

ELLSWORTH COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

January 17, 2023

The Board of Ellsworth County Commissioners convened this 17th day of January 2023 at the Ellsworth County Courthouse.

Members Present:

Dennis L. Rolfs, 1st District Commissioner

Gregory C. Bender, 2nd District Commissioner

Stephen S. Dlabal, Jr, 3rd District Commissioner

OPENING BUSINESS:

Chairman Bender called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Bender moved to approve the agenda with the addition of Bill Lowery.

Commissioner Dlabal seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Rolfs moved to approve the minutes for January 9, 2023. Commissioner Dlabal seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Mary Ann Fredrickson was in attendance but did not wish to address the Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS:

A Department Head Meeting was held with the following present: Sue Arensman, Carl Miller, Nathan Florian, Geneva Schneider, Teresa Shute, Keith Haberer, Dale Houston, Paul Kasper, Kerianne Ehrlich, Kristy Battershell and Shelly Vopat. Ms. Arensman asked if the Courthouse could have drills like once a month on the doors. Once the front doors of the Courthouse are finished, we will begin having monthly lockdown drills. The handbook committee needs to meet at least one more time to finish up the corrections. Ms. Arensman thanked the Commissioners for the 3% raise but was under the impression that the commissioners agreed that giving a 3% cost of living was not fair. Ms. Arensman would like to see a flat amount such as \$1.00 given to every employee. The top paid full-time employee will be compensated \$240 more a month and the lowest paid full-time employee will get \$69 more a month. Mr. Kasper said that cost of living is always given in percentages not a flat amount and we would get behind other counties who are giving 3.5% to 10% cost of living. The Commissioners will revisit wages at budget time for 2024. Keith Haberer introduced the Orion Damage Assessment program purchased by KDEM. Mr. Haberer took the training and said that we could take pictures of damage after a disaster and with this program it would give the cost of the damage.

Murray Marston, Ellsworth County Sheriff, was notified from KCAMP that the sheriff's office will receive \$21,000 for the automobile recently totaled. This will not cover the cost to replace this the automobile, so he is looking for an alternative. Mr. Marston is looking into purchasing a used cargo van for around \$20,000 to keep his budget in line.

Nathan Florian, EMS Director, presented his calls ran for 2022. The Ellsworth EMS Department had 899 calls; most of the calls are from the City of Ellsworth. Mr. Florian requested permission to give Jenny Kempke, Medical Billing Clerk, a 1% wage increase. Ms. Kempke goes above and beyond her job by taking calls during the day as an EMT and continuing her education in the evenings at no extra pay. The Commissioners agreed to the 1% increase for Ms. Kempke.

Amanda Cambrice, Sarah McCall & Marty Sneath, representing Pattern Energy, inquired what they can do for the County of Ellsworth since the money has gone to the general fund in the past to help decrease taxes. Also in attendance was Paul Kasper, Carl Miller and Bill Lowery. The Commissioners said that everyone is experiencing substantial cost increases. The Commissioners would like to keep tax payers taxes down. Ms. Cambrice said she would have an answer for the County by the end of March or sooner so the county will know what to expect when doing the 2024 budget. Bill Lowery, USD 112 interim superintendent, asked if USD 112 could enter into a contract with Pattern Energy separate from the county's agreement.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Rolfs moved to approve the 2022 Abatements 35 through 39 for a total of \$274.92. Commissioner Dlabal seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Bender adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Shelly D. Vopat, County Clerk

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