

# Ottawa County Board of Commissioner's Minutes

## September 25, 2023

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

JoDee Copple, County Treasurer/Payroll Clerk

Heather Maddox, County Clerk

Michelle Campbell, Human Resources

Jerry Ayers, Rick Shupe, Leeann Sparks, Caryn Tyson, John Wilson, and Reinhard Grund came into the meeting.

Commissioner Mortimer called the meeting to order at 8:00 am and asked Shupe to lead the group in opening prayer, followed by the flag salute.

**Public Comment:** Commissioner Mortimer asked Rick Shupe if he had any comments. Shupe said that he doesn't have any comments until he hears the minutes from last week's meeting. Wolf read the unapproved minutes. Rick said his concerns are with the notices that were mailed out. The notices by statute are what the constituents go off of to know when a budget hearing is happening. Mortimer asked Caryn Tyson if she knew anything about no fund tax warrants. Caryn Tyson said she was not familiar with that. Caryn Tyson said that she wasn't supportive of paying another year for the notices by the state, but Caryn said she will now be fighting to get counties another year of paid notices. John Wilson said that taxpayers are out here trying to keep up. The County surviving while the taxpayers are hanging on isn't what we want to see. Leeann Sparks wants to know if the county will collect the same amount as last year. Sparks also wants to know about the Central Kansas Library, is it raising higher than last year? Sparks wants to know what the RNR was supposed to be. Sparks says she is asking these questions because she doesn't know what Central Kansas Library is. Wolf said that it helps with libraries around the area, they mail books to the public and help with local libraries too. Sparks said she couldn't attend the RNR Zoom meeting the Central Kansas Library had. Wolf called the Central Kansas Library to see if Leeann could get some of her questions answered. Caryn discussed with the commission about taxes and how she could help educate them. The Republican Party is having a meeting to educate the tax payers about taxes at their November meeting, next month. Caryn Tyson will be present for that.

Rick Shupe, Leeann Sparks, Caryn Tyson, and Reinhard Grund left the meeting.

Karl Leech, and Ferrel Sanders came into the meeting.

Jodi Parks came into the meeting to discuss a grant. Commission signed off on the grant for the Hospital.

Malmberg asked what extra expenses they incurred during the transition of getting the clinic. Parks answered new computers, switching medical records, staffing, and some minor construction including sprinklers and alarm system. Wolf asked if they are sure they will get this grant. Parks said she can't say for sure, but it seems promising.

Jerry Ayers, and John Wilson left the meeting.

Seth Odette came into the meeting to discuss updates for the Ottawa County Sanitarian, with 16 septic permits, 3 consults, and 8 well permits.

On a motion by Commissioner Malmberg seconded by Commissioner Wolf, by unanimous vote the Board approved a 15-minute executive session for attorney client privilege to discuss county policy including Wolf, Mortimer, Malmberg, Michelle Campbell and Attorney Forrest Rhodes. To return at 9:06am. No decision was made.

Chris Jost, Brody Buzzard, Farrel Sanders, Kristen Kloft, Jeff Austin, Cade Rensink, Brian Kindall, Chris Smith, Kenny Baccus, and Tyler Crosson came into the commissioner's meeting to discuss Old World Blue Stem. Rensink with the Extension district discussed his concerns with the weed. Kindall said there is an issue around his pasture and it's a mile deep now, he thinks that it is spreading with mowing. Buzzard said this is a cumbersome battle that we need to control. Sanders said there is a pasture, outside of Wells, that has almost been taken over by this weed. His concern is with it spreading. Crosson said he is here to learn more about this weed before it makes a huge economic impact. Jost said that there has been an anti-burn culture in the Ottawa county area, but it seems like a fall back burn has had a great effect on this weed. Kristen, with Kansas Burn Council, discussed burning. Kristen said that a back burn

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is lighting the fire into the wind. It will burn slow and hot, getting down to the lowest part of the roots on the Old-World Blue Stem. Malmberg asked if this would kill off native grasses. Kristen said it may stunt it a little but, it wouldn't kill it. Kristen also said that burning will help bring on new grasses. Jost said that during the spring Old World Blue Stem is so hard to identify. Jost thinks that fall is the best time to burn and get rid of it. Jost said that we should get on top of this. Jost said that it is a great economic impact to spray the weed. Kristen can come up with wind speeds and temperatures, and how many gallons of water is needed to have on hand for a burn. Jost said that Kristen is a great resource to have on our side. Mortimer said we need to get the fire departments onboard for these burns. Rensink said there are a few departments that agreed to doing this but there weren't enough people on the department to commit. This is a time-consuming thing that will take people. Rensink said Smoky Hill Fire has a membership of people that would help. They wouldn't be opposed to coming across Saline County lines. Jost said that Saline County sends emails to their members, these members are asked to help each other out. Rensink said there needs to be more discussion between emergency management, dispatch, and rural fire departments. Mortimer asked what would you need from the commission moving forward? Jost said he would like to get the knowledge out to the public. He said Chemicals are an issue, is there was some way to get a grant for weed departments. The best chemical is Arsenal and Masapeer. Malmberg said she signed up with the Department of Ag to make Old World Blue Stem a noxious weed. The state said not at this time but the County can do it on their own. Jost said it's going to take time to get people to know what it is and educate them. Baccus said it is in the county ditches just as much as it is in the pastures. Baccus said there are resources available to inform the public. A suggestion to call a community meeting and asking someone to come in to talk about Old World Blue Stem. Resnik said he would like to discuss with other county's that have declared this as a noxious weed. Jeff Austin with NRCS manager, said that NRCS would offer help for landowners. Austin said that if landowners don't get educated on Old World Blue Stem they won't know how to ask for help. Mortimer asked about financial help. Austin said there are things we can look into. Rensink said he thinks we need to keep the discussion going. Malmberg said we should start with landowners, fire departments, emergency management, noxious weed, road and bridge, Extension office, NRCS, Dispatch and Sheriff. The commission will set up a meeting and extension and Jost will put it on.

