

# **REPUBLIC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES**

**MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2022**

The Republic County Commission met in regular session on Monday, June 6, 2022, at 8:30am. Commissioners present were Doug Garman, Melvin Jeardoe and Edwin Splichal. Secretary Susan Aaron recorded the minutes. Deb Hadachek from the Belleville Telescope observed most of the meeting.

Commissioner Garman called the meeting to order and attendees pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Lay Pastor Al Urich, American Lutheran Church of Belleville, offered morning prayer. Commissioner Splichal moved and Commissioner Jeardoe seconded to approve the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Jeardoe moved and Chairman Garman seconded to approve May 31, 2022, minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Attorney Trish Voth, Foulston Siefkin LLP, joined the meeting via Zoom. At 8:35am Commissioner Jeardoe moved and Commissioner Splichal seconded to enter executive session for Attorney-Client Privilege to discuss the proposed wind farm project for 25 minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Attending the session were the three commissioners and Voth. The Board reconvened at 9am taking no action. At 9am Chairman Garman moved and Commissioner Jeardoe seconded to enter executive session for Attorney-Client Privilege to discuss the proposed wind farm project for 5 minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Attending the session were the three commissioners and Voth. The Board reconvened at 9:05am taking no action.

Kay Shoemaker and Mike Hadachek, Republic County Development (RCD) presented loan documents for signatures. Fisher Rocks repaid their RCD loan in full. North Side, LLC, finalized paperwork for their RCD loan.

During Public Forum, several people shared. Brenda Danielson expressed a concern that electricity generated by the proposed wind farm be guaranteed to be retained for use in Republic County. Chairman Garman advised that how electricity is distributed is determined by the utility companies and suggested to reach out to the providers for Republic County. Commissioner Jeardoe, retired from Rolling Hills Electric, further advised that utility companies make determinations based on their business plan. Alan Anderson, NextEra, advised that utilities are franchised and that they contract with the providers. Electricity generated by the proposed wind farm will be injected into the southwest power grid. Danielson then expressed a concern that the county's attorney, Trish Voth, may be biased to advocate on behalf of the wind farm. Chairman Garman responded that Voth has a vast knowledge with 20+ years of experience working with wind farm projects for all varieties of customers. She does not appear to be biased. She represents Republic County very well, including advising considerations of future results from choices made now. Commissioner Jeardoe advised that electricity is used as it is produced, that it cannot be stored. Robert Lahodny added that power is directed to where it is needed most.

Annette Bredthauer shared that Marshall County was not happy with NextEra on two points: One, that road damages of approximately \$200,000 and fines has not yet been settled, and, two, that restitution for crop damage in 2021 has not yet been made. Bredthauer shared the phone numbers for the Marshall County clerk and commissioners. Bredthauer asked if the Commission had considered recording the meeting for public viewing. Chairman Garman answered that currently the county does not have that ability.

Chairman Garman, in response to a request from The Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK), moved to recognize June 2022 as Elder Abuse Awareness month in Republic County. Commissioner Jeardoe seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Belleville Chamber and Main Street requested to use the area close to the bus stop in front of the court house to set up a tent for a Poker Walk on Monday, June 13, 2022, from 10am to 1pm. Permission was granted with the stipulation not to obstruct the view of traffic.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court's budget request was presented for approval. Commissioner Splichal moved and Commissioner Jeardoe seconded to approve the budget as requested. Motion passed unanimously.

Raymond Raney, Emergency Manager, Communications Director and 911 Coordinator, presented topics.

