

July 12, 2021

The Board of Ellis County Commissioners met in regular session at 5:04 pm Monday, July 10, 2021, in the Commission Chambers, at the Administration Center, 718 Main Street, Hays, Kansas. Chair Robert "Butch" Schlyer called the meeting to order. Commissioners present: Chair Robert "Butch" Schlyer, Commissioner Neal Younger and Commissioner Dean F Haselhorst. Also, present were County Administrator Darin Myers, County Counselor Bill Jeter and County Clerk Bobbi Dreiling. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

No changes to the order of business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There will be no executive sessions.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

Chair Schlyer asked for any changes to the draft minutes of July 6, 2021. No changes were given; the draft minutes were approved as submitted.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Haselhorst **Second** Schlyer

To approve the Consent Agenda items A-G as presented, including the following:

Payment Voucher Claims

Health Insurance (FCMI) payment dated July 7, 2021 for \$2,423.55

Disposition: Motion was carried by a voice vote of three to zero

ISSUES FROM PERSONS NOT ON THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no issues from persons not on the order of business.

MONTHLY DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

No questions or concerns were stated.

CITY DUMP CLEANUP AND REPAIR PROGRAM

County Administrator Darin Myers and Kevin Heit from Kansas Department of Health and Environment presented to the Commissioners the City Dump Cleanup and Repair Program. Heit explained there is a dump site on private property near 55th and 240th that has been identified as an old dump site on the Dinges family property which may qualify to be cleaned up and properly covered using this program. He has spoken with the landowner who agrees with the cleanup. There is no cost to the County, only staff time. Schlyer asked what the timeframe is once the contract is signed for the work to begin. Heit said it could take anywhere from 30 to 90 days. Younger asked about finding oil. Heit said it would go into the hazardous waste group. There could be other monies that would help with that; it would not fall back on the County. Heit then discussed the Orphan Tire Program. Schlyer said they are ready to proceed with the City Dump Cleanup and Repair Program.

PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

Environmental Planning Supervisor Mason Ruder asked the Commission to appoint Keith Gustin to a three-year term expiring June 30, 2024 to the Joint Planning Commission.

Motions: Younger **Second:** Haselhorst

To appoint Keith Gustin to a three-year term expiring June 30, 2024 to the Joint Planning Commission.

Disposition: Motion was carried by a voice vote of three to zero

CATHARINE AND 310TH SPEEDING REPORTS

Sheriff Scott Braun updated the Commission on the monitoring of the area near Catharine and 31th Ave. He said his staff found no evidence of speeding. There were no citations or traffic stops. He said there have been 211 traffic stops last month in other areas of the County. He gave a summary of the RMS process which has been a great asset to his department and thanked the Commission for buying into the RMS system.

EMS PARAMEDIC RECRUITMENT SOLUTIONS

Health Services Director Jason Kennedy discussed the Ellis County EMS line staff employee compensation and the difficulties he has in recruiting and retaining qualified and certified EMTs, AEMTs and Paramedics. This is a nationwide trend that has impacted rural EMS. There are multiple

retirements of tenured employees in the next 2-3 years, and there needs to be significant changes made now to remain sustainable. Kennedy proposed two different options:

1. **Increase base hourly pay** to be more attractive and consistent with other services and similar industries in the state and local area.
 - a. 1% EMT, 1.5% AEMT 3.5% all medics, medics move one step. Estimated cost = \$117,796
 - b. 1% EMT, 1.5% AEMT 3.5% all medics, all move 1 step. Estimated cost = \$137,252
2. **Sign-on bonus:** Provide \$500 up to \$3000 as a one-time sign-on bonus for qualified and Kansas-certified candidates. The amount would be determined by set criteria based on experience and certification. Prospective employees wishing to receive a sign-on bonus would be required to sign a contract for two years of consecutive service with ECEMS. Prospective employees would receive 25% of funding paid on completion of orientation, 50% upon completing a 6-month review. The remaining balance would be paid upon completion of year one with an acceptable evaluation. Payments would coincide with employee evaluations. The total amount of compensation will not to exceed \$3000 per employee. Cost \$3000-6000 yr.
3. **Relocation Bonus:** It is essential to have a significant workforce that resides within Ellis County. This allows for callbacks, more community involvement, and better employee engagement. We currently do not have any residency requirements. It would make recruitment more difficult if we imposed a residency requirement without some form of tangible benefit to the employee. This program could be in the form of an initial 500 dollars paid upon completion of employment requirements and proof of residency in Ellis County, and the remaining \$1500 would be paid as a monthly rent or mortgage stipend for the duration of 12 months. The total amount of compensation will not exceed \$2000 per employee. Cost \$2000-4000 yr.
4. **Educational Certification Employee Grant:** We must focus, incentivize, and pay for in-house education and certification training. ECEMS is currently working with education institutions to bring EMT, AEMT, and Paramedic certification training to ECEMS. Training local established members of our community in prehospital care will lead to a long-term sustainable workforce that can lead to excellent patient outcomes. Cost \$4000-10000 yr.

