

August 21, 2023

Monday, 5:30 p.m.

The Bourbon County Commission met in open session with all three Commissioners and the Deputy County Clerk present.

Michael Hoyt, Mandy Shoemaker, Darryl Donohue, Barbara Geiger, Deb Lust, Carol Adamson, Doug Adamson, Ashley Adamson, Joe Ludlum, Ron Brown, Jason Silvers, Andrew Lyon, Chad Guthrie, Dean Bailey, Anne Dare, Kaleb Simpson, Jared Pollock, Ken Fuhrman, Clint Walker, Rachel Walker, Connie Neil, and Patty Ropp were present for some or all of the meeting.

Jim Harris opened the meeting with the flag salute followed by a prayer led by Mark McCoy.

Nelson Blythe made a motion to approve the consent agenda which includes approval of minutes from 8/14/23. Jim Harris seconded the motion and all approved.

Michael Hoyt brought several copies of the KORA and KOMA handbook for anybody who would like one and read an excerpt from the KOMA handbook regarding public comment. Mr. Hoyt handed out a spreadsheet of money that has been provided to Bourbon County REDI.

Clint Walker said he read through the drug and alcohol policy and said it is only as good as integrity of the chain of command, suggested the Commissioners set an example by doing a testing themselves, and that while he was in the military nobody was exempt from testing. Mr. Walker said we don't single out departments and everybody, in his opinion, unless they have something to hide should participate and if they don't want to participate, they should opt out in writing and provide their own policy.

Eric Bailey, Public Works Director, said Kansas Road from 227<sup>th</sup> Street to the city limits was completed last week before school started. Jayhawk Road from 69 Highway to the railroad tracks was asphalted yesterday. Jim said he received a lot of positive comments today about the asphalt. Eric said all 14 members of the crew went above and beyond in the heat and fought through issues at the asphalt plant to complete the job. Eric said they completed the work on Sunday, so they didn't interfere with school or business traffic. Eric stated they will start the chip and seal program next Monday and will start at the Linn County line and work south on 215<sup>th</sup> Street. The parts to fix the fourth mower arrived last Friday and they are working to get it running to help with the mowing throughout the county. Drilling is being performed at the Thomas Quarry this week to prepare for a blast that will happen next week. The Mack

truck that was wrecked is being taken to Mack in Joplin. Another Mack truck is at Inland with rearend issues and will hopefully have it back soon. Jim said he is shocked that they are going to attempt to fix the wrecked Mack truck, and Clifton told Eric to make sure it is right when it comes back. Jim thanked Eric and the crew for the asphalt work they have completed. Nelson said he has had people contact him about the coned off area on south Main Street in front of Verizon, and Eric said that is a City of Fort Scott issue from a water main break.

Brian Allen presented Resolution 14-23 which is a resolution appointing an Emergency Manager. Brian said the state requires an Emergency Manager and in order to be compliant with grants a resolution naming him as Emergency Manager is required. Brian stated an exercise was completed at the windfarm a few weeks ago between the windfarm workers, their company, and the Emergency Manager and that it went very well. Brian will be attending several training courses in September. Clifton made a motion to pass Resolution 14-23 appointing Brian Allen as Emergency Manager for Bourbon County, Kansas. Nelson seconded the motion, and all approved.

Selena Alvarado, Deputy County Clerk, presented a letter from the Drywood Township Board asking that Patty Simpson be named Treasurer to fulfill the remainder of Lynn Hoyt's term since Lynn resigned. Nelson made a motion to appoint Patty Simpson as the Drywood Township Treasurer. Clifton seconded the motion, and all approved.

Jared Pollock, Chairman of the Soil Conservation District, stated they previously gave a presentation to the Commissioners, but felt they needed to do so again. The Bourbon County Conservation District was represented by seventeen individuals present for tonight's meeting. Mr. Pollock said that the budget last year was \$40,000 and they are requesting a \$3,000 increase for 2024 not a \$10,000 increase as was erroneously stated in prior minutes. The Conservation District this year has brought in \$21,000 in state water resources that go to producers along with \$9400 from non-point source dollars. Since the last time Mr. Pollock presented an additional \$33,000 was obtained to be able to give Bourbon County producers. Mr. Pollock said they do not receive any state funding only a matching contribution to what they receive from Bourbon County and there is just under \$600,000 in federal dollars in Bourbon County that go directly into the pockets of Bourbon County producers. Mr. Pollock stated without a soil Conservation District, we may create an interruption in services to Bourbon County residents. There are 3143 counties in the United States and approximately 3000 Soil Conservation Districts. Mr. Pollock said a safe guess would be that the counties without a district are covered in concrete. Mr. Pollock read an excerpt from a book, "soil conservation is like paying a premium on an insurance policy. It provides us food and fiber, and it also provides a strong tax base. It is an insurance policy to the future." Ronnie Brown spoke about the Kansas Water Plan. The funding the county receives from that is from fertilizer, pesticides, quarries, and the rural water district and the City of Fort Scott who pay a water tax each month. Mr. Brown said that the leaders in Topeka have seen the serious need for water in Kansas and have funded the Kansas Water Plan at double. Mr. Brown said with the drought conditions we are in now without Cedar Creek we would be in trouble. Mr. Brown said he was on the board when Cedar Creek was established and is proud to see it happen. Mandy Shoemaker, District Manager, spoke to the

