



COUNTY COMMISSION

Wednesday, August 31, 2016

2:00 PM

Schenk Building, 1344 Fairground Rd, Hays

Special Meeting

STUDY SESSION **DATE AND LOCATION CHANGE**

Order of Business

- I. **Opening**
 - A. **Call to Order**
 - B. **Clerk Calls the Roll**

- II. **Study Session**

Discussion of County Commissioner Roles and Possible Changes
[Enclosure](#)

- III. **Adjournment**

What?

Purpose of today's meeting is to talk about our roles as Ellis County Commissioners and whether we desire to make any changes. All of the topic questions listed have been raised to the County Administrator from one or more Commissioners or department heads.

Who?

- Should we explore changing from 3 Commissioners to 5?
- Do we want regular reports from each department?
- Can we expand citizen engagement?

When?

- Should we go back to daytime meetings?
- How often should we do study sessions?
- Should we do an annual retreat?

< REVIEW CALENDAR >

Where?

- Should we install a/v equipment in Chambers?
- Should we explore joint meetings with city councils?
- Should we be more involved with regional/statewide entities to advance Ellis County objectives?

Why?

- What are our goals for Ellis County?
- What future capital projects do we want staff to work on?
- SWOT

How?

- What are our expectations for how we run meetings?
- How do we want to interact with department heads/elected officials?
- What values do we want the Ellis County organization to reflect?

Should we explore changing from 3 Commissioners to 5?

It has been suggested that Ellis County could benefit from having five County Commissioners. While the vast majority of Kansas counties retain three-member Boards of County Commissioners, state law provides a method for increasing the number of Commissioners (K.S.A. 19-204) and counties including Finney, Miami, Barton, Franklin and Seward have gone to five-member Commissions.

Do we want regular reports from each department?

In the past, most county departments had set times on the Commission agenda for providing monthly reports. While this practice has been discontinued, departments would like assurance that their needs and accomplishments are being communicated to Commissioners. How would the Commission prefer to receive information from departments? Should departments have regular agenda times? Would written reports be preferable? One example of a compromise between these two ideas is Barton County, where departments submit written reports to the County Administrator every two weeks. All the departmental reports are then compiled and placed in the agenda packet so Commissioners can ask questions.

Can we expand citizen engagement?

Not many residents attend County Commission meetings. Should the county make an effort to reach out to encourage attendance? Should staff explore alternative ways to reach out to citizens? Would the Commission be willing to invest in televising or live-streaming meetings so that even those who can't attend could view Commission discussions?

Should we go back to daytime meetings?

This relates to the questions above. One of the reasons for going to an evening meeting was to encourage citizen participation. If citizens are not showing up, returning to daytime meetings would be more convenient for county staff to make presentations, etc. How would this impact Commissioners? Would it gain community acceptance?

How often should we do study sessions?

Some organizations do study sessions on a very routine basis; others do them only as needed. If we were to use the fifth Mondays as study sessions, there would only be four opportunities next year (and one of those would fall on Memorial Day). Is this adequate for the county's needs or would the Commission feel "out of practice" with so few study sessions? Should consideration be given to re-purposing one of the existing Commission meetings each month to a study session? Would this be too frequent?

Should we do an annual retreat?

Many local governments (including the City of Hays) take governing body members for an annual retreat. January of 2017 is a five-Monday month, and this would occur just after the annual reorganizational meeting for the Commission. A retreat at this time would provide an opportunity for the Commission to think deeply about priorities for the year, and could also possibly be used to set direction for development of the 2018 budget. The questions under the “Why” and “How” sections might bear repeating at a beginning-of-the-year retreat.

REVIEW CALENDAR

The County Administrator has compiled an 18-month calendar of known events. It would be helpful for the Commission to go through this and look at the opportunities presented over the coming year and a half. Should any meetings be moved or changed? How do the answers to earlier questions impact this calendar?

Should we install a/v equipment in Chambers?

Whether or not the Commission chooses to film meetings, would it be more convenient to have video display capabilities in the Commission Chambers? From discussions with IT, it appears to be possible to provide this fairly inexpensively by using re-purposed equipment. Is it worth the investment? Would it encourage better presentations?

Should we explore joint meetings with city councils?

It has been suggested that it might be fruitful to meet jointly with the Hays City Commission to discuss ideas such as the changes to the boundaries of the city’s extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction. Similarly, meeting with the city councils of Ellis, Schoenchen or Victoria would provide the County Commission an opportunity to reach out to residents of those communities that might not be inclined to travel to Hays for a regular County Commission meeting.

Should we be more involved with regional/statewide entities to advance Ellis County objectives?

