**February 27, 2024**

The Graham County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday February 27, 2024. Commissioner Tremblay called the meeting to order with the flag salute. Commissioner’s, Kendra Robinson, Jarrod Knoll and Melissa Atkins were all present. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes from February 20, 2024. Commissioner Tremblay seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0.

**Graham County Hospital, Melissa Atkins**

Melissa said she was going to give an update on the hospital and new clinic. She reported that she just received word that the check that they had applied for back in August 2023, for some additional funds through the state that is part of a federal grant is on the way. Those funds they applied for through a grant, it is a matching grant, so for every $2.00 that we spend from the hospital, it will be matched $1.00. She reported when they did that application, they did it back in August, she applied for the ”moon” and we do have six million dollars to be used for the clinic, so she applied for the three million dollars matching and they were actually awarded that. Melissa reported the award came back in November, and she just found out the check has been issued, so that money will be coming to Graham County here in a matter of days, so really exited, they may or may not spend it all, because they have to spend every $2.00 for every $1.00, and we don’t want to just buy things that we don’t need, but that made the project much more doable, so you can look at it as a 33.33% discount on everything that we have to have for the new clinic, so that is great news. She reported the Contract Selection Committee did interview 4 different contractors last week and they did decide on one, Hutton, will be our contractor or Construction Manager. She reported they are really excited, they had 4 really good applicants, they spent a lot of time with each company asking them a standard set of questions and then they answered, then they present it to the Board then the Board made the decision at a special meeting last week. Melissa reported once they have a Contractor in place, they will know more about total cost, they will know more about ground breaking. The company that they talked to is going to help with community meetings, so they are really excited and are going to be able to set a community meeting date here pretty soon. She reported as far as staffing, they are doing real good on filling some of their vacancies, they were able to hire a part time purchasing director person, they hired a couple new nurse aides part time, they are still looking for an RN for nighttime, and they have been able to fill the PT with agency until we have someone, we do have someone in mind coming in August, and they are still looking for a Radiology Technologist but they do have somebody to help out. She went on to report agency is pretty expensive, so they try not to do that, but thank goodness they have somebody so they don’t have to go on diversion or anything. Melissa reported one of the board members and herself will be going to Wichita on Thursday, they have what is called the Kansas Hospital Association putting on a critical issues summit and that is geared directly towards the board members, so we would like for a board member to go, and hear all about what’s going on in the legislation, what all is going on around the state so, Billie Frakes and her will be doing that Thursday and Friday. She reported they just got another thank you and praise for our providers, she said they really do have a great group, their nursing staff are amazing. Melissa said just to back up on that grant, the grant application was actually the County was the one that applied for the grant, and she wrote the grant application, and the county signed for it, so the county will be receiving the money and then giving it to the hospital, it is the Rural Hospital Innovation Grant, it is part of a federal grant, so we will have to abide by all their rules and requirements. Commissioner Tremblay said it is important to keep our rural hospital, our average age is not getting any younger. Melissa said yes, we have to have it.

