

THE PRATT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MET IN REGULAR SESSION MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023 AT 2:00 PM IN THE COMMISSIONER ROOM, 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE. THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE PRESENT: THOMAS W. JONES III, RICK SHRIVER, DWIGHT ADAMS, TYSON EISENHAUER, COUNTY COUNSELOR, LORI VOSS, COUNTY CLERK, AND MARK GRABER, IT DIRECTOR.

THE MEETING WAS OPENED WITH THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

TYSON EISENHAUER, COUNTY COUNSELOR, PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND TITLE WHEN SPEAKING, PUBLIC COMMENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS ON TOPIC. PERSONS PARTICIPATING VIA ZOOM ARE CURRENTLY MUTED. IF YOU HAVE A COMMENT, PLEASE LET MARK KNOW VIA THE CHAT FUNCTION. MARK WILL THEN INFORM CHAIRMAN JONES, WHO CAN TAKE UP THE COMMENT IN A MANNER THAT DOES NOT DISRUPT THE AGENDA. IN THE EVENT AN EXECUTIVE SESSION IS NEEDED, IT WILL BE MUTED WHEN RECESSED AND TURNED BACK ON WHEN THEY RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION.

HEATHER MORGAN, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/COVID CONSULTANT REPORTED THAT THE ARPA REPORTING DEADLINE IS COMING UP IN APRIL AND THERE HAS BEEN SOME CHANGES. SHE WILL TAKE CARE OF THE REPORTING AND LET THE BOARD KNOW WHEN IT IS DONE. SHE ALSO MENTIONED THAT KDOT HAD AWARDED THE PRATT AIRPORT A LARGE GRANT FOR HANGER AND APRON REPAIRS WHICH WILL HELP THE AIRPORT STAY UP TO DATE. FINALLY, JUST MENTIONED NUMEROUS BILLS WHICH PASSED THE LEGISLATURE BEFORE TURNAROUND NEXT WEEK. THOSE INCLUDE SB 169 WHICH WOULD CHANGE THE CURRENT THREE TIER INCOME TAX STRUCTURE TO A SINGLE RATE OF 4.75% STARTING IN TAX YEAR 2024; [SENATE BILL 33](#) WHICH WOULD EXEMPT ALL SOCIAL SECURITY AND ALL RETIREMENT PLAN INCOME BENEFITS FROM INCOME TAX STARTING IN TAX YEAR 2023; SB 30 WHICH INCREASE THE INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX STANDARD DEDUCTION BY A FEDERAL COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT STARTING IN TAX YEAR 2023; SB 40 WHICH WOULD ALLOW TAXPAYERS WHO CARRIED FORWARD FEDERAL NET OPERATING LOSSES IN TAX YEARS 2018-2020 TO SUBTRACT THOSE AMOUNTS FROM THEIR KANSAS ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME AND FILE THOSE AMENDED RETURNS BY APRIL 15, 2025; AND SB 80 WHICH EXCLUDES SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS FROM HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED VETERANS WHEN CALCULATING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE PROPERTY TAX HOMESTEAD CLAIMS AND INCREASING THE ASSESSED VALUATION OF HOMES ELIGIBLE TO HOMES WITH A VALUE AS HIGH AS \$595,000. SHE ALSO MENTIONED THE SB 248 WOULD ELIMINATE BOTH THE STATE AND LOCAL SALES TAX ON FOOD EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024. THIS IMPACTS LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENTS SALES TAX RECEIPTS. SHE REPORTED THAT THE LEGISLATURE WAS AWARE OF THIS AND INDICATED THEY WOULD BE WORKING ON A SOLUTION TO MAKE LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT WHOLE BUT THAT THERE WAS NOT A SOLUTION FOR THIS ISSUE IN THE BILL AS IT PASSED THE SENATE. SB 252 WAS ALSO MENTIONED AS IT PROTECTS BUSINESSES FROM COMPETITION FROM GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF GOVERNMENT NOT PAYING PROPERTY TAXES AND OPERATING A SIMILAR BUSINESS TO A BUSINESS WHO DOES PAY PROPERTY TAX PAYMENTS. SHE ALSO MENTIONED THAT A BILL WAS PASSED WHICH WOULD LIMIT THE LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH'S EMERGENCY POWERS, THAT TWO ELECTION BILLS WERE PASSED WHICH WOULD ELIMINATE THE THREE-DAY GRACE PERIOD TO RECEIVE ADVANCED BALLOTS IN THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE, AND A BILL PASSED WHICH WOULD DISALLOW BALLOT DROP BOXES. ONE BILL WHICH DID FAIL TO ADVANCE WAS A BILL WHICH WOULD HAVE ALLOWED LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS TO LIST THEIR POLITICAL PARTY WHEN THEIR NAME APPEARS ON THE BALLOT. ALL OF THESE BILLS STILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE OTHER HOUSE AND MUST BE SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR BEFORE BECOMING

LAW BUT MANY OF THEM WOULD IMPACT THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTY AS WELL AS POTENTIALLY COUNTY FINANCES IN THE CASE OF SOME OF THE BILLS.

