

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022**

The Morris County Commissioners met on Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioners Wayne Kohler, David Fox and Jim Barber were present. Bill Kassebaum, County Counselor, and Chelsey Schmidt, County Clerk, were present.

Others present: Billy Kryger, Pastor Berean Baptist Church, AJ Dome, Council Grove Republican

Chris Blackledge, Emergency Manager, attended the meeting via telephone. Discussion was held regarding severe weather that occurred the evening of Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. Tornado sirens in the City of Wilsey were sounded as a precaution. Tornado sirens in the City of White City were sounded due to rotation being reported in the Latimer area with the storm traveling towards the east. The National Weather Service has reported the tornado that traveled through portions of Morris County was rated an EF1, along with hail and damaging winds up to 97 miles per hour. Information regarding damages to property is being gathered and can also be reported to the Morris County Sheriff's Department or Morris County Emergency Manager. Chris Blackledge recommended the county issue an emergency declaration, in anticipation that a declaration will be issued by the Governor.

2020 Decennial Census Data was reviewed. The 2020 census data reported a total population of 5,386 in Morris County. For comparison, the 2010 census data reported a total population of 5,923. Using the 2020 census data, population by precinct and by commissioner district was reviewed. Commissioner District No. 1 has a population of approximately 1,942 (36% of county total). Commissioner District No. 2 has a population of approximately 1,683 (31% of county total). Commissioner District No. 3 has a population of approximately 1,761 (33% of county total).

Commissioner Barber (Fox) moved to approve the population by commissioner district as presented and to make no changes or rearrangements of commissioner district boundary lines. Motion carried.

Dave Owen, Morris County EMS Director, and Shad Johnson, Morris County EMT, discussed a proposal for a new ambulance purchase scheduled for 2023. EMS currently has 4 ambulances in service; 2 ambulances stationed in Council Grove (Medic 302 and Medic 303), 1 ambulance in White City (Medic 301), and 1 ambulance in Alta Vista (Medic 304). The ambulances stationed at White City and Alta Vista are older vehicles that were rotated out to the smaller first responder districts. EMS would like to sell Medic 301 and Medic 304, rotate Medic 303 to White City, and station the new ambulance in Council Grove. The director vehicle (Medic 1) would then be moved to Alta Vista. One quote has been received from American Emergency Vehicles for a Ford 550 and is approximately \$335,000.00. The commission requested that other bids be obtained.

Melissa Landis, Executive Director of Empower House Ministries, provided an update on services provided. Empower House Ministries opened their new recovery home for women in Emporia on February 1, 2022. The home has an 8-bed capacity and currently 7 of those 8 beds are filled. The goal of Empower House Ministries is to help recovering female addicts by providing stable housing, developing self-worth and self-identity, developing new positive peer relationships, assisting in employment and job searches, assisting in the development of life skills and planning for the future. The program has been funded through grant monies, private

donations, and appropriations from local county's alcohol tax funds. An appropriation request for a portion of the county's alcohol tax fund was made. No specific dollar amount was requested; as "any amount the county would be willing to appropriate would be greatly appreciated." The appropriation request will be considered during the county's budgeting process.

Commissioner Barber (Fox) moved to approve the SLFRF Compliance Expenditure Report to be submitted to the Treasury as presented. Morris County has currently expended \$19,073.30 of the American Rescue Plan Act Funds. Motion carried.

Commissioner Barber (Fox) moved to approve the invoice from Rays Apple Market for the April MDT Meeting in the amount of \$128.80. Funds are to be paid from the Diversion Fund. Motion carried.

Commissioner Barber (Fox) moved to approve the reimbursement request for the County Attorney's office staff meals, mileage, tolls, and hotel rooms to attend a 3- day training. The total reimbursement request is \$1,687.26. Funds are to be paid from the Diversion Fund. Motion carried.

Morris County's General Public Transportation grant application was approved by the Kansas Department of Transportation for State Fiscal Year 2023 as follows:

- Capital Funding- 2 Ramp Accessible Minivans – Estimated \$123,000.00
- Federal Funding for Operating Expenses- \$72,250.00
- Federal Funding for Administrative Expenses- \$11,164.80
- State Funding for Operating Expenses- \$28,900.00

The remaining local match estimated for the county for SFY 2023 is \$70,741.20.

Commissioner Fox (Barber) moved to approve the Public Transportation Grant Funding from KDOT for State Fiscal Year 2023 as presented. Motion carried.

Travis Schweger, Noxious Weed and Waste Management Director, gave a report on the Noxious Weed and Waste Management departments. The north yard of the transfer station will now be open and accessible to the public 24/7. Discussion was held regarding recycling glass. The transfer station and recycle center plans to implement battery disposal options for county residents through the "Call to Recycling" program.