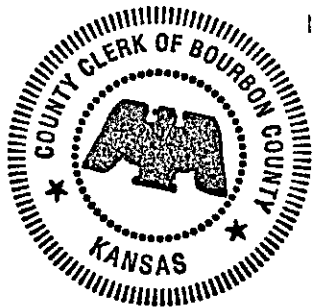
involvement the Soil Conservation District has in the community. A soil technician is in office, and they work with the county's road and bridge crew to provide the drainage acres and the assessments of bridge and tubes replacements within the county so the correct sizes are installed. The District hosts approximately 200 fourth grade students who participate in Soil Conservation Day at Gunn Park. Students and teachers rotate through 10 stations where they learn about soil erosion, soil layers, water quality, wildlife, forestry, grassland, and pollution. A booth is also at the Bourbon County Fair each year and usually includes information about pollinators and urban conservation. The District sponsors a team consisting of students from Uniontown and Fort Scott to compete in Regional and State Envirothons and Speech Contests. The District also works with NRCS staff and other agencies like Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Farm Service Agency, and the Forest Service to implement conservation practices. A local work group is held each year to for local landowners to address concerns with water quality, soil erosion, and other resource concerns. The District hosts a farmer-to-farmer coffee shop talk each quarter with local farmers and ranchers to discuss and share ideas with currents issues and problems with cover crops and the benefits and challenges of that being discussed recently. The District participates in the KOMB-FM Home, Sport, Farm, and Garden Show each year. The Soil Conservation District is a member of the Fort Scott Chamber of Commerce, and they host a chamber coffee each year to coincide with their Conservation Day at Gunn Park and Earth Day. Every year the Conservation District continues to support and promote conservation by paying dues to the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts, the KACD Employees Organization, the Kansas Association of Conservation District's Auxiliary, the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education, The KACD Youth and Education Committee, and the Kansas Rural Center. Donations are made to the Fort Scott FFA Chapter every year for their help at Conservation Day and for their help every other year at the annual meeting. On the opposite year Uniontown FFA Chapter helps with the annual meeting and they receive a donation for their help as well. There are many meetings that the Soil Conservation District supervisors attend each year to keep up with and be informed of new policies and new ways to promote and implement conservation. Mandy stated that kids these days think that their milk comes from Wal-Mart not a real live cow, and their hamburgers come from the grocery store or McDonalds. They need to know about the agriculture way of life and the steps that need to be taken to maintain our food, clean water sources, and the economic benefits of agriculture because without it, our world would be in pretty dire straits. Mandy thanked the Commission for the continued support of the Bourbon County Conservation District and their mission of protecting what we have today to have something left for tomorrow. Daryl Donohue, Treasurer of the Wilson County Conservation District, also represents Area 5 for the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts which encompasses the twenty southeast counties in Kansas. Mr. Donohue holds the position that was formerly held by Ronnie Brown. Soil Conservation Districts were formed in 1936 in every county and parish in the United States. Mr. Donohue clarified that there is a Conservation District acting in every county in the United States and territories and stated that in some locations several counties are compiled into one District. Hugh Hammond Bennett, known as the father of soil conservation, is the reason there is a Conservation District in Bourbon County. Mr. Bennet began his career when Theodore Roosevelt was president, and at that point soil conservation was part of the Department of the Interior. Mr. Bennett said, "soil has no politics, we are bipartisan". Mr. Donohue clarified that a producer is anyone who raises food or raw material for agriculture purposes to help feed and clothe the world. The Conservation District has a water resources cost share program and for sedimentation that helps prevent soil erosion and water sedimentation going into lakes and reservoirs and aids in reducing

