

PROCEEDINGS OF THE KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Center, Nebraska
January 22, 2025
9:30 a.m.

A regular meeting of the Knox County Board of Supervisors was held in the Boardroom at the Knox County Courthouse in Center, Nebraska on the date of Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. Present were Supervisors Martin J. O'Connor District #1, Kevin G. Mlady District #2, David L. Pierce District #3, James Sokol, Jr. District #4, Kevin D. Mackeprang District #5, Danny R. Schlote District #6 and James J. Borgmann District #7. Absent was none. Chairman Sokol, Jr. presiding.

Supervisor Mackeprang led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Sokol, Jr. announced to the public that a copy of the Public Open Meeting Act was posted in the Boardroom.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Crofton Journal newspaper, as shown by the Affidavit of Publication attached to these minutes.

Notice of this meeting was simultaneously given to all members and a copy of their acknowledgment and receipt of notice and agenda is attached to these minutes. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was opened to the attendance of the public.

County Clerk Fischer read the January 9, 2025 meeting minutes. Chairman Sokol, Jr. approved the minutes of the January 9, 2025 meeting.

Chairman Sokol, Jr. opened the public comment session at 9:47 a.m. Public comments were given by several employees. Also, Sheriff Henery introduced Deputy John Shaver to the Board.

Motion by Supr. Schlote, seconded by Supr. Borgmann that all claims, audited and approved for payment by the Claims Committee, be allowed subject to delinquent personal taxes. By roll call vote. Ayes all Districts. Nays none. Motion carried. Claims totaling \$378,858.48 are listed at the end of these proceedings.

Chairman Sokol, Jr. closed the public comment session at 10:00 a.m.

Chairman Sokol, Jr. moves the Board recess at 10:03 a.m.

The Knox County Board of Supervisors reconvened at 10:16 a.m. with all members present.

Highway Superintendent Barta met with the Board on the following: 1.) Update on recent bridge inspection training; 2.) A new laptop computer was purchased for Mechanic Crosley; 3.) Road employees' job evaluations will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 beginning at 1:00 p.m.; 4.) Discussed Lazy River Acres area. Hwy. Supt. Barta informed the Board of sand cleared.

Chairman Sokol, Jr. opened the One-and-Six Year Road Hearing at 10:30 a.m. Present were Hwy. Supt. Barta, Jefferson Twp. Chairman Jimmie Kotrous, Emergency Manager Taylor and Zoning Administrator Jelinek. Hwy. Supt. Barta presented information on budgets, employees, completed and proposed projects, and information regarding bridge and oil crews. Presently Knox County is one of four counties in Nebraska that has an oil crew and one of seven counties who have a full bridge crew. Chairman Sokol, Jr. closed the public hearing at 11:00 a.m.

Jim Dinklage representing R-Calf met with the Board regarding mandatory electronic identification (MEID) livestock tags for cattle and asked the Board to oppose the implementation. Mr. Dinklage submitted a resolution draft for the Board. Discussed was the burden to ranch families, that currently only breeding stock are affected but the Federal Government may add that all cattle will be required to have the electronic identification livestock tags, many area county boards have adopted similar opposition resolutions, Farm Bureau and Farmers Union are opposed to the implementation, South Dakota and Wyoming passed legislation that the use of EID is voluntary, Knox County is a livestock friendly county, and unfunded mandates. Motion by Supr. Pierce, seconded by Supr. Borgmann to adopt **Resolution #2025 - 05** opposing mandatory electronic identification livestock tags by the USDA with the suggestion that funds currently earmarked for this program be reallocated to efforts to restore import standards that protect all livestock producers and consumers from introduction to foreign animal disease. By roll call vote. Ayes all Districts. Nays none. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #2025 - 05

OPPOSITION TO MANDATORY ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION (MEID) LIVESTOCK TAGS

WHEREAS: The traceability program is incremental, USDA APHIS stated on its website, updated October 11th, 2024 after approving the new rule, that it "is committed to implementing a modern system that tracks animals from birth to slaughter", and

WHEREAS: The cost of EID tags disproportionately burdens small and medium sized independent farmers and ranchers. The USDA rule allows large, corporate-owned herds to be grouped and tagged as one group, creating huge loophole that keep costs low for larger companies, and

WHEREAS: The EID mandate would potentially interfere with price discovery found in traditional markets, thereby furthering vertical integration of the US food supply at the expense of the consumer and independent producer, and

WHEREAS: The EID mandate is far overreaching, intrusive and potentially circumvents privacy laws, threatening the livelihood of independent cattle and bison producers, and

WHEREAS: Independent, family-owned cattle ranches are of paramount importance to our local economy and to the economy as to a whole, and

WHEREAS: The comments received by USDA APHIS in the rulemaking process were overwhelmingly against the new rule, and

WHEREAS: America has the safest and highest quality meat in the world using our current, fully functioning and effective traceability system. The mandate rule claims to be about animal health, but does nothing to prevent or treat disease, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The Knox County Board of Supervisors vehemently opposes the implementation of any EID mandate by the USDA, with the suggestion that funds currently earmarked for this program be reallocated to efforts to restore import standards that protect all livestock producers and consumers from introduction to foreign animal disease.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: The Knox County Board of Supervisors requests that all elected officials make every effort to block this government overreach by the USDA.

