**March 12, 2024**

The Graham County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday March 12, 2024. Commissioner Tremblay called the meeting to order with the flag salute. Commissioner’s, Kendra Robinson, Jarrod Knoll, Melissa Atkins, and Cassie Branstetter were all present. Commissioner Tremblay made a motion to approve the minutes from March 5, 2024. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0.

**Graham County Hospital, Melissa Atkins**

Melissa reported things are going well at the hospital. They hired a locum this past weekend, none of the providers were available to take call, so they had somebody from Colby, we kind of had to get somebody last minute, but everything went well, she was very complimentary with our hospital and nursing staff and she said they are just truly amazing, she said she just wanted to pass that along and they really are fortunate for what they have. She reported some of the staff are involved in doing the CPR training for the community, like freshman health, and they do some training at the school and what they have had done in the past is asked the Commissioners to pay for a little mask, its $6.59/mask and goes over their nose and face if you have to do CPR for everyone that had taken the CPR class to keep that in their vehicle so if they come up on an accident, its so much easier and you feel so much more comfortable if you have that mask. Melissa reported she was an EMT and you don’t want to put your face on theirs and the seal is better. She reported they would like to order 200 masks @ $6.59 so total price is $1,500.00. Melissa asked Commissioner if they were willing to pay for that our of Sales Tax fund? Commissioners thought it would be a good idea. Commissioner Nelson asked why it wasn’t $1,200. Melissa said there was shipping, so it was $1,318, no sales tax but shipping of $184 for a total of $1,500.00, she reported it sounds like a lot but 200 is quite a few. Commissioner Tremblay made a motion to approve that purchase out of Health Care Sales Tax. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. Melissa provided Clerk with a bill for the masks to be paid. Melissa reported they have a meeting tonight to talk about door locks and security cameras and what all they will have will not have in the new clinic. She reported she leaves tonight to go to Kansas City for meetings but will be back next Tuesday. Clerk Kendra reminded Melissa we will not have the meeting next Tuesday because we have the Presidential Preference Primary Election going on but we will reconvene on the 26th. National Park Service, Cassie Branstetter told Melissa she would love to get her staff into CPR training if they have one going on soon. Melissa told Cassie to call up to the Hospital and they will let you know more information.

