

MINUTES  
MORTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FEBRUARY 26, 2007

Bob called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with open doors.

Present: Bob Boaldin, Chairman; Allen Tucker, Vice-Chairman; Ron DeGarmo, Commissioner; Eric Witcher, County Attorney; Mary Gilmore, County Clerk

The Agenda was reviewed and approved with additions.

Minutes of the February 5, 2007 meeting were read and approved with corrections on a motion by Allen, seconded by Ron.

Bills were reviewed and approved for payment.

The March meeting dates were tentatively set for March 5<sup>th</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup>.

The Commissioners will canvass the USD 217 Primary Election on March 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m.

At this time Linda Morton met with the Commissioners. Linda has been the MDS Coordinator at the Long Term Care Unit and was recently relieved of her duties. Linda had her MDS book on hand to show the Commissioners what she has to go by to do her job well. Linda stated that the Health System's Handbook states that they can "fire at will" and they gave her no reason for letting her go. Linda further stated that in the 20 years she has worked for Morton County she has had no disciplinary actions taken against her. She said that she feels she has no hopes of getting her job back but does feel the Commissioners need to know what is going on at the Care Center. Pat Kanhai will be the new MDS Coordinator for the Care Center; Pat was a floor nurse at the Hospital before coming to the Care Center and has done a little MDS in Hugoton where she previously worked. Linda said the morale at the Care Center is really down and the stress level is very high; everyone feels they are being spied on. They are afraid to smile or even visit with the residents for fear someone will say they weren't doing their jobs. Linda read a letter to the Commissioners giving a synopsis of what was told to her by Mr. Hernandez, CEO. Mr. Hernandez informed Linda that the Commissioners were in agreement to remove her from her position. Linda also said that in a few months she would be eligible to retire and now not only can she not retire but also will have no health insurance. Linda indicated that the Care Center used to pride itself on not having that "nursing home odor" when you walk in the front door. That is no longer the case. The Center smells due to poor patient care, which is due to inadequate staffing. Mrs. Morton said that the staff at the Care Center would be happy to visit with the Hospital Board and/or Commissioners at any time. The Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Linda for her input of the above situation and thanked her for coming. The Commissioners also informed Linda that they did not give their approval to relieve her of her duties. Linda thanked the Commissioners and left the meeting.

A lengthy discussion took place concerning all of the above after Mrs. Morton left the meeting. Consensus of the Commissioners was that they would go the Care Center and do a walk-thru following lunch this day.

The Commissioners reviewed the 2006 Inventories per KSA 19-2687.

Brandi Fleming met with the Commissioners and requested approval for attendance at the following meetings/workshops:

ICS 400	March 20-21	Hays, KS
Governor's Public Health Conf.	April 30-May 2	Hutchinson, KS
Pandemic Influenza Training	June 11-15	Anniston, Alabama

Brandi mentioned that the ICS 400 course is required and will be paid out of her Emergency Fund as will the Governor's Public Health Conference. She has applied for an immunization grant in the amount of \$1000 but has not heard if the application has been approved yet. Brandi also mentioned that there will be a Communicable Disease exercise held in Hugoton at Memorial Hall on May 16th from 10:00 – 2:00. All of the Commissioners are invited to attend. Brandi said she and Kristi Winters have been accepted into the Public Health Certificate Class; she has received a grant to pay for half of the expenses. The meeting in Alabama is an all expenses paid meeting. Although Brandi and Kristi applied at the same time, Brandi has been accepted, Kristi is still awaiting word.

Motion to attend the above workshops was given on a motion by Ron, seconded by Allen.

Brandi reported that the Health Department would like to begin providing DNA Collection services at \$25 per person. The results of the DNA will be sent directly to the person requesting the service. Motion was made by Bob, seconded by Ron, to approve this service.

The Supervisors met with the Commissioners for their regular monthly meeting. Present were Charles, Charley, Brandi, Justin, Kevin, Gwen, Sally.

Bob stated that we have been extremely liberal with our budgets so far this year and encouraged all to really watch their spending so early in the year so there will still be budget towards the end of the year.