Dated this 22nd day of January 2025.

KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

James Sokol, Jr. /s/
James Sokol, Jr., District #4, Chairman

Martin J. O'Connor /s/
Martin J. O'Connor, District #1

Kevin G. Mlady /s/
Kevin G. Mlady, District #2

David L. Pierce /s/
David L. Pierce, District #3

Kevin D. Mackeprang /s/
Kevin D. Mackeprang, District #5

Danny R. Schlote /s/
Danny R. Schlote, District #6

ATTEST: (Seal)
Joann M. Fischer /s/
Joann M. Fischer, Knox County Clerk

James J. Borgmann /s/
James J. Borgmann, District #7

Emergency Manager Taylor met with the Board on the following: 1.) Update on recent meetings and seminars; 2.) Discussion was held on the job status of E.M. Taylor. Currently he has an hourly status and asked the Board to consider changing to a salaried status at the current wage as he is not yet certified but will be after testing in April. Also, he has put in extra hours for training and meeting with local entities, departments and more. E.M. Taylor said, while the Board hired him with the stipulation that a wage increase would take place upon certification, he suggested keeping the current wage until July 2025 when the Board sets the new wages for hourly employees and appointed officials. County Attorney Knox Jensen informed the Board that E.M. Taylor does qualify under Department of Labor regulations to be classified as a salaried employee. Motion by Supr. Mlady, seconded by Supr. Pierce to classify Emergency Manager Taylor as a salaried employee beginning with the January 26, 2025 pay period and to be paid \$1,400 per pay period until July, 2025 contingent that E.M. Taylor has passed his certification exams. By roll call vote. Ayes all Districts. Nays none. Motion carried.

Motion by Supr. Schlote, seconded by Supr. Borgmann to place on file the Receipts Revenue List of January 6 – 17, 2025. By roll call vote. Ayes all Districts. Nays none. Motion carried.

Motion by Supr. Mackeprang, seconded by Supr. Mlady to authorize Chairman Sokol, Jr. to sign the 2024 Noxious Weed reports and to place the reports on file. By roll call vote. Ayes all Districts. Nays none. Motion carried. Legislative updates were given by officials.

Committee updates were given by the following: 1.) Supr. Pierce attended a Northeast Nebraska Area Agency of Aging meeting via Zoom on January 16, 2025 where it was noted that dues will increase at the next budget cycle; 2.) Supr. Mackeprang said that the Region IV Mental Health Advisory Council has been discontinued so that Committee designation can be removed.

Officials' updates were given by the following: 1.) Sheriff Henery met with the Board about recent dispatcher hirings and Board approval on May 15, 2024 of wage increases upon the hirings. Approved at the May 15, 2024 meeting was a one-time increase of \$1.00 per hour during the fiscal year 2024/2025 to the dispatchers/jailors, 911 Coordinator, Administrative Assistant and part-time matron when another dispatcher is hired within the fiscal year 2024/2025. Sheriff Henery asked the Board to approve a \$1.50 per hour increase because of the extra hours put in and additional work. Consensus of the Board was to stay at the \$1.00 per hour increase to the dispatchers/jailors, 911 Coordinator, Administrative assistant and part-time matron starting with the January 26, 2025 pay period and to discuss any further increases at budget time; 2.) County Attorney Knox Jensen is preparing a response on behalf of the Knox County Board of Supervisors to the public comment request from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Highway 12 Final Environmental Impact Statement; 3.) Supr. Mackeprang informed the Board that his attorney representing him in the North Fork Wind, LLC, etal v Knox County, etal lawsuit submitted her bill to NIRMA for reimbursement.

Supr. Kevin Mackeprang left the meeting at 12:07 p.m.

Motion by Supr. Schlote, seconded by Supr. Pierce to go into closed session at 12:08 p.m. on pending litigation namely the North Fork Wind, LLC, etal v Knox County, etal lawsuit. By roll call vote. Ayes Districts #1, #2, #3, #4, #6 and #7. Nays none. Absent was District #5. Motion carried. Chairman Sokol, Jr. reiterated the closed session will be held on pending litigation namely the North Fork Wind, LLC, etal v Knox County, etal lawsuit. The Board came out of closed session at 12:30 p.m.

Motion by Supr. O'Connor, seconded by Supr. Borgmann to close at 12:30 p.m. the closed session held on pending litigation namely the North Fork Wind, LLC, etal v Knox County, etal lawsuit. By roll call vote. Ayes Districts #1, #2, #3, #4, #6 and #7. Nays none. Absent was District #5. Motion carried.

