

Logan County Commissioners Work Session
April 29, 2025

Present: Mike Brownell, Jim Yahn, Alan Samber, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Elaine Meisner, Mohamed Mlaouch of Tunisia, Cemre Gencer of Turkey, Madalina Cara of Moldova, Tijana Milojevic of Serbia, Rick Cullip, Rob Quint, Michelle Pemberton, Trish McClain, Jeff Rice and Jennifer Crow.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION – The minutes of the April 22, 2025 Work Session were not finished.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK SESSION AGENDA – There were no revisions.

REVISIONS TO THE BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA – There were no revisions.

ELAINE MEISNER – Elaine Meisner and four exchange students visiting from four different countries met with the Board. Elaine explained that the students are considered scholarship students. They go through three rounds of competition in order to earn a scholarship through our government and the agencies that govern their countries. There is a total of 64 students that were granted to her company to come to the United States. The students all go through the same selection process for English competency, writing, and reading. They have earned their way, and they are very sharp kids. Two students are attending Fleming High School, and two students attend Sterling High School. The students are encouraged to get involved in sports, drama, music, choir, everything they can, and get as much exposure to our culture as they can.

Each student described the culture of their home country, their food, their education and family. Cemre Gencer is from Istanbul, Turkey and described the flag of her country. She is attending Sterling High School as a Sophomore. Madalina Cara is from Chisinau, Moldova which has about 700,000 people which is quite different from Fleming. She is staying with the Muller family in Fleming. Mohamed Mlaouch of Tunisia, Indonesia said hello in Arabic. He also described the flag of his country. He attends Sterling High School as a Junior and has been active in many events and many clubs, such as the chess club. Tijana Milojevic of Serbia is attending Fleming High School and is staying with the Mullers who are also hosting Cemre. Tijana is active in sports which they do not have in their schools in Serbia.

NORTHEAST COLORADO HEALTH DEPARTMENT - Michelle Pemberton and Trish McClain joined the meeting in person and Northeast Colorado Health Department attorneys Maria Harwood and Courtney Diguari joined the meeting via Zoom, which was held in the third floor conference room. Also present were Alan Samber, Mike Brownell, Jim Yahn, Jeff Rice and Jennifer Crow.

Alan Samber commented that his conclusion is that the new district will be subject to Tabor. The Board would like clarification on what the debt structure is going to look like if any as far as acquiring the new facility that NECHD wants to build. Will it involve an election on going into a multi-year fiscal debt, which would require a Tabor election, or will it be a lease-purchase agreement and the issuance of certificates of participation, or do they anticipate that no debt will ever need to be incurred because there will likely be sufficient grant funding available?

The attorneys answered that the Health Department is subject to Tabor, so there will have to be an election if there is going to be any debt incurred. The Health Department cannot impose taxes, so it would be just for revenue if there would be debt for a tabor election. There would be multiple other steps before the Board of Health would approve for that to happen. This amendment will allow more flexibility to pursue different

options. The Health Department does not know the grant funding side of it, but it will help with not having to issue any debt.

Alan Samber asked what is the anticipated revenue source to service any debt. The attorneys answered that debt can be paid with revenue that is derived from one or more functions or services of the health department. Certificates of Participation can be paid with available revenues from the health department, those would be the main funding sources.

Trish McClain stated that several different potential revenue sources have been investigated but no one specific funding has been identified. The health department has applied for Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS). This is their second application. They have also investigated USDA loans. They will not be able to accept either unless this amendment to the IGA is signed. Everything will first be discussed and approved by the Board of Health. The health department is still investigating potential sources of revenue for the building.

Michelle Pemberton noted that in initial conversations with the USDA to get a pre-qualification, they were told that their grant requirements are the same as their loan requirements. The health department didn't have the right language in the IGA to allow them to qualify for either one.

If the health department were to get CDS, the Board of Health will need to meet again and work out the details and there will probably be more details needed from the County. One of the attorneys noted that under Tabor as a general rule, federal grants are not part of the spending caps for enterprises. That would be the first thing that would have to be determined, whether a de-brucing election was necessary, whether the money was subject to Tabor, etc.

The health department is not a taxing entity and does not collect taxes. The county does provide funding for the health department. Commissioner Yahn had concerns whether it made the county somehow liable to repay something that the County didn't necessarily have a say in directing. Alan Samber also said legally the counties aren't liable, but in the worst-case situation where the district is going to look to the counties to kick in some money to prevent that from happening to avoid a default. By law, the county is charged with having a health department.

Commissioner Brownell noted that the health department board is very conservative. If it doesn't look like this project will work, they will not do it. They are under no obligation to build a building. If they sell the property, it will go back to the City of Ft. Morgan.

Morgan, Yuma, Washington and Sedgwick Counties have all approved the IGA. Trish McClain is planning to meet with Phillips County April 30th. Ms. McClain would prefer to find grants to cover most, if not all, of the costs of the building. The health department gets most of its revenue for programs from CDPHE contracts.

Commissioner Brownell noted that this amendment to the IGA does not in any way shape or form take away local control of Northeast Colorado Health department and give it to CDPHE. It allows NCHD to be its own entity for the purpose of encumbering funds. In that case, they would be more like the county. Health departments have to abide by certain CDPHE rules, but it would not become an arm of CDPHE. The Board would still retain that authority. The amendment does not change the existing structure of the health department.

The resolution will be scheduled for the May 6th agenda.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.