Ron reported on the recent KLPG meeting he attended in Topeka. Allen reported on the WEKANDO group that was recently formed in an attempt to entice a business or industry to locate in this four county area. Each county would pledge their money to the fund. If a county cannot entice a business on their own they can ask the group to assist them. Legislature has been introduced that would allow all those who put money towards the

project would be able to share in the revenue. If each of the four counties levied one mill we could raise a million dollars in a year.

Ron mentioned that we received notice that the Civic Center is supposed to be completed the first of April; we have since learned that it is not expected to be completed until sometime in May or June. Ron also mentioned that plans have been made to paint the Museum so that it will compliment the Civic Center.

Each of the supervisors gave their individual department's report. The Commissioners commended the supervisors on the good job they are doing and how well each department works with other departments. The supervisors then left the meeting.

Gwen reported that the Caterpillar track loader needs a whole new tracking system. At this time Leon is in the process of getting a quote for the work. Gwen also reported that the Landfill is short handed since Weldon is retiring. Approval was given for the part-time employee to move up to the full time position and to advertise the part time position.

The meeting recessed at noon for lunch and reconvened at 2:00 p.m.

Following lunch the Commissioners drove to the Civic Center construction site and then made an unannounced visit to the Long Term Care Unit. As they toured the facility they visited with some of the staff. The Commissioners then toured the Special Needs Unit and also visited with some of the staff of that facility.

Upon returning to the Courthouse the Commissioners met with Charley McKinley. Charley gave an update of the survey of Highway 56 in regards to the Civic Center Development. Kirkham-Michael has surveyed the project and is working on the plans. They also surveyed where the fire hydrants will be placed.

Charley said he got a bid from Venture for an asphalt plant but APAC did not want to bid. Due to weather conditions since December 19, 2006 Morton County will not be ready for an asphalt plant on June 11<sup>th</sup> as scheduled; it will be July or later. The department still has dirt work to do around the Civic Center and we still plan on doing asphalt work around it when we do Road 2 L-V. Also, we are still repairing roads from the storms which have delayed us from stockpiling the material on site. The minimum tonnage per day (500 tons) may be too much for Morton County to handle. That would be 22 semi loads, or, if we have to use tandems, at times 35 loads per day. The Heft bid has been approved by the Road Engineers. Consensus of the Commissioners was to accept the Heft bid.

The Commissioners asked Charley to contact Heft & Sons and see if they could be in Morton County in July instead of April. Charley said there is no way he can be ready for the asphalt projects in April but feels July is a more realistic goal. After placing a call to Heft & Sons it looks like the asphalt plant might be available in July.

A call was placed to Tim Campbell of SEDCO to find out where the Civic Center plat is. Tim was not available and a message was left.

Charley indicated the Road Department will be putting a culvert on County Road D in the near future.

At this time Kevin Shook and Tate Grasz met with the Commissioners to give the golf course report. Approval was given for Kevin to get bids for a new greens mower; bid will include a trade-in of one of the old greens mowers. Bids will be opened at the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Kevin reported that Ben Pate has asked if the golf course fence next to where Ben will be building his new home could be moved and out of bounds markers replace the fence. Ben said he will pay to have this done if the Commissioners agree to it. A short discussion took place. The Commissioners will look at this area at their next meeting.

Justin Holliday, Sheriff, entered the meeting and recommended hiring Tarah Burnett for the full-time Dispatch position at a salary of \$1650/month. Hers was the only application received for the position. The part-time position has yet to be filled. Approval to hire Tarah full-time was given on a motion by Ron, seconded by Allen.

Justin reported that the department is in the process of removing the extra fuel tanks that had been added to the county vehicles; they present a real safety issue and we don't need them. The Commissioners asked Charley if the Road Department can help dismantle these. Charley told Justin to just call the Road Department and set up an appointment.

Justin further reported that Tom Brenneman has three drug dogs that could work for Morton County. Justin has selected a German Shepherd, 15-16 months old. Allen Clark has agreed to take over handling the dog.

A call was placed to Gary Baker concerning where we are at with the water rights for the golf course. Gary indicated he thought we were about 60 days from being approved. Eric asked Gary if we should file another term permit but Gary did not recommend filing one at this time.

A call was placed to Tim Hardy to determine if he has heard from SEDCO on the Civic Center plat. Tim said he has not heard anything since last week and he will follow up on this.

