

**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

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August 13, 2020

The Jefferson County Commissioners met in special session on Thursday August 13, 2020. Present were Commissioners Lynn Luck, Wayne Ledbetter and County Clerk Linda M Buttron. Counselor Josh Ney was absent. Commissioner Richard Malm was absent.

Crystal VanHoutan, Health Department Administrator met with the Board. Crystal presented statistics regarding COVID cases from 7/24 through the present. On 7/24/2020 there were 48 total cases with 5 active cases and 3 hospitalizations. Today there have been 88 cases with 10 currently active cases and 7 total hospitalizations. At the highest point to date, active cases surged to 23. As of today, there are 88 people in quarantine or isolation from the virus. The Health Department staff checks on each of these people every couple days. Crystal said that the resources of the department are being stretched thin. Those statistics indicate the Jefferson County is at a 9.7% positive infection rate. This rate is part of the metric used to determine how schools will open in a couple weeks. Crystal reviewed the metrics for whether a school opens as "Green" "Yellow" "Orange" or "Red". Crystal also presented a letter from eleven local physicians and practitioners requesting that the Commissioners place a mandatory mask requirement into effect. They indicated in the letter that they were seeing a "tremendous increase" in positive SARC-CoV2 cases and anticipate additional spread with children returning to school. As was stated in the letter and reiterated by Crystal, the only tools we have available to slow the progression of the virus, while uncomfortable and tiresome, are continual use of masks, hand washing and physical distancing. She requested that the Board adopt a mask mandate for Jefferson County. Wayne stated that while he does not oppose the wearing of masks, he feels that a mandate is not needed. Wayne stated that he was supportive of masks in the schools. Lynn indicated her support for the mask mandate in order to use the tools on hand. Lynn and Wayne indicated that the Board's position on masks in the schools is to support the Governor's order. Crystal announced that a large motorcycle rally over Labor Day weekend will most likely contribute to more cases. Emergency Management has donated masks for the event in an effort to mitigate the exposure. Lynn moved that the County follow the Governor's mask mandate. The motion died for a lack of a second. Wayne asked that the record reflect that his comments not be construed as any criticism of the work being done by the health department. He stated he is very proud of the work the department has done and appreciates their efforts. He stated that the Board should make an attempt to better communicate to the public that masks are encouraged and that if the virus keeps getting worse, there may be a point where a mask mandate may be required.

Emergency Services Director James Tweed and Jim Bodenheimer met with the Board regarding the SPARKS funding. Contract agreements for Jim Bodenheimer and Brian Nyp were presented for consideration. Wayne moved that the contracts be approved as presented. Lynn seconded.

All voted in favor of the motion. James discussed contact with Hayden Tower regarding a radio tower in the County. Approval has been given to include this project in the SPARK funding. Hayden Tower will add fiber optic capability on the tower. This project does not include the 800-megahertz radio systems. They would need to be purchased later. Prior to construction there has to be a due diligence study done. James requested authority to start the due diligence process at a cost of \$30,000. If the project isn't funded through SPARK it can be funded through 911 funds. Wayne moved that the authority to proceed be granted. Lynn seconded. All voted in favor of the motion. He presented information about reimbursement and direct aid for the SPARKS funding. \$1,120,169.56 has been submitted for reimbursement. \$2,946,904.89 has been submitted for Direct Aid. James asked the Board to approve the submission. The Board asked that a line item for a 5% administrative reimbursement to the County be added to the submission. Wayne moved that the submission be approved with the addition of the 5% administrative reimbursement line item. Lynn seconded. All voted in favor of the motion.

There being no further business to come before the Board they adjourned to meet in regular session on August 17<sup>th</sup>.