

Ottawa County Board of Commissioner's Minutes

September 20, 2021

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session with First District Commissioner Dawn Wolf, Second District Commissioner Scott Mortimer, Third District Commissioner D. D. Malmberg all present.

Commissioner Wolf called the meeting to order at 8:00 am with opening prayer and flag salute.

Minutes from September 13, 2021 were read. Commissioner Malmberg move to approve the minutes. Commissioner Mortimer seconded. Motion carried, 3-0.

Those present were JoDee Copple, Katrina Pollet, Vicki Jensen, Duane Morris and John Wilson.

Randy Dick, Kaw Insurance, presented analysis reports for current year insurance. Randy will start to work on renewal in October of the self-funded health, dental and prescription plans. Optional plans will be discussed with Katrina Pollet, Human Resources.

Duane Morris presented commissioners with salaries of commissioners from surrounding counties of similar size. Commissioners' annual salaries are as follows: Ellsworth County, \$12,726, Lincoln County, \$13,416, Clay County, \$17,106, Cloud County, \$15,765 and Ottawa County \$25,564. Bonuses (which Ottawa County has none), car allowance and mileage he said were similar across these counties. Duane suggested that the commissioners pass a resolution to drop their annual wage to \$14,000. Commissioner Wolf stated that she feels she earns every penny of her salary. Commissioner Mortimer said that he had used his own equipment to work on roads and feels he earns every penny of his salary. Commissioner Mortimer stated that he will not vote to pass the requested resolution. Duane asked each commissioner if they took the job to serve the county or for the wage and health insurance that comes with it, of which two commissioners do not use. All three commissioners stated that they didn't know the exact wage when they ran for office. Commissioner Wolf stated that she has done a lot for the county that has saved a lot of money, including contracting the fuel this year while prices were still low for the Road & Bridge Dept, this hadn't been done in the past. She also said that she revisited contracts for road improvement bids, specifically the Wells Road and it was lowered several thousands of dollars. Commissioner Wolf also asked Duane why commissioner wages were now a problem when they had been at this comparable rate for many years before any of the present commissioners were on the board, to which he said he wasn't aware. Duane also asked why there is not a starting wage for commissioners. A new commissioner coming in makes the same as a commissioner with 20 years' experience which is contrary to sheriff, clerk and other elected officials. Commissioner Wolf explained that the commissioners have the same responsibilities and are on the same playing field, therefore are paid the same so one can't be considered to have more say than another. Duane suggested splitting the county into 5 sections and having 5 commissioners. Commissioner Wolf stated she would look into this idea and will discuss at an upcoming state meeting. John Wilson asked about the hours of commissioner meetings, stating that the commissioners used to spend the whole day at the courthouse.

Keith Coleman, Facilities Management, has completed site inspections at Museum and Road & Bridge. Old HVAC filters were replaced at the museum. Keith is creating maintenance files and taking pictures for documentation for each facility. Keith inquired about grounds care at the museum and will talk to the museum board. Keith is working on surge protector quotes and researching something to cover brown outs or low power. Keith ran cat 6 for phones for new offices in courthouse. Buick Rendezvous needs front-end work.

Russ Thornton, Undersheriff, was out on a call. Keith gave prisoner count of Saline County – 16, Sedgwick County – 12 and Ottawa County – 4.

Greg Dockins, Road & Bridge Administrator reported that the road crews are mowing county roads. Coronado – east of 250th put 2 pipes under the road. 180th Rd, south of Bennington and north of the Solomon River Bridge is washing out. Commissioner Mortimer complimented the new motor grader operator in the Delphos area. Solid Waste of North America has cancelled this year's conference. Five employees attended gravel maintenance school in Salina last week. Ottawa County was not chosen for the state 2023 Off-system Bridge Program. Commissioners will research who mows at the fairgrounds and see what it will take to keep it mowed year-round.

Commissioner Mortimer motioned to go into executive session to discuss Confidential Data concerning contracts on equipment. Commissioner Malmberg seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Those present were Commissioners and Greg Dockins. The group returned to regular session at 10:10.

ARPA funds were discussed. Commission asked if the ARPA committee had met, they have not.

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Brad Thurston – Fence Viewer Discussion – Brad will reschedule for next week.

Katrina Pollet, Human Resources, we have 4 county employees who have tested positive for covid and 3 who are quarantined because of exposure. We also have 4 employees who have applied for FMLA. Katrina worked with Ethan Keating, Fire District #1, to complete paperwork for grant. Commissioner Malmberg expressed concerns about paying for Covid absences. Katrina supports continuing to pay employees, it is a budget neutral expense. Commissioner Malmberg is concerned that people will not be cautious about being exposed because they know they will get paid.

Commissioner Malmberg motioned to go into executive session to discuss non-elected personnel. Commissioner Mortimer seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Those present were Commissioners and Katrina Pollet. The group returned to regular session at 10:30.

Commissioner Malmberg motioned to go into executive session to discuss non-elected personnel. Commissioner Mortimer seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Those present were Commissioners and Katrina Pollet. The group returned to regular session at 10:37.

Commissioner Malmberg attended a North Central Regional Planning Commission Zoom meeting last week.

Commissioner Mortimer motioned to go into executive session to discuss Confidential Data (trade secrets). Commissioner Malmberg seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Those present were Commissioners and Richard Buck, County Attorney. The group returned to regular session at 11:39.

Commissioner Mortimer motioned to go into executive session to discuss Confidential Data (trade secrets). Commissioner Malmberg seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Those present were Commissioners and Richard Buck, County Attorney. The group returned to regular session at 11:50.

With no further business before the board Commissioner Malmberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:53 am. Commissioner Mortimer seconded. Motion carried, 3-0.

ADOPTED this 20th day of September 2021.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

Dawn Wolf, Chairman

D.D. Malmberg, Member

Scott Mortimer, Member

ATTEST:

Vicki L. Jensen, County Clerk