Charley mentioned he has an employee who has been off on sick leave but will soon have used up all of the sick time and vacation time that has been accumulated. The employee is purchasing flex vacation but cannot use the 40 hours because 40 hours have not been paid for. The employee is a truck driver and Charley said he really needs his trucks rolling at this time. No action taken at this time.

Deb Schnurr met with the Commissioners and reported that Willie Furr passed his Paramedic Exam. Deb also mentioned that she is considering teaching a six-week EMT-I class in the near future.

Approval was given on a motion from Bob, seconded by Ron, for Kirk Walls, Dave and Diana Swiatkowski, and Todd Schnurr to attend the "Preparing for Burn Disasters class on Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> in Garden City. Approval was also given on a motion from Allen, seconded by Ron, for Kirk Walls and Tausha Espinoza to attend the 2007 KEMTA Convention March 29-April 1 in Hutchinson.

Deb mentioned that there will be a PALS class at Morton County Health System March 9-10. Todd Schnurr, Kenny Harlan, Tony Hoyt and Deb would like to attend. EMS usually provides breakfast and the Hospital supplies afternoon snacks. Room charges for the two instructors are shared between EMS and the Hospital.

Deb reminded the Commissioners that there is a storm spotter training on March 8<sup>th</sup>. EMS will be providing the food for the training.

Pay Application #2 for the Assisted Living and Pay Application #8 for the Civic Center were reviewed and approved for payment on a motion by Ron, seconded by Allen.

Vienna Lee entered the meeting and reported that Shaun Bowker, dba KANFLO OIL, has met the qualifications as an enterprise zone business. Mr. Bowker has requested consideration be given for the \$5000 cash contribution for asphalt be given towards cement. Since the County no longer builds asphalt parking lots for businesses approval for the \$5000 to go towards the concrete was approved on a motion by Ron, seconded by Allen. The funds will not be distributed to Mr. Bowker until proof of payment for the cement is presented.

Approval was given for Vienna to attend the USDA Energy Program in Ulysses on February 28<sup>th</sup> on a motion by Ron, seconded by Bob.

Vienna asked the Commissioners to review the Morton County Strategic Plan for any changes and requested their input for any future projects to be included in the Plan.

Vienna presented the Lease Agreement between Morton County and Amanda Ankrom for a Commissioner's signature. Amanda leases the economic development building at 529 Morton Street.

Vienna reminded the Commissioners that the Quarterly Local Government Luncheon will be held on March 8<sup>th</sup> at noon at the Courthouse Meeting Room. She will contact Marsha Barnes and see if she can cater the meal since Jim-N-I's will not be doing this for a while.

Mr. David Lawrence, FEMA representative, entered the meeting and requested signatures on several forms to be included with Morton County's FEMA grant application.

The Commissioners signed the Payroll Form, Resolution 2007-5 (A resolution urging the federal and state governments to retain drivers' license renewals at the local level.), the agreement between KDOT and Morton County to treat noxious weeds, Change Order #2 for the Civic Center and the Road Petition from DCP Midstream.

A call was placed to Kenny Mitchell, Chairman, Morton County Hospital Board of Trustees. The Commissioners asked Mr. Mitchell to come to the Courthouse to meet with them. A lengthy discussion took place. The Commissioners informed Mr. Mitchell that they made an unannounced visit to the Long Term Care Unit and the Special Needs Unit this day after lunch. They expressed their concern that the Long Term Care Unit had an unpleasant odor now that it never used to have. The Commissioners also mentioned that they were made aware that some of the long-time staff members had lost, or were losing their jobs. Mr. Mitchell stated that the Care Center is in the black and starting to make money. The Commissioners commented that their concern is that although the Care Center may be in the black, is it at the expense of patient care! Mr. Mitchell said a new Director of Nurses will be on board at the Care Center beginning March 5<sup>th</sup>. He will, however, visit with Mr. Hernandez, CEO, about the Commissioners' comments. The Commissioners stated that they have asked Mr. Hernandez to come to their March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting; Mr. Mitchell said he thought he would attend with Leonard.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned on a motion by Bob, seconded by Allen.