

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING, MARCH 30, 2007**

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CUSTER COUNTY MET IN
REGULAR SESSION WITH THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dick Downey	Chairman
Kit Shy	Vice-chair
Carole Custer	Commissioner
Ric Ferron	County Administrator
Debbie Livengood	Clerk to the Board

Also present was Nora Drenner, reporter for the Wet Mountain Tribune.

Meeting was called to order at 8:45am.

The pledge was recited.

County payroll and accounts payable were approved from the following funds:

County General	\$180,002.22
Road & Bridge	47,944.01
Emergency Service	10,591.31
Social Service Dept.	15,450.58
Capital Improvement	3,870.15
Total	\$257,858.27

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Downey updated the Board on a visit he had with other county commissioners in regards to their Veterans Service Officer. Every commissioner that Mr. Downey visited with stated that you only receive \$1,200.00 a year from the government for this office. There are no exceptions. Listed below are the following statistics that Commissioner Downey was given from other counties:

Bent County: Have a part-time officer and is paid \$350.00 a month. Their population is 6,200 and their county budget is \$1.6 million.

Otero County: Have a VSO scheduled part-time.

Morgan County: Have a part-time VSO and is paid \$650.00 a month. Their population is 28,000.

Garfield County: Have a part-time VSO and is paid \$600.00 to \$700.00 a month. Their population is 52,000.

Routt County: They have a part-time VSO. Their population is 30,000 with a county budget of \$20 million.

Rio Grande County: Their VSO works sixteen hours a week and is paid \$13,400.00 a year. Their population is 15,000 with a county budget of \$17 million.

Grand County: Their VSO works ½ day a week with a budget of \$4,000.00 a year. Their population is 15,000 and they have a county budget of \$14 million.

Park County: Their VSO is part-time and is paid \$2,500.00 a year. Their population is 17,000 with a budget of \$24 million.

Alamosa County: Their VSO is part-time and covers the entire San Luis Valley. Their population is 40,000 with a county budget of \$18,000 million.

Costilla County: They have a part-time VSO who is paid \$800.00 a year.

Moffat County: Their VSO is paid \$1,200.00 a year. Their population is 15,000 with a county budget of \$25 million.

Commissioner Custer stated that “Sustainable Ways” are asking for a letter of support to be attached to their grant application. They would like to start a Farmers Market in the county this summer.

Nora Drenner will not be able to serve on the Advisory Board for 2-1-1 since it would be a conflict with her job as a reporter. However, Nora will help gather information that is needed and give it to the person that is appointed to the board.

Commissioner Downey reported on the CCI Steering Committee meeting he attended in Denver on March 23rd. There was discussion on the survey that all counties received through their extension offices concerning the commissioner’s input on what extension programs they would like to have in their counties. The bill on Eminent Domain is going forward with an amendment to the bill and HB1168 concerning Forest Improvement Districts has passed and been signed by the governor.

NEW BUSINESS

Landfill Manager, Rusty Christensen, met with the Board in regards to hiring a new landfill equipment operator due to the resignation of Rick Smith. A new hire will be required to have a Class B CDL license.

Commissioner Custer made a motion to start the new landfill employee at \$23,500.00 a year. After the probation period the salary may be upgraded as the supervisor feels is appropriate. Commissioner Downey amended the motion to add that the salary was not to exceed \$25,000.00 in the first year. Commissioner Shy seconded the motion and the amendment. Motion carried unanimously.

Silver Cliff Town Clerk, Sue Hutton, and Westcliffe Town Clerk, Kathy Reis, met with the Board in regards to their annual “Clean Up Day” that is scheduled for May 12th.

Commissioner Shy made a motion seconded by Commissioner Downey to allow both towns the use of the landfill on May 12th free of charge with the exception of those items such as tires that the county is charged for. If there is a reason the towns need an extra

day to haul off all of the trash, they are directed to tell the landfill personnel and they will not be charged for those loads either. Motion carried unanimously.

Art Hutchison, the new manager for the Great San Dunes National Park, met with the Board to introduce himself and address any concerns that they may have. Commissioner Custer was concerned that there are no ATV's allowed in the park making it very difficult for someone with a handicap to enjoy the park. She would like to see some handicap accessibility added to the Great San Dunes National Park for those that need it. Commissioner Shy asked that Mr. Hutchison make sure that there is signage on Custer County's side of Medano Pass informing individuals that there are no ATV's allowed in the park since Medano Pass is such an attraction on this side of the valley to take to the sand dunes. Commissioner Shy also mentioned posting a sign (48 X 24) at Medano Pass to show it was part of Pikes Trail.

Mr. Hutchison estimated that approx. 300,000 people visit the Sand Dunes every year. They employ about thirty-five individuals in the summer and eighteen in the winter months.

CTSI (County Technical Service Inc.) Manager, Dennis Hunt, met with the Board concerning the availability of grant funds to the counties. Mr. Hunt has been hired by CTSI to write grants. There is a \$500.00 grant application fee that is charged and if the county is successful in being awarded the grant, a percentage of the grant amount is due to CTSI. Mr. Hunt will also do an assessment study as well for a fee.

Mr. Hunt and the commissioners discussed applying for an energy impact grant to purchase three road graders. The next grant cycle is in June of this year.

Commissioner Shy made a motion seconded by Commissioner Custer to have Mr. Hunt pursue applying for an energy impact grant. Motion carried unanimously.
Commissioner Custer will be the contact person for Mr. Hunt.

Charles Bogle, along with approx. twenty other individuals, met with the Board to give a power point presentation concerning a proposed lodging tax. A lodging tax would only apply to those individuals who stay overnight in a hotel/motel and by law can't be more than 2% that is collected. A study done by students from CSU show that this would generate approx. \$20,000.00 each year.

According to the sales figures for the year 2006, had there been a lodging tax in place, it would have generated \$25,000.00 in revenues. Any money that is collected from a lodging tax can be used for tourism only. However, the state will withhold 3 1/3% of the tax collected for administrative costs. The lodging tax that is collected has to be held in its own fund. It can't be deposited with any other county funds. The committee working on a lodging tax committed themselves to help support the Road & Bridge tax to other individuals and organizations along with the lodging tax if the Board would go forward with both questions on the November ballot.

The Board “Thanked” the group for the presentation and told them they would give their answer on supporting the lodging tax on Monday, April 2nd at 2:30.

Being no further business the Board adjourned at 3:50pm.