

## Logan County Commissioners Work Session

August 24, 2021

Present: Byron Pelton, Jane Bauder, Joe McBride, Alan Samber, Shannon Graves, Dave Long, Diana Korbe, Debbie Unrein, Jerry Casebolt, Marilee Johnson, and Jennifer Crow.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION** – Commissioner McBride moved to approve the minutes from August 17, 2021 as written. Commissioner Bauder seconded and the motion carried with Chairman Pelton abstaining.

**REVISIONS TO WORK SESSION AGENDA** – Commissioner McBride added Debbie Unrein to discuss ARPA funds. Commissioner Pelton added discussion of the Courthouse parking lot and the fifth Tuesday of the month meeting with the City of Sterling.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHEDULE OF DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SCHEDULE OF BILLS AND PAYROLL** – Shannon Graves met with the Board to review the Logan County Department of Human Services schedule of bills dated August 24, 2021. The Board approved all bills as presented. The Board also approved the Department of Human Services' payroll for the period July 31 through August 13, 2021.

**RE-1 VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT ARPA FUNDS** – Dave Long met with the Board. He presented a contract with RE-1 Valley School District for use of ARPA funds from the federal government related to Covid support. The Re-1 Valley School district will hire student achievement coaches within the schools. Two coaches have been hired by the school district and two more will be hired with the ARPA funds. The district will supply records with regards to what their goals are and measurements of students' attitudes. The contract amount is \$235,000 to hire two coaches with an additional \$35,000 for additional mental health assessments. The Board will schedule this on the August 31, 2021 Business Meeting agenda.

**COUNTY ROAD 37 ENGINE BRAKE ISSUE** – The Board has had several complaints each year from residential areas and the noise created by trucks using their engine "jake" brakes. Many of the small towns in Nebraska have signs at the town limits stating "No Engine Brakes". Most of the stops do not require the use of jake brakes. The Board must adopt an ordinance for this and hold a public hearing for first and second readings. Commissioner Pelton stated that there is a complaint procedure to be followed as per the Right to Farm Bill. However, it is not necessarily all agriculture associated trucks using the engine brakes. This would be enforceable by the Sheriff. The Board agreed they would like to pursue this. Jane will get a list of county roads to Alan Samber to be included in the ordinance. Some of the state highways may need the signs as well approaching the towns. Jane will contact CDOT to find out their sign process.

**COURTHOUSE PARKING LOT** – Commissioner Pelton would like to take the two parking spots on the nearest the east door and reserve them for Honorably Discharged Veterans who are coming to see the Veterans Service Officer. This would be similar to what Sky Ranch has done. The Board agreed to try one spot and see how it works. Byron will call Sky Ranch to ask where they got their signs.

**FIFTH TUESDAY MEETINGS WITH THE CITY MANAGER** – Commissioner Pelton suggested that the new City Manager be invited to the work session to meet with the Board on every fifth Tuesday. The Board agreed that the invitation will be extended. The Board has had previous fifth Tuesday work sessions with City

Council, however they have not been organized for some time. Commissioner Bauder suggested that the meeting be held in a neutral location. The Board agreed to keep it at the Courthouse meeting room during a commissioner's work session for now. The next fifth Tuesday is in November.

**COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS JUNE AND JULY AND JUNE SALARY PUBLICATION**

**REQUIRED IN AUGUST** –Commissioner McBride moved to approve the June Commissioners Proceeding. Commissioner Bauder seconded and the motion carried. Commissioner McBride moved to approve the July Commissioners Proceedings. Commissioner Bauder seconded and the motion carried. Commissioner McBride moved to approve the June Salary Publication Required to be Published in August. Commissioner Bauder seconded and the motion carried.

**PURCHASE OF SHERIFF TASERS WITH ARPA FUNDS** – Debbie Unrein joined the meeting. She has worked with Karen to determine if the purchase of tasers for the Sheriff's Department will be an allowable expenditure. The county can show a loss of approximately \$700,000 in revenue so the purchase can be allowed. The amount needed for the purchase of the tasers was approximately \$105,000. The Board approved the purchase. It will be formally approved in the next business meeting to be consistent with approval of other ARPA funds expenditures.

