

The Board of Brown County Commissioners met in regular session with the following members present: Chairman Dwight A. Kruse and Keith Olsen. Richard L. Lehmkuhl met via zoom. Also present was Brown County Clerk, Melissa Gormley. County Attorney, Kevin Hill was present for a portion of the meeting via Zoom. Dwight Kruse opened the meeting at 8:10 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all. Richard Lehmkuhl led the meeting with a prayer.

MINUTES

Motion by Keith Olsen to approve the December 21, 2020, minutes. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Motion carried.

TAX CHANGE ORDERS

Tax Change Orders 2019-169 through 2019-173 and 2020-25 and 2020-26 and 2020-28 were signed and approved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Brown County Appraiser, Steve Markham requested a 5 minute executive session. Motion by Keith Olsen for a 5 minute executive session on non-elected personnel with the three Commissioners, and Brown County Clerk, Melissa Gormley present to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel with executive session necessary to protect privacy interests. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Closed 8:18 a.m. Opened 8:23 a.m. No binding action was taken.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Brown County Attorney, Kevin Hill, requested a moment of silence for Ex-County Commissioner Steve Roberts.

SPARK

Brown County Emergency Manager, Don Pounds, and Brown County Treasurer, Cheryl Lippold, discussed checks that need to be written to different entities.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Brown County Treasurer, Cheryl Lippold, requested a 5 minute executive session. Motion by Keith Olsen for a 5 minute executive session on non-elected personnel with the three Commissioners, Brown County Treasurer, Cheryl Lippold and Brown County Clerk, Melissa Gormley present to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel with executive session necessary to protect privacy interests. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Closed 8:45 a.m. Opened 8:50 a.m. No binding action was taken.

TREASURER

Brown County Treasurer, Cheryl Lippold, gave an update to the commission about her office.

COVID-19

Robin Downard, Brown County Health Nurse, gave an update to the commission on COVID-19. There are 58 active cases, total deaths is 18, and 917 total cases. She also discussed the positivity rate. Downard stated that she is in contact with KDHE because the numbers she has does not match what KDHE has.

John Broberg, Hiawatha Hospital CEO, shared comparison charts with the commission. Broberg stated the masks are working to lower the COVID count. Broberg also discussed the challenges faced by the health care system.

Downard stated the remote testing sight in Horton will be closed Sunday, but will be open Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Unless they receive more funding, this will be the last week for the testing. County Attorney, Kevin Hill, asked what the mask mandates were in other neighboring counties. Downard is requesting the commission extend the mandate until January 18, 2021.

Downard stated she would recommend leaving the courthouse closed to the public for at least two weeks to get past the two weeks after the holiday. Commissioner Olsen and Lehmkuhl were both opposed to keeping the courthouse closed. Lehmkuhl stated if the courthouse needed to be shut down then all businesses needed to be shut down, including Wal-Mart.

Rex Lockwood, Brown County resident, asked Downard to explain the percent positivity rate because it looks like the numbers are increasing. Downard stated the numbers could be skewed because of the holidays and testing not being done.

Lucas Heinen, Brown County resident, asked Broberg to explain the spread between the health care workers and members of the community. Broberg explained that the hospital has had to make adjustments to what they do since the beginning. Broberg also explained that wearing PPE correctly is very important.

Commissioner Kruse stated the agenda needed to be followed and he opened the floor for ten minutes to those in favor or not in favor of the mask mandate.

Lucas Heinen, spoke not in favor of the mask mandate. Heinen asked the commission to rescind the mask mandate and leave it to the individuals.

Rex Lockwood, resident, also spoke not in favor of the mask mandate. Lockwood also stated that it should be the responsibility of the person, not the government. He also asked for the commission to rescind the mask mandate.

Commissioner Lehmkuhl stated he has received letters for and against the mask mandate. He stated the county would see an increase in cases because there are more tests being done. He also stated if you don't feel good, stay home.

Broberg stated the Christmas holiday was just upon us and we needed to get through the next two weeks. He also said the masks were helping with those that are asymptomatic.

Commissioner Kruse discussed what other counties are doing and he would like to see the mask mandate stay in place.

Commissioner Olsen said he would like to leave it up to the individuals or businesses to wear a mask and it should not be up to the commission to make that decision for citizens.

Motion by Keith Olsen, to rescind the mask mandate in Brown County effective today, December 28, 2020. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Brandon Roberts, Brown County resident, requested a six month extension on his property that is enrolled in the NR program.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Brown County Attorney, Kevin Hill requested a 20 minute executive session. Motion by Keith Olsen for a 20 minute executive session on non-elected personnel with the three Commissioners and Brown County Attorney, Kevin Hill present to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel with executive session necessary to protect privacy interests. Seconded by

Richard Lehmkuhl. Closed 10:06 a.m. Opened 10:26 a.m. No binding action was taken.

DIRECTOR JJA/ACC

Motion by Richard Lehmkuhl to offer the director position to Chris Denner at \$55,000 effective today. Seconded by Keith Olsen. Motion carried. Motion by Keith Olsen to offer the deputy director position to Vicki Hubin at a pay rate of \$45,000. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Motion carried.

COURTHOUSE RE-OPENING

Motion by Keith Olsen to re-open the courthouse starting January 4, 2021, regular business hours 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with each department deciding how many people in the office at a time. Seconded by Richard Lehmkuhl. Motion carried.

NURSE

The commission discussed the nurse at the front door. As of now, the last day for the nurse is December 31, 2020. The commission will leave it up to the new board to decide to keep that position.

MASS GATHERINGS

Kevin Hill discussed the mass gatherings. The last resolution on December 7, 2020, limited the gatherings to no more than 50. Motion by Keith Olsen, to rescind the mass gathering limitation. Seconded by Dwight Kruse. Motion carried. Again, the commission urged everyone to wash their hands, and use the precautions necessary.

Motion by Keith Olsen to adjourn. Seconded by Dwight Kruse. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, December 31, 2020, to approve month end bills.

ATTEST:

APPROVED BY:

MELISSA GORMLEY,
COUNTY CLERK

DWIGHT A. KRUSE, CHAIRMAN

KEITH OLSEN, MEMBER

RICHARD L. LEHMKUHL, MEMBER