

## **September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

The Morris County Commissioner meeting was called to order on Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Commissioners Jim Barber, David L. Fox and Wayne Kohler were present. Bill Kassebaum, County Counselor, and Chelsey Schmidt, County Clerk, were present.

Others present: Gary Floyd

Zach Krause, with KVK, visited with the commissioners regarding an a/c unit in the district court meeting room that is leaking. The unit was shut off last Thursday. The system was flushed but the leaking has not been resolved. The HVAC system runs above the ceilings of the courthouse alongside concrete ledges; visibility and accessibility to the system are very difficult. KVK will need to remove and/or cut part of the unit in order to gain better access and further inspect the unit.

Melissa Landis, Executive Director of Empower House Ministries, provided a report to the commissioners. Empower House Ministries continues to operate the women's recovery residence located in Lyon County. They have received a recent donation that will allow for a men's recovery residence. The men's recovery residence will also be located in Lyon County and is estimated to be opened in October of 2023.

Max Amos visited with the commissioners regarding old world bluestem grass. Old world bluestem is not a native grass but it is becoming more and more prevalent in our area. Mr. Amos has old world bluestem grass in his pastures and expresses concerns about the invasiveness of the plant and the reduced growth of other grasses that are more nutritious and palatable for livestock. Old world bluestem has not been declared or considered a noxious weed. It is also very difficult to control and treat effectively with herbicides. Mr. Amos requests the county to consider preventative measures to address further progression of old world bluestem.

Scott Stroda, with Stroda Plumbing, visited with the commissioners via telephone regarding the possible water leak in the courthouse. A leak was located in one of the inmate sinks in the jail. The water has been shut off to the sink until parts arrive for repairs. Review of the courthouse water usage reports indicates a significant decrease in usage after the water was shut off to the sink.

Travis Schweger, Noxious Weed & Waste Management Director, gave a report on the Noxious Weed and Waste Management Departments. The renewal contract with Hamm Companies is due by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Several discussions have been held over the past few months regarding the proposed price increases for waste removal. Although the fee per ton would be less, the county is not currently equipped to haul waste to the landfill located in Perry, Kansas. At this time, it is unknown if there would be a true cost savings should the county decide to haul its own waste or contract the hauling out to a private entity.

Commissioner Fox (Kohler) moved to approve the contract with Hamm Waste Services, as presented. Hauling fees will increase to \$41.14/ton on October 1, 2023 and additionally increase to \$44.14/ton on January 1, 2024. A cost of living adjustment will be applied annually on April 1<sup>st</sup> based on the increase of the Consumer Price Index, plus an additional 2%. Fuel surcharges will continue to be assessed. Motion carried.

Darrell Litke visited with the commissioners regarding the county farm lease.

Commissioner Kohler (Fox) moved to advertise for sealed bids for the county farm lease. Bids are to be opened on Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:30 a.m. Motion carried.

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

- Mid States Materials Quarry (Wilsey location) base rock was hauled on Diamond Creek Rd. from CC-DD, 150 Rd. from Y-AA, CC Ave. from 100-Dunlap Rd., AA Ave. from 950-1000, and Four Mile Rd. from Z-BB
- Air Capital Quarry road rock was spotted in on V Ave. from 1700-1800, M Ave. from 2200-2300, and H Ave. from 2800-2825
- Decking was repaired on the RS-480 Bridge on 2825 Rd. and H Ave.
- Shoulder and ditch work was done on CC Ave. from 100-Dunlap Rd., AA Ave. from 100-150, and 150 Rd. from Y-AA
- Culverts were replaced on V Ave. between 1700-1800 and M Ave. between 2200-2300
- Patched a hole on a tank car tube located on Diamond Springs Rd. between CC-DD
- Large rocks were removed from the windrow on 150 Rd. from Y-AA and placed in the ditch by a culvert located at AA Ave. between 100-150
- Old culverts that were replaced were picked up and hauled to the shop yard
- Sign maintenance was done across the county
- Mowing continues with work done on the White City, Wilsey, Delavan and Dwight routes
- Boom mower was used on trees along the Burdick route
- Routine grading of roads was done on all routes
- Shelly attended a “wrap-up” meeting with the Kaw Valley inspector for the Dunlap Bridge Project completion
- Paperwork was filed with the state for the KDOT Bridge Reimbursement funding for the Dunlap Bridge Project
- Contact has been made with the land owner to begin acquiring the right of way needed to replace the box culvert on B Ave. between 2300-2400
- The Dunlap Bridge and approach work has been completed

Discussion was held regarding concerns that have been reported to the road and bridge department and are as follows:

- The intersection of 2600 Rd. and Hwy 56 is not safe for semis to turn on. This is the State's right-of-way, not the County's.
- The city of Burdick was not mowed until after Labor Day. Work records show that it was all mowed on August 25<sup>th</sup> and August 28<sup>th</sup>, prior to Labor Day.
- Request for a “yield” sign at Reed and Anderson St. in Burdick for children playing safely. The sign is being re-installed today, September 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Request for chip seal roads from White City going to Hwy 77 to be striped and painted. Information obtained from Dickinson County reports a cost of approximately \$2,000.00 per mile to paint the center line only. Dickinson County contracts with Straight-Line Striping Inc. out of Grand Island, Nebraska; this cost is considered an average price range for striping services. Due to liability reasons, if any chip seal roads are striped, they must all be striped. Morris County has 75 miles of chip seal roads; the estimated cost to stripe 75 miles of road would be approximately \$150,000.00 and would have to be maintained and portions redone annually with each chip seal project.

Linda Eldridge, County Treasurer, gave a report on the Treasurer's Office. Discussion was held regarding a request that was made to consider part-time employees receiving holiday pay. County policy specifies that part-time employees do not receive benefits such as paid time off or holiday pay.

Commissioner Kohler (Fox) moved to approve the minutes from the September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 commission meeting, as presented. Motion carried.

Commissioner Fox (Kohler) moved to approve the accounts payable vouchers as presented; in the total amount of \$220,046.03. Motion carried. The breakdown by fund is as follows:

General:	\$ 12,853.69
Road & Bridge:	\$ 588.07
Reappraisal:	\$ 264.82
Solid Waste:	\$ 743.00
Capital Improvement:	\$ 34,666.00
Bridge Bonds 2020A:	\$ 170,930.45

Commissioner Kohler (Fox) moved to approve payroll liabilities as presented, in the total amount of \$126,962.56. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 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**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Jim Barber, Chairman**

**ATTEST:**

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**David L. Fox, Member**

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**Chelsey Schmidt**  
**Morris County Clerk**

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**Wayne Kohler, Member**