

# Board of Crawford County Commissioners

## Commissioners' Journal

2024, **SIXTEENTH** MEETING

CRAWFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ROOM  
Girard, KS. **Tuesday, February 27, 2024 10:00 AM**

The Crawford County Board of Commissioners met pursuant to Kansas Statutes.

Annotated Chapter 19, Article 2, Section 18 in due and regular session with open doors.

Commissioner Carl Wood served as the presiding officer.

Commissioners Bruce Blair and Tom Moody were in attendance.

County Clerk Lisa Lusker and County Counselor Jim Emerson were seated with the Board.

Chairman Wood led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **UNDER THE HEADING BUSINESS FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING CONSENT AGENDA**

**On motion (24-105)** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Blair that the consent agenda be approved including:

1. Approval of the **February 23, 2024** minutes of the Board of County Commissioners.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Blair and Wood

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed and the consent agenda was approved.**

### **SIGNING OF MOTIONS**

The County Clerk presented the following motions for Commissioners' signatures:

Motion 24	98	That the consent agenda be approved including: Approval of the February 20, 2024 minutes, and Authorizing the Chairman to sign the previous week's vouchers
Motion 24	99	To approve the letter of support to the Secretary of Transportation in support of the City of Pittsburg's grant application for funding for the Pittsburg Industrial Corridor Upgrade project and authorize the Chairman to sign
Motion 24	100	To approve funding to the City of Pittsburg in the amount of \$26,563.16 from the Operating Reserve funds for the county's portion of the grant preparation for the Pittsburg Industrial Corridor Upgrade

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Motion 24	101	To approve the ARPA drawdown request for February 2024
Motion 24	102	To approve the disbursement of \$36,911.42 to the Crawford County Fair Board from the funds from the capital campaign fund from the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas
Motion 24	103	To recess this open session and go into a closed executive session for a period of not more than 20 minutes to discuss items that would be deemed privileged in the Attorney-Client Relationship to discuss zoning and to include the Board of County Commissioners and County Counselor Jim Emerson and to reconvene by 10:55 AM
Motion 24	104	To recess this open session and go into a closed executive session for a period of not more than 10 minutes to discuss Non-Elected Personnel to discuss Road and Bridge and to include the Board of County Commissioners, County Counselor Jim Emerson, and to reconvene by 11:01 AM

**UNDER THE HEADING NEW BUSINESS**

**PROCLAMATION AND ORDERS OF THE BOARD**

**MESSAGES FROM CRAWFORD CO LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS AND OPENING OF ANNOUNCED BIDS**

**MESSAGES FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC**

**Item One:** Mr. Mike Bodensteiner addressed the Commissioners in regards to the Large Childcare ARPA update. Mr. Bodensteiner said that he hopes this day is a celebration of the investment made for childcare in Crawford County and to see the progress that is being made towards serving the need for childcare. Representatives from Sugar Creek spoke about their project. The representatives mentioned this is a group effort between Sugar Creek, New Foundations being the provider, USD 249, and funding support from County as well as the State. They mentioned that Sugar Creek will be financing and constructing the building, USD 249 will move their preschool classrooms to this building, and New Foundations provide licensed childcare. Representatives explained the location has been adjusted since the original application was submitted. The representatives discussed some other grant funding they received in addition to the ARPA funding from the county. Commissioner Wood asked what the difference between childcare and preschool is. The representatives answered preschool is a half day program where a child cannot remain for the entire day as well as a different licensing requirements. They also mentioned that it is still in the works of deciding if the preschool will be licensed through KSDE or KDHE which is up to the school district. Commissioner Wood stated nobody has been able to tell him the difference between childcare and preschool. One representative reiterated that the licensing will be different between the two which will define different requirements to be followed by each program but that she is not completely sure what Commissioner Wood means by the difference of the two. Commissioner Wood said people are telling him that childcare is for 0–30-month-old children and that after 30 months the children enter preschool. One representative answered she believes childcare can go up to 8 to 12 years of age if licensed to do so, and she referenced that the Family Resource Center in Pittsburg is licensed to take children for after school care. Commissioner Blair mentioned he felt the representatives were well prepared for this presentation. Mr. Bodensteiner was addressed by Commissioner Wood with the question of what the difference between childcare and preschool is. Mr.