**Community Development, Dan Steffen**

Dan arrived at this time and handed out Graham County Community Development coffee cups and pens to the Commissioners. Dan reported they had an E-Community and Business Development meeting last night and they are going to move forward, he has to submit an application through the E-Community Program, we will get $15,000 for the “pitch your porch” program. He reported it will be a no match grant. He reported they will take applications, the designated area for Pitch your Porch, will be targeting Pomeroy and a section of Main Street as well as downtown main street section Morland and Bogue. Dan reported the application process is, they will submit an application, for renovations or whatever they want to do, masonry work, new windows, anything that is exterior, the project has to be viewed from the sidewalk or street, nothing interior and then they will have a pitch, literally a presentation, however they want to do it, and the judges will combine those two scores and award 5 different businesses $3,000 towards whatever their improvements are. Dan reported it is a neat program, we are only the second ones in the state to do it. He reported they are going to use a scoring rubric from another grant program in Russell County to do the actual scoring, and we will do that for both the pitch and the physical application. He reported it is a neat, no match grant to hopefully inspire some folks to make some improvements on building fronts, etc. Dan went on to say it is a reimbursement, so basically, we approve what they are going to do up to $3,000 and they supply us with invoices that it has been done and we cut the check and we will run that check through Leadership of Graham County account so we can expedite the checks back to them and also hopefully Leadership Graham County is going to help us vote as well. Dan reported the application fees for E-Community programs, he has checked with several other programs, they charge a $25.00 application fee, so they are not flooded with applications that their not going to follow through on, and those dollars they are going to put into miscellaneous funds as well as the $3,600 he received so he will have that for entrepreneur programs that do have fees for us to participate, so that is where those dollars will go. He reported email followers, they have added some more as well as Facebook followers. Dan reported he provided Commissioners with a copy of the budget, on the Department budget, the last page, the $3,600 he spoke about, it reflects going into the miscellaneous fund as well as the $25.00 application fee, he said the only expense out of there so far has been the mugs and pens for promotional items, but the $3,600, plus the $25.00, we are going to use for, like he said there is some networking Kansas programs that cost us a little bit but they pick up the majority of it. He asked Commissioner’s if they had any questions on the budget? Commissioner Nelson said it looks good. Dan reported it is a different format this year, but he thinks it’s easier to read. Commissioner Tremblay agreed and said it is easy to follow. Dan reported the accounts, Leadership Graham County account will have some expenses for members of the class are going to Wichita, so they are going to cover the cost of their motels, meals, we bought some books and workbooks but Sonya hasn’t given him an invoice yet to reimburse her for the books, the class needs to complete prior to going to Wichita to the Leadership edge class at Kansas Leadership Center and again they will pickup the motels cost, meals, and mileage down. Dan reported the Rural Mural match fund, he has submitted an application for $10,000 grant and GH Co Community Foundation wanted me to go ahead and apply for mural funds to get that balance up, we have enough fund in place for the Morland mural on the side of Morland Mercantile so whenever Layne can get to that, and the Community Foundation approves his design he can get started on that. Dan reported the other fund they are trying to raise for the Frontier Stage Theater. He said the workforce investment board, it doesn’t indicate it on here, but what shows on the travel and tourism account which is the last page,