Schlyer inquired of the work commitment if the employee to take advantage of the Educational Certification Employee Grant. Kennedy said the employee would be required to commit to a two-year commitment. The sign-on bonus would also be a two-year commitment. The relocation bonus does not have a time commitment. Schlyer asked about the sign-on bonus and if it didn't work out and they quit would they be required to pay back the sign on bonus. Kennedy said he would need to discuss this with County Counselor Jeter. Haselhorst thinks it's a good way to promote our healthcare facility. Younger likes option two as well. Myers asked that the motion contain the language to reflect a change in the pay scale to include 20 steps instead 14.

Motion: Schlyer **Second: Younger**

Move to approve the Ellis County EMS Recruitment and Retention strategy, including provisions 1b and 2-4 of Ellis County EMS Recruitment and Retention Strategy beginning August 8, 2021 and to adopt a new pay scale to include 20 steps.

Disposition: Motion was carried by a voice vote of three to zero

2022 BUDGET UPDATE

County Administrator Darin Myers asked the Commission to review the 2022 County budget and provide feedback for the outside agency budget requests, retirement matching contribution match, EMS retention program and the revenue neutral rate. Schlyer said he would like to go through the outside agency's requests line by line. Discussion was had on each agency. It was agreed that DSNWK's budget would be \$250,000 and not the \$240,000 requested; and GrowHays would be \$150,000 and not the \$200,000 requested. Ellis County Historical Society's budget amount would stay at the \$72,000 requested, and the Commission wants monthly updates on what their plan is going to be.

The sales tax projection is doing better than anticipated. This will help offset for the increase to EMS. Haselhorst stated he wants to make sure that we are still building up money and not going back to where the County was a couple of years ago.

The General Fund budget request is \$24,410,242 for 2022. This is an increase from 2021 of \$471,000. This increase represents the Commission's request to create a new bridge fund with an annual transfer for \$400,000. This would increase the road fund to \$71,000.

The Solid Waste Fund has a budget increase of \$1,153,006, which is a decrease in expenditures of \$113,874 from 2021.

Ellis County Fire Department budget request is \$623,389, an increase of \$5,782 from 2021.

Discussion was had on KPERS457. If approved, there are several options available to create/switch the 457 plans over to a 401(a) plan where the county can contribute to the employee's plan. Discussion was had on the plan itself on any potential match by the County of 1-3%. Assuming there was 100% employee participation it would cost between \$70,200 to \$210,600. It was figured that \$15 would be a 1% match, \$30 would be a 2% match and \$45 would be a 3% match. This is not built into the budget for next year. Schlyer asked if there has been good feedback from employees. The employees of the wage and benefit committee were surprised as it was unexpected. He said there has been no negative feedback. Myers said a dollar amount is more relatable than a percentage amount. Schlyer said this is about recruitment and retention of our employees. Younger wants to keep our employees here and not leave and hope that the employees take advantage of it. Haselhorst said it's a good idea. He questioned as to where the money would come from since its taxpayer money. Myers said there is an opportunity on the sales tax. Valuations are going up next year so the mill levy will go up. Revenue will be increased as well. Schlyer would like to see it implemented but only up to a maximum of 2% match. Haselhorst said if it works well he would be in favor of starting it at 2%, but upping it up to 3% in the future. Younger agreed.

With the expectation of increased property valuations and the increased amount to the road and bridge capital funds, it is expected to exceed the revenue neutral rate (RNR) for both the County's general fund and the fire department fund. Since this is expected, it is requested the Commission give the County Administrator direction to notify the County Clerk of the intent to exceed the RNR.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

County Administrator Darin Myers stated there was one final change order on the environmental building that totaled \$2100. This is for the conduit in case an electric gate is installed at a later date and a couple of extra light switches and fans. This will be paid out of the environmental operating fund. If any of the Commissioners are interested in attending the Fort Hays annual Tiger auction to let him know, and he will get them the paperwork for it.

COUNTY COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Haselhorst had no report. Commissioner Younger had no report. Commissioner Schlyer said the fishing is still good.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair Schlyer adjourned the meeting at 6:21 pm. The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, July 19, 2021, Administrative Center Commission Chambers, 718 Main Street, Hays, Kansas at 5:00 pm.

BOARD OF ELLIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ROBERT "BUTCH" SCHLYER, CHAIR

NEAL YOUNGER, COMMISSIONER

DEAN F HASELHORST, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

BOBBI L. DREILING
ELLIS COUNTY CLERK