One of the Commission’s cost-cutting measures for 2017 involved reducing memberships in organizations such as the National Association of Counties and the Kansas Legislative Policy Group. These organizations can provide valuable outlets for Ellis County to advocate for our community needs. Now that the budget has been finalized, it might be worth reconsidering the county’s memberships in these organizations. However, this makes sense only if the county is willing to develop a strategy to maximize the value gained from these organizations. From discussions with KLP staff, for example, it appears that some member counties have very active Commissioner participation in the organization while other counties assign responsibility to their County Administrators to use the services. Similarly, Northwest Kansas Planning & Development Commission represents an opportunity for regional interaction. How should it be used?

What are our goals for Ellis County?

At the beginning of the 2017 budget process the Commission had an opportunity to weigh in on priorities for the organization. Given the financial climate, the themes of Commission comments were understandably tied to making the county organization more fiscally sustainable. Now that the budget process has been completed (and before the next one launches), there is an opportunity to think about not just the county organization but the entire community and the Commission's aspirations. One example is partnerships with entities such as Fort Hays State University; should the county fund scholarships in the future?

What future capital projects do we want staff to work on?

Meeting at 601 Main provides an opportunity to think about future renovations not just to this building but also to the buildings at Public Works, the county's road and bridge infrastructure, safety improvements for employees, computer network needs, and many other types of capital projects. In the wake of the large building projects of the last few years, how should the county prioritize additional improvements?

SWOT

What other factors, both internal and external, does the county need to deal with in order to actualize the Commission goals? What strengths does Ellis County possess and what weaknesses need to be addressed? What opportunities are likely to present themselves in the coming years and what threats do we need to guard against?

What are our expectations for how we run meetings?

Cover sheets for agenda items were introduced this year, and recently Commissioners have asked staff to pay increasing attention to the quality of these. What other types of actions should staff take to assist the Commission in running an effective meeting? What decisions should the Commissioners come to amongst themselves to contribute to smooth meeting processes?

How do we want to interact with department heads/elected officials?

How can the Commission contribute to creating a team environment throughout the county organization? What can staff and elected officials do to assist the Commissioners?

What values do we want the Ellis County organization to reflect?

Beyond the goals the Commission wants county government to achieve on behalf of the community, how would the Commission like the organization to operate? What principles should be embedded within the county culture? Should the Commission set aside "seed money" to fund investments in programs that meet our priorities?

September 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 COUNTY HOLIDAY	6 Commission meeting, 5 pm	7 Radio show, 8:30 am	8	9	10
11	12 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	13 Radio show, 8:30 am	14	15	16	17
18	19 Commission meeting, 5 pm	20 Radio show, 8:30 am	21 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	22	23 Hays Chamber, 12 n	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

EVENTS

ICMA Conference
Administrator in Kansas City, MO, Sept. 24-28

KLPG Fall Meeting
Dodge City, Sept. 29-30

October 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Commission meeting, 5 pm	4 Radio show, 8:30 am	5	6	7	8
9	10 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	11 Radio show, 8:30 am	12	13	14	15
16	17 Commission meeting, 5 pm	18 Radio show, 8:30 am	19 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 Hays Chamber, 12 n	29
30	31 Commission study session, 2 pm?					

EVENTS

November 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Commission meeting, 5 pm	8 ELECTION DAY Radio show, 8:30 am	9	10	11 COUNTY HOLIDAY	12
13	14 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	15 Radio show, 8:30 am KAC Conference	16 KAC Conference	17 KAC Conference	18	19
20	21 Commission meeting, 5 pm	22 Radio show, 8:30 am	23	24 COUNTY HOLIDAY	25 COUNTY HOLIDAY	26
27	28	29	30			

EVENTS

December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Commission meeting, 5 pm	6 Radio show, 8:30 am	7	8	9	10
11	12 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	13 Radio show, 8:30 am	14	15	16	17
18	19 Commission meeting, 5 pm	20 Radio show, 8:30 am	21 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	22	23 COUNTY HOLIDAY	24
25	26 COUNTY HOLIDAY	27	28	29	30	31

EVENTS

January 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 COUNTY HOLIDAY	3 Commission meeting, 5 pm	4 Radio show, 8:30 am	5	6	7
8	9 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	10 Radio show, 8:30 am	11	12	13	14
15	16 Commission meeting, 5 pm	17 Radio show, 8:30 am	18 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Hays Chamber, 12 n	28
29	30 Commission retreat, 9 am?	31 Hays Chamber banquet				

EVENTS

State Legislature Reconvenes
Monday, Jan. 9, 2 pm

Commission Budget Planning Session
Per policy, this is supposed to occur in "mid to late" January. This year it did not take place until April due to County Administrator transition. Could this be done at Commission retreat?

