

MINUTES  
MORTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
MARCH 5, 2007

Bob called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with open doors.

The February 27, 2007 Primary Election was canvassed with the results indicating that Jean Ann Hull and David Light will be the two At-Large candidates printed on the USD 217 General Election Ballot; each had 52 votes after the Provisional Ballots were counted.

The Business Meeting followed the Election Canvass at 9:00 a.m. with open doors. Present were: 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 26, 2007 Minutes were read and approved with corrections on a motion by Allen, seconded by Ron.

Bills were reviewed and approved for payment.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the February 22, 2007 WEKANDO Minutes on a motion by Ron, seconded by Allen.

The Commissioners will travel to Ulysses on March 8<sup>th</sup> to attend a meeting with Tom Fuhrman, Appraiser, to discuss the declining future of the Hugoton gas field.

The Clerk mentioned there will be no construction meeting regarding the Assisted Living Facility on March 7<sup>th</sup>, per the Architect.

Motion was made by Allen, seconded by Ron, to go into executive session from 9:00 to 9:20 a.m. for attorney/client privilege. Present were the Commissioners and County Attorney. No action taken after coming out of executive session.

The Commissioners reviewed the letter from Orr Construction Management requesting a time extension of 28 days to the contract for the Assisted Living Project. Following a discussion motion was made by Ron, seconded by Allen, to approve this request.

The Road Petition from Phoenix PetroCorp, Inc. was reviewed and approved on a motion by Bob, seconded by Ron, the Commissioners signed the Payroll Form, and reviewed the Valuation Notices for county-owned property.

Architect bills for the Civic Center in the amount of \$2887.75 were reviewed and approved for payment on a motion by Ron, seconded by Allen.

A call was placed to Tim Hardy. Tim said he visited with Tim Campbell, SEDCO, and the plat for the Civic Center should be ready this week.

At this time Leonard Hernandez, Morton County Health System CEO, Jeff Weaver, CFO, Cesar Lopez, DON, Jack Higgins, John Milburn, Kenneth Mitchell and Mary Whisennand, Hospital Board Members, Pat Kanhai, Sonja May, Debra Sappenfield, new DON for the Long Term Care Unit entered the meeting. Also present during this part of the meeting were Don Coen and Linda Morton. The Commissioners welcomed Mrs. Sappenfield. Debra told the Commissioners her credentials and said she would be living in Keyes, OK, because she has a grandchild there. However, she plans to support all activities in Morton County. The Commissioners thanked everyone for coming to meet with them and expressed some of their concerns in regards to the Care Center. The Commissioners mentioned that they had made an unannounced visit to the Long Term Care Unit at their last meeting and were disappointed that the Center had an odor that it didn't used to have. The Commissioners stated that they don't want expenses cut if we have to cut patient care. Sonja May, Human Recourses, said they have been advertising for CNAs and currently have people going through classes so they can help with the feeding of the residents. Mr. Mitchell said it is the goal of the Board to have the System survey ready everyday. Mr. Hernandez is now making almost daily visits to the Care Center. The Board understands that image is everything and they are dedicated to getting back to being the best Care Center in the area, as before.

A discussion took place concerning the "wound care" incident. Pat Kanhai said that a Wound Team has been created and they meet a minimum of once a month, or as often as needed. Cesar stated there are several nurses, CNAs, physicians, dietitian, etc. on the team and they evaluate each patient. So far the team has met four times. The team reviews each chart to make sure all of the patient's needs are being met. In regards to a complaint that a resident was not getting her bath because she refused it, this has changed with input from the family and the cooperation of the resident.

At this time Jeff Weaver reviewed the Care Center's seven year trending. Jeff said the System has had to utilize the services of contract nurses at times but it is hard to get them. They are relying on overtime and this is very costly.

Pat stated she was granted her request to hire additional CNAs and they are continuing to look for these. They want quality CNAs who will come to Morton County and stay. A CNA is required to complete 90 hours of training before they can get certified and there are just so few people willing to take the training. The work at the Care Center is very hard and demanding.

