

Data Centers are topic of discussion at Commissioner’s Meeting

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, August 10. All members, Tron Stegman, Joe D. Thompson and Shannon Crawford were present. County Clerk Amy Jo Tharp was also present.

Agenda: 8:30 – Budget Hearing; 8:45 – Jonathan Percy – Eco Devo; 9:00 – Kayla Janko – Cimarron Basin; 9:15 – Jayme Rich – Tax Sale; 9:30 – Jeff Cox – Public Works; 10:00 – Pat Hall – Data Centers Discussion

Tron called the meeting to order. Motion was made and passed to approve minutes from the last meeting. The county vouchers were approved and the County Clerk was instructed to

draw warrants on the Treasurer chargeable to the various funds of the county for the following amounts: General \$109,848.80; Judicial District \$ 977.07; Road & Bridge \$98,085.29; Airport \$3,154.89; Noxious Weed \$3,925.94; EMS \$11,677.80; Fire \$3,103.72; Fire Bequest \$25.22; Comm Health \$16,986.24; Airport Grants \$ -; Sheriff \$43,406.31; 911 Wireless \$ -; TOTAL: \$291,191.28

Commissioner Tron Stegman opened the budget hearing meeting. No one had any comments. All commissioners were in favor of the 2027 budget. Joe made a motion to accept the 2027 budget for Stevens County.

Shannon seconded. Motion carried. Tron closed the budget hearing.

Jeff Cox, Stacey Wood, Jonathan Percy, Lisa LeNeve, Shelley Cox, Matt Rome, Neal Gillespie, Brad Herron, Autumn Herron, Pat Hall, LaDonna Hall, Lynda Prine, Jennifer Burrows, Jolene Goode, Connie Tennis, Pam Brown, Darin Heger, Mike Hanson and Maryann Willoughby were in attendance.

Rodney Kelling requested a letter of approval to submit to the bank for Rickey Burrows to be added to the fire department’s credit card. The commissioners approved and a letter was presented for a commissioner signature.

Rex Evans discussed the issues of the Memorial Hall and courthouse roof. The commissioners tabled the discussion until later today and will review quotes to see if it needs to be let out for bids.

Jonathan Percy informed the commissioners that Jan Leonard will be resigning from the Eco Devo Director position December 31, 2026. Jonathan said the funding for Eco Devo is very limited and eventually the board may need to be dissolved. Matt Rome expressed that the Eco Devo position brings important development to the county, such as Flora Foods, solar farms and other revenue generating entities. Matt said the Eco Devo board plans to post the job position in the newspaper and hire a replacement by December. In doing so, the Eco Devo board has requested an extra \$10,000. from the county. Lisa LeNeve would like to find a qualified individual to fulfill a combined director position for both the Chamber of Commerce and Eco Devo.

Cimarron Basin was next on the agenda and presented the paperwork from the Department of Corrections to continue corrections in the area. The commissioners approved and signed the agreement.

Jayme Rich came in and requested a letter to be reviewed stating that Frazie Title Work would be the company that will handle the title work for the next tax sale.

Jeff Cox will be attending the solid waste conference August 27 - August 30. Currently the landfill employees are working on topping off the old pit with 12 inches of junk dirt which has been approved by the state. They will begin the cap which will need to allow for plant growth to keep the wind from blowing away the soil. Chip sealing is going well, and Jeff is in hopes of it being completed within a week or two.

Joe shared that he reviewed an email from KWORCC stating they would like a county policy on safety. Joe suggested getting a safety committee together that would inspect county buildings and make sure the policy is up to date. Joe suggested the

commissioners do a walk-thru of the county buildings. Jeff added that there is need for an eye-wash station at the landfill, and he is currently looking into finding one.

Jeff would like to put out for bid having 5,500 to 6,000 tons of concrete crushed and to either sell half or keep all the crushed concrete.

Cesar Pena with S & S Rock Crushing, Inc., was in attendance and said they could crush the concrete and either leave half with the county or keep it all. Cesar stated it is best to have no wire in the crushed concrete once the job is complete.

The commissioners instructed an ad be placed in the newspaper requesting sealed bids for concrete crushing, with one bid for crushing the concrete and the county keeping half, and the other bid for crushing concrete and the county keeping it all. The sealed bids will need to be either submitted to the county clerk’s office no later than bid opening which will be at the next commissioner meeting August 24, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. or brought directly to the

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High Plains Music Fest, Fall Fling and Kites are Saturday

Reminder, the High Plains Fall Fling Vendor and Craft Show at the Eagle RV Park - right across the road from Dirtona Raceway is Saturday. Vendors will offer their wares all day Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For more Fall Fling information, please contact the Hugoton Area Chamber of

Commerce at: 620-544-4305.

Giant kites, courtesy of Great American Kites & Events will also be at the RV Park again this year. The show is free to the public. Kites will be displayed from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Saturday is the Annual High Plains Music Fest. It is slated to take place at

Hugoton's Dirtona Raceway again this year. Featured artists will be headliners Sterling Elza and Cole Barnhill along with Fox N’ Vead. The show starts at 6:00 p.m. Join everyone for a night of red dirt country, classic country and southern rock. Ticket sale proceeds will benefit local charities.

Annual Health Fair is September 19

Stevens County Healthcare is offering their annual Free Health Fair for 2026, September 19 from 7:00 a.m. to noon. The event will be at Hugoton High/Middle School Cafeteria.

There will be free lab draws including CBC, CMP, Lipid Panel, TSH, A1C, and PSA (men over 50). You must fast prior to time of test.

These tests are offered to anyone nine years of age and older.

New this year! The Masonic Cancer Alliance with their “Hope on Wheels” mobile cancer screening bus will be at the health fair. The bus will be there from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Doctors from KU Medical Center and The University of

Kansas Health System will offer free skin cancer screenings, prostate cancer screenings and take-home colorectal cancer screening kits. No insurance is required and no registration for the screening is required except for mammograms. The mammograms will be billed to your insurance but if you do

not have insurance, the MCA will cover the mammogram costs.

You must be pre-registered for the Fair. Questions or for more information contact Camee at 620-544-8563. You can pre-register at the Stevens county Hospital, Medical Clinic or Retail Pharmacy before September 18 at 4:00 p.m.



Where in the world is the Hugoton Hermes? The Hugoton Hermes is with Aiden and Diane McDaniels at the Renaissance Festival in Bonner Springs. Aiden and Diane are standing in front of the Fortune Teller’s Wishing Well at the Festival. Photo courtesy of Diane McDaniels.



Where in the world is the Hermes? Milton and Eileen Gillespie (and the Hermes) recently visited the British Isles. Highlights of their time in Scotland included the ancient stone circles at Stenness and Brodgar, which predate the circle at Stonehenge in England. Another highlight of their trip was visiting a farm that raised the Scottish Highland Cattle, or “hairy coos” according to the Scots. Photo courtesy of Eileen Gillespie



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