KLPG Legislative Conference
Date TBA

February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Commission meeting, 5 pm	7 Radio show, 8:30 am	8	9	10	11
12	13 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	14 Radio show, 8:30 am	15 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	16	17	18
19	20 Commission meeting, 5 pm	21 Radio show, 8:30 am	22	23	24 Hays Chamber, 12 n	25
26 Sesquicentennial	27	28				

EVENTS

Staff Budget Planning Session
Per policy.

March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Commission meeting, 5 pm	7 Radio show, 8:30 am	8	9	10	11
12	13 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	14 Radio show, 8:30 am	15 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	16	17	18
19	20 Commission meeting, 5 pm	21 Radio show, 8:30 am	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 Hays Chamber, 12 n	

EVENTS

April 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Commission meeting, 5 pm	4 Radio show, 8:30 am	5	6	7	8
9	10 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	11 Radio show, 8:30 am	12	13	14 COUNTY HOLIDAY	15
16	17 Commission meeting, 5 pm	18 Radio show, 8:30 am	19 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 Hays Chamber, 12 n	29
30						

EVENTS

Western Kansas Counties Meeting
 ("Little KAC")
 Date TBA.

Capital Budget Requests Due
 Per policy, departments to submit to
 County Administrator by April 15.

May 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Commission meeting, 5 pm	2 Radio show, 8:30 am	3	4	5	6
7	8 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	9 Radio show, 8:30 am	10	11	12	13
14	15 Commission meeting, 5 pm	16 Radio show, 8:30 am	17 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26 Hays Chamber, 12 n	27
28	29 COUNTY HOLIDAY	30	31			

EVENTS

Kansas County Commissioners Association Conference
Date TBD

Operating Budget Requests Due
Per policy, departments to submit to County Administrator by May 1.

Staff Budget Meeting
Per policy, last week of May.

June 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Commission meeting, 5 pm	6 Radio show, 8:30 am	7	8	9	10
11	12 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	13 Radio show, 8:30 am	14	15 Budget work session with departments, 9 am?	16	17
18	19 Commission meeting, 5 pm	20 Radio show, 8:30 am	21 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 Budget work session with departments, 9 am?	30 Hays Chamber, 12 n	

EVENTS

Outside Agency Subsidy Requests

Per policy, to occur second Commission meeting in June. How did this work this year? Should we divide them up?

July 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Commission meeting, 5 pm	4 COUNTY HOLIDAY Radio show, 8:30 am	5	6	7	8
9	10 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	11 Radio show, 8:30 am	12	13	14	15
16	17 Commission meeting, 5 pm	18 Radio show, 8:30 am	19 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 Hays Chamber, 12 n	29
30	31 Commission study session, 2 pm?					

EVENTS

Budget Presented to Commission
July 10

August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Commission meeting, 5 pm	8 Radio show, 8:30 am	9	10	11	12
13	14 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	15 Radio show, 8:30 am	16 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	17	18	19
20	21 Commission meeting, 5 pm	22 Radio show, 8:30 am	23	24	25 Hays Chamber, 12 n	26
27	28	29	30	31		

EVENTS

Budget Public Hearing
Must be scheduled by Aug. 15.

September 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 COUNTY HOLIDAY	5 Commission meeting, 5 pm	6 Radio show, 8:30 am	7	8	9
10	11 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	12 Radio show, 8:30 am	13	14	15	16
17	18 Commission meeting, 5 pm	19 Radio show, 8:30 am	20 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 Hays Chamber, 12 n	30

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October 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Commission meeting, 5 pm	3 Radio show, 8:30 am	4	5	6	7
8	9 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	10 Radio show, 8:30 am	11	12	13	14
15	16 Commission meeting, 5 pm	17 Radio show, 8:30 am	18 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Hays Chamber, 12 n	28
29	30 Commission study session, 2 pm?	31				

EVENTS

ICMA Conference
Administrator in San Antonio, TX, Oct
21-25

KLPG Fall Meeting
Oct. 5-6

November 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Commission meeting, 5 pm	7 Radio show, 8:30 am	8	9	10 COUNTY HOLIDAY	11
12	13 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	14 Radio show, 8:30 am KAC Conference	15 KAC Conference	16 KAC Conference	17	18
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December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Commission meeting, 5 pm	5 Radio show, 8:30 am	6	7	8	9
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17	18 Commission meeting, 5 pm	19 Radio show, 8:30 am	20 Ellis Chamber, 8 am	21	22	23
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31						

EVENTS

January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 COUNTY HOLIDAY	2 Commission meeting, 5 pm	3 Radio show, 8:30 am	4	5	6
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28	29 Commission retreat, 9 am?	30	31			

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February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Commission meeting, 5 pm	6 Radio show, 8:30 am	7	8	9	10
11	12 PBC meeting, 5 pm Commission follows	13 Radio show, 8:30 am	14	15	16	17
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EVENTS

Memo

To: County Commissioners

From: Phillip Smith-Hanes, County Administrator

Date: August 29, 2016

Re: 601 Main Street

As you are aware, the County has made significant strides in facilities over the past three years. However, there is one project that was included in the 2013 bonds (and envisioned as far back as the late 1990's, I'm told) that we have yet to embark upon: improvements to the Health and Extension offices at 601 Main Street in Hays.

