

MONDAY

JUNE 24, 2019

The Governing Body of the City of Pratt met in a Recessed City/County joint meeting in the Commission Room located in City Hall.

PRESENT:	Doug Meyer	Mayor
	Gary Schmidt	Commissioner
	Don Peters	Commissioner
	Zach Deeds	Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:	Roy Eckert	City Manager
	LuAnn Kramer	City Clerk
	Regina Probst	City Attorney
	Nate Humble	Chief of Police
	Glenna Borho	County Commissioner
	Joe Reynolds	County Commissioner Chairman
	Tom Jones	County Commissioner
	Sherry Kruse	County Clerk
	Bob Schmisser	County Counselor
	Jimmy White	Pratt County Sheriff

CALL TO ORDER:

The recessed meeting was called to order by Mayor Meyer. The Mayor instructed the City Clerk to note that all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Leslie.

Mayor Meyer reminded the audience that this meeting may be taped and/or recorded.

BUSINESS:

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON WATERLINE TO COUNTY PROPERTY BY 54 PICK-UP:

Commissioner Borho stated that Mr. Mike Miller had been out of town and did not have any updated information for the meeting today. This item will be tabled until the next City/County joint meeting.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON DISPATCH:

Police Chief Humble stated that he had talked to different counties to get their range of pay and how they were setup with the Communications Director being over dispatch. Sheriff White commented that he had talked to Franklin County and he informed the Commission it was rough at the start, but ten times better than what you had in the beginning and that you operate much more efficiently. Chief Humble stated that he had visited with Rice County and had them send him a copy of their resolution that they had passed in 2006 for dispatch to become their own entity. Chief Humble added that he also got a copy of their bylaws. Chief Humble commented that they were adamant that you set up an advisory board that would consist of the Communications Director and other emergency agency representatives. Chief Humble stated that this would not take much since his employees were already certified, but they would have to get ORI certified. Chief Humble explained that, to do that, you had to be checked through the KBI and do paperwork.

Commissioner Borho questioned if the employees in Rice County had become County employees. Chief Humble stated that they did; however, every situation would be unique. Commissioner Borho asked if there had to be a Director. Chief Humble stated that there had to be, but you could use one of your full time employees. Chief Humble stated that Ford County split everything 50/50 between the City and the County and a majority of the others were paid through the County. Chief Humble commented that the Director's pay ranged from \$50,000 to \$60,000. Mayor Meyer asked if the LEC Committee could be part of this board. County Counselor Schmisser stated that could not, except for the Chief and the Sheriff, because they did not have mutual interests. Mr. Schmisser commented that the Committee could be revamped and additional responsibilities given to them. Commissioner Peters questioned why they could not. Mr. Schmisser stated that the LEC Committee dealt more with building issues. Commissioner Borho added that each entity was to put \$15,000 in the capital equipment fund yearly for anything that comes up concerning the LEC.

Commissioner Borho stated that there was talk at one of the meetings at the fire station about software, but she did not remember the cost. Mayor Meyer commented that it was complex, technical and expensive, but something that we needed. Mayor Meyer stated that, to move forward, we would need someone in charge of that department and it was the Commission's job to make that happen. Commissioner Reynolds stated that he thought the cost of the software was about \$50,000. Chief Humble stated that that was about right and added that it was needed and would standardize the way it was run now. Chief Humble explained that this would create less confusion by having someone in charge. Sheriff White agreed and stated that training day for a new dispatch person was when the phone rang. Sheriff White commented that the new software would show on the screen who the dispatch person should send to the situation on a high risk incident. Commissioner Borho commented that Superintendent Suzan Patton was not notified when there was the shooting on North Main Street and she had busses going into that area, so this system could tell the dispatch to call the schools.