GENERAL FUND. Salaries, 105,141.53; Applied Connective Technologies, IT, 12,395.13; Classic Carpet Care, mop rental, 55.00; C-Mart LLC, gas, 42.50; Collector of Internal Revenue, Social Security County pays, 8,023.74; County of Knox Employee Benefit c/o Healthcare Solutions Group Inc., insurance County pays, 34,370.00; Creighton 59 LLC, gas, 44.99; DAS State Accounting-Central Finance, backup, 472.00; Dollar General, supplies, 77.05; Elizabeth Doerr, contract labor, 50.00; Farmers & Merchants State Bank, safety deposit box rent, 30.00; Great Plains Communications, tower internet, 64.52; Hampton Inn, lodging, 3,498.60; Hefner Hardware, paint, 85.98; Jeannoutot Plumbing, water heater, 1,580.53; John Thomas, mileage, 57.12; Knox County Treasurer, transfer from General Fund to Road Fund, 128,971.78; Lincoln National Life Insurance Co., insurance County pays, 141.99; Microfilm Imaging Systems, scanner rent, 40.50; MIPS Inc., forms/shipping, 711.95; MOCIC, dues, 100.00; NACT, dues, 75.00; Pitzer Digital, publishing, 435.75; Principal Life Insurance Company, insurance County pays, 1,096.51; Quill Corporation, office supplies, 321.00; R&K Motor Parts, repairs/oil/filter, 84.76; Retirement Plans Div. of Ameritas, retirement County pays, 7,438.25; Schreier's Lumber Company, repairs, 1,010.55; U-Save Pharmacy, meds, 38.63.

ROAD FUND. Salaries, 38,634.31; Bauer Built Inc., tire repair, 36.00; Black Hills Energy, heating fuel, 25.19; Cedar-Knox Public Power District, electricity, 294.12; CHS, diesel, 569.80; Collector of Internal Revenue, Social Security County pays, 2,905.21; County of Kox Employee Benefit c/o Healthcare Solutions Group Inc., insurance County pays, 12,290.00; Creighton 59 LLC, gas, 410.20; Hefner Hardware, shop supplies, 79.04; J&J Sanitation, garbage, 49.00; Linn Post & Pipe Inc., repairs, 25.56; Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, insurance County pays, 56.62; NMC Inc., repairs, 191.86; Pease General Store, shop supplies, 156.21; Pitzer Digital, publishing, 53.07; Principal Life Insurance Company, insurance County pays, 419.94; R&K Motor Parts, repairs/filters, 1,901.07; Retirement Plans Div. of Ameritas, retirement County pays, 2,551.03; Russ Crosley, garbage, 46.00; Santee Utility Commission, garbage, 65.00; Spencer Quarries Inc., red rock, 1,101.96; Truck Center Companies, repairs, 191.51; Vic's Service LLC, gas, 138.00.

CHILD SUPPORT FUND. Microfilm Imaging Systems, scanner rent, 81.00; MIPS Inc., jury list, 320.00.

VISITOR'S PROMO FUND. Niobrara Promoters, promo grant, 1,000.00; Winnetoon BBQ, promo grant, 300.00.

COUNTY WELLNESS FUND. Name Redacted, reimburse deductible, 250.00; Name Redacted, reimburse deductible, 250.00; Name Redacted, reimburse deductible, 250.00; Name Redacted, reimburse deductible, 250.00; Name Redacted, reimburse deductible, 500.00; Name Redacted, reimburse deductible, 250.00.

C&C DEVELOPMENT FUND. Salaries, 1,751.20; Nebraska Development Network-NE, dues, 75.00.

INHERITANCE FUND. Abrahams Kaslow & Cassman LLP, special county attorney, 4,138.66.

KENO FUND. J&J Sanitation, deer dumpsters, 796.56.

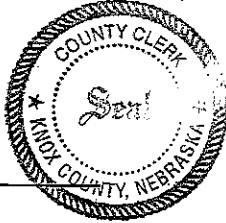
TOTALS

General Fund	306,455.36
Road Fund	62,190.70
Child Support Fund	401.00
Visitor's Promo Fund	1,300.00
County Wellness Fund	1,750.00
C & C Development Fund	1,826.20
Inheritance Fund	4,138.66
Keno Fund	796.56
Total	\$378,858.48

Chairman Sokol, Jr. adjourned the Knox County Board of Supervisors at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 22, 2025 until Wednesday, February 5, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. for a regular meeting.

I, Joann M. Fischer, Knox County Clerk, do hereby certify that the County Board of Supervisors' minutes are correct to the best of my knowledge.

ATTEST:



Joann M. Fischer

Joann M. Fischer, Knox County Clerk

COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF KNOX COUNTY, NEBRASKA

By

James Sokol, Jr.

James Sokol, Jr., Chairman