

## **Logan County Commissioners Work Session**

**February 21, 2023**

Present: Jerry Sonnenberg, Joe McBride, Mike Brownell Alan Samber, Shannon Graves, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Kristan Lange, Jerry Casebolt, Trae Miller, Tom Kiel, Ed Lake, Mike Weingardt, Mike Forester, Bryan Dermer, Bobby Jones, Brian Kailey, J. D. Sexton, Jaci Wagner, Jeff Rice, and Jennifer Crow.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION** – Commissioner McBride moved to approve the minutes of February 7, 2023. Commissioner Brownell seconded, and the motion carried 3-0.

**REVISIONS TO WORK SESSION AGENDA** – None.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE HUMAN SERVICES SCHEDULE OF BILLS** – Shannon Graves met with the Board to review Logan County Department of Human Services schedule of bills dated February 21, 2023. The Board approved all bills as presented. The Board also approved the DHS payroll for the period January 28, 2023, through February 10, 2023.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHEDULE OF COUNTY BILLS** – Kristan Lange met with the Board to review the Logan County schedule of bills dated February 21, 2023. The Board approved all bills as presented.

**REVIEW BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA** – There were no questions on the Business meeting agenda.

**AMENDMENT TO STATE LAND BOARD LEASE** – Ed Lake of RF Systems explained to the Board that ever since the translator system switched to digital there has been a problem with interference. When the old analog stations would push stations down from Denver, the channels would still be a little snowy, but people could still watch them. With digital, the receiver is either on or off and people see a station is off and they shut their TVs off. It has gotten worse since 2017, when the FCC squashed the spectrum. Now, channels are 14 through 36 in UHF where you used to have channels 14 through 69. They are operating on that little bit of the spectrum at Reiradon Hill, or the Sterling tower, trying to receive from Akron, or Yuma or Holyoke. When interference comes and pushes down the Platte Valley, it's a lot worse here than other places, it will just wipe out the tower, so nobody out there gets anything when that happens. It doesn't always happen on every single channel every time.

They looked into a dish network, however, it was cost prohibitive because the network wanted to charge per person watching it, and they base that on how many people are in the county, even though that's not how many people were watching it.

They got in touch with another transmitter operator in southwest Colorado. They were interested in sending TV signals via IP over the internet and worked together to find a site close to Denver that would be free of interference. They found one with one of their tower crews in Elizabeth, Colorado. The signal originates from there and they send the signal to southwest Colorado over the internet and our signal goes to Holyoke, Colorado right now. That's part of the Region One

system, which is Yuma, Phillips, and Sedgwick County translator system which is all interconnected.

The idea was to bring Logan County in as soon as they could get internet to Reiradon Hill, that has been the big problem. They found PC Telecom did have fiber on the hill and tried to work with the state, but the state did not want to amend their lease. The next best thing would be to dig fiber in. They went through the whole red tape process with the State Land Board, getting it surveyed and approved with them. The State is charging a one-time fee for the encumbrance on the land, which is \$9,366.00.

The rest of the bill will be PC Telecom's actual build charge to bring the fiber, which they estimated to be about \$10,300 - it's almost two miles they have to dig. Once that is in, then they will have fairly low-cost, high-speed, internet. The cost is approximately \$250 per month for one-gig download, which is a pretty good price. They will bring the signal from Elizabeth to Holyoke and from Holyoke to Sterling. They will use Sterling's internet to feed back to Yuma. Then Holyoke will also feed Wray. That gets the key sites for everyone in northeastern Colorado, especially the ones with the most interference. Peetz should look pretty good once they get a solid signal in Sterling.

The total cost for this year will be around \$20,000 for installation. The internet will be a shared cost for the originating site at \$250 per month. Everything has been building in the budget for the last three years. Capital costs and other equipment has been purchased already. Once the lease amendment is signed, they estimate that they can start in March depending on weather. The time frame to be up and running will be dependent on the weather for digging. All the equipment is ready to be up and running.

Commissioner Brownell asked whether the translator system could stream a class being hosted by the Heritage Center for folks that don't travel as well. Mr. Lake answered that it might be possible to do something like that if the proper FCC licensing was obtained for a low power FCC channel. He stated that he has others in Region One interested in doing that also, especially for local high school games. Someone will have to have a computer on site to link into that and put the stream on and there will have to be a dedicated sub channel for county activities or whatever you want to call it. It is technically possible; it is just a matter of changing a low power television station license with the FCC.

**IMPROVEMENTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE ON SOUTH ELEVENTH AVENUE** – Mike Weingardt met with the Board to discuss a petition to pave a portion of S. 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Byron Pelton had signed and put "Chair". The City Attorney wanted more information of what his position was, i.e. Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners even though they know, they want it in writing. Mr. Weingardt noted that this, according to George, will be spread out over ten years. The Board again approved signing the petition as the action has already been approved, Commissioner Sonnenberg signed as Chairman Board of Commissioners. The cost is \$19,645.93 spread over ten years. Mr. Weingardt stated that this was supposed to be in the city's projects for this year and George Good assured him that the city held money back for this job. The bid opening is today at 2:00 p.m.

**COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS** – Commissioner McBride moved to approve the

Commissioners Proceedings for January for 2023. Commissioner Brownell seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

**LOGAN COUNTY AMBULANCE COLLECTION ASSIGNMENTS** - Commissioner McBride moved to approve assignment of a Logan County Ambulance debt collections account to Wakefield and Associates, the account number ending in 1003 and allow the Chairman to sign. Commissioner Brownell seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

The meeting recessed at 9:17 a.m. and reconvened at 9:50 a.m.

**STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH** – Mike Forester, Bryan Dermer, and Bobbie Jones and students from Peetz, and Merino High Schools joined the meeting.

Mr. Forester explained the schools' involvement in the Bobby Jones Pure Purpose Mentorship Program. They felt it would be good to give the Board an update on the program from the students' perspectives. Also, an update from an administrator's perspective, and its efficacy moving forward. They are also asking if there is any form of assistance, such as additional grants to continue the program. The first year, battling through COVID as an administrator, Mr. Forester said he was not prepared for the mental health status of the students. It was probably one of the most stressful years that he had ever had in his entire life. He got a crash course in suicide threat assessments, dealing with panic attacks, anxiety attacks, and various things that the students experienced and there wasn't a day that went by that something of that nature happened that he didn't feel it. Last year the suicide threat risk assessments that he had to perform went down to one or two. This year it has been zero.

What he has witnessed, is that students have been empowered to work through things that the "world throws at them." Bobby Jones has structured the program so that the students can recognize their emotions and can recognize the triggers to those things that send them to a place that they don't want to be and be able to navigate through that and assist their peers in navigating through that. Not only do they have the program, but they have the author that comes in and is able to support that. It has been pretty powerful.

Mr. Forester asked the students to tell the Commissioners how the Bobby Jones program has helped them in their lives. One of the students said it helped him with his self-confidence and helped him guide others and in being a leader.

Bobby Jones is in the school every Tuesday (Merino) and teaches a lesson and then is there for the whole day and is available to the students individually. Mr. Forester made the program available to the sixth grade this year as well. There has been 100% participation among the students. Peetz High School is seventh grade through twelfth grade.

Another student said the program has helped her deal with severe depression and anxiety and she has learned how to manage stress more and does not have panic attacks or anxiety attacks as often. He has also helped her learn how to cope with past traumas.

A third student said that in Merino, Bobby Jones has helped bring the school together. They were divided with major cliques in the school. They have learned to come together and not tear

each other down. They were doing it because they were scared. Now they are not afraid to open up to each other or be real with each other anymore. They are able to be themselves.

One student said they were taught how to control their emotions, but they don't need to shield or hide them. In doing this, he has learned to control himself better. It has benefited him in taking tests and in sports to perform his best in those situations.

Other students cited that they made more friends outside of their normal peer groups of sports or classes, they gained a lot of self-confidence, and learned how to gain control of their emotions. The students like to talk to Bobby and feel like they can trust him. It has not only helped students control their emotions but the entire school body. One student said he has been in a lot of schools and this is the first time he has seen a program make changes in the whole school body. The program has helped especially with the suicide issue that is in schools. It has made the students realize that that they have worth and that they need to keep that worth.

Mr. Dermer noted that the Bobby Jones program has been a great program and he sees a lot of changes in the Merino school in the last two years. The program was funded with ARPA funds through two years. \$175,000 went to schools. Bobby Jones said that he does not want the program to live and die with him. He wants to be able to leave the program behind and add a tech piece, a video piece that basically multiplies him. Leaders will be able to go forward and be able to lead journal lessons. Each lesson has a five-day journal piece.

Mr. Forester stated things continue to grow, the healing process is starting, and they have strategies and keys in order to better their mental health.

The Board agreed to discuss what options would be available to assist the schools whether it be matching grant funds or other means to extend the program.