**Community Development, Dan Steffen**

Dan arrived at this time, he asked what was going on in the Courthouse today. Clerk told him it was day one of the Jury trial on the Morland case. Commissioner Tremblay told Dan he was up next. Dan asked Commissioner if they had read through his report he previously provide them. Dan said if the Commissioner have a chance, he would invite them to attend the next WKREDA meeting that is in Hays, should be a program, as far as community development 101 sessions, and that is the closest it is going to be in awhile, that and Phillipsburg, it would give them a chance to get more familiar with the program and what they are doing. Commissioner Tremblay asked Dan when it was, as he didn’t see it on the schedule. Dan reported he didn’t think he had it on there yet because he doesn’t have the date yet but will get those because he knows they are sending them out. He reported the Youth Job Screening Grant, he was looking at, he is still looking at, it is a $100,000 max with a 10% match, 5% in card, 5% in cash, did some checking, his idea was for the work ready certification program, for us to bring that to Hill City High School. He went on to say after doing some checking he found out they already have it, it is offered to juniors through the counselors office, it isn’t mandatory but whoever wants to take it can and it is free. He reported the people that run the ACT test are the ones that set it out since it is a nationally recognized program they tied it in to start doing that through the ACT folks as opposed to Kansas Works through Department of Commerce. Dan reported his initial idea was to do that, as well as the manufacturing skills certification which is offered through Barton County Community College and Hutch Community College, he has inquired to both of those about bringing that as an option but has got no response to date, but he will follow up with that. Dan reported he had a zoom meeting with Tim Parks who runs the Block Grant Program along with Cannan with the Planning Commission who is going to help him, the deadline has been moved to September, so they have more time as opposed to the May deadline, still thinks there is an opportunity to bring some kind of job skills to the high school. Dan said, not all students go to college, not all go to college and stay in college and it’s evident not only in Graham County but the entire nation that there are students graduating with book smarts but no hands on skills. Dan said they also talked about a program that Tim Parks is aware of for 6th – 8th graders basically an assessment giving them an idea of what they want to do in their career and what coursework and skill sets they would need to accomplish that, he went on to say everything from financial literacy, to real ins and outs of living on your own as far as costs and so on, so they are still looking at that. Dan reported they have an application submitted for both the Hansen Foundation & Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission for additional grant dollars for murals. He reported they have enough for the Morland mural but he would like to get enough to do the Frontier Stage theatre, they have the artwork waiting on approval, they received approval for the Morland Mercantile just waiting on approval from the theatre group. Dan reported Deb Makler, ED Director of Rawlins County doesn’t have a job description, so he sent her some examples he had. He got to thinking about it, and from his initial job description as well as more defined for this position, he wants to put it together and have to the Commissioners well before they post for his position again in terms of committee work, expectations, travel, just not so generic so people have a better idea when they are applying. Dan reported he did find out about the solid waste grant, Corina checked with Penco and KDHE and we do not need a special permit to have the recycling center at the Landfill property. He reported he is still waiting on a quote from Van Koon on the Morton building, he said Van finally sent an email reporting he is struggling getting information together and didn’t want us to think he forgot them but will be back in touch. Dan reported Corina is waiting for a cost so they know what to look at, KDHE maximum grant is usually $25,000 but they also said depending on the application they may go higher, so they will apply for whatever availability they have. Dan said she is also checking with a couple other agencies as far as solid waste disposal and recycling. Commissioner Tremblay said he would be curious what our options are. Dan said exactly, and he is noting in there from the Commission stand point, it is a must have but no funding to make it a have. Dan said he is meeting with the city of Hill City in regards to the makemymove program, that is the one that as a reminder where through the economic invasion center, tying in with the company makemymove.com, for anybody that is a remote worker that relocates to Graham County, they will put together a local incentive package as well, he is waiting on answers and dollar costs for what they can put together, but the proposal he has for the city is a waiver of all utilities, it wouldn’t be for just anybody, it would have to be a part of the makemymove program, which the EIC provides $10,000 towards relocation expenses, again this would be individuals that already have jobs, they want to get out of cities and go rural for whoever they work for as far as remote work. Dan reported he is still looking for a couple judges for the pitch your porch project, got 3 that have said yes, including Kendra, so thank you, he will be getting that information in May for people to do the application to get their bids and quotes, application will be due June 1st and the 12th we will have the pitch, so they will be rated on their application 50% and 50% on their actual pitch, and they can use power point or whatever they want to and we will select 5 of them, and again, that is all covered through Network Kansas Program as an E-community, $3,000 that won’t be upfront, they will have to provide receipts for what we approved for the application as far as renovation anything exterior. Dan reported he will be hand delivering them on Pomeroy and Main street so they can not say they didn’t know about it. Dan said he wanted to come back to Commissioner’s to see if they had discussed any further on the Graham County Membership of Travel & Tourism. Commissioner Nelson said he thinks it would be good to give $100. Dan said anything as far as showing support and because it is the County, they will get decals for the department windows and maybe even pickup some individual memberships in the courthouse too. Commissioner Nelson said it isn’t much, but at lease its something. Dan asked for a motion to do $100 to Travel & Tourism. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to donate $100 to Travel & Tourism. Commissioner Tremblay seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0. Kendra clarified that we would be taking this donation out of Courthouse General fund. Commissioner’s agreed. Dan said he would submit a voucher and check be written to Tavel & Tourism. Dan said he met with the Nicodemus township board last night, he said he has never had so many questions in his life about the membership and what is included and the billboard and most of the questions came from people on the zoom call and he said he thinks they are very grateful for everything we have done in promoting Nicodemus and the visitor center and so on. Commissioner Tremblay told Dan, the lady in the back was Cassie Branstetter, Dan said yes, he knew her. Dan reported Facebook followers, it is amazing, he said he remembers him and Karla joking saying they would like to get to 500, and they are almost there, he said as long as they have more followers on the Grow Graham County Facebook page then they do on the Citizens for Graham County page, there seems to be less and less posting on there which isn’t a bad thing because most things on there seemed to be critical or criticism. Dan reported as far as committee reports, they haven’t really met, most of the meetings are coming up. Dan asked Commissioner Tremblay if he had any suggestions as far as Ag Development Committee, as there isn’t a good time of year from what he has found. Commissioner Tremblay said no, needs more thought. Dan said he will keep trying to get everyone together. Dan presented Commissioner with a picture of the boards at the WKREDA meeting, it showed Graham County as bronze sponsors and anything WKREDA does, we will show up as a bronze sponsor on. Dan asked Kendra if she was ready for the election. Kendra responded we are getting there, we have been doing Advance in-person voting since February 28th, this will be Deb’s last election with us, so we kind of had her pull back and had Anissa and Krista do most of it, that election is again Tuesday, from 7 – 7 here in the courthouse, we have had quite a few walk-ins or advance in-person voters, not as many as she would like to see of course, but it is a smaller election so if we get to a 50% turnout, she will be happy. Dan said he was visiting with someone the other day and they didn’t even realize Kansas has a presidential primary. Kendra responded we haven’t had since the late 90s, that was the last time, so if nothing else, it gives us practice, we have 2 really big elections coming up and we are all still fairly new so it will be good practice for all of us. Dan said with a lot less ballot volume. Kendra responded yes, we do have a good poll worker crew, our poll workers are fantastic, our counting board is fantastic, we are lucky we have some of those that we can get almost every election, they are all good.

