

# Information Network of Kansas Board Meeting Minutes

## Special INK Board Meeting – via Teleconference Monday, April 6, 2020

### Opening

A special meeting of the INK Board was called to order via teleconference at 11:04 a.m. on Monday, April 6, 2020 by Chairman Aaron Kite with the following members present:

Mark Burghart, Secretary of Revenue  
Patty Clark, representing the Secretary of Commerce  
Jennifer Cook, representing the Secretary of State  
Doug Gaumer, representing the Kansas Bankers Association  
Lucas Goff, representing the Kansas Association of Counties  
Gregg Wamsley, representing the Kansas Library Association  
Glen Yancey, representing the Executive Branch Chief Executive Technology Officer

### Others Present

Suzie Schmitz, PayIt; John Yearly, Chief Counsel, Department of Administration (and Board Counsel, INK);  
Duncan Friend, Information Network of Kansas; Nolan Jones, Kansas Information Consortium, LLC.

### Regular Agenda

#### 1) Projects to be initiated under Governor’s grant request for COVID-19 Pandemic Response Public Communications and Supporting Activities (Review / Approval)

After calling the meeting to order, Kite explained that the Board had been contacted by the Governor’s office with four proposals for projects. His understanding was that it was not an increase in amount from what had been approved by the Board for the overall grant. The \$500,000 pool remains the same, they are just requesting flexibility to apply it to additional projects. He then asked Friend to summarize the proposals before the Board, with any additions needed from Yancey.

Friend referred to a table that had been provided to the Board that summarized the status of one existing project that had been approved, along with the new items, noting that it, along with the proposals had been sent to him by Kate Davis, the legislative liaison on the Governor’s office, with several other representatives from that office on the cc, including Ryan Wright, the Deputy Chief of Staff who had submitted the original grant proposal and Jillian Fisher of the Office of Rural Prosperity who had been handling some of the website portion of these requests. *[This table is replicated below]:*

Agency	Project	INK Status	Project Status	Estimated Cost
KDHE	Phones	Approved	Implemented	\$ 3,000.00
GO	Phones			\$ 1,620.00
KDHE	Website			\$ 22,000.00
Statewide	Website			\$ 20,000.00
KDOL	Phones			\$ 100,000.00
<i>Total</i>				\$ 146,620.00
<i>Remaining</i>				\$ 353,380.00

He briefly recapped that the Board had previously approved the Governor’s office request for up to \$500,000 for COVID-19 Communications-related projects and two of the projects – the first, services related to supporting the KDHE COVID-19 Response line via use of a software product Amazon Connect.

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As is shown in the table, they anticipate it now to total around \$3,000 cost, although that could change. The second was for the potential use of a chatbot to be used in helping to answer questions about COVID-19.

The way things were left, if the Governor's office would like to proceed on additional projects through the grant, the Board could convene on relatively short notice to review them. So, what is happening is that they are coming forward now – obviously urgently, as the Board is scheduled to meet in several days on Thursday – with four projects. Friend noted that they were explained in the documents that were forwarded to the Board members in advance of the meeting and then offered a brief summary.

One is to help with phone call overflow for the Governor's constituent services office, again, using the Amazon Connect solution. It is public information – members of the public are trying to get information about these issues from the government. For the second request, Friend recalled that the Board had approved both a contract with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and an amendment to the Master Contract between INK and KIC both related to implementing a COVID-19 website for KDHE. At that time, KDHE had a COVID-19 website, and those were for INK to put up a website, essentially in front of that to help staff get things updated quickly. Now, for this second request, they have decided to go with another party to “aggregate” that content to make it one thing for them to be able to manage. He continued, saying that they explained that in the quote for that, which was also sent out to the Board.

The third item is a COVID-19 Response website for the state which talks about what agencies are doing to organize this information across agencies. He noted that the federal government did this kind of thing as well. Part of is COVID-19, then here is what the government is doing in different domains, like “are state parks open?” That is the difference between the two website projects – one is to consolidate and make the COVID-19 focused information more robust, the other is a separate site they refer to as a “response and readiness” site that talks about what the state is doing and impact to operations.

The final project is Kansas Department of Labor. Friend referenced the huge volume of new calls they were receiving related to unemployment. He had included in his transmittal to the Board some information provided by Ms. Davis about what the startup costs noted in the proposal entailed. It is much larger than the costs associated with the COVID-19 response line, but, of course, the call volume is enormous. The explanation provided indicates they are planning on distributing staffing out to 40+ people who are going to take calls from the public to provide information. So, they are including estimated costs of \$50,000 a month for two months at which time they are going to reassess the situation. The website can handle what it can, the calls can handle what they can, it is still all public information, and, in the proposals, they tied that into INK's mission. Friend indicated he was continuing to receive emails from the Governor's office containing more details, but what he had presented to the Board was what he had received so far. Friend then asked if Yancey had additional information. Yancey responded that he knew what Friend did, but that the explanation covered it.

