



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
August 14, 2025**

2101 Claflin Road
Manhattan, KS 66502
www.rileycountyks.gov

Cindy Kabriel
785-565-6200

Family & Child Resource Center, Room #124

8:30 AM

[District 1 – John Ford, Member](#)

[District 2 – Greg McKinley, Chair](#)

[District 3 – Kathryn Focke, Vice-Chair](#)

8:30 AM

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
John Ford	County Commissioner	Present	8:30 AM
Kathryn Focke	County Commissioner	Present	8:30 AM
Greg McKinley	County Commissioner	Present	8:30 AM
Rich Vargo	County Clerk	Present	8:30 AM
Jacob Hansen	County Counselor	Present	8:30 AM
Vivienne Leyva	PIO	Present	8:30 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
David Adams	EMS/Ambulance Director	Present	8:33 AM
Joshua Gering	Assistant EMS/Ambulance Director	Present	8:33 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	8:36 AM
Emma Loura	Manhattan Mercury	Present	8:40 AM
Russel Stukey	Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief	Present	8:49 AM
Lynn Blecha		Present	9:12 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	9:12 AM
Daryn Soldan	Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce	Present	9:29 AM
Christian Bishop	Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce	Present	9:32 AM
Diane Creek	Health Department Director	Present	9:36 AM

Steven Zimmer		Present	9:29 AM
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Pledge of Allegiance**Public Comment**

McMillan announced the Transfer Station will be closed Saturday for maintenance.

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Monday afternoon I listened in on a Teams call Monday afternoon with Derik Flerlage, Jarvis Doleman, and Jennifer Manuel from KDHE along with Diane Creek and Heather Ritchey from the Riley County Health Department to discuss the Child Care Licensing for the region. Looks like there will be changes coming here in 2026 but I will let the team here at the Health Department go through all of that when it is convenient.

Tuesday evening, I met with John Hladik & Katie Rose Hargreaves with Tallgrass Energy out of Omaha, Nebraska at Tallgrass Taphouse to discuss a project that they are working on potentially here in the southeastern part of Riley County and extending through to western Texas. Everything is still in the preliminary stages, but they wanted to reach out to discuss and lay out the vision which they have also provided through digital means in case questions or concerns may come up along the way.

Wednesday afternoon I spoke with Dawson Wagner from Wildcat 91.9. He's working on an article on decriminalization of CBD products and wanted to get my perspective on events that have taken place in recent times here locally, and my thoughts on federal, state and local policy that drives the discussion, enforcement of the laws themselves, and interpretations of the policies that are currently in place. Also on Wednesday and I thought this was worth bringing up all things considered the Leavenworth County Commission vetoed the second revision of the Riverbend RHID in the City of Lansing with a vote of 4-1 this is after it barely passed both through the City of Lansing and the Lansing school board.

Other than that it has been a busy week at work which is great and I'm managing to stay caught up on everything else which is usually difficult this time of year and I'm only nine days away from letting a college football team dictate my mood for the next five months.

Focke's Comments:

Monday afternoon I had appointments with my chiropractor and physical therapist. They both helped me out and I've had a couple of good days.

Tuesday I attended the Personnel Committee meeting at my church. We have been going over the employee handbook and revising the section on "Abuse Protection" for youth and vulnerable adults. We are finally ready to send it to the Church Council for their approval.

That evening, I attended a meeting of the Democratic Party at Pottorf Hall. The guest speaker

was with the ACLU and he spoke about legal issues going on in DC and the country. It was a well-attended meeting, with lots of dialog.

Wednesday, I spent the afternoon working on topics for Friday's "Within Reason" radio show. I also reviewed the agenda and documents for today's meeting.

McKinley's Comments:

Tuesday I attended the Flint Hills Veterans Coalition meeting. They discussed having a raffle, but time is closing to the parade so it might not happen. Discussion on the parade. Now RCPD will not be doing the barricades but there was a meeting with RCPD and ROTC to plan this out. The Fort Riley Mounted Color Guard may be available for the parade again. The elimination of the mounted color guard and the museum closing have been given a six month extension. There was also discussion about a membership drive. Attendance at the meetings has gone down the last two years.

Tuesday evening was the Riley City Council meeting. Russel Stukey and the assistant chiefs attended. Riley is considering closing their fire department and discussed how the change would work with the county. The county has a fire station right next to the city's. This meeting was just to gather information and the final decision will be made at a later meeting. There was also some discussion on the proposed feedlot north of town.

Wednesday the building committee met with the contractor for the EM/Fire building. BHS presented their estimate base on the final plans. Several changes were discussed and BHS will work on revising the numbers for the meeting next month.

I received a call from Aaron Estabrook about the possible reclassification of marijuana at the federal level. This would allow changes to be made at a local level. He wanted to know what I thought. I told him I would need a lot more information to make a judgement.

Also received a call from Josh Brewer at Habitat for Humanity. He is trying to set up a group to review RHID possibilities in the area. I told him I could work with the group and told him some of our concerns about the project we rejected.

EMS Assistant Director Josh Gering was on KMAN yesterday and did a great job of representing what EMS does.