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Bodensteiner said he agrees with the representatives from Sugar Creek on their response to the question and that is a complex answer. Another representative answered that preschool is more of an education curriculum and only allows the child to attend for 3 hours of the day, and that childcare is moving towards more education but also is a full day program. She mentioned that both programs can have different rules and curriculums but also can overlap quite a bit as well. Commissioner Wood asked Mr. Bodensteiner's opinion in regards to the decision to fund a program without an application and if he agrees with the decision that was made and Mr. Bodensteiner says that he thinks the Commission made a good decision and that no grant process is ever perfect.

Commissioner Blair stated the representatives from Sugar Creek exceeded his expectations for today and is exactly what he wanted to see come from these programs, and that they have involved the community in their project. Next, Ms. Ann Elliott represented The Family Resource Center. Ms. Elliott brought up the change of hospitals from Ascension Via Christi to Mercy but that they do still get to keep their lease. She mentioned that ground should be broke next week or beginning of the following week. Ms. Elliott said a waiting list has been started as well as employees will begin to be hired this summer. Commissioner Wood asked why Ms. Elliott mentioned that she will spend the ARPA money first and she answered because it is the smaller amount and is ready to be spent as well as being the easiest to spend. Commissioner Wood asked if this project could piggyback off of The Family Resource Center's licenses but Ms. Elliott stated they will have their own license through KDHE. Commissioner Wood asked Ms. Elliott if she agrees with what the prior speakers have answered when it comes to the difference of childcare and preschool. Ms. Elliott provided similar response to the question.

Commissioner Wood asked County Counselor Jim Emerson asked how they will handle the extension of opening days and Mr. Emerson said the county will have to update the MOUs. Mr. Ron Scripsick who is representing Point Forward spoke to the Commissioners next. Mr. Scripsick said their demo is done and a new roof is being put on the building currently, and he mentioned Point Forward has met with three different providers and do not have anything solid yet but that they should have a provider by August. Commissioner Moody stated he drove by the location and that the demolition looks to be done and Mr. Scripsick stated the project is now in the restructuring phase, and also that they hope to be open for service January 2025. Commissioner Wood asked how Mr. Scripsick felt in regards to the application and contract process and Mr. Scripsick answered that he felt it was fair to all parties involved. Mr. Jamey Whitney with SEKCAP spoke. He mentioned SEKCAP's project would involve the old ATC building, and their biggest hold up to moving forward is that they do not have the property in their possession yet because it has not been decided on how that building will be used. Mr. Whitney also stated they cannot put together any contracts until they know they have secured the use of that building. Mr. Whitney did propose that SEKCAP could have a work session with the Commissioners in regards to the issue and how they can move forward. Commissioner Wood asked if Mr. Emerson can get in contact with Mr. Whitney in regards to the work session and Mr. Whitney said that would work for him. Pastor Donnie Talent addressed the Commissioners representing Sonshine. He mentioned they finished phase 1 on both the childcare center and autism center. Pastor Talent stated phase 2 was funded outside of the county by raising money and that it is in the works and hoping to be completed by end of April and first to middle of May opening serving availability for infants, 1 years old, and 2.5 years and older. Commissioner Wood asked Pastor Talent if he plans on expanding more and Pastor Talent said at this time, he does

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not see that happening. Commissioner Wood asked Pastor Talent's opinion on the application and contract and Pastor Talent said he does not believe it was the best process because he was the first one to come to the Commissioners in 2021 and that he needs to tread lightly because it is difficult to express the feelings without throwing punches. Pastor Talent said he is having some difficulty with understanding why 5 of the entities have contracts and why 1 does not, and his concern was mostly the 1 entity not having a contract and receiving large funds. Commissioner Blair asked where Sonshine would be without the county's contribution and Pastor Talent stated the childcare center would still be up and running without this contribution but that they were grateful for the funds but they also had community support. Pastor Talent said that Commissioner Wood is the only Commissioner who has come to look at the facility to see how the funds have been put to use. Commissioner Wood asked how much money does Sonshine has invested to get the preschool/childcare center up and running, but mentioned Pastor Talent does not have to answer that question if he does not want to. Pastor Talent replied they have around \$500,000 to \$600,000 invested for the 98 spots but that they did already have the building. Mr. Bodensteiner asked to please be informed on the work session scheduled with SEKCAP. Commissioner Moody said bottom line is that 1100 childcare spots were created for the residents of Crawford County and he believes it is something this Commission can be proud of.

**On motion (24-106)** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Wood to recess the open meeting for a period of 5 minutes.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Wood, and Blair

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

The Regular Session was called back to order.