Corrine Blosser, Register of Deeds, gave a report on current courthouse maintenance needs. The door on the south side of the courthouse that is used in conjunction with a buzzer system is broken. The buzzer system allows individuals who are seeking shelter during storms to notify the dispatch office to unlock and open the door. The part needed to repair the current buzzer system will cost approximately \$1,200.00. Alternative pricing and options will be considered.

Commissioner Fox (Barber) moved to go into executive session to discuss the acquisition of real property for 15 minutes, with Bill Kassebaum and Chelsey Schmidt present. Motion carried.

The commission entered executive session at 11:50 a.m.

The commission returned to open session at 12:05 a.m.

No action taken.

Commissioner Fox (Barber) moved to approve Resolution No. 2022-08 declaring a state of local disaster emergency for Morris County, Kansas due to storms that produced hail, strong winds,

and tornadoes on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, which has damaged or destroyed property throughout Morris County. Motion carried.

Jeff Falter and Shelly Lautt gave the following weekly road and bridge report:

- Hamm Quarry rock was placed on 2400 Rd. from G-J, P Ave. from 2600-2800, V Ave. from 1700-1800, 1600 Rd. from V-X and K Ave. from 1800-1950
- Rawhide Quarry gravel was placed on 2100 Rd. from C-D, 1400 Rd. from G-J, Kelso Rd. from P-Q, 1050 Rd. from K-M and 500 Rd. from G-J
- MSM Quarry rock was spotted in on 1850 Rd. from V-X, AA Ave. from 2600-2700 and 2900 Rd. from AA-BB
- Shoulder and ditch work done on Z Ave. from 1400-1500; then covered with creek gravel and MSM Quarry rock
- Retrieved rock from the shoulder on P Ave between 1700-2000
- Shoulder and ditch work done on multiple roads across the county; on all routes
- Cleared brush from the Downing Cemetery road
- Tube was cleaned and culvert wall reset on R Ave. between 200-300; someone had driven through it
- Cut trees with boom mower on B Ave. from 2200-2300 and 2100 Rd. from B-F
- Moved the screener from 500 Rd. and G Ave. to Four Mile Rd. and AA Ave.; hauled rock from the creek and screened gravel
- "Dead End" signs were placed on 850 Rd. between K-L and the game road off of Munker's Creek Bridge per the request of Corp of Engineers
- Crossroad culvert tube stabilization was completed with lego blocks on J Ave. between 800-900 and topped with Rawhide Quarry gravel
- Entrance culverts installed on 1850 Rd. between V-X and 1800 Rd. between U-V
- Rental loader was returned to Reed Company; the new loader arrived from John Deere
- Clearing trees and debris from the roads after the April 29<sup>th</sup> storm damage

Commissioner Fox discussed a minimum maintenance road on 1100 Rd. in the area of D/F Ave. that has tree limbs that have fallen. He also complimented the work done on 500 Rd.

Department head meeting was held. Those departments in attendance were: Laura Viar, County Attorney, Linda Eldridge, County Treasurer, Corrine Blosser, Register of Deeds, Ryan Michaelis, County Appraiser, Travis Schweger, Noxious Weed and Waste Management Director, Bill Kassebaum, County Counselor, Jeff Falter and Shelly Lautt, Road and Bridge Managers, and Chelsey Schmidt, County Clerk.

Items discussed were:

- County information technology services
- Department budgets for 2023
- Cost of living increases
- County courthouse cleaning services
- Capital improvement plans
- Implementation of detailed accounting structure for 2023

Commissioner Fox (Barber) moved to approve the 2022 Cereal Malt Beverage Licenses for the Kahola Cantina located at 490 Kahola Rd. in Council Grove. Motion carried.

Commissioner Barber (Fox) moved to approve the accounts payable vouchers as presented; in the amount of \$150,602.44. Motion carried. The breakdown by fund is as follows:

General: \$ 12,460.74  
Road & Bridge: \$ 2,504.94  
Reappraisal: \$ 12.00  
Health Dept Flowthru: \$ 7,121.00  
Noxious Weed: \$ 76.55  
Solid Waste: \$ 50.00  
Capital Improvement: \$ 4,219.93  
Bridge Bonds 2020A: \$ 124,157.28

Commissioner Fox (Barber) moved to approve the payroll in the amount of \$95,211.63 and employer paid liabilities in the amount of \$14,966.32. Motion carried.

Commissioner Fox (Barber) moved to approve the minutes from the April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 commission meeting as presented. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

--Meeting minutes can also be found on the county website: [www.morriscountyks.org](http://www.morriscountyks.org)

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**OF MORRIS COUNTY, KANSAS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wayne Kohler, Chairman

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Barber, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chelsey Schmidt  
Morris County Clerk

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David L. Fox, Member