Commissioner Borho asked if we could not buy something for a lot less money. Chief Humble stated that you might be able to add things to some programs. Sheriff White added that that comes at a cost also. Commissioner Jones asked if we could not add to the present software for it to work professionally. Chief Humble explained that a new system would integrate with this system, but you still need someone in charge and getting feedback from dispatch employees. Commissioner Borho asked if the City had three shifts and full time employees to staff those shifts. Chief Humble stated that you should have two employees on at a time and then the Director would be the other dispatcher. Mr. Schmisser suggested getting someone to come in and see what we had and pay them \$2,500. Chief Humble stated that most of them were surprised that we were not already doing this and explained that he had not come across anyone that was run by the City. Mr. Schmisser questioned if there was a certificate for continuing education for qualified dispatchers. Chief Humble explained that there was continuing education for them, but nothing was offered here. Chief Humble commented that you used to be able to go on a site and do online training, which was paid by 911 funds.

Commissioner Peters asked Chief Humble if he had mentioned that he had two people that he would consider for Director. Chief Humble stated that he had said that. Commissioner Peters questioned if he would have to hire another full time person. Chief Humble stated that you would need five full time. County Attorney Beverlin stated that she was in support of Chief Humble and Sheriff White, as well as a supporter of best practices. Ms. Beverlin commented that this was the right way to move forward and that dispatchers were unsung heroes. Ms. Beverlin explained that they were first responders, because they were the witness to the initial event and had to be trained properly. Ms. Beverlin added that an administrator would be a great addition, because you would no longer have an officer taking dispatch calls. Sheriff White stated that dispatch and detention officers were stressful jobs and many were diagnosed with PTSD or commit suicide so they had to be supported. Mayor Meyer stated that the City Commission strongly supports the recommendation and concerns voiced by Chief Humble and Sheriff

White and want to move forward; however, they did not know the next step. Chief Humble stated that he agreed with the application process and a board to handle the interview process. Commissioner Deeds questioned if they had come across a job description. Chief Humble stated that he had and he needed to tweak a few things. Mayor Meyer asked if any gave them an idea of how long it was to make the transition. Chief Humble stated that no one really gave him a time line.

Mayor Meyer commented that the City was paying dispatch salaries and not paying a lease payment or rent. Commissioner Borho asked how easy it was to find a certified part-time dispatcher. Chief Humble stated that it was hard to find part-time; however, you needed to get them certified if you do find that person. Commissioner Borho commented that it would be the board's decision to promote from within and then to hire a full time person, which would include benefits. Commissioner Borho commented that you would also have the Director. Chief Humble explained that six full time dispatchers, including the Director, would be ideal. Mayor Meyer questioned how long it took to become certified. Chief Humble stated that it was about three to six months. Sheriff White commented that some of them have burn out before that time. Chief Humble stated that training was the hard part.

Commissioner Borho commented that budgets were coming up and the City had the money in theirs already, but the County would need to talk about it. Commissioner Borho explained that they would need to budget for six full time employees and benefits and new software program in 2021. Mayor Meyer stated that the City pays about \$300,000 in salaries and benefits currently, but we would not want to pay that for rent. Mayor Meyer added that that would have to be talked about. City Attorney Probst stated that she had reviewed the Rice County by-laws and resolution, but the Hutchinson Division of Emergency Communications Department falls under the police department. Ms. Probst stated that the Director's expenses were divided and the dispatch costs were separate from the building. Mr. Schmisser explained that there were more political subdivisions than the City and County that we dispatch for. Mr. Schmisser stated that we used to dispatch for Wildlife and Parks at one time, along with Kansas Highway Patrol, City police, County Sheriff, County EMS, Township Fire Departments and City Fire. Mr. Schmisser questioned what volume of the calls were in the City limits of Pratt and commented that it was his impression that it was probably around 85%. Chief Humble stated that a majority would be within the City. Ms. Probst stated that her point was that jurisdictions would handle how they were dispatched differently. Ms. Probst commented that it would not do the County Counselor and the City Attorney any good to sit down and rewrite the agreement until we knew where we were to go.