**National Park Service, Cassie Branstetter**

Cassie Branstetter was called up next. Cassie reported she is the new superintendent at Nicodemus National Historic site. She reported Graham County is pretty special in not only having a national historic site located here, but also having a pretty singular cultural resource for the country, Nicodemus as we all know, is the only existing African American township this side of the Mississippi. Cassie reported she was very pleased to sit on a recent cultural review of another African American township in Colorado called Deerfield, it was extremely dramatic how different the resource we have here in Graham County is compared to Deerfield Colorado, because it is existing, the decedent engagement in Nicodemus is amazing, the engagement for the resource of the County, how much it has been preserved and protected by the locals in the area, it really is singular for the nation to have this resource, so she is extremely happy to be able to be here to support Nicodemus and get to attend it. Cassie went on to say, personally, she’s from Midwest, she grew up in Missouri, just north of Columbia, Missouri and has worked for the National Park Service for 13 years, most recently she moved here from Buffalo National River in Northern Arkansas another gem for our country that we have, I looked in Hill City when she came in, but there wasn’t much available so she moved to Plainville, out of Graham County, but excited to work with all the representation here and excited to continue to promote support and preservation of this American story that we have in the county. Commissioner Tremblay said it is important that we preserve it.

**Road & Bridge, Wayne Pfeifer**

Wayne arrived at this time. Wayne reported he didn’t have much, he had guys blading all 4 corners of the county. Wanye said they are making a mixing strip out at the Landfill to mix millings and dirt, for smaller jobs, but if they get on a whole mile they will mix it on the spot. Wayne said he had mechanics working on stuff. Commissioner Tremblay asked how that was going, if they had a lot of stuff down. Wayne reported yes, something is always breaking down. Wayne said he had 3 guys in the jury selection process, so he was short 3 guys. Commissioner Tremblay asked if it would take all day. Commissioner Nelson said he had heard they would be done by noon. Wayne said he’s never been selected for jury, but had a guy tell him he had been selected 5 times, for the selection process, not been selected. Wayne reported they hauled all their millings. Commissioner Nelson said he hadn’t heard anything, Commissioner Tremblay said he hadn’t heard anything, it needs to rain. He said he had Josh pulling shoulders by C Road down by Ruder’s. Wayne said they are getting the other disc going, it had a flat tire on it yesterday, so once it’s going it will go either in Ben’s area or have another one going. Commissioner Tremblay said yeah that one was rough for a while. Commissioner Tremblay asked if they were able to do anything down by the church. Wayne responded they did not really do anything, it is to dry, he said he could have probably put the teeth on and went down it with some water trucks and maybe try to blade it. Commissioner Nelson said maybe we will get some rain and that will help. Commissioner Tremblay agreed and said yes, we need rain to happen. Clerk Kendra told Wayne we won’t have a meeting next Tuesday because we will have the election but will reconvene the 26th. Wayne asked which elections that was. Kendra said the Presidential Preference Primary, a small election. Wayne said he will have to go vote. Kendra said he could go vote now if he had time, we are doing advance in-person voting in our office. Commissioner Tremblay said yeah, get it done, it’s actually a pointless procedure at this point in the game. Kendra said especially since Super Tuesday was last week. Wanye said he would wait to vote on Tuesday, Kendra told him we would be here. Commissioner Tremblay said it’s a very expensive for a pointless election. Kendra said they are doing a reimbursement for direct expenses, so the poll worker wages, any office supplies, so hopefully we don’t lose to much money on this election because we do have two big ones coming up. Kendra said we have Election school for the poll workers and counting board on Thursday, and we will do public testing Friday, so anyone who wants to come in to see if our machines are working, we will have it set up in Commissioner’s room 10:00 a.m. to Noon so public is welcome to come see that our machines are in fact working.

