

**Logan County Commissioners Work Session  
February 27, 2024**

Present: Mike Brownell, Joe McBride, Alan Samber, Kristan Lange, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Rick Cullip, Elaine Meisner, Saikal Matazimova, Caitlin Baseggio, Kevin Blankenship, Diana Korbe, Danny Gutierrez-Dutton, and Jennifer Crow.

Chairman Brownell 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 13, 2024 as written. Commissioner Brownell seconded, and the motion carried, 2-0.

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

**REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHEDULE OF COUNTY BILLS** – The Board met with Kristan Lange to review the Logan County schedule of bills dated February 27, 2024. All bills were approved as presented.

**ELAINE MEISNER WITH EXCHANGE STUDENT FROM Kyrgyzstan** – Elaine Meisner introduced Saikal, an exchange student from Kyrgyzstan. Saikal is staying with a local family who is also hosting another exchange student. She will be here until the middle of May.

Saikal explained that Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country in Central Asia bordered by Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and China. Kyrgyzstan’s size is approximately 77,000 square miles in total and is known for its mountain ranges. Ninety percent of all its land is mountains.

The language of the country is Kyrgys and Russian. The government is Unitary, and the President is a Democratic President. Their currency is som, and 70 som equals one dollar.

Saikal showed her country’s flag. The red represents bravery and wealth, the yellow represents peace. The symbol in the middle of the flag represents the top of a house or yurt of the Kyrgys nomadic people who moved from one place to another using horses. The horse played a great role in the country’s history. There are forty sun rays which represent the forty tribes of the Kyrgys people.

Saikal described the culture in Kyrgyzstan and described her people as very hospitable. When people come into their homes, they greet them respectfully and place them in the highest space in the room and serve them hot tea and bread. Their national food is Beshbarmak. It is noodles with boiled meat, horse meat, and people enjoy it. They also drink horse milk which is called kymyz. If you drink too much, you get high.

The national game of Kok-boru is very famous and is played on a square field with a hole. People ride horses and must put a goat inside of it. It seems quite dangerous, but it is not. Archery is also part of the national game. Another game that is very interesting is called Kyz Kuumaii. “Kyz”

means a girl and “Kuumai” means chasing. The man and woman each ride a horse, the woman goes first. The man has to chase the woman and kiss her cheek, if he doesn’t, he has lost.

Saikal came to the United States through a Flex program, a future leaders exchange program sponsored by the USA Department of State and American Consul. Thousands of exchange students come from all over the world. They come from fifteen countries every year to the United States to experience American teenage life, to get to know American culture, customs, and history and of course, share about their country, and be an ambassador of their country.

Saikal shared that she heard about the Flex program two years ago. She applied but didn’t get in. The next year, she applied again and was selected as semifinalist. She interviewed and submitted a lot of documents and essays and finally was selected as a finalist. It is quite competitive, only two percent of students get scholarships. It was tough, but she is very happy and glad to be here. Going to high school was always her dream and she wanted to learn about American people and the culture and holidays and share about her country. She is thankful for her coordinator Elaine Meisner. She was asked what her favorite American food is. She cannot eat pork as she is Muslim. Her favorite food is beef steak with mashed potatoes and gravy and macaroni and cheese. Commissioner McBride thanked her for her presentation and gave her a gift bag that contained Logan County souvenirs.

**LOGAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AG DAY EVENT** – Caitlin Baseggio, Logan County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director met with the Board concerning the Ag Day event that the Chamber of Commerce is hosting. Last year the event was held downtown at the Chamber of Commerce. They felt like that was not a good location for that type of event. They want to make it a bigger event and want to include more Ag companies and get more equipment. It was decided that the fairgrounds indoor arena is a better location. Ms. Baseggio stated they want to schedule the fairgrounds for Friday, April 12, from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. and asked if there is a possibility the Board could waive the fees for rental of the arena. The date is reserved on the fairgrounds calendar.

The Exhibit Center arena will need to be packed for vendors. Jaci Wagner is assisting with the event, lining up presentations. NJC is going to participate, and they are going to have their Farm Bureau Barbeque the next day to raise money for them. The Chamber will be promoting NJC to get people to come back the next day for that. They plan to have farm equipment set up in the parking lot if there is room. Commissioner Brownell noted that they may need to be careful of the construction crews coming in and out.

Ms. Baseggio explained that downtown businesses near the Chamber of Commerce did not like that the Ag Day event closed off their business parking to customers.

Commissioner Brownell noted that the Board is in the process of reworking the fees for use of the fairgrounds. The Board agreed that the fees can be waived for Ag Days at the fairgrounds.

**CITY OF STERLING/LOGAN COUNTY INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS** – Sterling City Manager Kevin Blankenship met with the Board to begin preliminary discussion of the City of Sterling/Logan County Intergovernmental Agreements. Mr. Blankenship explained that his intentions today are to meet with the Board to start discussions as the IGAs expire in July. The items

included in the agreement include the Logan County Ambulance, Logan County Landfill, Logan County Jail, sewage collection on County Road 37, South Platte Valley Regional Transportation Authority, Sunset Memorial Garden Cemetery, Building Permits, and Special Event Permits. There are a couple of others that may need to be included such as the IT Server Platform, IGA, we may want to include this or keep it separate. There's also an employee reciprocal free admission to the Logan County Shooting Range and the Sterling Rec Center if we want to continue that.

Mr. Blankenship's intention today is just to bring forward what we have now and ask how the Board wants to proceed, whether through email comments or to meet individually. He can come back in a couple of weeks, or come back weekly, whatever the Board would like.

Commissioner McBride suggested that if there was to be an initiative or ballot issue for the ambulance, the IGA could be extended for a year. The county mill levy could be cut, and the ambulance service could run on its own. That's a huge part of the whole IGA. Next year's board will know if the ambulance is still with the county. If it's taken out of the IGA, that changes everything.

Commissioner McBride has discussed the Ambulance District with the Fire Chief and for the most part, he thinks it should get supported. A lot of the rest of the IGA is balancing out the ambulance portion, a lot of smaller stuff and was not a big deal.

Mr. Blankenship is open to whatever works for the County. The consolidated IGA could be extended by another year. Alan Samber asked if the ballot initiative passes, will there be a need for a buffer of time for accumulation or collection of sales tax until such time to enable it to operate. Commissioner McBride also mentioned that an ambulance district Board would need to be appointed or elected. Commissioner McBride stated that he doesn't have any complaints with the rest of the IGA. He would like to see ground burials at Sunset Memorial Gardens. Mr. Blankenship stated that the City is open to talking about that and seeing how they can work with that.

Commissioner Brownell asked if there are any other issues that need more discussion than others. Blankenship stated really the ambulance piece is the one that needs the most discussion from both sides, most others are just "business." He asked if the Board would want County Attorney Alan Samber or the City Attorney to draft an extension to the IGAs. Commissioner McBride stated that the Board needs to make sure Commissioner Sonnenberg is on board with extending the IGAs.

Commissioner Brownell discussed the possibility of combining the Recreation Center and the Heritage Center. Wade Gandee and Cynthia Mills are going to be discussing the idea.

Alan Samber noted that there was an additional IGA regarding Use Tax Collection which he sent to the City Attorney. He will discuss with the City Attorney how to proceed with extending the current IGA deadline. The Server Platform IGA has a separate deadline. It could be rolled into the consolidated IGA which would extend that deadline another year and two months. Alan will discuss with Matt after making sure Commissioner Sonnenberg is on board with proceeding.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.