

Logan County Commissioners Work Session

October 31, 2023

Present: Jerry Sonnenberg, Joe McBride, Mike Brownell, Alan Samber, Kristan Lange, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Jerry Casebolt, Jane DeSanti, Rob Quint, Dave Barber, Marc Reck, Tom Kiel, Jeff Rice, Danny Guterrez-Dutton and Jennifer Crow.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION – Commissioner Brownell moved to approve the minutes of October 17, 2023, as written. Commissioner McBride seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

REVISIONS TO WORK SESSION AGENDA – There were no revisions.

REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHEDULE OF COUNTY BILLS –The Board reviewed the Logan County schedule of bills dated October 31, 2023. Commissioner Brownell moved to approve the bills dated October 31, 2023. Commissioner McBride seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

REVIEW BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA – There were no additions or changes to the Business Meeting agenda.

STERLING BUSINESS NETWORK USE OF CLARENCE’S CORNER - Jane DeSanti discussed the use of Clarence’s Corner during November 24 - December 23 by members of the Sterling Business Network (SBN) as a promotional effort to draw business downtown.

Ms. DeSanti reported that Rick Cullip didn’t feel that it would work to wrap Clarence’s Corner. He felt like there would be a chance that it would cause damage to the building. The exterior wrap structure could cause damage and Mr. Schlenz couldn’t guarantee that it would not be damaged. Home Depot had approved the project and would have built it. The Board stated that Rick did not have the authority to cancel the project.

The SBN wants Sterling to be known as the City of Sweet Adventure. Therefore, instead of building the panels, they would like to paint the slogan on the end of Clarence’s Corner. They want it to be their tag to help generate more tourism. Karen Foote would be willing to paint the lettering. It would take two days with the temperature at least 65 degrees. The cost would be \$719.00.

Commissioner McBride would like to contact Mrs. Meisner and see what the family would say about this. He does not like the lettering on the building year-round. He thinks if they are willing to donate some money to the project, they can decorate the building. However, Ms. DeSanti stated Home Depot won’t just donate decorations because their decorations need to be tied to a project. The business community wants Sterling to be known as the City of Sweet Adventure and not just for Christmas, it’s year-round. She mentioned Home Depot has 8-foot inflatable nutcrackers costing \$249.00 each that light up and eyes move or metal ones for \$600.00. Jane has looked at decorations and thinks that the painting idea is a good compromise.

Commissioner Sonnenberg is struggling with permanently painting something on the building where maybe they can do the same thing with a beautiful sign next to it. Jane agreed that we could make a sign, but the building is going to need painting again. Karen Foote said it has been fifteen years since the building was painted. Jane wants to put the lettering on there until it needs to be painted again and Joe said that he will have to talk to the family about it. Jane mentioned the history of Clarence's Corner. According to some of the people she has talked to, there was a petition that was trying to get rid of Clarence's Corner because they thought it was an eye sore. The health department eventually closed it down because of the water issue.

Commissioner McBride suggested a movable storage type structure for \$4,000- \$5000. However, the problem becomes loading it and moving it every year. Jane thinks she will be competing with Clarence's Corner. Commissioner Sonnenberg said it would be a partnership with Clarence's Corner. There are many groups that Jane has organized to help run Clarence's Corner for the Christmas season. Jane is hoping that during the holiday there are activities going on to attract people downtown.

There will be the Hospice Christmas tree in the gazebo. The Commissioners will take a look at the money. Commissioner Sonnenberg thinks that they can make another building work.

Jane suggested a metal cart with an awning. Hot chocolate or other snow cones could be sold from a cart. Commissioner McBride offered to work with Jane before the next meeting on November 7th. Commissioner Brownell suggested the slogan be placed on a banner over Main Street or on the reader sign by tourist center. However, Marilee Johnson said the sign is no longer working. Jane said maybe asking the banks if they can put the theme on their signs, but she doesn't know what their policies are.

Commissioner McBride asked if the Chamber or the City of Sterling were on board with this campaign. Jane said she didn't know because they had not really been to the meeting because the Chamber Director is new. The Sterling Business Network has been working on this idea (City of Sweet Adventure) for two years. DeSanti discussed the billboard on the interstate coming from Denver and suggested that there should also be a billboard advertising Sterling on the highway from Nebraska. Commissioner Sonnenberg told Jane she can work with Commissioner McBride this week on options and see what they can come with for next week's meeting.

SENATOR KEN BUCK UPDATE - Darlene Carpio met with the Board to give an update on Senator Ken Buck's activities. It has been a fiasco in DC especially in the House of Representatives, but they finally settled the speaker issue. One of the first things Mike Johnson wants to bring to the floor is to vote to fund aid for Israel and to separate that from Ukraine aid. If it gets out of the house it will probably run into some snags with the Senate.

One of his top three agenda items for next month is the Farm Bill. That will be the largest appropriations bill that will come before this Congress. The Farm Bill, without any added programs, without any added bumps to any existing programs, will reach a trillion dollars for the first time ever, just because of inflation. She doesn't know if his thinking is that it needs to come together with funding our government, which is now down to a three-week deadline again.

There have been five major appropriations packages since the last Farm Bill, that Congress passed. The Inflation Reduction Act and everything that came into the billion-dollar price tag all over Covid funding. All those things have been in our budget over and above, since our last Farm Bill. That is going to be a real factor when they look at the price tag and see what other requests they have for additional monies. Something that people in Ag country will want to watch and play into the conversations and the decisions.

Ms. Carpio reminded the Board that the SBA is offering Sterling as a resource center to make people aware of the programs that they can bring. They chose the area because of all the flooding, rain, and tornados that we have had. That is happening from November 14, 2023 through November 18, 2023.

Mike said that they ran the information in the Sterling J.A this morning and said that Jerry Casebolt is going to check on some of the folks in Atwood that had flooding to make sure that they are aware that the SBA is coming.

Also, the SBDC (Small Business Development Centers) centers have given additional training and information in the last few months on how to support SBA programs. The state department has been offered Webinars at 1:30 p.m. every day on what's going on in Israel. There are constituents in District 4 that have family members or others that have needed help getting out of Israel.

Ms. Carpio noted that one of their priority requests has been on behalf of the folks of the Republican River. Those conservation programs are a good tool to try and retire some of those acres. Last year they did not get to fund any Equip contracts. The Equip contracts were funded through state dollars but federal dollars did not fund any of the contracts. Funds are allotted to each state and before they could fund that program in the Republican River basin last year, they ran out of dollars. They did have a program where they could go to other states and if they hadn't used their funds, they could ask for some of the other state's funds. She is not sure if they accessed any of that. If they funded them last year, it was through that \$30 million that they got from the State of Colorado.

The meeting recessed at 9:35 a.m. and reconvened at 9:58 a.m.

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 1009 and allow the Chairman to sign. Commissioner Brownell seconded and the motion carried, 3-0.

SECURITY FOR PRIVATE EVENTS AT THE LOGAN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS - The Board discussed security. Commissioner Sonnenberg has had multiple conversations with the Sheriff about it. Commissioner Brownell looked at it and after reading Alan's comments and also comments from law enforcement, he is fine with doing away with the requirement. If people want to hire law enforcement, they can, but it should not be required. Commissioner Sonnenberg used that statement as a motion. Commissioner McBride seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.