### **MESSAGES FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES**

### **MESSAGES FROM APPOINTED OFFICIALS**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

### **MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC continued**

**Item Two:** Mr. Emerson stated he has been in contact with Freeman Health Systems Grants Coordinator Ms. Lisa Nelson in regards to a grant opportunity. Mr. Emerson mentioned that Mr. Gus Brunetti has taken care of the county's portion of the grant proposal and would like to give him credit for doing so. Mr. Steve Sanderson on Freeman Health System's Executive Team and Mr. Danny Caylor with Freeman Health Systems Facilities Management addressed the Commissioners. Mr. Sanderson mentioned Freeman cannot apply for this grant on their own as it must come from the county but that it has been a collaborative effort to create the drafted grant application. He explained that this grant could bring up to \$3,000,000 to advance the hospital Freeman will be bringing to the community. Mr. Sanderson mentioned this will be a 50 bed hospital with roughly 500 employment positions. Commissioner Wood stated that the way he understands this is that the county will apply for the grant on Freeman's behalf, and Mr. Sanderson answered that yes it would be a county grant that would then be dispersed to Freeman and that he would refer to it as more of a collaborative effort between the two. Commissioner Wood

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asked if this project falls through who will be on the hook for the money and Mr. Sanderson stated that if Freeman does not meet the grant requirements the county would never receive the money to begin with but that Freeman is committed to put all of that money into the community and this project. Mr. Sanderson said one down fall is that they may not get awarded the entire \$3,000,000. Commissioner Wood asked what the deadline for the grant application is and Mr. Sanderson answered they would need the Commissioner's support today. Commissioner Wood asked Mr. Sanderson how long they have known about this grant and Mr. Sanderson said they have only had knowledge of this grant for about a week.

**On motion (24-107)** of Commissioner Wood and the second of Commissioner Moody to approve the KDHE Rural Hospital Innovation Grant Application with Freeman Health Systems and authorize the Chairman to sign.

Yeas: Commissioners Wood, Moody, and Blair

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

### NEW BUSINESS

**Item One:** Mr. Emerson presented two invoices for the tower project near Arma for roughly \$26,500. He stated this would be payments four and five on the project and would leave a remaining balance of about \$2,000 left to pay on the project. Mr. Emerson reminded the Commissioners that this project was paid partially out of ARPA funding and partially from Operating Reserves funds.

**On motion (24-108)** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Wood to approve payment of invoice #1998 and Invoice #1999 from Wallace Tower Specialists and Repair for the Communications Tower Project near Arma in the amount of \$26,490 and authorize the Chairman to sign.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Wood, and Blair

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

**Item Two:** Mr. Emerson said a gentleman has informed the county that there is a need for a fence replacement from the result of a project around 4 to 5 years ago. Mr. Emerson said it was checked on in person and he believes they are correct and that it is something they should have caught at the time of the project but did not. Commissioner Wood asked if this was in Franklin and Mr. Emerson answered yes, it is. Mr. Emerson provided the Commissioners with an estimate for what the work will cost.

**On motion (24-109)** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Blair to approve the repair of a fence located in Franklin.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Blair, and Wood

Nays:

Present but not voting:

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Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

**Item Three:** Mr. Emerson announced that severe weather training is available on March 6<sup>th</sup> starting at 3:00 PM for the public and 6:00 PM for first responders located at the Bicknell Center.

**Item Four:** Commissioner Wood commended the rural fire departments on Saturday for their efforts with the large fire located in Pittsburg. He also thanked Emergency Management Director Rusty Akins for working on this issue as well.

### OLD BUSINESS

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

### UNDER THE HEADING FUTURE BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### FUTURE BUSINESS:

**Item One: March 1, 2024 – 10:00 AM** Public hearing on Solid Waste Plan 5-year update.

**Item Two: March 22, 2024 – 9:00 AM** The Board of County Canvassers will meet to canvass the ballots from the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary Election with the Regular Session commencing immediately after the canvass.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### UNDER THE HEADING MOTION TO ADJOURN

#### MOTION TO ADJOURN

**Item One:** Adjournment

**On the motion** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Wood to adjourn the [February 27, 2024](#) meeting of the Board of Crawford County Commissioners at 11:24 AM and to reconvene at the next regularly scheduled time with open doors.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Blair and Wood

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

**In Testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed my official seal and submitted these minutes for the approval of the Board of Crawford County Commissioners.**

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**Lisa Lusker**  
County Clerk

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**This submission completed at the Crawford County Courthouse in Girard.**

Taken [RJA 02/29/2024 2:30 PM/amended BKW 2/29/2024 3:18 PM](#)