**EMS/Fire, Mickie Helberg**

Mickie arrived at this time. Mickie reported she was just here to inform the Commissioners of a project they have been working on for a couple months now and they are pretty excited about it, it is called Climavision. Climavision is a weather gap filler, so we are assigned to Goodland National Weather Service and where Goodland is, they set the beam up its about 35,000 feet, we are rounded, so we fall in that gap. Mickie went on to say that’s why she always listens to Goodland, Dodge and Hastings and if they all say the same thing, she knows if we are going to get zapped or not get zapped. She said so, what this company does, it looks at the United States and she meant to bring the brochure up but she was tied up with another commitment, anyways, there are gaps all over the United States based on where they are located at and where the weather services are at, and we are one of them, which we’ve known that for years. Mickie went on to say, so what they are looking at doing is putting smaller radar capability within those gaps to fill those voids, pretty exciting, and they picked Hill City. She went on to say a couple months ago, when they contacted her, they were looking at places within the county and city. She said they usually like elevators but our elevators sit in a hole, so there was a problem with that, it wouldn’t get out to do us any good, its like a 60 to 80 mile radius, so it will help not only our county but the surrounding and possibly into Nebraska a little bit. Mickie said so they looked at the water tower and she brough Cole into the project, Bryce came out and talked to us, with Climavision, and showed us exactly what they were looking at and where they were looking at, and so they approached Dennis and he was agreeable that there engineers would go out and look at the water tower to make sure it was suitable and it came back all positive and they were really excited, so a week ago, when the City Council met, Bryce came down and Cole and her went and he presented it to the City Council because it requires a mutual aid with them because it is their water tower. Mickie said it costs the City and County absolutely no money, no funds, they pay for everything. Mickie went on to say the city agreed to do a mutual aid agreement with them, to set the satellite on the water tower, so it’s about 10’ x 12’ and then there is a generator that sits at the base it would be approximately 4’-5’ with a control panel and whether that sits on the outside or the inside of the water tower, that is for them to determine. She went on to say this data will be available to whoever the City says can have the data, hoping it is of course law enforcement, including P.D., all law enforcement, and emergency management, Goodland will have access to it and anyone outside of who they designate will have to pay a subscription fee, that is how they will kind of recoup some of their costs. Mickie said one of the weather stations is very interested in it matter of a fact, they are already referencing it Hill City weather station, so hopefully they would pick up some of that, but once again, there is absolutely no cost to the City or the County to do this project. Mickie reported when they come out, they allow for 7 days to set it, but he thinks it will probably be 3-5 days to set it and he is hopeful that they will be ready to go by June. Commissioner Tremblay said so storm season. Mickie said they are hoping for a little earlier, but if they had to build a tower, of course a year to a year and a half. Mickie reported it is very positive for us, it’s going to fill that gap. Commissioner Tremblay asked will that kind of help eliminate some of the questions, Goodland has all these issues where they start issuing tornado warnings so we have one coming down on us, so we are all out looking for it and we see nothing. Mickie said yes, because where they are, they see all this up here, and this radar will see all this down here, so it’s going to help fill that gap, they are going to be able to see it, we will be able to see it, and, just like you said, there is times we went out storm spotting and they are telling us to get out of the way, and we are like we just don’t see it. Commissioner Nelson, said a lot of times they will call and ask what he had for rain fall. Mickie said they will be able to tap into all of that data, now of course if there is no weather, there is no data to produce, it is going to make a huge difference for us as far as responding and notifying the school, the hospital for patient movement, Dawson, etc. Mickie went on to say it is pretty positive. She said she had a flyer to give to Commissioner’s, it’s what was presented to the City Council, they had to be on board with it. Commissioner Nelson said he thinks it will be great. Commissioner Tremblay said he thinks it’s a great deal and will be pretty awesome. Mickie said she just wanted to inform them and when she knows more about the timeline, she will keep them informed. She went on to say there will be a ribbon cutting, because it’s kind of a big deal. Commissioner Nelson asked if there were any other towns in Kansas to get this. Mickie reported there are, all across the U.S. any of those gaps, the brochure has a map to show those gaps and what they are hoping to fill, by putting a satellite in, she said we aren’t talking a great big satellite, we are talking a 10 x 12 feet, that is the base to hold it, so it’s not that big, and it will change the skyline just a little bit, but what they are doing, they have identified all those gaps, so they will put a radar in those gaps to fill it in so everyone will have the data that they need to, to respond and save lives. Commissioner Tremblay said that is pretty exciting, I mean they explain how the curvature, the beam is to high. Mickie said Goodland when they were out on Wednesday for their storm spotter class, they were all excited about it, and they won’t have to pay for the data, it makes sense they wont have to pay for that, but as far as who is allowed to have that data, that will be determined by probably Dennis and the city council since they are the ones doing the mutual aid, but if the outside surrounding counties want to have that data, they will pay a subscription, that’s how they will recoup costs. Mickie said it also give a backup generator for the water tower, it’s going to take awhile for that to drain. Commissioner Tremblay said that was awesome news. Mickie said they will coordinate all that and how that is going to work, and did I say, there is no cost to the city or county. Mickie went on to say they approached her, in January they usually have a weather conference in Lyons, or Wichita or wherever, so all the meteorologists come in and Emergency Managers and whoever else, Bryce was going to talk to me at that time about this project, but it got cancelled because of weather, so he called me and I was totally caught off guard, she said it took me a little bit to wrap my head around it, but once I did, I though this is so good for the county, it’s really huge. Mickie said she will keep them informed. Commissioner Nelson asked if anyone could pay the subscription to get it. Mickie said that she doesn’t know, but she imagines privately could. She went on to say the EOC (Emergency Management) will hopefully have access to it, but she doesn’t know what that subscription costs, what it will look like or what it’s going to be, so she can’t answer that. Commissioner Tremblay said that is pretty neat, great news.