Leonard said he understands the Commissioners have received a lot of complaints about the lack of manpower, poor patient care, etc. He has only received one call. Leonard asked that these calls be passed along to him. Kenneth Mitchell said, "We are running the place for the patients, not the employees." It is not the family members who are calling to complain, it is the employees. Mr. Mitchell said he feels we got a bum rap on the survey and it grew into more than it really was. He stated they are expecting great

things from Debra Sappenfield. Mr. Milburn said that as far as staffing goes, jobs are available if someone wants to work.

At this time Mr. Coen and Mrs. Morton asked if they could comment. Mr. Coen said that even though Mr. Messer, former CEO, brought the System out of the red and into the black, he didn't cut staff at the Care Center. He further stated that when things go bad it is usually because of administration. Mr. Coen said he feels it is time for the Board to say to Mr. Hernandez that they have lost confidence that he can do his job anymore. If they can't do that, the Commissioners appoint the Board and they can get rid of the Board.

Mrs. Morton stated that she felt she was treated like a criminal her last day at work. Her personal items were thrown in a box and she was escorted to her vehicle. She was not even permitted to turn her computer off. Pat Kanhai is taking her place. Linda feels the Care Center has declined since Leonard and Cesar have taken over. Linda also said the residents are all upset that she is gone and there are people there who need to be monitored all the time that just won't get that when she's gone.

The Commissioners stated that they want the Long Term Care Center and the entire Health System to be the very best it can be! We have the best physicians and trained staff, we all have to work together to make it work like a team again with one goal, good patient care!

Mr. Coen stated that in the past the employees were told they should not talk to any of the board members about any health care concerns. He feels that an employee should be able to visit with a board member or Commissioner without the threat of retribution from administration. He also feels there is a lack of communication between administration and the staff.

The Commissioners thanked everyone for taking time from their busy schedules to visit with them and, again, mentioned that we have a great Health System, we just all need to work together to make it something we are all proud of.

Vienna Lee and Tim Hardy entered the meeting. Vienna reported that the next Local Government Luncheon is scheduled for March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Vienna gave an update on the two Chiropractors (a married couple) who are interested in coming to Elkhart. They would like to be here four half days per week. They currently live in Walsh, CO, and are interested in expanding their practice. A discussion took place concerning Dr. Perlita Dutton's office. Vienna said that Dr. Dutton would like to sell the office but might consider leasing with an option to buy. Vienna will stay in contact with the Doctors.

Vienna reported that the area Economic Development Directors will be meeting in Stanton County on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

Vienna also mentioned that she has been busy spreading the word about the upcoming FSA meeting to be held on March 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium. There are tentative plans being made to consolidate the Morton County FSA office with the Stevens County office. It is hoped there will be a standing room only audience in support of keeping the office open in Elkhart.

Tim Hardy stated he made some calls and Tim Campbell, SEDCO, has submitted the Civic Center plat to Kirkham-Michael; they will overlay the utilities and the plat should be completed today.

Vienna mentioned that the Committee will be meeting on Thursday at 2:00 p.m. to get the kitchen items ordered for the Civic Center.

The meeting recessed at noon for lunch and reconvened at 1:00 p.m. Following lunch the Commissioner drove to the Civic Center for an inspection, drove to the site of Ben Pate's new home, and drove to the Library to view the areas where the roof leaked following the last snow storm. The Commissioners asked the Clerk to contact Jerry Ryman to see if he would look at the Library roof.

Charley McKinley met with the Commissioners. Charley reported that there has been a recall on the recall on the four newest Mack trucks. He also stated that there is a Mack dealer in Lamar, CO and it would be closer to drive to Lamar than Hays; we are instructed simply to take the trucks to the nearest Mack dealer for the recall repairs.

Charley submitted his February 2007 monthly report for the Commissioners' review.

Charley reported he inspected the site for Shawn Bowker's new business, KANOIL, and it appears no site preparation will be needed under the Enterprise Zone. Shawn has requested a couple loads of sand to put down before laying the cement. Consensus of Commissioners was that this was acceptable.

Charley mentioned that Valero had a big explosion down in Texas; this will, no doubt, cause the cost of our asphalt oil to go up.

A discussion took place concerning the Civic Center parking lot timeline; also the acceleration and deceleration lanes in front of the Civic Center on Highway 56.

Ron asked for an update on the installation of the culverts in Rolla. A discussion took place.

