



# Otoe County Board Minutes



November 22, 2021

The Otoe County Board of Commissioners convened in regular session at 8:30 a.m. on November 22, 2021, to audit and sign regular claims and payroll claims and to take care of such other matters as are on the agenda for this meeting. Advance notice of the meeting was published in the Nebraska City News Press and posted in at least three public places, including the County's website. This meeting was open to the Public, and the agenda was kept current, and is on file for public inspection at the office of the Otoe County Clerk during regular business hours.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jerad Sornson. Answering present at roll call were Commissioner Sornson, Commissioner Freshman, Commissioner Parsons, Commissioner Thurman, and Commissioner Crownover. Absent – None.

Commissioner Sornson informed the public in attendance that a current copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted on the west wall of the meeting room. Additional copies are available upon request.

Freshman made a motion, seconded by Parsons, to accept the agenda as posted. Voting aye were Sornson, Freshman, Parsons, Thurman, and Crownover. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Parsons made a motion, seconded by Thurman, to accept the minutes from the previous meeting and not have them read as each member was furnished with a copy of same. Voting aye were Freshman, Parsons, Thurman, Crownover and Sornson. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Having reviewed the regular claims in advance of this meeting, Crownover made a motion, seconded by Parsons, to approve payment of the regular claims. Voting aye were Parsons, Thurman, Crownover, Sornson, and Freshman. Nay – none. Motion carried. An additional claim for payment to Casey's was presented later in the meeting. Parsons made a motion, seconded by Crownover, to approve the additional claim. Voting aye were Crownover, Sornson, Freshman, Parsons, and Thurman. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Freshman made a motion, seconded by Thurman, to audit and sign payroll claims. Voting aye were Parsons, Thurman, Crownover, Sornson, and Freshman. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Parsons made a motion, seconded by Crownover, to approve Resolution #11-22-21-28 authorizing a tax refund to Rose Ann Duncan in the amount of \$212.08. The tax list correction was approved at a prior Board of Equalization meeting. Voting aye were Thurman, Crownover, Sornson, Freshman, and Parsons. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Deb Weitzenkamp, UNL Extension Educator, presented the names of Trevor Houghton and Sarah Joy for re-appointment as extension board members. She explained that board members are allowed two 3-year terms and Trevor and Sarah will be completing their first term and have agreed to a second term. Thurman made a motion, seconded by Freshman, to re-appoint Trevor Houghton and Sarah Joy as extension board members. Voting aye were Crownover, Sornson, Freshman, Parsons, and Thurman. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Tom Grooman spoke to the board in support of the Veteran Service Office and Otoe County Veteran Service officer, Chad Miller. Mr. Grooman highlighted several accomplishments of Mr. Miller, including the acquisition of two new vehicles for transporting veterans to appointments. He stated that



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Mr. Miller is doing a great job of servicing the veterans of the county and would like to see an increase in his hourly wage. Mr. Miller spoke regarding the military pension and medical funds that are brought into the county by veterans. He explained that his position involves dealings with state and federal agencies. Discussion led to Mr. Miller expressing that he would like to continue the Buddy Check program for veterans and stated that the program would cost approx. \$1500 to \$2000. Joseph Musumeci was present to express concern about the availability of rides for appointments and office hours. Chairman Sornson explained that the drivers are volunteers and Mr. Miller is looking for more. He also explained that the office availability is being discussed. Commissioner Thurman suggested looking at KENO funds to provide an incentive for volunteer drivers.

Sornson made a motion, seconded by Parsons, to approve the re-districting map for Commissioner Districts. Every 10 years, the districts need to be reviewed per population numbers and updated if needed. Voting aye were Sornson, Freshman, Parsons, Thurman, and Crownover. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Sornson made a motion, seconded by Thurman, to approve a \$1,000 Covid premium payment to all qualifying Otoe County employees. To qualify an employee must have been employed from Nov. 21, 2020, through Nov. 22, 2021, and be a current employee as of Nov. 22, 2021. If employed after Nov. 21, 2020, the payment will be pro-rated for the months employed. Part-time workers will receive a pro-rated payment based on the average number of hours worked per week. Elected officials are excluded from the payments. The funding of the payments is a qualified expenditure of the Covid American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds. The payments will be subject to tax and retirement withholdings. Voting aye were Freshman, Parsons, Thurman, Crownover, and Sornson. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Tony Burkhalter, Nebraska Public Employees Local 251 Union President, addressed the board regarding an official grievance filed on behalf of one or more road employees. The grievance includes concerns of using personal cell phones for timekeeping. The county recently started a new payroll system, and some employees use an app on their cell phone to clock in/out, request time off, view accruals, etc. The grievance form lists an adjustment of installing time clocks in all road facilities or purchase county phones for employees to conduct county business for employees that do not wish to have the app on their personal cell phone. After discussion and notation that the employees are reimbursed \$25/month for using their personal cell phone for county business, Sornson made a motion, seconded by Freshman, to leave the current clocking in procedures without further compensation. Voting aye were Parsons, Thurman, Crownover, Sornson, and Freshman. Nay – none. Motion carried. A letter of response will be sent.

Parsons made a motion, seconded by Freshman, to award the bid to Vogtscapes, Inc. for Projects C-66(587) and C-66(662). The public bid opening occurred on Nov. 5, 2021, and the award was tabled at the Nov. 8, 2021, meeting. Vogtscapes, Inc. was the only bid received. The bids were as follows:

Project C-66(587)	Bid: \$433,600	Start Date: May 2022
Project C-66(662)	Bid: \$492,244	Start Date: June 2022

Both projects are eligible to receive CBMP reimbursement: C-66(587) \$141,923 and C-66(662) \$177,343. Voting aye were Thurman, Crownover, Freshman, Sornson, and Parsons. Nay – none. Motion carried.



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Crownover led discussion of a project with a bridge on County Rd 29 located on the SW corner of Syracuse near the ballfields. The City of Syracuse is in favor of putting in tubes for the repairs. The discussion included the City of Syracuse purchasing the material and Otoe County would provide the labor. No action was taken during the meeting.

Jon Brinkman, Highway Superintendent, provided a Road Closure Study to the Board of Commissioners. The study is for vacating approximately 1000' of County Road 6 North of G Road, located in the Southwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 34, Township 9 N, Range 9 E in Otoe County. It was stated that there is continued litigation on another portion of County Rd 6 and the vacation procedures were tabled until litigation is complete.

Highway Superintendent, Jon Brinkman, presented the supervisor's report: Project (665) C Road Paving: the box culvert is poured, and backfilling has begun, and the utilities are working on moving out. The construction crew completed work at King and 10 South, repair work at the landfill, cleaned out beaver dams at numerous locations, and completed seeding and erosion control at numerous locations. Both crews have been grading and hauling rock and trimming trees around signs and bridges.

Jennifer Panko-Rahe, County Attorney, introduced Seth Hawkins as a new Deputy County Attorney.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, and since all items on the agenda have been disposed of, Chairman Sornson declared this meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 7, 2021.

I, Jennifer Bassinger, County Clerk of Otoe County, do hereby certify that the above minutes were taken by me, and are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and I therefore set my hand and affix the county seal this 22nd day of November 2021.

Jennifer Bassinger  
Otoe County Clerk