

**MINUTES for July 1, 2024**  
**BOARD of CHEROKEE COUNTY**  
**COMMISSIONERS'**  
**CHEROKEE COUNTY, KANSAS**

**CONVENE**

Chair Cory Moates called the regular session of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners (the Board), to order at 9:00 AM on Monday, July 1, 2024, in the Commission Room, #109 of the Cherokee County Courthouse located at 110 W Maple St., Columbus, Kansas. County Councilor Jake Conard opened the meeting with prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners Cory Moates, Lorie Johnson, Myra Frazier, Deputy County Clerk Jess Frasher, County Counselor Jake Conard, Road and Bridge Supervisor Cody Zook, Columbus News Report Owner Larry Hiatt, and Citizens Jeff Clark and Jerad Tanner were present.

**APPROVAL of MINUTES**

Commissioner Frazier motioned to approve the minutes as presented from June 24, 2024. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ROAD and BRIDGE**

Citizens Jeff Clark and Jerad Tanner came before the Board to address various matters related to Road and Bridge operations. Clark stated that he believes trees bordering roadways are not being trimmed to the same standard that they have been in the past, and that they are now becoming a hindrance when moving large farming equipment within the county. Road and Bridge Supervisor Cody Zook credited the equipment being used, stating that they current equipment does not reach as high, but the Road and Bridge staff are doing everything they can. Clark addressed the Board regarding the placement of signage on county roads, stating the current placement of signs does not allow for larger farm equipment to be moved without damaging the signs. Possible solutions were discussed, including relocation of existing signs and use of flexible signs. Clark expressed his displeasure regarding an interaction between himself and Commissioner Moates, stating he felt he was not respected. Tanner addressed the Board, stating that he thought that he and Zook had an agreement where he would be notified of upcoming ditching work, as it would interfere with the mowing of the ditches. Tanner told the Board of an interaction Between a member of his family and a Road and Bridge employee. Tanner stated that his daughter by marriage was moving farm equipment and had asked a county Road and Bridge employee that was nearby if they could move over so that she could pass. Tanner stated that the employee refused to do so.

**NRP APPEAL – MATT TURLEY**

Matt Turley came before the Board to appeal the decision to terminate his Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) tax rebates due to the late payment of property taxes. It was determined that the county does not have the authority over the NRP in question due to it being administered by the City of Baxter Springs, and that further discussion would be required to determine the standing of his County NRP.

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW**

Health Department Administrator Peyton Kessler and Assistant Administrator Brenda Clugston came before the Board to review the submitted 2025 Health Department budget. The Board clarified that the department would no longer need to reimburse the Road and Bridge Department for the salaries for janitorial services. Commissioner Johnson asked why the meeting cost has increased. Brenda credited the meetings required for receiving certain grants, and the meetings that staff are sent to for training as the cause. Commissioner Frazier noted that the amount budgeted for utilities is less than the amount in 2023. Commissioner Moates informed Kessler and Clugston of a request of the Kansas Corporation Commission to allow for an increase in gas rates. Commissioner Frazier recommended that the amount budgeted for utilities be increased. Commissioner Johnson suggested that the amount that was allotted for janitorial services be added to the utilities budget. Commissioner Johnson asked about they were comfortable with the amount budgeted for salaries. Kessler reviewed nurse salaries compared to other organizations. Kessler states that she has looked at raising pay in 2025, but wanted to wait to see if she received grants that would help cover the costs. Commissioner Johnson asked if some of the items that would be budgeted under professional services would be reimbursed. Clugston responded that most items in that budget are monthly charges that are not reimbursed. Commissioner Moates questioned the amount budgeted for office furniture and equipment. Clugston responded, stating that she is not planning on any major purchases that would be included in that budget. Commissioner Moates if they are comfortable with the spreadsheet, other than the changes made in the meeting. Clugston responded, stating that she was. Commissioner Moates asked if she would make the changes discussed and provide an updated spreadsheet. Clugston stated that she would.



**CLASS LTD BUDGET REVIEW**

Class LTD president Bob Davis came before the Board to review the submitted 2025 budget. Commissioner Moates asked if Davis had seen the budget that was sent in, and asked if it was satisfactory. Davis responded, stating that it was. Commissioner Frazier stated that it looks as if they are overstaffed compared to other counties. Davis responded, stating that the larger number of staff in Cherokee County is due to the differences in needs of the clientele. The Commissioners requested that Davis provide them with a detailed budget.

**CONSERVATION DISTRICT BUDGET REVIEW**

Paule Bone from the Cherokee County Conservation District came before the Board to review the submitted 2025 budget. Commissioner Moates asked Bone to describe the services that the Conservation District offers. Bone listed examples of programs they administer, and the goals of such programs, such as controlling erosion and maintaining water quality. Commissioner Frazier asked about the Conservation Districts involvement in septic system replacements. Bone described a program to the Board which helps landowners replace their septic systems, specifying that they must be within a certain distance of a stream or well to qualify. Commissioner Frazier asked what items would be under fixed asset purchases. Bone responded, stating that would be for the purchase of equipment that the conservation district could rent to the public for projects. Commissioner Frazier asked about the other administrative expenses budget. Bone responded, stating that would be used for items such as audit fees, dues, phone systems, and other operating costs for the office. Commissioner Frazier asked about the large carryover and if they have any desire to purchase new equipment. Bone stated that in the past, they had considered purchasing a no-till drill, but have not due to possible staff and maintenance reasons.

**RESOLUTION 18-2024 STREET NAME**

Commissioner Moates motioned to approve resolution 18-2024, a resolution naming certain roads created by the Kansas Department of Transportation as part of the extension of Highway 400. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

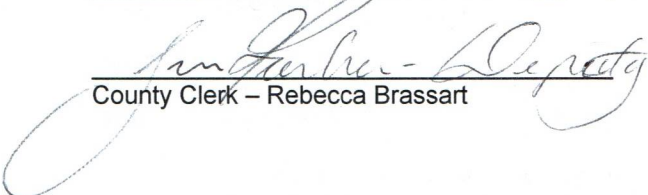
**NRP APPEAL – JANET OWENS**

Janet Owens joined the meeting by phone to appeal the decision to terminate her Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) tax rebates due to the late payment of property taxes. Owens Acknowledged that she failed to pay the property taxes in a timely manner. Commissioner Moates explained that the appeal process was meant as a precaution meant for the benefit of participants who were removed as a result of a county employee error. Commissioner Johnson motioned to deny the appeal of Janet Owens. Commissioner Frazier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Moates motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ATTEST: Resolved and ordered this 8th day of July 2024.**

  
County Clerk – Rebecca Brassart

  
Commissioner Chair – Cory Moates

  
Commissioner – Lorie Johnson

  
Commissioner – Myra Carlisle Frazier