

**December 2, 2024**

**Unofficial Minutes**

**Russell County Commission Meeting**

At 9:00 am Duke Strobel made the motion to open the meeting. Daron Woelk seconded; Steve Reinhardt approved. Administrator Stephanie Grisham, County Attorney Dan Krug, and County Clerk Kristi Whitman were also present.

Duke Strobel made the motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2024, meeting. Steve Reinhardt seconded; Daron Woelk approved.

The Commissioners had their review. Duke Strobel stated he spoke with the Road and Bridge staff assigning Cindy Saryerwinnie and Justin Mermis as interim co-public works directors until a Public Works Director can be hired. There are four board positions open on the Fair Board. County Administrator Stephanie Grisham will contact Sadee Soldan for recommendations to fill the four openings. County Clerk Kristi Whitman presented transfer order 2024-21 to transfer \$120,000.00 from the Special Road and Bridge Fund (340) to the Special Hell Creek Bridge Fund (175). Duke Strobel made a motion to approve the transfer order 2024-21. Daron Woelk seconded; Steve Reinhardt approved.

Justin Mermis, interim Road and Bridge co-public works director gave an update on the Road and Bridge Department. The engine for the landfill scraper is done. It will need to be cleaned before installation. A fan motor on a grader engine went out. This is under warranty. Murphy Tractor will be here to repair it. The Canyon Road washout is being worked on. The Milberger Bridge project is being worked on. The project will hopefully be done in January 2025, depending on the weather.

Mike Parsons, Executive Director of Economic Development and CVB presented Resolution 2024-22 authorizing participation in the rural opportunity zone student loan repayment program for calendar year 2025. Mike Parsons explained the Rural Opportunity Zone student loan repayment program and the County will not be contributing financially to this program but allow cities and employers to take advantage of the Rural Opportunity Zone Program. Mike also went over programs the County is already involved in including the Make My Move Program and the Work Force Recruitment Grant. Mike gave

an update on the Flintwood Development Housing Project that he and Russell City are working on together. Daron Woelk made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-22 authorizing participation in the rural opportunity zone student loan repayment program for the calendar year 2025. Duke Strobel seconded; Steve Reinhardt approved.

Elizabeth Gilmore, Register of Deeds, requested an annual pay increase of \$1.00 per hour. The Commissioners agreed to approve the requested annual pay increase. Elizabeth stated digitizing records in-house has saved the county a significant amount of money and filing fees will remain unchanged for 2025.

At 9:47 am Duke Strobel made the motion to enter into a 5-minute executive session for non-elected personnel for an employee evaluation with Administrator Stephanie Grisham and Register of Deeds Elizabeth Gilmore in attendance. Steve Reinhardt seconded; Daron Woelk approved. At 9:52 am the meeting resumed. No action was taken.

County Clerk Kristi Whitman presented annual Cereal Malt Beverage applications for LaSada Lodge and Petroleum Wholesale DBA Sunmart. Duke Strobel made a motion to approve the cereal malt beverage applications for LaSada Lodge and Petroleum Wholesale DBA Sunmart. Steve Reinhardt seconded; Daron Woelk approved. County Clerk Kristi Whitman requested an annual pay increase of \$1.00 per hour. The Commissioners agreed to approve the requested annual pay increase.

At 10:03 am Duke Strobel made the motion to enter into a 5-minute executive session for non-elected personnel for two employee evaluations with Administrator Stephanie Grisham and County Clerk Kristi Whitman in attendance. Steve Reinhardt seconded; Daron Woelk approved. At 10:08 am the meeting resumed. No action was taken.

Jennifer Buzzell, Noxious Weed Director, stated they have been working on truck and tank maintenance. They have installed chemical add tanks on the trucks to pump chemicals into the larger tanks. This prevents climbing on the main tank to add chemicals. Noxious Weed employees will be taking tests and getting certified. Jennifer requested a transfer of \$50,000.00 from the Noxious Weed Fund to the Noxious Weed Capital Outlay Fund. The Commissioners approved the transfer.

Connie Schinkus, Payroll/ Administrative Assistant presented paper bids. Connie stated the bids were for 160 cases or 4 pallets of paper from OPI in the amount of \$42.00 per case and Tri-Central in the amount of \$45.00 per case. The Commissioners agreed to award the bid to OPI at \$42.00 per case for a total of \$6,720.00. Connie stated last year the cost of paper was \$7,360.00, so the cost of paper has decreased.

At 10:35 am Duke Strobel made the motion to enter into a 15-minute executive session for non-elected personnel with Administrator Stephanie Grisham in attendance. Steve Reinhardt seconded; Daron Woelk approved. At 10:50 am the meeting resumed. No action was taken.

County Administrator Stephanie Grisham stated Gorham Fire #1 requested Tyler Anderson be added to the roster. The Commissioners agreed to add Tyler Anderson to the roster pending all paperwork being turned into Payroll.

Checks were approved and signed to be deducted from the following funds:

|            |                             |             |            |                             |             |
|------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>100</b> | <b>COUNTY GENERAL</b>       | \$36,746.16 | <b>290</b> | <b>GORHAM FIRE #1</b>       | \$ 2,682.34 |
| <b>110</b> | <b>ROAD &amp; BRIDGE</b>    | \$39,479.51 | <b>300</b> | <b>LUCAS FIRE #2</b>        | \$ 98.58    |
| <b>130</b> | <b>NOXIOUS WEED</b>         | \$ 31.46    | <b>320</b> | <b>DORRANCE FIRE #4</b>     | \$ 8,054.43 |
| <b>140</b> | <b>4-H</b>                  | \$ 194.68   | <b>328</b> | <b>RUSSELL CO FIRE #5</b>   | \$ 426.66   |
| <b>150</b> | <b>CVB</b>                  | \$11,777.48 | <b>330</b> | <b>APPRAISER</b>            | \$ 1,899.00 |
| <b>155</b> | <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b> | \$ 267.48   | <b>335</b> | <b>APPRAISER CAMA/ORION</b> | \$ 802.00   |
| <b>180</b> | <b>ELECTION</b>             | \$ 565.38   | <b>360</b> | <b>SOLID WASTE</b>          | \$10,585.30 |
| <b>250</b> | <b>SERVICE TO ELDERLY</b>   | \$43,798.85 | <b>380</b> | <b>EMER TELEPHONE</b>       | \$ 107.22   |
| <b>260</b> | <b>COUNTY HEALTH</b>        | \$14,808.20 | <b>390</b> | <b>SPECIAL ALCOHOL</b>      | \$11,800.00 |

At 10:55 am Duke Strobel made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Steve Reinhardt seconded; Daron Woelk approved. The next regular meeting for the Russell County Commissioners will be on December 16, 2024, beginning at 9:00 am in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse.