

Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County
Agenda for May 30, 2017

9:00 Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

10:00 Terry Rook, Vice President, Employee Benefit Trust, Willis Towers Watson, to discuss employee benefit options

10:30 David R. Frisch, P.L.S., representing GMS, Incorporated, Consulting Engineers, to discuss storm water drainage and parking lot improvements at the Lincoln County Services Complex

11:30 Wayne Shade, Lincoln County Weed Coordinator, to discuss vehicle replacement

1:00 Rachel Baird, Alamosa County Land Use Administrator, and Darius Allen, Alamosa County Commissioner, to discuss solar power plants

1. Approve the minutes from the May 18, 2017, meeting
2. Review the monthly management report from the First National Bank Omaha
3. Discuss public hours of operation at the Lincoln County Landfill
4. Review and act upon proposals from the Black Hills Energy Commercial Natural Gas Efficiency Program for upgrades at the Lincoln County Shop, 43326 County Road 33, Lincoln County and the Lincoln County Annex Building, 328-8th Street, Hugo
5. Review and act upon a renewal contract for state fiscal year 2018 for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program in an amount not to exceed \$23,329.00
6. Review and act upon a request for a Lincoln County credit card for Land Use Administrator Trey James
7. Old business
8. New business
9. Approve payroll and expense vouchers

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. on May 30, 2017. The following attended: Chairman Doug Stone, Commissioners Ed Schifferns and Steve Burgess, County Administrator Gary Ensign, and Clerk to the Board Corinne M. Lengel. County Attorney Stan Kimble attended the presentation at 1:00 p.m., as did Will Bublitz with the Limon Leader and Eastern Colorado Plainsman.

Chairman Stone called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Burgess to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Schifferns made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on May 18, 2017, as submitted. Mr. Burgess seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The Board reviewed the monthly management report from the First National Bank of Omaha, and then discussed the public hours of operation at the county landfill. Mr. Burgess made a motion to begin closing the Lincoln County Landfill at 3:00 p.m. on July 1, 2017, due to Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment regulations. Mr. Schifferns seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Mr. Ensign will work on an ad for the newspaper and signs will also be posted at the landfill announcing the upcoming change in hours.

The Board reviewed proposals from Black Hills Energy Commercial Natural Gas Efficiency Program for upgrades at the Lincoln County Shop and annex building in Hugo. Mr. Ensign said that the upgrades will all be paid for by Black Hills Energy and that they hire their own contractors.

Mr. Burgess made a motion to approve the Black Hills Energy Natural Gas Direct Install Program upgrades for the Lincoln County Shop in the amount of \$18,841.82. Mr. Schifferns seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Upgrades will include the replacement of a furnace and the repairs of several doors in order to increase energy efficiency.

Mr. Schifferns made a motion to approve the Black Hills Energy Natural Gas Direct Install Program upgrades for the Lincoln County Annex Building, located at 718 ½ 3rd Avenue in Hugo, in the amount of \$7,140.00. Mr. Burgess seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Ensign said the inspector had also looked at the Victim Advocate building but had not identified any deficiencies there. The courthouse is too large of a complex for the program, but they will look at the Ellis Allen building at the fairgrounds the next time they come out.

After reviewing the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Response Task Order Contract in the amount of \$23,329, Mr. Burgess made a motion to approve the contract. Mr. Schifferns seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Schifferns made a motion to approve a county credit card with a limit of \$1,500 for Land Use Administrator Trey James. Mr. Burgess seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

There was no old business, and when Mr. Stone called for new business, Mr. Burgess said they need to address painting the eaves on the roundhouse and asked if they want to put the job out for bids. Mr. Ensign will speak with Roxie Devers about it again to see if the State Historical Society would have any reasons why a local painter could not be hired for the job.

At 10:00 a.m., Terry Rook with Willis Towers Watson met with the Board to discuss employee benefit options through CEBT (Colorado Employer Benefit Trust). After giving his background, as well as that of the company, he stated that he could provide a cost comparison between CEBT and the county's County Health Pool plan if the commissioners wanted him to. They agreed and Mr. Rook will put something together and meet with the Board at a later date.

At 10:30 a.m., Dave Frisch with GMS, Incorporated, Consulting Engineers, met with the Board and District 2 and 3 Road Foremen Bruce Walters and Rick Ashcraft to discuss storm water drainage and parking lot improvements at the courthouse. District 1 Road Foreman Chris Monks was unable to attend the meeting. After discussing the design aspects and informing Mr. Frisch that they would like him to go ahead and design Phase 3 (the west parking lot) as well, the commissioners discussed possible freezing of the discharged water. Mr. Frisch said that some freezing would most likely be inevitable. Mr. Ensign asked him who would be responsible for any problems if GMS designs the drainage and parking lot but the county tears out the asphalt and someone else lays the concrete. Mr. Frisch responded that it would depend on whether or not the work had been done according to the design. Mr. Burgess commented that they would make sure to do soil compaction tests, and Mr. Frisch said that tests are done periodically after a certain number of loads during the pour. He added that there are basically three pieces to the design: preliminary surveys, design, and putting together all project specifications. He went on to say that if GMS doesn't do the construction, they cannot sign off on the project in the end; however, if they have a contractor doing the work for them, they will sign off at project completion. Mr. Schiffers asked if the county could decide to have GMS bid it out once the design process is complete, and Mr. Frisch said that would be fine. They will work up the design and send it to the Board for final approval.

Mr. Frisch left and Mr. Stone told the foremen that John Forristall is cleaning out a fence row and the commissioners were thinking they could use the topsoil for cover at the landfill. It was estimated that it may be at least 1,000 yards of dirt, and Mr. Forristall wants the county to pay what is paid for gravel, which is \$9 per load.

The group also discussed using more signage when completing road work after an incident that occurred last week.

At 11:30 a.m., Weed Coordinator Wayne Shade met with the Board to discuss the purchase of a new weed truck. After weighing the options of the Ford and Dodge and determining that the Ford would be approximately \$1,000 higher with the trade-in of the old truck, Mr. Burgess made a motion to purchase a 2017 Ford from Spradley Ford in Greeley for \$55,819. Trade-in will be approximately \$21,000, leaving a purchase price of \$34,819. Mr. Schiffers seconded the motion but said he would not vote in favor since he does not like the problems they have

had with the engine in the Ford the county currently owns. Mr. Stone and Mr. Burgess voted in favor of the motion and Mr. Schifferns voted against.

At 1:00 p.m., Alamosa County Land Use Administrator Rachel Baird and Alamosa County Commissioner Darius Allen met with the Board to discuss solar power plants. Also in attendance for the meeting in the jury assembly room were County Attorney Stan Kimble, Land Use Administrator Trey James, John DeWitt, Will Bublitz with the Limon Leader and Eastern Colorado Plainsman, County Assessor Jeremiah Higgins, Tina Adamson and Michelle Wyckoff with Kiowa County, and members of the Lincoln County Land Use Board Chris Monks, John Reid, Bill Craig, James Bledsoe, John Higgins, Mark James, and Paul Martin.

Mr. Allen explained that Alamosa County adopted 1041 regulations in 2009 and follow them for installation of solar energy. They have had no issues and the revenue that has been generated in property tax has been a huge benefit. He commented that they had taken 1,200 acres out of production for one of the plants, which had generated approximately \$40,000 in property tax. It is now well over \$900,000 annually. He went on to say that their biggest concern had been decommissioning of the power plants, so they do require an irrevocable letter of credit, cash, or a bond as part of the permit. The company must re-evaluate those costs every five years and give the county an estimate of what to expect in the event the plant is decommissioned.

Ms. Baird stated that their permit fee is \$30,000 but the high cost is due to the fact that they have hired a third party consultant, which has been extremely valuable. Most companies do not even hesitate to pay the fee. She added that they also ask for a "voluntary donation" of \$1,500 per megawatt based on number of megawatts produced for each power purchase agreement. The money is used for community development and is a motivating factor for the company since they are investing in the community. Their permitting process can be completed in six months, where it takes several years in other states. Ms. Baird believes that is because of their 1041 regulations and consultant.

Ms. Baird went on to say that there are fifty-one foot towers in Alamosa County's largest solar power plant, a 320-acre, 50 megawatt plant, but even though there are three national wildlife refuges and a national park in the county, there is no evidence of issues with fires or loss of wildlife due to its existence. She added that Alamosa County has the largest number of solar power plants in the state. Mr. Allen added that community input is imperative, and if Lincoln County is considering allowing solar plants, holding as many public meetings as possible would be a great benefit. He felt that every company they have dealt with has done everything they can to accommodate them. Mr. DeWitt asked if there has been problems with glare and was told that some solar plants are right next to very active county roads but there has never been a complaint. Many of the panels simply blend into the horizon. When asked about setbacks, Ms. Baird said theirs are twenty feet in Alamosa County, but she imagined further would not be an issue for the companies. If the county requires screening, or something that will cost the company money, they may be more apt to argue, but a greater distance in setbacks really wouldn't cost them anything. She was also asked if the companies lease or purchase the land and responded that most of those in Alamosa County have purchased the land. She knew

nothing about mineral rights or mineral right landowners as that is not an issue in Alamosa County. Mr. Allen commented that it would be worth their time for the commissioners or land use board members to come and take a tour of the solar plants, just to see for themselves how they operate. He stated that they do give excellent tours and are always happy to do so.

Mr. Kimble asked if Alamosa County has a sales/use tax, but Ms. Baird said they do not since the permit fee is so expensive. She added that as far as large-scale development, Alamosa County is basically out of transmission capacity, so more development will not happen anytime soon.

Mr. Craig asked if they would change anything since they have had the solar plants for a while and was told that there have been absolutely no complaints. If anything, they might consider having the companies pave some of the roads since they do tear up the roads quite a bit during construction. Mr. Kimble asked about a road agreement and was told that they are required and are separate applications. Ms. Baird said they do have two formal hearings before the county commissioners, which are like any other board of county commissioner hearings, but they do try to have as many public open house meetings as the company wants to have.

John Higgins commented that one of his concerns is the heat coming off of the panels and what it would do to neighboring crops. Ms. Baird said that they have never had any problems with it, but their temperatures are a bit different than those in eastern Colorado. Most of their solar plants are also pretty far out in the country so are not very near to residences or crops.

There were no other questions so the group dispersed and the commissioners returned to their meeting room where they approved the May 2017 payroll and expense vouchers for the month.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned until 9:00 a.m. on May 31, 2017.

Corinne M. Lengel, Clerk to the Board

Doug Stone, Chairman