At this time Tim Watson, Randy Edelman and Keith Jarvis met with the Commissioners regarding the upcoming FSA meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup>. They just wanted to make sure the Commissioners are aware of the meeting. Bob said he has visited with Bill Light, Steve Morris, and Jerry Moran's office. All are aware and will do what they can to help us keep the Elkhart office open.

Randy asked the Commissioners if the Conservation District could get some of their appropriation money yet. The Commissioners said they will visit with Steve Rice about this. Randy stated that if the FSA office closes, the Morton County Conservation District will still have to have an office and staff in Morton County. This could require an increase in tax money for the Conservation District.

Kevin Shook met with the Commissioners to give the golf course report. Kevin stated he has asked three companies for bids for a greens mower. Bids will be opened at the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Kevin reported they have almost all of the tree limbs picked up from the recent storms; the High School Golf Teams are helping rake up the twigs.

The area around the pond has been cleaned up and the pond is now ready to take on more water.

The Elkhart High School Golf Team will begin practicing today; Yarbrough and Rolla will start soon.

Kevin mentioned he hasn't received the money from the Elkhart Recreation Commission yet but hopes to get that soon.

Sheriff, Justin Holliday, met with the Commissioners. Justin reported his department had a Fire Marshall Inspection on February 26<sup>th</sup>. There were no records of past inspections available. We did receive a couple of deficiencies but nothing serious. Justin stated there had been no inspections of the pull stations. He conducted an inspection and everything works as it should. Justin would like to contact someone who will conduct annual inspections of the department to ensure that all equipment is in top condition. He has contacted the Hospital and the School to find out who they use. Justin will keep the Commissioners informed and the costs involved.

Justin gave Eric the invoice for the new drug dog. Allen Clark has agreed to be the Trainer/Handler for the dog.

Justin discussed an accident that took place on state line road and asked who actually has jurisdiction on that road, Oklahoma or Kansas? Kansas worked the accident but it was actually on the Oklahoma side of the road. Eric will research the matter.

A call was placed to Ashley Fiss, Civic Center Architect. Ashley stated that Jon Ryman, Orr Construction Contractor, and the electrical contractor, have attempted to contact Tri-County Electric repeatedly with no success. Ashley asked if the Commissioners could attempt to contact Tri-County.

A discussion took place concerning the generator for the Civic Center. Consensus of the Commissioners was that a gas generator is preferred. The generator should be able to handle everything but the air conditioning.

The Commissioners informed Ashley that they feel a colored mortar in the brick at the Civic Center would look very nice. Ashley said that no color has been picked out yet and she could meet with whomever to look at some color samples so it can be ordered.

Ashley mentioned that she designed a parking lot to accommodate 334 spaces. She will get the drawing to the Commissioners soon. The Commissioners stated they approved proposal request No. 3 for the Civic Center.

Ed Johnson entered the meeting. A discussion took place concerning vouchers that were submitted for hourly employees to get holiday pay when they didn't work. The Commissioners told Ed that the employees at the Senior Center have to physically work to get paid. This includes the cooks, dishwasher, bus driver, activity director, etc. Ed said he will inform the employees of this.

Ed stated that the Elkhart Senior Center needs a new refrigerator. This is not a budgeted item but there is money in Capital Outlay that can be used for this. Ed had a couple of bids and the Commissioners approved the purchase. Ed said the problem was that neither of the two businesses will direct bill the County. The Clerk's office will write a check for the amount of the refrigerator, less sales tax, when they do the next run of checks. Ed will have to take the Check to Sears and then Sears will order the refrigerator. Someone will have to go to Garden City to pick up the refrigerator when it comes in.

A call was placed to Rick Wayman, Tri-County Electric. The Commissioners were informed that the underground wire is ready and they can bring it to the Civic Center site this week when they come to finalize plans for ordering the transformer. The Commissioners will let Chris Pikes, Wildcat Electric, know this.

A call was placed to Ben Pate to let him know that the Commissioners are in agreement with what he wants to do with the golf course fence behind his new home site.

The Commissioners left the meeting room and drove to Richfield to view the city roads.

Upon returning to the Courthouse, and there being no further business, the meeting adjourned on a motion by Ron, seconded by Allen.