$2,324.64, he caught it on the reconciliation, that was deposited into the workforce account, so he went to bank yesterday and asked for those dollars to be transferred to the correct account, they admitted it was their mistake, and he has the receipt showing where it was supposed to go, so they got that straightened out, it’s not indicated on the report, it’s indicated correctly on report. Dan reported Travel and tourism account, they are starting to go out and sell memberships for the travel and tourism development committee, and at the same time they are selling because they are due July 1st, ads for the ultimate guide for Northwest Kansas, so they came up with a great idea of if you buy an initial membership, if you get it half price. He went on to say, if you buy a platinum membership or a gold membership, platinum membership you get 50% off the ad price for the ultimate guide, gold membership, you get 25% off for the ultimate guide, so hopefully it will inspire people to become memberships and also advertise in the guide and they have a list to go out, he reported he got those packets ready to go out this week. Dan went on to say as far as the grants, the $10,000 digital imaging grant, did the memorial school, if you want to see that, he has it posted on the website, you can go in, it’s really neat, you can click on a point and it goes around and shows you the video image of the interior of the school, the exterior of the school and so on. He stated they got that funded through EIC and K-State 105 program. He then went on to report he changed his report grants received to income received so he could identify that partner grant from the sales tax credits in there as well and then he mentioned last time that private rural grant program funding in there. He said hopefully we do as well in 2024 as we did in 2023 as far as grants coming in, he said we aren’t going to bring in 100% of what we apply for but we will keep applying. He reported they have the workshop set up for Kansas BIL program, there will be a workshop on the 25th in Colby and on the 28th in Hays and that will be basically an overview of programs and what is available in terms of funding, again that is from the Kansas BIL program, who will provide the matching funds for getting the Counties to apply for federal grants along with technical assistance from BIL Kansas and the planning commission with those dollars to match what’s required for the federal grants for large projects. Dan reported he visited with Scott Roberts and he is going to make sure the city is aware of and wanted to make sure the Commissioners were aware of it as well, he said either Colby or Hays would be a great time to show up and talk about what kind of projects specifically flood mitigation to look at and go after some of those dollars, as he said that day he was here, Matt Hanson, there is ten billion dollars dedicated to our EDA district which is 18 counties, we might as well go after our share, if its going to come to the northwest, we might as well go after our share of it. Dan went on to say it would be nice to have a billion in each county but there is some that won’t bother with it. He reported he thinks it is a heck of an opportunity, he has never seen anything like this as far as not costing the municipality anything, with project match money coming from the state for a federal grant. Dan said the E-Community loan was approved, for Unicorn Floral gift, replacement of some of their coolers for flowers and plants as well as the roof. Dan reminded Commissioners to not forget the YEC event, if you have time seeing by the trade fair for the Peoples choice vote on the 5th for the Youth Entrepreneur Program. He reported we have 6, which is not bad for the first year, and he thinks once some of the other kids see what the prize dollars are they will have a lot more interest coming next year. He reported the Health & Wellness resource fair on the 13th, Crystal showed him the list of vendors, there is 65+ vendors from all over the state. Commissioner Tremblay asked Dan if he had heard anymore word on the recycling center? Dan reported Corina is checking with, she is gone the next couple days meeting with KDHE, she hasn’t’ heard back from them so she is going to them, and also regarding the Community Development block grants, and not only the recycling center but a couple other projects she is going to be checking on. Dan reported they are not getting back with her, so she is going to go see them. He reported Van Koon with Morton Buildings met with Chris out at Landfill and he is going to provide some specs and costs for them. Dan said he things it was a 50’ x 90’. Commissioner Nelson said it was 50’ x 80’. Dan said he couldn’t make their meeting, but Van said it went great, Chris is a great guy, he looked at the location and it shouldn’t be no problem for him to provide bids and see what they can do, just have to find the money to pay for it. Graham County Clerk asked Dan for the book and workbook from Sonya, did she just need to reach out to her to get that? Dan said yes. Kendra said she actually has the book, she had bought it when she went to one of the other KAC meetings, she just needed the workbook. Dan said he wasn’t sure when the next Leadership class was, Kendra said she thought she sent out an email that we were moving it, Kendra looked and said it was moved to April 24th, Dan asked when the Wichita trip was, Kendra responded with April. Dan asked Kendra if she would have time to go to that in Wichita, Kendra responded yes, she was going to room with Tiff Breinig. Dan said it was a really neat program, they actually already have a meeting set up to start planning the next years leadership class and the last one he went to, he actually ate with 4 high school students that we invited. He said he asked them point blank if this was something they would be interested in doing, 3 said yes, the other one said it depended on school events. Kendra stated she hoped to see more involvement with the YEC next year, Plainville has 23, I’m doing the judging of it, and some of them are good, some are really good. Dan said he judged one year and they had one called Cardinal Corn, 3 students got together and made all these different flavors of popcorn and they opened it at Plainville High School to sell it and they had people form the community coming in to buy it, they didn’t win the competition in Plainville but placed higher in the state contest. He said his favorite story is a girl named Jade her business plan was made by jade, it was a bread making packet, she did different flavors and recipes and so on, stated with a $100 loan from her parents, because of her, they had to switch the competition from youth existing businesses and start up businesses. He said she kept going, placed at state multiple times, long story short, she sold her business to Paisley Pear, so now they take on selling the bread mixes and so on, and she uses that money to help her go to school. Commissioner Tremblay said that is what it takes, inspiration.

**Janitor, Kelli VanLoenen**

Kelli was up next. She presented the Commissioner’s with two bids for the courtroom floor. Commissioner Nelson said he was thinking about just doing the west side of the floor for now and seeing how that goes and do the east side later if the smell doesn’t get better. Kelli said it’s whatever they want to do, she does think a lot of the smell is coming from the carpet. Commissioner Tremblay said that is what he worries about is it’s in the carpet to. Commissioner Nelson said they could always go in later on and do the east side. Commissioner Tremblay said he agrees, he’s thinking maybe lets do the west where the floor is so back and see if that smell doesn’t leave, then we can do something. Commissioner Tremblay asked Kelli if water ever got that far east and into the carpet. Kelli said she not that she knows of, Kelli said she knows they have had it professionally cleaned a couple times, but it doesn’t really help, she said they had Steinmetz from Hoxie came in and did a really good job, and got all the stains out. Commissioner Tremblay asked how long ago was that. Kelli said Donna was still here. Kendra said it had to be at least 4 years, because she worked in District Court for 2 years, so at least 4-5 years. Commissioner Tremblay said he wonders if they shouldn’t do the west part where it is so bad. Kelli said she can get ahold of that Steinmetz and see if they can clean the carpet, and then Rusty is going to get in there and those windows in, he said he is going to talk to District Court like on a Friday and hopefully have them soon. Commissioner Tremblay said he will have to plan around that jury trial. Kelli said yes, he came in and talked to Kayla and said if he calls them the Friday before and make sure it’s open, he said it will take like 2 or 3 days to get both sides out and get it framed back up and then come in and finish it and clean up everything. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve Russell’s Rennovation for the west half. Commissioner Tremblay seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0. Kelli said she will let the Commissioners know when they get that all done, and asked if they wanted bids for cleaning the carpet. Commissioner Nelson said he doesn’t think there is anybody in town that does it. Kelli said she might call Cleanrite where she gets some of her cleaning supplies might do it. Commissioner Tremblay told her to check around.