Kaite Vanderhoff with Choose Ottawa County and Owen Kindall came into the commissioner's meeting to update them on things that she has been doing. Vanderhoff attended Kansas Sampler Inc. and Kansas Housing conference. She informed the commission about a grant to help families with school purchases called KEEP. Vanderhoff and Kindall left the meeting.

## **County Departments:**

### **Sheriff**

Prisoner count Saline County, 27 and Ottawa County 6, and Minneapolis 2. Total 35 inmates. Thornton came into the meeting to ask the commissioners to update the starting wages for the department.

John Shay with the North Central Regional Planning Commission came to the meeting.

On motion by Commissioner Mortimer, seconded by Commissioner Wolf, by split vote the Board approved to allow starting wages up to \$17.50 for the Sheriff's Department starting with the October pay period. During the discussion Malmberg said that Thornton doesn't seem to be having any issues with hiring at the current starting rate and Ottawa County benefits are better than Saline County and Cloud County she was voting against it. Wolf Yea, Mortimer Yea, Malmberg Nay.

### **Appraiser**

Truette McQueen came into the meeting to discuss with the commission about a drone policy. Commissioner Wolf called Mason Herman Engineer with Martin Planning.

Malmberg asked what the difference was between approving and not approving. John said that this is due to funding we received. Mason said that the funding came from the department of defense. Malmberg said that she was on a planning board and there was nothing discussed about flight plans. Mason said the firm was not aware of this either. Mason said he doesn't know if this is totally negotiable. Wolf asked when they received funding for this. Mason said that it was around 2020? Wolf would like to find out when these funds were received as she doesn't remember Zoning getting them. Shay and Herman will discuss and see what they can find out. Commission would like to discuss it again in two weeks.

Commission discussed packing plant numbers for McQueen to take it to the board at 63 a month and see what they think. Malmberg stated plans for the plant need to be outlined.

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### Road and Bridge

Chris Smith and Joe Mullen came into the commission meeting. Smith gave the Commissioners a tabulation of verbal/written quotations. Smith let the commission know that the sealing should happen tonight and then once that is done the striping will happen. The State told Smith that they are going to seed the Wells Rd and it is finished. Commissioners are not happy with the way the road ended up. Commission discussed with Smith costs of overlaying it correctly, so it doesn't cost more money down the road. Commission discussed with Smith and asked the commission if Road and Bridge could stripe the Delphos Road.

On motion by Commissioner Malmberg, seconded by Commissioner Wolf, by unanimous vote the Board approved to accept the quote received from road and bridge to stripe roads at \$1,800 a mile totaling \$66,600 to be taken out of ARPA funds.

### Clerk

Heather Maddox gave the commissioners the claims register to sign off on, and the minutes. Wolf discussed about Maddox hiring additional staff in her office. This was not presented to the commissioners for approval. Maddox said money was in the election budget. Wolf said that was not presented to the commissioners for additional staff. Wolf and Malmberg disagree with hiring an additional full-time position in the clerk's office.

On a motion by Commissioner Wolf, seconded by Commissioner Malmberg, by unanimous vote the Board approved the September, 2023 minutes as presented.

### Claims for Approval: Totaling \$28,972.84

County General	\$8,463.38
ARPA	\$5,429.27
Road & Bridge	\$10,552.42
Culver TWP Road	\$210.70
Tech Fund/Register of Deeds	\$95.00
Building Fund	\$1,754.67
Noxious Weed	\$30.54
Historical	\$214.12
Appraiser	\$32.85
Law Enforcement Center	\$2,189.89

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

**Upcoming Meetings Commission will attend.** Commissioner Wolf will attend Kansas Women Elected Officials meeting in Hutchinson on Saturday.

Commissioners will meet Wednesday September 27<sup>th</sup> at 5pm for a work session.

Following the work session, the commissioners will host a solid waste committee meeting in the courthouse basement meeting room at 7pm.

With no further business before the commission the meeting was adjourned at 12:41pm on motion by Malmberg and seconded by Wolf. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

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ADOPTED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2023.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

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Dawn Wolf, Vice-Chairman

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D.D. Malmberg, Member

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Scott Mortimer, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Heather Maddox, County Clerk