

Logan County Commissioners Work Session
May 14, 2019

Present: Joe McBride, Jane Bauder, Byron Pelton, Alan Samber, Valerie Richards, Debbie Unrein, Marilee Johnson, Jeff Long, Dean Williams, Marsha Clark, Josh Mayhugh, Brian Lyrel, Alan Gentz, Matt Martin, Rod Talbert, Lisa Wolever, Larry Graham, Jeff Rice and Jennifer Crow.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION - Commissioner Pelton moved to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2019 work session as written. Commissioner Bauder seconded and the motion carried.

REVISIONS TO WORK SESSION AGENDA - Addition of a Wakefield Ambulance Collections Assignment and discussion of scheduling a Business Meeting for June 11, 2019 for a hearing for the Chamber of Commerce.

The Board will not have a Business Meeting on June 4, 2019 due to attending the CCI Summer Conference. The Board agreed to schedule a Business Meeting on June 11 in order to schedule a public hearing for the Chamber of Commerce Special Events Liquor License.

LOGAN COUNTY AMBULANCE COLLECTION ASSIGNMENTS - Commissioner Pelton moved to approve assignment of a Logan County Ambulance debt collection account to Wakefield and Associates, the account number ending in 8021 and allow the Chairman to sign. Commissioner Bauder seconded and the motion carried 3-0.

REVIEW LOGAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SCHEDULE OF BILLS - Valerie Richards met with the Board to review the Logan County Department of Human Services schedule of bills dated May 14, 2019. The Board approved all bills as presented.

REVIEW LOGAN COUNTY SCHEDULE OF BILLS - Debbie Unrein met with the Board to review the Logan County schedule of bills dated May 14, 2019. The Board approved all bills as presented.

FLOWERING TREE DONATION PROGRAM - Jennifer Crow discussed a proposed Flowering Tree Donation Program with the Board. Donated flowering trees - Radiant Crabapple and Snowdrift Crabapple would be planted in the strip of grass between the street and the sidewalk on all four sides of the Courthouse square starting on the north side. Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Chance Wright has given his approval and will plant the trees. The Board approved of the program and asked Jennifer to contact the City of Sterling Forestry Department to inquire about the rules as the property is in the City's right of way.

ATV'S/UTV'S ON COUNTY ROADS - The County cannot issue licenses for ATV/UTV's. Joe still looking into the matter.

SILENT RR CROSSING - Chairman McBride noted that there was a meeting on Friday concerning the Silent Railroad Crossings. DOLA may have a grant available which would

require a 50% match. The City and the County would be participating. There may be other funding options as well. The Town of Merino may be doing a similar project as well which would also require a match. It was suggested that the Board will want to treat all towns the same, i.e. provide matching grant funds. Total cost of the projects is not known as well as the availability of funding options. The Board agreed that Chairman McBride should continue to research the matter.

STERLING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK PROGRAM - Jeff Long, Sterling Correctional Facility Warden and Dean Williams, Executive Director of Colorado Department of Corrections met with the Board to discuss a work program for inmates who are due to be released in a short amount of time. The program is being introduced in hopes that it will reduce the re-offense rate. In Colorado the recidivism rate is 50 percent. Dean Williams noted that there are two problems he has noted since he has been in his position. The first issue is DOC releases several hundred people from prison every month, when their sentences are up, and many of those prisoners re-offend. Improving the re-offense rate will improve public safety.

The second issue is that in Logan County and others around the state, there is a shortage of employees. DOC is releasing prisoners into communities every month who are not part of Community Correction Programs because they either don't qualify, or their time is too short (less than 6 months). Community Corrections Programs often have long waiting lists. The proposed program is a way to partner with employers such as Mr. Lebsock, with his hemp processing facility in this case, in order to advance economic growth wisely, strategically, and safely in particular regions of the state.

Research has shown that if prisoners are released with a job ready, with money in their pocket and with a future for job experience, they have a better chance to staying out of prison. There are eleven individuals identified as candidates for the proposed program. Two of the individuals, Sterling Correctional Facility (SCF) prisoners, Michael and Connor, were present at the meeting today. Mr. Williams restated that he is committed to reducing the re-offense rate. He would like to start the pilot program in a small phase next week sometime.

Several members of the audience presented their opinions and asked questions about the program.

Larry Graham asked why the prisoners can't be released into the Community Corrections Program. Mr. Williams again explained that some of them have too little time left on their sentences to qualify for Community Corrections. Also, the programs have crowded waiting lists. There are more Community Corrections beds than ever in the state and there are still 500 on the waiting list. Community Corrections Boards often reject a lot of applications if they are not safe and local to the community.

Those in the program will be paid prevailing wage. Some of their wages will go to their restitution and/or child support and any debts they owe. Electronic monitoring will be used with regular and unscheduled checks by DOC staff.

Prisoners who have shown redemption and those who have shown repentance for their crimes are those types of offenders that they look for to take part in the program. The offenders will have housing on the grounds or will be temporarily housed in town. Ideally they want them closer to the employer.

Concern was noted for the fact that the ankle monitors can be cut off. Mr. Williams responded that if an offender cuts an ankle monitor, DOC will respond within 10-15 minutes. DOC is notified through a centralized system with a 24/7 operations center.

Commissioner Pelton Byron noted that the Community Corrections program in the county works very well. They are well supervised on the job and when they return to the Community Corrections facility but when they are "off paper" they go back to re-offend. Mr. Williams responded that the difference between Community Corrections and the proposed program is that it works like many peer oriented programs work, where the offender belongs to and is a part of something and has more to lose. Once their time is up some of the guys stay on because they need the job history, they want to work and earn money.

The employer will provide one meal, DOC will help with the evening meal. They don't want them to be a burden on community services. DOC won't allow the families to move to the community to live in the community to be near them. They will allow visitation on Sundays, etc.

They are being asked to take responsibility for their lives again after being told what to do and when to do it 24/7 for many years. The first month or two, DOC will help them with rent and expenses, after that they will be responsible for their rent and food, etc.

Mr. Lebsack stated that he will get in return work force that wants to be out there working. The end goal is to harvest as many acres as they can, which is physically not possible to do without the extra hands. Lebsack advertised for 70 workers and received three calls. There were a couple hired but they didn't want to do that type of work. It was noted that hemp is Federally legal now, it is more a Federal issue whether or not cbd oil is produced in the community.

Mr. Williams asked Michael, a DOC offender to speak on behalf of the program. He noted that is an opportunity to prove himself and a chance for prisoners to re-claim their identity as men and to show they can succeed and follow rules.

The SCF Associate Warden spoke in support of the program. He asked that the community open their minds to the fact that the men are committed want to get out and do the right thing. He has served on Community Corrections Board and has been involved in screening of these men. As a member of the community, he would never do anything to put his family in harms way. He has a friend living in Fort Morgan, who outsourced their labor to foreigners and it didn't go well for that community.

Discussion was held on the future of the prison in Sterling. SCF is the largest prison in Colorado. Mr. Williams asked if the Commissioners wanted the prison in the community. It was noted that it would be economic disaster for the community if the prison were to close. There are approximately 850 jobs that would be lost. Most of them live within 30 miles of the facility.

Mr. Williams stated that he would like to pilot the program and come back in a few months and give an update.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10.:25 a.m.