**New Business**

Commissioner reviewed and signed Accounts Payable vouchers. Commissioners reviewed and signed 1 Freedom Claims voucher for health insurance claims paid on 3/7/2024 in the amount of $4,028.28. Commissioner Tremblay reviewed and signed the Abstract of Commissioner minutes for 2/27/2024. Graham County Clerk Kendra presented Commissioner’s with an invoice for Kansas County Commissioner’s Association for the annual membership. Commissioner’s both agreed to pay it. Kendra presented Commissioners with Resolution No. 2024-10 regarding fees for jury service. Kendra said this jury trail brough on some questions as to how we pay for jury duty, Tiff in District Court said the Commissioners sign off on a resolution about what we are paying them, so she reached out to Norton County Clerk. Norton County Clerk reported that was how it worked and send Kendra a copy of their Resolution, so Kendra mirrored their Resolution. Commissioner Tremblay made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-10. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0. Kendra ensured both Commissioner’s reviewed the 2023 Year in Review report provided by Graham County Sheriff Cole Presley. Kendra reminded Commissioner’s we will not meet next Tuesday March 19th due to the election, but will again on Tuesday March 26th. Kendra asked Commissioner’s to be at the meeting at 9:00 a.m. to Canvass the Election and then reminded them they would have Accounts Payable vouchers and Payroll vouchers to review and sign.

As there was no further information to be discussed, Commissioner Tremblay made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0.

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Kendra Robinson, County Clerk Troy Tremblay, Chairman