**EXTENSION OFFICE FIFTEEN-PASSENGER VAN PURCHASE** – Brian Kailey, Extension Director and J. D. Sexton, and Jaci Wagner, Extension Agents met with the Board to discuss the purchase of a 15-passenger van for the Extension Office. Jake Schneider at Transwest has been searching for a used van with reasonable mileage and a reasonable price for quite some time. The Board has allocated \$20,000 for the purchase of a van in capital outlay. Extension had requested \$40,000 because state bids were coming in at around \$36,000. The Clover Buds program has also grown and is up to 30 kids now. They have two six-passenger vans now, which can transport only twelve kids. They are taking two junior judging teams and a senior judging team this year to weekly contests.

J. D. Sexton explained that the 4-H programs are growing, and they are taking more youth to camps. The challenge right now is they must have volunteers use their personal vans to get the kids to the judging contests. They just returned from Kearney, Nebraska and that is wear and tear on volunteer vehicles, and the volunteers won't let Extension reimburse them for fuel. There is also the problem of multiple vehicles on the road. It would be better to have fewer vehicles to worry about.

The Extension program feels that it can come up with \$10,000 if the county can contribute another \$10,000. They are searching for a reliable van that they can trust to take to Louisville, Kentucky, as their plan is to take the team there in two years.

Commissioner Brownell asked if they had considered purchasing the people movers like the college uses. J.D. stated that he felt less safe driving those type vehicles and fuel economy is less in those vehicles, particularly in the wind. The 15-passenger vans actually have safer-technology now than they used to have. It would also be accessible to other departments in the county to use if they need to use it.

Brian Kailey asked how to go about getting bids on a used vehicle. Commissioner McBride said as long as they can show that they have searched for the vehicles, even if they find a similar one online, they can use that vehicle or a second vehicle as one of their bids. They do not have to be sealed bids in this case, they can fill out a purchase order. Jake Schneider said that he would be able to get the vehicle here from Denver so that a Road and Bridge mechanic could inspect it and probably the Transwest mechanic would inspect it as well.

The Board agreed to fund the purchase with an additional \$10,000.00. The Extension program will use fundraisers to come up with an additional \$10,000.00.

**EXTENSION CREDIT CARD LIMITS** - J.D. Sexton requested a permanent increase on Extension agents' credit cards. Right now, they all have a \$1,000 limit and are forced to put things on their personal credit cards because the \$1,000 limit is not enough. For example, the other day he had to order belt buckles for a livestock judging contest. He had to put \$500 on his card because his county card was maxed out. He sent the judging team to Kearney, Nebraska this past weekend. It cost \$1,500 to go to that contest. He did not have enough credit available on his card, so he ended up having volunteers put things on their personal cards. He is requesting a permanent \$3,000 or \$5,000 limit increase. They do not have 4-H Council cards because they require two signers. Extension agents cannot sign on those accounts, it has to be volunteers, according to national 4-H policy and they have to attend all meetings to do that.

Debbie Unrein stated that there is a form that will need to be completed for the commissioners' approval for the credit card limit increase. The Board agreed that they would not have a problem with a \$5,000 limit.

Commissioner Brownell noted that he will be gone to CIAC which is a quarterly meeting with CSU's new director. He will visit with the agents to get their suggestions before that meeting.

Debbie Unrein discussed the CTSI insurance coverage and governmental immunity in the case of an accident in-state. Out of state, governmental immunity is lost and insurance is subject to whatever is charged. Brian Kailey stated that they do have a release of liability form for students and it also releases drivers from liability. Anyone that volunteers to drive 4-H kids, is made a 4-H leader because CSU will back them up because they are a 4-H leader and liability is covered with vehicles, if anything happens. They are run through motor vehicle and criminal background checks to be sure they are safe.

**NECALG BUS PROPERTY** - Alan Samber discussed the sale of the NECALG bus property in Sterling on South 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. CDOT has determined that it wants to sell the property. By state statute, local governments have the right of first refusal to purchase it for the appraised price. If a local government does not purchase the property through the first rights of refusal, it will go to a bid process. NECALG approached the county with a request that it purchase the property so that NECALG doesn't risk a third party bidding on it. The Board agreed to exercise

that option on behalf of NECALG last August and purchase the property at its appraised price of \$155,000. CDOT is ready to proceed with the closing of the sale. NECALG has made the verbal commitment to purchase the property from the county. Ken Mooney of NECALG assures Alan that NECALG does have the cash to pay the county for the property. The Board agreed to continue with purchase of the property and sale to NECALG.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.