

Minutes of the Woodward County Commissioners Special Meeting Monday, March 10, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. at the Woodward County Fair Grounds Meeting was called to order by Chairman Clint White with members Donny Thorn & Troy White present. Also, present Wendy Dunlap, Amanda Parks, Donna Gaston, Bailey Kafka, Ben Smith, Trina Mingus, Tom Lucas, Emily Lintner, Eldon Merklin, Ronnie Peach, Rachel Vanhorn, DA Chris Boring, Ray Bayliff, Billy Riggs, Sheri Rice, Michael Fox, Harvey Currier, Margie Smith, Michael Smith, Rick Hay, Trey Hutchison, Patrick Coffey, David & Elaine Beckwith, Tommy & Terry Roedell, Donna Gaston, Barry & Patricia Wood, Shane Waggner, Joey Wilson, Tim Polk, Chayton & Madison Dilley, Mike Johnson, Becca Price, Briley Goodwin, Daniel Rickman, Marty Phillips, Steve Semmel, Bev Chestnut, Victoria Dodson & Kelly Witchey. Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Statement of Compliance was acknowledged, agenda was filed & posted March 6, 2025 @ 10:00 a.m. Motion was made by T. White to approve the minutes of the previous meeting seconded by Thorn Voting: all ayes. Witchey reported that she had a great meeting in Durant & learning more about upcoming FMAG & Witchey is looking at upcoming grants. Lucas reported the project for Quinlan Rural Water #2 for \$50,000 Grant for water hydrants has been completed. Response from DEQ Tire Recycling Program Manager has been attached. Motion was made by T. White to accept the low Sealed Bid B-25-1 from Redline Fire Supply for \$30,801.68 for Fabrication, Building & Installation of new Fire Truck Skid Unit for Sharon Fire Department. A second bid was received from Casco Industries for \$35,405.00. The motion was seconded by C. White Voting: all ayes. The Commissioners then heard from concerned citizens regarding public safety. Donna Gaston states, "I have lived in Woodward County since 1944. I am related to Creel & Melvin Gaston. They gave their lives helping people in Woodward County. Mitchell is stealing my tax dollars."

Next, Ray Bayliff stated, "I want to make a correction from last week. In the budget totals it was 1,076,000 that approved last year. I keep hearing that the sheriff has no money to repair sirens or get lights, but there is still a pickup setting out at the District #3 barn without the lights mounted on it for 7 months. Also, there are vehicles driving around that have sirens & lights working only part of the time. This is a neglect of duties to not get these running with sirens & lights on every vehicle within the sheriff's office. Mitchell is also drawing a \$1000 a month for travel which should be by personal vehicle only but is driving a county vehicle some of the time. The county vehicle is only to be used in emergency situations. There is a container on the range to store a lawn mower in but also has evidence in with no lock on this container. The audit for 2008 shows guns missing. Mitchell was sworn in December 9th because he was going to be gone, but then sworn in again on January 2nd 2025. We as Woodward County are at the bottom with 17% in national statistics of being safe which should not be. A letter was received March 7, 2025 appointing Patrick Holloway Undersheriff for Woodward County retroactive to July 12, 2023. This is not acceptable and should have been filed when he became undersheriff. There was a county in Oklahoma that had Bureau of Indian Affairs Prisoner that died & the tax payers had to pick up a 33-million-dollar law suit to cover it with residents raised taxes, whereas is our undersheriff Holloway was dismissed from Cache, Oklahoma after three write ups. We need good law enforcement in Woodward County. We have a jail administrator who is also a deputy & Dare Officer We have 20 employees in the sheriff's offices. One of the employees put a video on snap chat of the employees playing with a stun gun as a joke. We want the County commissioners to ask the DA to ask the Attorney General for a Grand Jury." Gaston informed the group she also sent a letter to the Attorney General. Thorn reported the new pickup was picked up from the yard with Mitchell boxing up all the lights & siren,

Bayliff asked the commissioners if they asked to meet with Mitchell? C. White reported to the group that he had texted Mitchell three times wanting to meet in the clerk's office. Mitchell's response was "I have already responded to the public thru the newspaper." Bayliff reported "this is the lowest moral I have seen at the sheriff's office." Briley Goodwin stated "the sheriff's office only has one deputy working the night shift. I work out of town a lot & I want my wife & kids protected. I had a deputy pass me in a work zone going 80 miles per hour." Billy Riggs reported he is very disappointed in Mitchell. "We hoped to see him at the meeting so we can ask him some questions & concerns we have on this situation." Riggs asked "does the undersheriff have full power to control the office when the sheriff is gone?" Riggs also asked about the new sheriff unit. "Hopefully he has taken it somewhere to have the siren & lights put on the vehicle." Sheri Rice reported that in August 2024 County Commissioners approved \$150,000 for radio systems that are not installed. They are running on an analog system which is not good. There is a drone that was purchased for \$20,000 that is still in the box & not being used. Our sheriff's office has a lack of leadership & we are opening ourselves up for a law suit with all the jokes on snap chat being posted by employees of the sheriff's office. I agree with Goodwin; I am very disappointed in the sheriff. Tommy Roedell states "our sheriff is working remotely & can't make solid decisions for our county which will leave us open for negligence & law suits." Mike Smith adds "people work away from home to support their families. Mitchell is not doing his job by being gone. Maggie Smith commented, "Mitchell is paid to do a job & he has done a good job until his wife died, but being gone out of the country, he cannot be here to protect the citizens of Woodward County. I own a gun & I will use it. I do not feel like we have good protection now." Marty Phillips adds "when the 'sandwich bandit' was loose, I was right in the middle of the hunt. Mitchell would not let outside law