Business Meeting

1. Discuss Policy Breakfast
2. Discuss Joint City/County/County Meeting
3. Riley County Employee Action Forms

The Board of County Commissioners signed Riley County Employee Action Forms for the following:

- Carol Sommers, a Customer Service Representative II, in the Treasurer's Department, for Separation from County Service, effective September 12, 2025.
- Ellie Erwin, a Seasonal Laborer, in the Public Works/Parks Department, for Separation from County Service, effective August 11, 2025.
- Maricela Garcia, a Seasonal Laborer, in the Public Works/Parks Department, for Separation from County Service, effective August 11, 2025.
- Luke Leone, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.
- Hailey Heptig, for a Title Change, as an Appraiser Support II, in the Appraiser's Department, at a Range 7, at \$25.26 per hour.
- Kallie Kolterman, for a promotion, as an Appraiser Support II, in the Appraiser's Department, at a Range 7, at \$23.36 per hour.
- Carleen Brewer, for a promotion, as an Appraiser Support II, in the Appraiser's Department, at a Range 7, at \$27.05 per hour.

Review Minutes

4. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Aug 11, 2025 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes.

RESULT:	Adopted Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner John Ford
SECONDER:	Commissioner Kathryn Focke
AYES:	Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford
NAYS:	None

Review Tentative Agenda

5. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM

Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

6. Administrative Work Session

Hansen discussed the feed lot operation going on in the northeast of the City of Riley.

Hansen said he will be asking for authorization from the Board for Riley County's Legislative Priorities for KAC.

Stukey discussed the Corps of Engineers and Kansas Wildlife and Parks putting in fire breaks and prescribed burns on larger parcels to mitigate big fires.

Hansen stated the Riley County legislative priorities are Constitutional Home Rule, short-term rental enforcement, revision of statute to limit timing of documents

provided when appealing to BOTA, motor vehicle registration fees, local government units intentionally moving people to county and imposing costs unilaterally, and requiring State of Kansas owned or leased property to maintain property for fire prevention.

Ford suggested not presenting Constitutional Home Rule due to timing and potential leadership change.

The Board agreed by consensus to withdraw Constitutional Home Rule this year.

The Board agreed by consensus to submit the following Riley County Legislative Priorities to KAC:

- Short-Term Rental Enforcement
- Revision of statute to limit timing of documents provided when appealing to BOTA
- Motor Vehicle Registration Fees
- Local government units intentionally moving people to county and imposing costs unilaterally.
- Requiring State of Kansas owned or leased property to maintain property for fire prevention

9:20 AM

Evan McMillan, Assistant County Engineer

7. Bid opening for 2025 Peterson Ranch Road Improvement

The Board of County Commissioners opened the following bids for the 2025 Peterson Ranch Road Improvement.

<u>Company</u>	<u>Alternate 1</u>	<u>Alternate 2</u>	<u>Alternate 3</u>	<u>Proposed Start Date</u>	<u>Proposed Working Days</u>
Shilling Construction Co., Inc. PO Box 1568 Manhattan, KS 66505	\$333,080			10/15/25	20
Bayer Construction 120 Deep Creek Road Manhattan, KS 66502	\$388,260	\$586,965	\$606,865	09/15/25 – Asphalt	20
				04/28/26 – Concrete	45

Move to refer the bids to staff for evaluation and recommendation.

RESULT:	Adopted Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner Kathryn Focke
SECONDER:	Commissioner John Ford
AYES:	Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford
NAYS:	None

9:30 AM

Shilo Heger, Treasurer

8. July 2025 Revenue Reports

Heger presented the July Revenue Reports.

9:45 AM Jason Smith, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce

9. Economic Development Update

Soldan presented an Economic Development update.

Bishop discussed Fort Riley activities.

10:00 AM Diane Creek, Health Department Director

10. Staff Update-Childcare Licensing/WIC

Move to recess as the Board of County Commissioners and convene as Board of Health.

RESULT:	Adopted Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner John Ford
SECONDER:	Commissioner Kathryn Focke
AYES:	Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford
NAYS:	None

Creek presented a staff update on Childcare Licensing.

The Board agreed by consensus to evaluate Childcare Licensing in November 2025.

Creek discussed a \$5,000 bill they received for the space they use at the Fort Riley Hospital for WIC services.

Creek said they intend to move from the hospital to Facility 210 to provide WIC Services. She said the move will need to be completed by the 1st of December.

11. Out of State Travel- Zero to Three conference

Creek presented the out of state travel requests.

Move to approve the Out of State Travel Requests for Sarah Haybarker and Tammy Feldkamp to attend the Zero to Three LEARN Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

RESULT:	Adopted Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner Kathryn Focke
SECONDER:	Commissioner John Ford
AYES:	Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford
NAYS:	None

Move to recess as the Board of Health and reconvene as the Board of County Commissioners.

RESULT:	Adopted Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner John Ford
SECONDER:	Commissioner Kathryn Focke
AYES:	Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford

NAYS:	None
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10:30 AM **Budget and Planning Committee - Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer**
12. Cash Flows

Phillips presented cash flow reports.

Adjournment

10:36 AM Move to adjourn.

RESULT:	Adopted Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner John Ford
SECONDER:	Commissioner Kathryn Focke
AYES:	Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford
NAYS:	None