**Road & Bridge, Wayne Pfeifer**

Wayne was up next. Wayne presented the Commissioners with the sealed bids from BTI and Carrico for tractor rentals to open and review. Commissioner discussed the bids. Commissioner Nelson said American Implement might be interested in bidding. Wanye asked Commissioners if they wanted him to get a bid from them. Commissioner Nelson said it wouldn’t hurt, and to call them and tell them what we are wanting and make the decision next week. Wayne asked if the bids were close? Commissioner Tremblay said the only difference he seen was the oil change. Commissioner Nelson said it was pretty crazy how much they dropped. Wayne said he didn’t know how much they dropped but figured they could beat the $32.00/hour then asked where are they at? Commissioner Nelson said $19.92/hour. Commissioner Tremblay said both of them. Wayne said they came up with the exact same number? Wayne said there is nobody at BTI, the guy he has been talking to is from Iola or Great Bend area, he said he thought he could make a lot of difference. Commissioners compared the bids again, looking at oil changes. Commissioner Tremblay said the bid he had said to supply all oil and filters and must be for the life of the lease. Commissioner Nelson said his bid said it was just one. Commissioner Tremblay said his said it will put the new tires and rims on the tractors. Commissioners still discussed that one bid was 9 months and one was 12 months, same hours. Commissioner Tremblay said wait a minute, one bid said 300 hours, and the other one was 350 hours. Commissioner Tremblay said 8 months, 300 hours or 12 months, 350 hours at $19.92/hr that is regardless of what you want I guess. Wayne said since the availability of tractors is way better since COVID. Commissioner Nelson said they had a skid steer price on there to for $32/hr. Commissioner Tremblay said that is 250 hours, a yearly lease. Wayne said he must have threw that in. Commissioner Tremblay said they got a deal, they would give you a $3,000 credit to apply towards your choice, a skid steer rental or use of dollars off a new mower price. Commissioner Nelson said we should have done this last year. Wayne said the first ones they ever rented, they paid $24/hr, then it went up to $26/hr, then $28/hr then last year went up to $32. Commissioner Tremblay said yeah he remembered that. Commissioner Nelson asked Wayne if he wanted to look at the bids and gave them to him to review. Commissioner Nelson said he would say table it and wait and give them a week at American Implement and see what they can come up with. Commissioner Nelson said they don’t have no deadlines, so deciding next week would be fine, right? Wayne said the guy in Great Bend wanted him to call him to see if they got it, he then said I think both of them are wanting to get some tractors ordered. Wayne said this Carrico deal sounds like more of a package deal. Commissioner Tremblay asked Wanye do you need a skid steer? Wayne said no, but ours is getting to where we will have to put new tracts on it, but it does alright. He went on to say, there is times we could use two, say we go out on a project, then they don’t have nothing if a freight truck comes in, to unload it, we used that one quite a bit this year to clean snow, but he hopes we don’t have that much snow next year. Commissioner Nelson said we just wait a week and look at the other one. Wanye asked Commissioner Nelson if he had that number for American Implement. Commissioner Nelson said he had an email from them. Wayne asked Commissioner Nelson to send him the information so he could call and get a bid. Commissioner Tremblay said it seems pretty reasonable, it beats buying old junk. Commissioner Nelson said one breakdown will cost you a lot. Wayne said the big advantage is when they run all them old tractors, they are working on the tractors and mowers more. Commissioner Tremblay said they are putting physical damage insurance on these tractors. Wanye said the only thing we have to supply is liability. Commissioner Tremblay said warranty service calls are included. Commissioner Nelson said they supply the used tires and rims to. Wayne said first time, they will put used rims and tires on them and if we blow one of them, we have to replace them and usually for a couple hundred bucks we’ve been able to get them through Kansasland. Commissioner Tremblay said that is really pretty good deal either way. Wayne said that one year, from BTI, we bought a front tire and a back tire and the back tire was over $3,000 and it wasn’t blown out, it