enforcement that came in to help do their job. The sheriff can't do his job if he is not present. It is not ok to use my tax dollars for his salary." Shane Waggoner states "Chris Boring should call Drumond (Getner, OAG) and make this right." Patrick Coffee continued the discussion adding, "I have lived here my whole life. There was much more patrolling last year than now. A sheriff has to live & work in this county to protect the citizens." Bayliff stated "There was a cow out and the sheriff's department refused to answer the call, resulting in a vehicle hitting the cow. We would like our questions answered next week." Goodwin asked if there was an exit audit requested by the sheriff? C. White said the auditors called him & said the sheriff requested an exit audit on December 30, 2024 but later cancelled it because he was staying in office. Micheal Fox stated "you can't run a sheriff's office while being gone for an extended period of time." Harry Carrier adds "Woodward Citizens don't have a clue that this is going on with our sheriff. I am very disappointed in the sheriff." Donna Gaston stated "You Woodward County Commissioners are our representatives & we want something done about our sheriff." Victoria Dodson says "I moved here in 2019 from Ellis County to get away from a bad sheriff & now Woodward County has a bad sheriff. I live on 17th street & there was a guy running down the street yelling he was going to kill everyone it took a sheriff's deputy 45 minutes to get there." Bayliff stated he wanted to go thru the right channels to get something done about our sheriff. A formal Request for legal opinion regarding sheriff's absence was posed to District Attorney Christopher Boring. 1. Can the sheriff effectively fulfill his statutory duties while being outside of the country for extended periods? 2. Does his extended absence constitute willful neglect of duty under Oklahoma law? 3. Does his absence create a potential liability risk for the county, including but not limited to, liability related to the operation of the jail & law enforcement coverage? 4. What legal options if any does the Board of County Commissioners have to

address this situation if it is determined that his absence negatively impacts county operations? 5. How is the term "resident:" legally defined under Oklahoma law in the context of an elected official's qualifications? How long may an elected official reside in another county, state, or country while still being considered a qualified resident of the jurisdiction they were elected to serve? Request for Legal Opinion on potential investigative Matters

1. The possible wrongful termination of Deputy Chayton Dilley, who was reportedly dismissed for running a tag at the sheriff's house, while other deputies allegedly engaged in more serious violations without similar consequences.
2. Allegations of unsecured evidence at the gun range
3. Reports of missing firearms from the department's inventory as referenced in an overheard conversation between the sheriff & reserve deputy.

Motion was made by C. White to approve & submit letters to Chris Boring DA seconded by Thorn Voting: all ayes. Boring reported that he had a jury trial in Dewey County but he was sure that he could answer most of the questions from the public without reaching out to the Attorney General's Office. Motion was made by T. White to approve the Court Clerk's Records Management & Preservation Report \$88,360.86 seconded by C. White Voting: all ayes. Motion was made by Thorn to approve Resolution R-25-13 determining Maximum Monthly Highway Expenditures February 2025 \$1,916,306.50 seconded by C. White Voting: all ayes. Motion was made by C. White to approve Cash Fund Estimate of Needs & Request for Appropriations for February 2025 seconded by T. White Voting: all ayes. The following Monthly Reports were presented: Treasurer (2), Implement Stamps (1), County Health (1), County Clerk (2), Election Board (1), County Sheriff (1), Assessor (1), Vehicle Stamps (1) & District Attorney (16) Motion was made by C. White to approve Monthly Reports as presented seconded by T. White Voting: all ayes. Motion was made by T. White to approve Purchase Order Batches #81 & #82 seconded by Thorn Voting: all

eyes. Motion was made by T. White to approve Monthly Report of the County Treasurer to the State Auditors February 2025, \$1,477,561.92 seconded by C. White Voting: all ayes. Motion was made by C. White to approve Agreement for Engineering Services between Woodward County & Kirkham, Michael & Associates Inc Ref: Persimmon Creek Wind Farm 2 seconded by T. White Voting: all ayes. Motion was made by C. White to approve Case Balance Report February 2025 \$139,762.46 seconded by Thorn Voting: all ayes. Motion was made by C. White to approve Agreement #772036 Lease Purchase option for 2025 Cat Motor Grader for District #2 \$339,900 thru Oklahoma Department Transportation Revolving Fund seconded by T. White Voting: all ayes. As there was no other business before the board at this time a motion was made by C. White to adjourn seconded by Thorn Voting: all ayes.

Clint White-Chairman