**ARPA FUNDS PLANNING** – Debbie Unrein has to submit in interim report by the end of the month to show how funds are planning to be spent. Agreements with the schools in the amounts of \$175,000 and \$235,000 have been made for mental health assessments and the tasers will be approximately \$105,000 bringing the appropriated amounts to a total of \$510,000. The interim report requires a calculation for lost revenue and a rough plan on how the funds will be spent.

HVAC repair/replacement would fall under other public health. Commissioner McBride attended a State Land Board meeting where Broadband came up. Washington County has been working on a project and they said that there is just no (grant) money for that size of a project available. They have spoken with Greg Etl and did not get a favorable answer. Commissioner Kent Vance is who he was speaking with. Commissioner Bauder reported that the smaller towns have fiber internet through their telephone companies. CenturyLink has it but the speed is not there. Viaero gives priority to cell service so you have to turn off your WiFi and it works better. No one has accomplished it (Broadband) on the east side of Colorado. Starlink is going to be available in our area. Commissioner Bauder has put the deposit down on it. Once the equipment is available they will send it out and the remainder of the fee will be paid and Starlink will establish the connection.

The Board agreed to concentrate on HVAC at the Jail and Courthouse due to the threat of future Covid outbreaks. The bid for the Energy Services Company has been tabled. The Board would like to have the person from the DOLA Energy Office come out and meet with them. The budget amounts can be approximate. The Board will ask Chance to start getting estimates on HVAC. Commissioner Pelton will check with Chance and call Aaron Tilden to let him know the Board wants to talk to the State.

Debbie Unrein mentioned that loss of revenue can be used for general things including infrastructure. Elbert County was not able to do anything with ARPA funds for roads and bridges.

Commissioner McBride presented an idea that every employee be paid a one-time hazard pay or "premium pay" bonus \$3,000, then at the end of the year the COLA raises could be lower 2% - 3%. This would save money out of the General Fund. With the money saved, then look at some type of reasonable tax credit.

Commissioner Pelton mentioned he is fine with that except that it should be given to the employees who showed up and worked every day and not the employees that worked from home. Debbie Unrein noted that the period from March 2021 forward is the baseline, they don't have to look back to last year 2020. Previously it was called hazard pay, it is now known as premium pay. In 2020, some employees worked from home two weeks and came back in when the Courthouse opened again to the public.

Commissioner McBride suggested paying every employee because there will be arguments from all kinds of employees who will argue that they qualify. Then he would agree to the lower COLA increase like 3% instead of 5%-6%. The question of giving new hires the bonus was discussed. The funds can be used as incentives to get the new hires to come to work. It is rare to get bonuses at the county level. The cost would be around \$700,000 to do the bonuses. Tax credits especially for the businesses would be good this year.

John Korrey had presented a T-mobile grant application for a large screen in the rodeo arena. This could take the bull riding shows to the next level. Commissioner Pelton suggested LED lights for the outdoor arena/stadium. A GOCO grant could be applied for also. The don't have to use sales and use tax. Chance is getting bids on the lighting, Marilee Johnson is getting bids for a jumbotron for the outdoor arena. The arena lights need to be replaced with LED lights as the old magnetic ballast lighting is charged a surcharge every time the lights are turned on. The projects could be combined for a GOCO grant with the sales and use tax can be used to upgrade the electrical and water for fair vendors. That project cannot be done until it is known whether or not the county can get asphalt. The parking lot will need to be torn up to work on the electrical. More camper spots need to be added as well as upgrading the electrical for them. There is not enough electricity to run every camper running AC.

The ARPA funds are able to be used to increase salaries. Diana Korbe joined the meeting. Merit raises were discussed. CTSI frowns on merit raises and employee evaluations. Not very many counties like to do evaluations any more. The value of merit raises was discussed. Merit pay incentivizes employees to work harder. It is important to reward the people that do a really good job. Supervisors must be trained how to evaluate their employees. Supervisors need to have training on how to supervise employees. Some of this is available through CTSI. The Board asked Diana to send out a survey to Department Heads to ask if they are interested in training.

When the county did the last salary survey, they could not afford to give all of the increases. The commissioners chose to implement the increases over three years. It was suggested that the Class III B classification by the State for Elected Officials salaries. The salary survey should not use any counties along the I-25 corridor. All of eastern Colorado could be used except Yuma County cannot be used as their wages are much lower. Sometimes how the job assessment is written gets higher wages, i.e. glorifies the position vs. a basic job description.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.