was cut, had hit pipe. Commissioner Tremblay said lets table that and see if we can get one from American and make the decision next week. Commissioner Tremblay told Wayne we did just get a complaint a little while ago about the road by Prairie Home Church, it didn’t get bladed this last time and they said it is really bad. Wayne said we can water blade it, he said we had several roads that didn’t get bladed. Wayne reported they were hauling millings on the Worcester road today, whatever they get done, but he thinks they are going to cut us off, we don’t have what we were going to buy, but he things they sold it, he needs to call Rocky. Commissioner Nelson asked if that west pile get hauled to? Wayne said he thinks they are hauling it now, but 20,000 tons was supposed to go to Norton, when they got there on Tuesday of last week, there was ten other companies hauling and that wasn’t what he told him, at the start, we were going to get 8,000 ton, S&R was going to get 2,000 ton and 20,000 ton was going to Norton, but Wyatt called him awhile ago and said they were surprised we up there today, and they weren’t going to load us tomorrow. He went on to say, so he needs to call Rocky, as of this morning they had 260 loads and they calculated about 380 loads, so they are a bit short, but it is what it is. Commissioner Tremblay said yeah, it will help. Wayne said we would have brought it up to the road sooner, but on the east spot, they got into some real chunky stuff and when they got into the west side, it got really fine. He said he talked to Ben awhile ago and he said it was laying down real nice, maybe it will help the people out for awhile. Commissioner Nelson said the oil field tore that road up pretty bad getting to all their wells. Wayne said it’s not really good putting millings on top, its kind of like pouring marbles on this floor, it doesn't work. Commissioner Tremblay said yeah, they need to be stirred don’t they? Wanye said Brian VanLoenen wants a little bit there at Bogue, just going south of Bogue, he said he wasn’t sure if that was going to be a good place because they come in from the south and it will probably butch it up, but they talked about maybe mixing a little bit, shale doesn’t work very good either if it’s a real high speed but slower spot it might hold together pretty good. Commissioner Tremblay asked if the repairs were going alright? Wayne reported they got the grader back from Colby, and have not received the bill yet. Commissioner Nelson asked if the was the one with a transmission? Wayne said yes, and the one they thought, it was an old G, they drained the oil and filter, and the filter was actually collapsed, so he wasn’t sure if that was starving it from oil, but Chad has been running it and said it’s been doing alright, he said usually those G’s don’t have trouble with transmissions, they are pretty bullet proof, the G’s are pretty much all mechanical, and those H’s have those solenoid, you usually have to replace them. Wayne reported they will go look at the road by Prairie Hil Church and see what they can do about it. Commissioner Tremblay said that would be helpful. Wayne requested a copy of the bids, County Clerk got him a copy of the bids from BTI and Carrico.

**New Business**

Commissioners reviewed and signed Payroll vouchers, Payroll payable vouchers and Accounts Payable vouchers. Commissioner reviewed and signed Abstract of Commissioner Minutes from 2/13/2024. Graham County Clerk Kendra verified Commissioners received in their binders information on the 48th Annual Kansas County Commissioner’s Association Conference. Commissioners reviewed bids from B&E Garage on the Landfill pickup Chris Mikkelson drives. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve Estimate #: 002750, with ATK engine in the amount of $7,514.47. Commissioner Tremblay seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0. Commissioners reviewed and signed the Amendment to Community Fisheries Assistance Program Grant Agreement for Trexler’s. Graham County Clerk presented the Commissioner with a letter from the Hill City Grade School about donating or volunteering at the Family Literacy Night. Commissioners agreed we didn’t have a fund to donate out of. Commissioner Tremblay said maybe the Department Heads should volunteer to help with it.

As there was no further information to be discussed, Commissioner Tremblay made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0.

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Kendra Robinson, County Clerk Troy Tremblay, Chairman