

**Logan County Commissioners Work Session  
April 16, 2019**

Present: Joe McBride, Jane Bauder, Byron Pelton, Alan Samber, Valerie Richards, Debbie Unrein, Jeff Rice, Dave Long, Rob Quint, Marilee Johnson, and Jennifer Crow.

Chairman McBride called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION** - Commissioner Bauder moved to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2019 work session as written. Commissioner Pelton seconded and the motion carried.

**REVIEW LOGAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SCHEDULE OF BILLS** - Valerie Richards met with the Board to review the Logan County Department of Human Services schedule of bills dated April 16, 2019. The Board approved all bills as presented.

**REVIEW LOGAN COUNTY SCHEDULE OF BILLS** - Debbie Unrein met with the Board to review the Logan County schedule of bills dated April 16, 2019. The Board approved all bills as presented.

**REVIEW OF BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA** - The Board reviewed the Business Meeting Agenda for the April 16, 2019 meeting.

**ATV/UTV USE ON COUNTY ROADS** - no new information available.

**COURTHOUSE EXTERIOR LIGHTING** - no new information available. Nate Webb was not able to come out to check the controllers last week.

**COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS** - The Board approved the Commissioners proceedings for the months of January and February, 2019.

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**ADJOURNMENT** - There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 10:23 a.m.

**FEMA HYDROLOGY MAPS** - Rob Quint of the Logan County Planning and Zoning Office met with the Board to concerning the new hydrology maps that were received from FEMA. Thuy Patton would like to meet with Commissioners in May to review the changes to the maps. The Board agreed to invite Ms. Patton to the May 28<sup>th</sup> work session.

Changes in the floodway will be discussed along other changes from Sterling to Atwood. Elevations have been done to add to the maps in those locations so landowners will not have to foot the bill for studies. The maps will go through public hearings for two years before they become official.

**MENTAL HEALTH DRUG ADDICTION PROBLEMS IN LOGAN COUNTY** - The Board met with Journal-Advocate reporter Jeff Rice to discuss the meth problem, mental health problems and the under funding of mental health care that is affecting the community. Mr. Rice will have a series of articles on these issues. Included in the series is an article on mental health in agriculture.

Mr. Rice came across information Commissioner Pelton had provided which notes that northeast Colorado is among the worst or second to worst areas in the nation in every category, i.e. Illicit Drug Use Other Than Marijuana, Non-medical Use of Pain Relievers in the Past Year, Illicit Drug Dependence in the Past Year, Dependence or Abuse of Illicit Drugs or Alcohol and Needing But Not Receiving Treatment for Illicit Drug Use in the Past Year. Mr. Rice also questioned why northeastern Colorado is categorized in the higher percentages than neighboring states of Wyoming, Nebraska and Kansas.

Dave Long noted several variables. One of which is Colorado spends much less than other states spend on substance abuse and mental health treatment. Colorado is near the bottom of the list of the amounts states spend on those issues.

Many years ago a formula was developed on many parameters which determines how much money is given to the northeast region of the state. When it first came out, it was low and has never changed even though the demographics in the area have changed. Some counties and cities have had ballot questions to create a sales tax that goes to aiding mental health care. Jefferson and Larimer Counties have sales tax earmarked to mental health care. The City of Boulder has a sales tax that is earmarked for child care. Larimer County is building a detox and rehab facility for addiction treatment.

A second component is the lack of continuity or continuous good mental health services over the years due to lack of resources. There is a lack of awareness of mental health care and a lack of resources along with a stigma associated with mental health needs in agricultural regions of the state. Those that need the care don't want to admit there is a problem.

Prisoners being released from Sterling Correctional Facility are released to a half way house and then their family and friends move here which exacerbates the problem. Prisons used to move inmates from prison to prison to keep gang activity down. Commissioner Bauder was told that they may not be moving them as often which if true, family and friends may be moving here to be near the prisoners.

Representative Pelton co-sponsored House Bill 1193. The bill would help approximately 30% of current cases with more resources from the state and federal government.

Dave Long explained that there are two parts to the funding need. The first part is how much funding the county needs to be able to manage the case load within the Child Welfare Department - those people that have an open case. This does not fix the problem, it is just the need for ongoing management of moving those people through the system in either trying to reunite families or terminate families and find long term placement for children through adoption and placements, etc. That does not address or solve the problem i.e. what do we need to do to get meth out of here. Counties have to budget to fund over and above what the state will allow to begin to address the problem.

The state does not refund excess funds to taxpayers under the Tabor Amendment. Out of a billion dollars in excess funds collected, all but \$70,000 went to all day kindergarten. The mental health problem/drug problem is more important. Mental health and child welfare have never been on the list of uses for excess tax dollars.

Dave Long estimated that there is \$6.5 million lost in economic activity because of meth related child abuse cases to the county, either due to people not working, and using DHS benefits, the cost of rehabilitation, lost purchasing power in the community, judicial costs, incarceration costs, federal benefits, food stamps, medicaid and more. There are between 60-80 children in the local system right now.

Long reported that in the last nine days, Logan County DHS has taken custody of eight children due to meth and domestic violence resulting from meth problems. The removals are instigated by law enforcement or the courts remove the children and place them with DHS due to safety.

The Board discussed the need for a task force of agencies working together to solve the issues. The county would be willing to provide funding and look into grant funding to create a task force.

The community needs to report suspicious activities, a police need to investigate the activities. The District Attorney needs to be on board with getting meth dealers off the streets.

Jeff Rice asked about a deeper social cause of meth use. Why would anyone try meth? Long explained that some people want to change their mood, whether it is with coffee, tea, beer, alcohol, meth, cocaine, heroin. They want to change their mood. They don't have the coping skills to be able to get through the day in a normal, functioning way. They self-medicate in order to be able to alter their moods. Kids need to be taught more coping skills.

There is really not that much evidence that addiction is in the genes. It is more generational and formed from the habits of people in that family structure. Dave Long explained that meth is different from opioids, depending on the person's predisposition, a one-time, first-time meth use can alter brain chemistry to the degree to cause addiction. Meth use eliminates the natural part of the brain that seeks pleasure from normal activity, like work and the feeling of reward that you get from providing for the family, going to a movie, etc. It instantly replaces that with an insatiable need to quench the next high. It rewires brain and creates a different brain prion. The only way to extinguish the addiction is two years of complete abstinence for the person to be able to start feeling the reward in their brains on old ways of receiving pleasure. This is why parents on meth don't want their kids, because they no longer feel the pleasure that their family brings.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.