nutrient and pesticide runoff. All 105 Conservation Districts in Kansas offer a comprehensive list of best management practices and components for landowners and operators. Some of those practices include terraces and waterways, ponds, pasture and rangeland plannings, cross fencing, water wells and pumping plans. Nonpoint source pollution cost share provides assistance for the establishment of practices with the contract of goals water quality protection and restoration in watersheds, information for adults and youth, and other water quality issues identify by the state water planning process. Mr. Donohue asked all to remember this is done locally by our neighbors and the people we interact with, the community as a whole and stated there is a wealth of information in the local conservation office. Mr. Donohue said we are only caretakers of the land, and we have to do the best we can and to have the information provided by the Conservation District is extremely important. Mr. Donohue asked the Commissioners to continue to fund the Bourbon County Conservation District. Andrew Lyon, Director of Conservation for the Kansas Department of Agriculture, stated agriculture is the largest industry in not only the state of Kansas but also in Bourbon County. There are over 2000 jobs, or 23% of jobs, directly related to agriculture in Bourbon County. Agriculture produces \$655,000,000 in output each year and accounts for about 27% of the economy in Bourbon County. Mr. Lyon asks that when you think of the Conservation District you think of them as the protection of that economic engine that is so vitally important to not only our state, but here in Bourbon County. Mr. Lyon urged the Commission to continue the funding of the Conservation District stating he believes this is an investment the county makes that will provide a positive return on investment for not only Bourbon County but for the state of Kansas and the United States of America as well. Mr. Lyon asked the Commissioners for any questions they may have. Clifton said it is hard for him to support conservation when the state and feds don't, and he says that his family tried to put land back in CRP and it was turned down. Clifton said he knows that isn't the conservation district's decision, but it leaves a sour taste in his mouth when they are trying to do conservation practices on highly erodible land, and it's turned down. Clifton stated he has not spoken to Mandy about this. Clifton said he has a problem with that and asks how he is to respond when he is not being supported by the state or feds. Clifton said he read there was only 3000 acres in CRP and that we are farming road ditch to road ditch tearing every acre we can up and asked where the conservation is at. Mr. Lyon stated he understands Clifton's concerns and the rules on CRP and re-enrollments have been difficult to say the least. Mr. Lyon said he wishes they could influence the federal policy more than they can. Most Districts across the state recognize this as a problem and they try to provide on expiring CRP acres is the opportunity for livestock water source development. Clifton said they are taking it and put highly erodible land back into production for it to be more than likely overgrazed and conservation is not going to happen. Mr. Lyon said it is the hope that the land will be kept in grass because you break that highly erodible land out and we know what's going to happen. A member of the audience asked Clifton if he spoke with the FSA people to determine exactly why their CRP application was turned down. Clifton said he spoke to them over the phone, and they urged Clifton to go to the right source and talk to them about it. Mr. Lyon said they are trying to do the best they can at the state level and the local FSAs are doing the best they can with the rules that are handed down to them. Jim thanked the Soil Conservation District for coming and presenting and said he appreciates the information and dialogue, and them answering questions.

During the Commission comment section Nelson said he spoke with Mandy and Mr. Pollock and his issue isn't necessarily with the work they do it's the principal. Nelson stated he sounds like a broken

record it's the government, the feds, the state, and even county government that is like a virus that has infected every aspect of life, it's involved in everything, and he does not agree with that. Nelson said he feels government should be an unseen force for the most part, it's involved in everything and he's against that and that is why he does not support the Soil Conservation District. I don't mind the work they do, there's 105 counties in Kansas they all have it, is it voluntary? I don't know but a whole bunch of people show up when you talk about getting rid of it. Nelson stated he received a lot of phone calls regarding the Soil Conservation District. Nelson said he always tries to stick to what he thinks, and if he's not convinced otherwise, no amount of pressure will make him change his mind. Nelson said he doesn't think the government should be involved in soil conservation, but the landowner should make their own choices and if the soil conservation district has information about it that's great, but he doesn't want taxpayer money going towards it. Clifton said he has said enough, and Jim said he doesn't totally disagree with what Nelson is saying but sometimes government has to step forward because no one is getting the job done. Jim stated he's not wrong, but there are, in my vote, instances if we do one thing it might improve other things and have a better payday back to the county as far as investments. Jim stated sometimes county has to come forward and be the leader. Nelson said it's the principal that the government is our savior mindset, and he's not that type of guy. Clifton asked why do we fund the Sheriff's Department then and why do we fund anything? Nelson said it's up to people to take care of themselves and if they can't it's on them. Jim asked what do we do with the ones who don't take care of themselves because there are some out there who don't have the means or the resources to take care of themselves. Jim said he read in the paper that the federal government is purchasing meals for local students for the school year and that those kids are hungry and asked Nelson should we not feed them? Clifton said without the funding those kids would go hungry. Clifton said in the homes he sees there are kids whose parents aren't going to help them because they are crackheads and drug dealers, but the kids didn't have a choice to be born into that. Clifton said we have kids like that in our own town and said he hopes we can help them somehow, and Jim agreed. Jim said everybody will be able to voice their wants and needs for the 2024 budget in the upcoming budget work session.

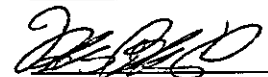
Clifton made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:21. Nelson seconded the motion and all approved.



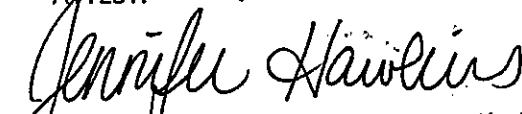
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF BOURBON COUNTY, KANSAS

 Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_, Commissioner

 Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
Jennifer Hawkins, Bourbon County Clerk  
8-28-2023 Approved Date