

## ELLSWORTH COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING

### MINUTES

**November 16, 2020**

The Board of Ellsworth County Commissioners convened this 16<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2020 at the Ellsworth County Courthouse.

***Members Present:***

*Dennis L. Rolfs, 1<sup>st</sup> District Commissioner*

*Kermit Rush, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Commissioner*

*Stephen S. Dlabal, Jr, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Commissioner*

### **OPENING BUSINESS:**

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

Commissioner Rush moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Rolfs seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Rush moved to approve the Minutes for November 9, 2020. Commissioner Dlabal seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

### **APPOINTMENTS:**

A **Mask Mandate** discussion was held at 9:00 a.m. Those in attendance were: Dan Reed, Andrea Reed, Jessica Holt, Keith Haberer, Anthony Hopkins, Janet Kempke, Ryan Lahey, Debbie Mog, Season Wacker, Greg Bender, Jeremiah Brown, Roger Tanuis, Dr. Ronald Whitmer, Paul Kasper and standing by law enforcement Sheriff Marston & Chief Halfhill. Dan Reed said he and his wife have been contacted by hundreds of people in opposition of the face mask mandate. The mandate is causing division and bullying. Andrea Reed said there has been comments made to a business owner who wanted to be present today, but they feel bullied into silencing by those who oppose the mandate. Jessica Holt read a statement representing business owners, employees and residents of our community. They do not feel a mask mandate will be an effective way to slow the spread of COVID in our community. Aaron Johnson feels wearing a mask should be left to the individual. Mr. Johnson feels the information that is being given is conflicting and confusing to the public. The mandate is hurting his business. Mr. Johnson asked the Commissioners to please work with businesses. Debbie Mog believes everyone in this room would protect everyone in their family and their friends by wearing seat belts or wearing masks. Farmers would not go to their Health official and expect them to plant their wheat. Why are individuals telling Health officials about their job? Physician Ryan Lahey said people are consistently making wrong decisions so asking people to use common sense and make the right decisions is not going to lead to them to make the right decisions. Anthony Hopkins said ICU beds are full and there is no room for individuals who are in accidents. Medical Professionals have been ignored in the past and Mr.

Hopkins hopes the elected officials will listen to the medical advice and leave the mask mandate in place.

Commissioner Rush made a motion to go into executive session to discuss non-elected personnel employment policies from 10:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. with Jeremiah Brown. Commissioner Rolfs seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. At 10:30 a.m. the Commissioners returned to open session with no action taken. Mr. Brown informed the Commissioners that he is down an ambulance, but the ambulance is going to be fixed in Missouri. Commissioner Rush made a motion to allow Jeremiah to buy a stove and microwave to be paid out of the equipment fund not to exceed \$1,300. Commissioner Rolfs seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

A **Mask Mandate** discussion was held at 10:30 a.m. Those in attendance were Kevin Kennedy, Celia Heller, Greg Heller, Paul Kasper, Scott Grauer, Andrew Bair, Greg Bender, Kerianne Ehrlich, Keith Haberer and standing by law enforcement Sheriff Marston & Chief Halfhill. Celia Heller would like to see individuals given the freedom to decide if they want to wear a mask. Ms. Heller asked the Commissioners if they got the survey from businesses regarding face masks. Commissioner Rush said no they did not get the survey. Kevin Kennedy said he knows of three individuals that have tested positive and they came into the pharmacy not wearing a mask and risking everyone in the business. He is in support of the mask mandate and would like something done about the individuals who are supposed to be in quarantine but choose to ignore it. Scott Grauer is upset that the convenience store is not enforcing the mask mandate. Andrew Bair said people are scared that the mask mandate is a slippery slope into government control, he does not know if that is the case, but he does know that the hospital is in danger. Health advisors believe that masks will reduce the positive cases. Mr. Bair wants to encourage them that this is not about rights, it is about health. If I wear this mask what is the risk but if we do not wear masks, the risk is health. Commissioner Rush said the mask mandate will be put on the next agenda to be reviewed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Dlabal moved to approve the opinion letter for the certificate on Phases I & II projects for the Smoky Hill Windfarm with the modification of the wording on County permits. Commissioner Rush seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Dlabal adjourned the meeting at 11:35 p.m.

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Shelly D. Vopat, County Clerk

November 16, 2020