Kite then asked what Friend's recommendation was, saying that he had not yet had time to review the supplementary material that had been distributed to the Board that morning. However, Kite had reviewed the proposals that had been sent out the previous day and they did appear to be within the scope of INK's statutory purpose. Friend responded that he agreed with what Kite had said. The concern that always comes during any situation like this where there are essentially emergency procurements being conducted is the contracting, but he did have a conversation with them to make sure they understood that they were procuring / contracting for these services, not the Board, who would just be funding them. And, yes, they looked to Friend to align with INK's statutes, especially with the precedent that the Board has already set with the COVID-19 response line. So, Friend believes they are all good to go.

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He continued that the one caveat he had was that this will mean that KDHE will be transitioning off the solution that INK originally provided for them as a no-charge solution for them. He didn't know how the email part of that website would be handled – he noted that Jones was on the phone – but he was certain it could be worked out. Friend concluded by saying that he would recommend approval.

Kite continued, saying that they would then need a modification to the motion that was approved on the date of their last meeting to specifically include the four proposals before the Board today (Note: The meeting being referenced was held by teleconference on March 23, 2020). This would be under the understanding that was indicated at the last meeting that Friend would receive the proposals and review them, so they have to pass Friend's approval. And, the financial limits, at least for the present time, will stay in place.

**Action Taken:** Kite moved that the motion from the prior meeting be modified to include the four proposals that were received and then everything else from the that motion would remain the same. Seconded by Clark. Kite asked if there was further discussion from the Board about the motion.

### Discussion

Cook directed a question to Friend – she thought she might have found the answer in Ms. Davis's email. Cook asked if the Department of Labor was estimated to be \$50,000 a month. Friend said that Cook was correct. To clarify for the Board, the proposal is for \$100,000, made up of an estimate of \$50,000 a month. And, in the summary he had sent out to the Board that morning, Ms. Davis had confirmed that this was driven mainly by call volume-related costs, the high call-volume – this explains why it is so different than the \$3,000 that the Board is seeing for KDHE. She asked if that was a per-call cost, not a flat dollar amount. Yancey interjected that, yes, it was so much per minute. When a call gets initiated, there is a charge for the first full minute and then per minute every 10 seconds. He continued that he spoke with Ms. Davis and that they expect, like, two months of the contact center, with the expectation that if the service is continued after that, that they would be in the position to reevaluate, and also be in a position to use other funding sources related to the federal Department of Labor and their normal budgeting for that. Cook thanked Yancey, indicating that was very helpful. Friend then noted that, per the original motion about him approving things, he understood it worked that way, and he understood it was in the proposal, but he had not seen any documentation so far related to that. He continued that he would work after the fact to take a look at it, but he knew that Yancey had seen it and it explained generally how that cost model was working.

Friend then said he had one more thing. He had been having an email exchange with the Governor's office about five minutes before the meeting about how payment would work. Friend wanted to clarify with the Board what he had told him and make sure the members understand and agree with. What he told them was that the grant was to the Governor's office, but there was the expectation that while they might direct some to themselves, but primarily to somewhere like KDOL or KDHE. The main thing was that the responsible party was the Governor's office for making sure contracting is handled, for getting approval for what the projects are, and for approving payment. And, the grant was written so that they could delegate that, as long as it was explicit. He continued, saying that they were now working on those mechanisms, so they wanted to know "Should the Governor's office reimburse the agencies? Should the agencies pay first?" And he told them that while the preference now was that the agency pay first and INK reimburse them simply to make sure the expenditures were recorded appropriately, but if they wanted an exception, the Board does have a history of paying directly. But, in both cases, that has to be approved by the Governor's office or their delegate and that it is an appropriate expenditure under the terms of the grant and a legitimate expenditure for the Board to pay.

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So, Friend's main take was that the Board's main concern was that the people who the grant was awarded to, which was the Governor's office, have a view into payments being made, but the mechanisms could be worked out with him (Friend). So, he could reimburse an agency, or pay directly, as long as they were approving it, and it is clear that the people responsible for the grant understand it, then it is OK. If that is an issue for the Board and they want to amend the motion somehow, that is why he is bringing it up.

Kite said he didn't think that was a problem, but that Friend would need to track the expenditures for each project to make sure that if some point they reach the limit for that, the Board will need to determine whether to extend more authority. But, as for payment, they would just leave that to Friend's discretion. Kite then asked if there were any additional discussion. He then called for a vote and had Friend do a roll call for the vote.

The motion was unanimously approved. Kite asked that Friend compose a modified resolution and distribute it to the Board.

### **2) Other Business (as required)**

There was no other business. Friend reminded the members that there was a regular meeting of the Board scheduled for Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.