

By JESSICA CRAWFORD • Daily Leader The Southwest Coalition, which includes city commissioners from Dodge City, Garden City and Liberal, met Thursday evening at the Rock Island Depot. Although, its focus is not expected to change, its meeting format, however, will be changing.

Dodge City Commissioner Rick Sowers suggested the coalition meet only once or twice a year. However, he said, an executive group comprised of one commissioner from Garden City, one commissioner from Dodge City and one commissioner from Liberal meet at least four times a year as the entire coalition has done in the past.

“I have heard discussions on meeting maybe less in this this type of meeting and more with an executive committee,” Sowers said. “Actions from this meeting are often not as driven and forceful as they could be. I think we should maybe meet only a couple of times a year and really put the emphasis on the executive committee.

“We need someone accountable to really have action,” he added. “We can put these guys to work in smaller groups. I guess my thoughts would be to have less of these meetings. In a smaller group, maybe there will be quicker responses.”

Commissioners all agreed revamping the schedule and meeting format would be a more effective way to get more attention drawn to Southwest Kansas.

Commissioners discussed KDOT proposed road projects that will total in \$100 million to \$150 million in Southwest Kansas. The needs in Southwest Kansas, however, total \$450 million to \$650 million.

Ultimately, commissioners from the three cities represented opted to allow the executive committee, that has yet to be formed, prioritize in regards to road projects that will benefit Southwest Kansas.

Commissioners also agreed to lobby in support of southcentral Kansas regarding the need for the four laning of U.S. Highway 54 from Kingman to Mullinville.