Mayor Meyer asked Sheriff White and Chief Humble what they wanted to do. Chief Humble stated that, if the Commission could work it out, he would like to see dispatch get what they needed. Chief Humble commented that he would continue doing what he had been doing; however, it was not fair to dispatch. Chief Humble explained that they needed someone who could solely focus on that and that would take a full time person. Chief Humble added that he did not want something to happen due to ignorance and his biggest concern was to protect the community. Commissioner Peters commented that we pay \$300,000 plus benefits for dispatchers now and the Director would be an additional \$50,000 plus benefits.

Commissioner Jones questioned what the cost of the software program would be. Sheriff White stated that it could be half a million dollars. Commissioner Jones stated that that was a big thing and questioned who was going to pay for that. Commissioner Peters stated that this could be a win-win for both to get this corrected and he suggested starting at splitting it 50/50. Commissioner Borho added that we could hire a full time Director and leave things as they are, plus get the board setup and find a full time dispatcher. Commissioner Borho questioned if they would continue to report to Chief Humble. Mayor Meyer stated that he would agree that they should report to either Sheriff White or Chief Humble. Chief Humble commented that dispatch would report to the Director once that was all setup.

Ms. Beverlin stated that we have the Chief, the Sheriff, Commissions and dispatchers, but dispatch did not really have anyone so they gravitate to the City police department. Ms. Beverlin commented that she felt that that office could do a lot better and a Director could fill that role. Ms. Beverlin explained that the reality was that they needed someone to make decisions and there were benefits to having a Director who would be sure that there was adequate training for the dispatchers. Ms. Beverlin commented that the board should have representatives from the City, County, fire departments, Sheriff and Police and there needed to be a good hard look at funding for this, because it needed to happen. Mayor Meyer stated that the City was paying their fair share by paying the employees and the County was paying for equipment, but he questioned why we did not divide and pay equally after another full time employee was hired. Commissioner Borho commented that there was the annex that was done in 2013 and the plumbing project that the City helped pay for, but the County had paid for a lot of things. Mayor Meyer stated that the City had other things to do and dispatch was important. Chief Humble explained that 911 tax was responsible for lots of things and he felt that 50/50 was not too far off.

Commissioner Jones suggested that we find a full time dispatch and then get an application for Director, because both sides want this to happen. Commissioner Reynolds asked how they would decide if they did not know the total of what was going to be. Chief Humble explained that there would be around \$300,000 for wages and benefits. Commissioner Reynolds stated that the City had been paying around \$400,000 so it could be split in half. Mayor Meyer added that the County does the equipment and furnishings. Commissioner Reynolds stated that the software could be figured in on billing. Mr. Schmisser commented that the air conditioning had wiped out both sides with the \$15,000. Commissioner Reynolds stated that he felt the \$15,000 was not going in the right place in the past.

Commissioner Borho asked how important it was for dispatch to become a separate entity. Sheriff White stated that he was not sure it was that important. Commissioner Deeds suggested that we get together and propose ideas and see who wants to get on the board. Mayor Meyer commented that they had to have someone to report to on a day to day basis. Commissioner Borho stated that a good Director just does what they need to do. Mayor Meyer added that they would need to adhere to a budget and have the know how for what their job was. Ms. Probst commented that she felt that one Commission should be responsible for funding for everything. Commissioner Borho questioned why there would be a board. Chief Humble commented that it would be for the day to day operations. Chief Humble added that the EMS Director reports to the Commission and the new Director would too.

After more discussion, Mayor Meyer stated that the Sheriff and Chief should draw up something that the Commission could work on. Mayor Meyer commented that the City would still put money in the budget for dispatch. Mayor Meyer questioned if the preliminary agreement was that the Director would be the responsibility of the County Commission. Commissioner Borho stated that they would want to know what the City was going to contribute. Commissioner Reynolds stated that he did not know how much money they could afford and they were talking about \$300,000 for dispatch employees. Ms. Beverlin stated that they needed to look at the budget and what would be needed to make it work.

Next meeting:

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, July 15, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

RECESS:

Mayor Meyer made a motion to recess until Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. for the budget work session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peters and carried unanimously.

DOUG MEYER, Mayor



ATTEST:

LUANN KRAMER, City Clerk