

WESTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OFFICIAL MINUTES
January 18, 2022

The regular meeting of the Weston County Board of Commissioners was called to order by Vice-Chairman Nathan Todd at 9:00 a.m. at the Weston County Courthouse. Commissioners Ed Wagoner, Tony Barton and Don Taylor, Attorney Michael Stulken and Clerk Becky Hadlock were present. Upton Town Clerk Kelley Millar led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Barton moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Wagoner. Carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Barton moved to approve the Consent Agenda which included the minutes of January 4, 2022, Chairman's signature on Grant Award Agreement between Wyoming Office of Homeland Security and Weston County; seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Carried.

DISPATCH UPDATE

Mayor Pam Gualtieri explained that Commissioner Taylor asked that she attend the meeting as the City and the County has not been on the same page regarding Dispatch. Mayor Gualtieri reported that the City of Newcastle would be relocating Dispatch. Mayor Gualtieri added that the new CIS updates are not being used as the equipment has not arrived and none of the entities have been trained. Upton Police Chief Susan Bridge stated they couldn't move forward as new computers and software are needed. Commissioner Taylor added that the problem with Dispatch is there still has not been any forward movement. Mayor Gualtieri indicated their problem was with the radios and not the system and this has been fixed. Commissioner Taylor asked if a joint powers board was still an option. Newcastle Town Councilman Don Steveson stated the City was not even considering this after a letter from the County was sent out. Commissioner Barton explained that he made the motion to send the letter to make Dispatch work for everyone. Deputy Attorney Jeanie Stone stated that they City will oversee Dispatch but come March, they hope to have new agreements drawn up. Mayor Gualtieri wanted to address an issue that read in the *Weston County Gazette* about concerns with Upton being dropped. Mayor Gualtieri added that by law, the City cannot drop anyone. Chief Bridge indicated her concerns when Chief Sam Keller, Dispatch Supervisor Melissa Stubbs and City System Admin Leanne Cox stated they got what they needed for Newcastle. When Chief Bridge asked if they'd be dispatching for Upton, Admin Cox stated they got what we needed for their (Newcastle) officers. Vice-Chairman Todd added that he might be partially to blame for the Upton side of things, but there are 3,000 people in this County who do not get to vote for the Mayor of Newcastle or have any say in the admin in the town of Newcastle. Vice-Chairman Todd added that now the City is going to pay \$50 - \$100,000 for a new Dispatch center and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million in the County. Vice-Chairman Todd would like to work towards a JPB and save the City and the County money. Mayor Gualtieri gave her personal opinion on the JPB, that everyone on the Board needs to have equal say and pay an equal share. Chief Bridge indicated this would take the Upton Ambulance's entire budget. Mayor Gualtieri stated she is looking at it from a business aspect, not as the Mayor. Deputy Stone was hoping to visit with the other Attorneys, but added that Attorney Mark Hughes is bowing out as he feels it is a conflict of interest as he represents both the City of Newcastle and the Town of Upton. Deputy Stone reported the next step will be to take inventory of the equipment in Dispatch. Deputy Stone also stated that the Town of Upton and Weston County need to have an idea of what they will pay in dispatch fees. Councilman Steveson stated that everyone already agreed to a percent of what was presented at the last Dispatch meeting. Commissioner Taylor

stated that he has a problem with Mayor Gualtieri saying that if someone doesn't pay an equal portion, they don't have a say. Commissioner Taylor added that this a leverage that the City has total control and it is uncomfortable for him. Vice-Chairman Todd feels this is a County issue and not a City issue and should be under an elected official.

OLD BUSINESS

REVIEW THE DRAFT DRU CONSULTING, LLC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Commissioner Barton moved to approve the Chairman's signature on the Dru Consulting, LLC Service Agreement; seconded by Commissioner Wagoner. Carried.

REVIEW THE DRAFT WESTON COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Board will review this in the workshop with Dru Consulting.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

Commissioner Barton moved to amend the January 4, 2022 minutes to advertise board openings, Courthouse closings & special meeting notices in the *News Letter Journal* at the government rate; seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Carried.

ROAD & BRIDGE

Road & Bridge Superintendent Jim Hansen gave a copy of the Barton Road traffic study to the Board. Superintendent Hansen stated the speed limit to be posted is the Board's discretion. The Board would like to have the Sheriff and Highway Patrol's input before they make a decision. This will be added to the next agenda. Superintendent Hansen has ordered road signs for a price of \$15,000. Superintendent Hansen also gave an update on Road & Bridge.

COUNTY NURSE MANAGER

Sarah Gregory, came before the Board to introduce herself as the new County Nurse Manager.

PHRC CONTRACT POSITION

Melanie Pearce, State of Wyoming Public Health Nursing Regional Supervisor phoned in to answer the Board's questions on the Memorandum of Understanding between Wyoming Department of Health, Public Health Division and Weston County. Supervisor Pearce explained the reason this was dated July 2021 is because some counties used all of their funds so this money will go back and cover some of these funds. Manager Gregory will come to the next meeting and explain this in more detail. Commissioner Barton moved to table the MOU discussion until the next meeting; seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Carried. Supervisor Pearce asked if the \$16.80 per hour could be raised. She explained that because the position requires an Associate's Degree, Crook County pays \$23.00 per hour and Niobrara pays \$16.00 per hour. Commissioner Barton stated that this is a grant but they would be a contract employee while the grant is available. Commissioner Taylor made a motion to increase the wage to \$25 per hour; seconded by Commissioner Barton. During discussion, the benefits were reviewed. Ayes: Barton and Taylor. Nays: Wagoner and Todd. Failed. Commissioner Taylor made a motion to increase the wage to \$22 per hour with benefits; seconded by Commissioner Barton. Carried.

BH NATIONAL FOREST DISTRICT RANGER

District Ranger, Rob Hoelscher introduced himself to the Board. Ranger Hoelscher let the Board know there would be a webinar on February 1st, pertaining to the Forest Plan Revision. Commissioner Barton would like to see Ranger Hoelscher on the agenda quarterly for updates.

AWARDING CORONAVIRUS STATE & LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

Deputy Attorney Jeani Stone visited with the Board about using the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to pay the County employees. Commissioner Barton expressed that the employees are underpaid but does not feel they need the amount requested and would like to wait. Commissioner Barton would like some input from outside stake holders. Commissioner Wagoner echoed what Commissioner Barton had to say. Commissioner Taylor was in support of paying the employees. Deputy Stone suggested taking care of those that have had to work during the pandemic. Vice-Chairman Todd said having a workshop is important. There will be a workshop one hour after the February 1st meeting ends.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Assistant Publisher/Editor, for the *Weston County Gazette*, Nick Trandahl, addressed the article that had been brought up by Mayor Gualtieri about Upton being dropped. Assistant Publisher Trandahl stated his article was from three or four direct quotes of elected officials. Assistant Publisher Trandahl added that he is here to report on the County of Weston and the City of Newcastle has their own newspaper that can handle their side as he is not going to go to the City of Newcastle meetings to report on their perspective of Dispatch.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PROPOSED LITIGATION

Commissioner Barton moved to go into Executive Session per W.S. 16-4-405(a)(iii); seconded by Commissioner Wagoner. Carried. Executive Session began at 11:47 a.m.; regular meeting reconvened at 12:04 p.m. Matters concerning possible litigation were discussed in Executive Session; no action was taken.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Nathan Todd
Vice-Chairman

Attest: Becky Hadlock
Weston County Clerk