

# Ottawa County Board of Commissioner's Minutes

March 25, 2024

The Board of County Commissioners met in regular session in Suite 201 at the Ottawa County Courthouse.

## Those present were:

First District Commissioner Dawn Wolf,

Second District Commissioner Scott Mortimer

Third District Commissioner D. D. Malmberg

John Carson, Rick Shupe, Duane Morris

Heather Maddox, County Clerk

Stephanie Watkins, Deputy Clerk

Commissioner Wolf called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and led the group in opening prayer, followed by the flag salute.

## County Departments:

### Museum

Jim Kay came into the meeting at 8:02 a.m. Jerry Schmidt and Jana VanMeter came into the meeting at 8:03 a.m. Kay gave the commission a resignation letter from a museum board member.

On motion by Commissioner Malmberg, seconded by Commissioner Mortimer, by unanimous vote the Board approved to accept the resignation of Museum Board member Neal Kendall effective immediately. The Museum board gave an update on the new building for the museum. Kay said that they have received some memorial money. Kay said that Duane Morris wrote an article on the museum, and it will be published next week. The endowment money has been earmarked to be used for a specific use, the endowment fund is sitting at \$15,524. Kay estimated \$87,000 in the expansion fund.

Kay said that the board discussed the raise for the museum employee, the board would like them to get paid \$14.00 an hr. Commissioners and The Museum Board discussed the wage for the current part time employee. Commission asked for the board to wait to see what new information they receive for the wage study. Kay, Schmidt, VanMeter, and Carson left at 8:24 a.m.

### Public Works

Chris Smith, Public Works Administrator came into the meeting at 8:25 a.m. and gave the commission a Weed Eradication and Progress Plan, then left.

**Public Comment:** Rick Shupe asked about the wage study amount. Shupe asked what amount of this would be for raises above what you already gave. Malmberg said all \$549,000 and stated that she wouldn't approve any amount over the \$70,000, which is what the total raises have been on an annual basis. Shupe asked if they like what the wage study has presented so far. The commission said no, they would like to see Ottawa County compared to ten of the surrounding counties closer to the size of Ottawa County. Wolf said the Arnold Group compared Ottawa County to KDOL Regional data. Mortimer stated that we are trying to get on a pay scale. Duane Morris asked the commission if they do merit raises and stated that he thinks department heads should be the ones that do the evaluations because they are the ones that work with them on a daily basis. Mortimer stated that they had done that the past two years. Shupe asked if there was any way that the public could be involved in the decision. Commission said they will let him know when it's going to be discussed. Shupe and Morris Left the meeting at 8:42 a.m.

### Attorney

On a motion by Commissioner Malmberg seconded by Commissioner Mortimer, by unanimous vote the Board approved a 20-minute executive session for consultation with attorney for body to discuss confidential data including Wolf, Mortimer, Malmberg, Richard Buck. To return at 9:04 a.m.

On a motion by Commissioner Mortimer seconded by Commissioner Malmberg, by unanimous vote the Board approved a 10-minute executive session for attorney client privilege to discuss on-going litigation including Wolf, Mortimer, Malmberg, and Richard Buck. To return at 9:15 a.m.

On motion by Commissioner Malmberg, seconded by Commissioner Mortimer, by unanimous vote the Board approved to restore Richard Buck, as the County Counselor and back pay that he did not receive for the month of February.

### Sheriff

Sheriff Thornton came into the meeting at 9:15 a.m. Prisoner count Ottawa County 8. Wolf asked when the contract with Benchmark, the food program for the jail will be completed. Thornton said April 1<sup>st</sup> Benchmark will no longer be servicing the jail. Wolf asked what the plan is after April 1<sup>st</sup>. Sheriff Thornton said the Golden Wheel, hungry man dinners or pizza. Wolf asked where they are with employees. Russ said they are down to 6 employees in corrections. Thornton said statutorily they have to let him operate as to what he sees is necessary. Malmberg said they are

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worried about the budget. Thornton said he is looking out for other departments budgets and doesn't want them to pull money from each department at the end of the year. Wolf asked if they could move a day shift to night, then Thornton and VanCoevren could help cover day shift? Malmberg asked Thornton if it would be cheaper and safer to house outside the county vs. what it costs to house in county. Sheriff Thronton said yes, it would cost less. Malmberg would like to see what it would cost to house our inmates outside of county. Thornton will call around and see what he can find out.

On motion by Commissioner Mortimer, seconded by Commissioner Malmberg, by unanimous vote the Board approved to take a 5-minute break starting at 9:44 a.m.

On a motion by Commissioner Malmberg, seconded by Commissioner Wolf, by unanimous vote the Board approved the March 18th, 2024 minutes as corrected.

JoDee Copple

### **Claims for Approval: Totaling \$92,213.82**

County General	\$4,314.51
Road & Bridge	\$16,306.19
Bennington TWP Road	\$6,427.22
Coronavirus Relief	\$48,800.00
Buckeye TWP Road	\$322.69
County Health	\$2,896.00
Law Enforcement Center	\$490.95
Aging	\$1,067.45
Concord TWP Road	\$7,310.95
Richland TWP Road	\$3,150.68
Stanton TWP Road	\$988.81
Appraiser	\$9.20
Election	\$129.17

On a motion by Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commissioner Mortimer, by unanimous vote the Board approved the claims as presented.

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With no further business before the commission the meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m. on motion by Malmberg and seconded by Mortimer. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

ADOPTED this 1<sup>st</sup> day of April 2024.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn Wolf, Chairman

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D.D. Malmberg, Member

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Scott Mortimer, Member

ATTEST:

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Heather Maddox, County Clerk