According to a letter from Randy Phillips of Spangenberg Phillips Tice Architecture to Greg Sund, dated July 1, 2013, the estimated construction cost (including addressing the parking lot issues) for 601 Main was \$402,518. Architectural fees would add an additional \$34,214, for a total of \$436,732. Based on the Turner Building Cost Index, the cost of construction has increased by 14.4% between the second quarter of 2013 and the second quarter of 2016. This would place the current cost of construction at \$499,621. This does not include any costs that were not contemplated at the time of the letter from Mr. Phillips (for example, a cost estimate increase from Driggs Engineering on the parking lot received in 2014 or the need for a new telephone system for Extension). I think it is safe to say that remodeling of 601 Main would cost a minimum of half a million dollars. For this amount of funding, the County would get essentially a reconfiguration of the current office space - to hold the same number of staff - with improved but still limited functionality for both the Health Department and the Extension Service.

The County is not starting from zero with respect to funding this project, however. A total of \$265,731.94 remains from the Series 2013-A PBC bonds. In addition, \$199,627.70 was deposited into the General Fund in 2015 from the sale of the former EMS building less office furnishings purchased for the new Emergency Services facility. Although there are some hoops associated with re-budgeting these funds and transferring them from the County's General Fund to the Public Building Commission (the technical current owner of 601 Main), the total of these two amounts is \$465,359.64 or 93% of the minimum amount estimated to be needed for the project.

To determine whether it is in the County's interest to spend these funds (plus another \$35,000) on 601 Main, I have visited with a number of individuals. From conversations with Butch Schlyer, Kerry McCue, Linda Beech, Susan Schlichting, and Holly Dickman, it appears that neither of the anticipated changes in structure for these two functions (Health/EMS combo or Ellis/Barton districting for Extension) will significantly change their needs for space. While both functions are open to relocating, no one could readily identify a suitable alternative space.

I also spoke with Joe Norton of Gilmore & Bell, the bond attorneys that provided counsel for the County in issuing the 2013 bonds, about our options other than remodeling 601 Main. Mr. Norton advised that the County could use unspent bond funds to retire the debt early if we deemed the original projects (which

included 601 Main within the definition of "Administrative Center") as complete. We might also be able to spend the unspent balance of \$265,000+ on another project within the portfolio of properties financed in 2013 (the Courthouse, for example), but this would require further research if the Commission desires this as an option. Because 601 Main currently serves as security for the 2013 bonds, actually selling the property and using the proceeds to construct new offices for Health and Extension at a new location would require modifications to the PBC lease and potentially other documents as well. Choosing this path could get complicated (and expensive).

All of this leads me to believe that our best option is probably still to remodel 601 Main. However, I would want to have extensive conversations with the architects. Based on our experiences at Emergency Services and the Courthouse/LEC, I would want us to be very clear about what we would be getting for our money and how much money (erring on the high side) it would actually cost. Greg Erbert has identified some additional infrastructure issues with the building that I don't believe were included in the estimate from Mr. Phillips, and I know some additional exterior lighting would also be needed to make the space more functional for meetings. I would recommend that in addition to the two current sources of funds we dedicate proceeds from sale of the Tholen building to this project as well.

The second-best option is probably to ask Mr. Norton to look more extensively into whether the remaining bond funds could be used on another County facility. Given the poor utilization of space (particularly in the basement) at 718 Main and the fact that Bill Ring is no longer at the Emergency Services building, it might be possible to remodel space in one or both of those buildings (re-opening the pain of construction we thought was done) to house Health and Extension. We could then look at selling 601 Main or - if that proves too complicated - entering into a long-term lease on the building with the Historical Society for their storage needs.

A third (more radical) option is to look at completely demolishing the existing structure and building a new building on site. As we know from our 22nd Street experience, new construction is not without its own set of complications. And given the location of 601 Main in the flood plain of Big Creek, this option might be significantly more expensive than the contemplated remodel. However, it also provides the potential to make sure that all the infrastructure issues in the building get addressed rather than simply covered with new floors and ceilings.