

Sabetha hospital asks for portion of sales tax

(KNZA)--Sabetha hospital officials met with the Brown County Commission again Monday to ask for a share of the revenues from a proposed 10-year half-cent countywide retailers sales tax earmarked for the Hiawatha Community Hospital.

Sabetha Community Hospital CEO Lori Key presented the Commission with a resolution approved by the hospital's Board of Directors asking that the sales tax resolution approved by the Commission March 4 be amended.

Key said the hospital is proposing that the Hiawatha Hospital receive 100 percent of the proceeds for the first two years. After that, Key said they are asking that the portion of sales tax generated by retailers located within the Sabetha city limits go to Sabetha's hospital, with the remainder still going to Hiawatha's hospital.

A special election on the sales tax issue is set for May 21. "We at Sabetha Hospital understand the plight that is before everyone," Key told the Commission. "We did not want to delay any vote, but we did want the realization that Sabetha Hospital does serve some of the Brown County population, providing health care services. Ten-years is a long time for the retail sales tax to be generated."

Key said the Sabetha Hospital currently provides health care services to a significant number of Brown County residents, comprising 27 percent of the patients served by the hospital. In addition, she said the hospital took over home health services from the Hiawatha Hospital last April for the western part of Brown County. Since that time, Key said the hospital has served twenty-two patients in the Brown County area.

Sabetha Hospital Attorney Martin Mishler presented a petition to Commissioners signed by Sabetha businesses in support of the request.

Hiawatha Hospital Interim CEO John Broberg, who was present at the meeting, said he had no problem working with the Sabetha hospital on a portion of the funds. He said what's really important is not delaying the vote due to the hospital's urgent situation.

Commission Chairman Keith Olsen asked that the joint city-county hospital advisory committee meet to consider if the sales tax resolution should be amended, and make a recommendation to the Commission for consideration when they meet again Friday.

The committee is to meet Thursday afternoon at 12 noon in the upstairs room at Hiawatha City Hall.

Many Signals Communications