

By JESSICA CRAWFORD • Daily Leader

The city and county commissions met Monday evening in order to decide on the formation of the new Joint Economic Development Council.

Although feathers might have recently been ruffled regarding the changing of a proposed draft – all were in agreement that the Chamber of Commerce would be asked to appoint one member to the board.

“One of the main changes would be, in the original we talked about it consisting of six members,” Mayor Joe Denoyer said. “The proposed changes have it consisting of seven members with the Chamber of Commerce appointing one member to the executive board of the Joint Economic Development Council.”

County vice chair C.J. Wettstein felt an appointment from the Chamber of Commerce would be beneficial to the new JEDC.

“I think the change would be a good idea – letting the chamber appoint one,” he said. “Because first off, that would make us an odd number. And go ahead and just let the chamber because they get a lot of calls in – I think it would be valuable assistance to the board and would help out a lot.”

City commissioner Bob Carlile agreed with Wettstein’s comments.

“They are very active in economic development,” Carlile said. “I would be in favor of that, too.”

County chairman Joyce Hibler inquired as to why the chamber was not originally invited to appoint a member to the JEDC.

“I wasn’t here the night you did this, I was sick,” she said. “Why did you decide on the six and not include the chamber, was there a reason for that?”

“We actually kind of discussed it and it is kind of where we fanned out at,” Wettstein replied.

City commissioner Dave Harrison had the understanding that more discussion, beyond the past joint meeting, would go into the formation of the JEDC.

“I was under the impression that we were going to work on this thing with each of our staffs and come back with a proposal,” he said. “I didn’t realize what we were doing that night was the end-all and be- all.”

With all agreeing on the formation of the board, county commissioner Jim Rice inquired as to who would foot the bill when travel expenses were incurred.

“There is one thing in here that I was thinking about on my way in, and I don’t see anything in here about expenses, travel expenses and that kind of thing,” Rice said. “I can foresee the need of this committee to have to travel on research projects.”

Ultimately, it was decided that the City of Liberal would pay travel expenses because the Economic Development Department is under the city’s control. However, prior approval would be necessary before anyone were to go out of town for economic development purposes.

The city commission voted unanimously to approve the formation of the JEDC at the joint meeting. The county commission also voted unanimously to approved the resolution at its regular meeting later in the evening.

The two commissions will soon begin receiving applications for positions on the advisory board

and ultimately make their appointments. Each commission will be appointing three members and the Chamber of Commerce will be appointing one member. Seven members will form the new JEDC, as opposed to the 15 members that currently form the board.

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Daily Leader

After the Liberal City Commission voted to pass its resolution, Seward County commissioners voted unanimously Monday to pass a resolution which repeals an earlier resolution for the new establishment of a Joint Economic Development Council.

Some discussion had taken place last month in a joint meeting between the commissions, and the two boards agreed that the JEDC would be formed by three appointments from each commission. This reduced the current total number of members from 15 to six.

Due to the fact the JEDC, by law, is only an advisory board, council members cannot vote on matters during meetings. Because of this, some commissioners from both city and county felt it necessary to add a seventh member for tie-breaking purposes. Since voting is not an issue for the JEDC, the commissions at the September joint meeting agreed the board would only consist of six members.

Monday's resolution established an executive board for the JEDC, which would consist of seven members, three of whom would represent Seward County and three for the City of Liberal. The seventh member would be selected by the Liberal Chamber of Commerce.

The resolution likewise set first terms of one, two and three years to be divided equally, and members would be appointed for three years following those terms.

Monday's resolution repeals a law passed in 1987, which established a JEDC. The new resolution took effect once both city and county commissioners voted to approve it.