FIONA BAGWELL, DEVELOPER FOR NEXTERA ENERGY, GAVE A SHORT EXPLANATION ON THE POTENTIAL OF A SOLAR FARM IN PRATT COUNTY. THEY HAVE LEASED A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF LAND AT THIS TIME. IT WILL TAKE A COUPLE OF YEARS TO GET THE PROJECT IN PRODUCTION. SHE STATED NOTHING FORMAL IS BEING PRESENTED AT THIS TIME. SHE ASKED ABOUT THE OTHER SOLAR FARMS IN THE COUNTY. BOTH ARE WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST SOLAR FARM IN PRATT COUNTY. THEY HAVE MORE THAN HALF OF THEIR ACREAGE ALREADY LEASED AT A PER ACRE LEASE. IT WILL BE NO EARLIER THAN LATE 2024 OR EARLY 2025. THEY WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW AGREEMENTS THIS SUMMER AND GET STARTED. BJ HAYES, ZONING DIRECTOR IS DEVELOPING A PERMIT PACKAGE FOR SOLAR FARMS IN PRATT COUNTY. TYSON ASKED, AS THEY GET CLOSER, TO COME BACK IN WITH DEVELOPMENTS. SHE SAID THEY WERE PLANNING TO DO THAT.

JASON WINKEL, LANDFILL/RECYCLING SUPERVISOR PRESENTED A NEW HIRE FORM. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER MADE A MOTION TO HIRE NICOLE TATRO FOR RECYCLING OPERATOR AT \$15.00 PER HOUR. COMMISSIONER ADAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0. REPORTED THE LOADER THAT CAUGHT FIRE HAS BEEN TAKEN APART AND BEING REPAIRED.

JON ROACH, NOXIOUS WEED, REPORTED THEY GOT THE ROOF DONE AT HIS SHOP. HE ASKED IF THEY STILL WANTED TO SPRAY FOR KDOT. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT TO SPRAY FOR KDOT AT \$80.00 PER TRUCK AND \$30.00 FOR THE OPERATOR. COMMISSIONER ADAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2023. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE TERMINATION OF THE LAND LEASE CONTRACT WITH GARY BARKER AND TREY LANGFORD LOCATED AT E/2 SE/4 OF 35-27-13. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

COMMISSIONER SHRIVER MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES AT 2:30 PM FOR AN ATTORNEY/CLIENT MATTER CONCERNING SALES TAX AND EXEMPTIONS. COMMISSIONER ADAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0. CHAIRMAN ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 2:45 PM WITH NO ACTION TAKEN. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

DARCIE VANDERVYVER, HEALTH DIRECTOR, PRESENTED HER GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR SIGNATURES. SHE REPORTED THE 2004 VAN HAS HAD SOME ISSUES. IT HAS BEEN IN THE SHOP AND BEING REPAIRED. SHE STATED SHE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE LIGHT FIXTURES CHANGED OUT IN TWO OF HER OFFICES. SHE WILL GET QUOTES AND COME BACK IN.

MARK GRABER, UPDATE ON PHONES, THE SC TELCOM TECH WILL MEET HIM AT THE NEW BUILDING WEDNESDAY.

COMMISSIONER SHRIVER MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 2:50 PM FOR TEN MINUTES FOR AN ATTORNEY/CLIENT MATTER CONCERNING EXEMPTIONS. COMMISSIONER ADAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER MADE A MOTION

TO RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 2:57 PM. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BOARD OF TAX APPEALS FOR THE STATE OF KANSAS EXEMPTION FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS STATED THAT FRED NEWBY WANTED IT KNOWN THAT BRAD SWISHER AND DOUG FREUND ARE DOING A GOOD JOB ON THE ROADS IN HIS AREA.

COMMISSIONER SHRIVER REPORTED AFTER THE RAIN LAST NIGHT, THERE WERE A COUPLE OF LEAKS AT THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING. HE HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE CONTRACTOR. THERE IS ALSO A PROBLEM WITH THE HEATING/COOLING IN THE LARGE MEETING ROOM. THE CONTRACTOR WILL COME OUT TO CHECK THEM OUT. HE ALSO QUESTIONED THE BOND FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, CAN WE PAY IT OFF EARLY AND WHEN CAN WE START PAYING OFF EARLIER. TYSON STATED THAT THE INTEREST RATE FOR THE BONDS IS A VERY GOOD RATE.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS ASKED ABOUT THE INCREASE IN HEALTH INSURANCE, IT WAS STATED THE INCREASE WILL BE AROUND \$800,000.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 3:05 PM FOR TEN MINUTES TO DISCUSS NON-ELECTED PERSONNEL CONCERNING EVALUATIONS. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0. COMMISSIONER ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 3:12 PM WITH NO ACTION TAKEN. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE .50 RAISES FOR DIANA ORONA AND CHERYL SLUPSKI IN THE APPRAISER OFFICE. COMMISSIONER ADAMS SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE PAYMENT VOUCHERS FOR FEBRUARY 27, 2023. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

COMMISSIONER ADAMS MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 3:18 PM. COMMISSIONER SHRIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

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THOMAS W JONES III                      CHAIRMAN

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DWIGHT ADAMS                              MEMBER

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LORI VOSS, COUNTY CLERK

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RICK N SHRIVER                              MEMBER