.

Permission was granted for both trainings.

- The new command vehicle will be available the first part of February.
- Whitley announced that David Strnad, Allen Carlson and himself received National recognition for using Handtevy Mobile and supporting the ED team providing high-quality care of a pediatric cardiac arrest situation. Each person received a Handtevy Challenge Coin.
- Whitley also shared recognition from the Kansas City Trauma unit in regards to a recent medical emergency.
- Whitley presented a quote from Ed M Feld Equipment Co. for Rescue suits. Whitley is requesting 10 suits at \$767.06 per suit. The cost can be covered with the NextEra contribution to the emergency medical services.

Commissioner Jeardoe made a motion to order 10 suits and authorize spending up to \$10,000 for this equipment. Commissioner Garman seconded the motion which Commissioner Splichal made it unanimous.

- Whitley asked permission to use the paramedic training funds in county general for Tyler Sothers to continue his paramedic training. Permission was granted.
- Whitley is working with Faye Jones to find grants to assist with building improvements for the EMS station.

Cindy Coons presented the list of financial accounts with the percentage rates of each banking facility and stated that 75% of the property taxes for 2022 have been paid.

With all agenda items completed, Commissioner Garman made a motion to adjourn at 12:50 p.m. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded the motion. Commissioner Splichal made it unanimous. The next meeting will be on Monday, January 16, 2023 beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Republic County Courthouse in the Commissioners' boardroom.

ATTEST: _____
Kathleen L. Marsicek, County Clerk

APPROVED: _____
Edwin Splichal, Chairperson

Melvin Jeardoe, Member

Doug Garman, Member