- Dispatch needs to be informed when an entity needs them to help respond to an alarm as to what actions need to be taken when the alarm trips. Recently Dispatch received an alarm notification from the Health Department, but Dispatch had not been advised that they were a backup responder nor what to do if an alert was sent.
- With the pending retirement of Appraiser Barry Porter, both the county's email account and the county's antivirus software need to be managed by someone as Porter currently handles these. The county's email account with Google is no longer complimentary. No one seems to know what the new cost will be. Chairman Garman asked Raney for his opinion on how to handle the county's IT needs. Raney advised that whoever we use be available for on-site service, not merely for remote service.
- Raney presented a quote from NexTech to replace Susan Aaron's computer. Chairman Garman requested that Raney get a second quote and go with the lesser cost between the two.
- Raney encouraged the Board to review the value of the long-term care employee benefit.
- Raney advised that the discount of chemicals provided by the Weed Department has decreased from 25% to 20% and to please look into that.
- The window in Dispatch leaks badly during rains. In spite of intense investigation, the source of the leak has not been identified, but Raney believes the leak is higher up in the wall.
- The County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant contractor, Laura Leite, has received several inquiries from applicants about the status of their applications. Chairman Garman responded that awards of ARPA funds have not yet been determined. Applications have been reviewed, but require further discussion.
- Raney advised that now ARPA funds may be used as the matching portion for other grants.
- Raney has received quotes for a new phone system and asked if the Board would like a demonstration from any of the companies who sent quotes.
- Homeland Security Funds, through Emergency Management, is purchasing an inventory system that can be available to county departments.

Ken Robbins, Highway, Transportation and Solid Waste Director presented the weekly report of concerns and department activities. Then Robbins discussed with Commissioners the following:

- Today, June 6, items collected from the City of Republic's city-wide clean-up will be picked up
- Thistles in a 60-acre field near Republic were knocked down and crimped by the owner in an effort to eliminate this noxious weed.
- Crews are adding gravel and blading roads at all opportunities during the recent rains.
- Part of 20 Road between US36 and Queen Road is being upgraded to gravel as soon as weather permits.
- Commissioner Splichal inquired if the wood box culvert on 120 Road south of Granite will be replaced with a railroad box car. Robbins advised, no, it is not tall enough, rather this is one of a few that may have to be rebuilt.
- Robbins presented and discussed a 6 Year Capital Plan for Equipment 2022-2027
- Robbins presented a draft resolution updating a Republic County purchasing policy

Katherine Wilber presented updates on her work toward repairs of the front court house steps. She will work with Maintenance Director, Patrick Comstock, to acquire needed measurements. She will work with a

monument company for granite. Commissioner Jeardoe advised he needs a quote to use in a grant application with the Historical Society.

At 11:10am Chairman Garman moved and Commissioner Jeardoe seconded to enter executive session for nonelected personnel regarding employee performance for 10 minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Attending the session were the three commissioners. The Board reconvened at 11:20am taking no action. At 11:20am Commissioner Jeardoe moved and Commissioner Splichal seconded to enter executive session for nonelected personnel regarding employee performance for 5 minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Attending the session were the three commissioners. The Board reconvened at 11:25am taking no action.

Commissioners reviewed and discussed ARPA grant fund applications. The Board directed to invite Laura Leite and Raymond Raney to meet with them next week concerning the ARPA applications.

At 11:45am Commissioner Jeardoe moved and Chairman Garman seconded to enter executive session for Attorney-Client Privilege to discuss the proposed wind farm project for 10 minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Attending the session were the three commissioners and Trish Voth via telephone. The Board reconvened at 11:55am taking no action. At 11:55am Commissioner Jeardoe moved and Chairman Garman seconded to enter executive session for Attorney-Client Privilege to discuss the proposed wind farm project for 5 minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Attending the session were the three commissioners and Trish Voth via telephone. The Board reconvened at 12:00pm (noon) taking no action.

Shortly after Noon, the Board moved to the Sheriff's department. Sheriff Dave Cox and Deputy Andrew Bates provided a tour of the Sheriff's office rooms and the bull pen of the jail. Updates to the facilities, use of the facilities, planned improvements and areas that could be improved were discussed.

Soon after 1pm, the Board returned to the Board room. The Board requested that upon her return Clerk Marsicek advise them of the status of job applications for Health Department positions. The Board would like to fill positions to restore the Health Department services as soon as possible.

With all agenda items completed, Commissioner Jeardoe moved and Chairman Garman seconded to adjourn at 1:30pm. Motion passed unanimously.

The next regular meeting will be on Monday, June 13, 2022, beginning at 8:30am at the Republic County Courthouse.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen L. Marsicek, County Clerk

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Doug Garman, Chairperson

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Melvin Jeardoe, Member

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Edwin Splichal, Member