



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

115 North 4th Street
Manhattan, KS 66502
www.rileycountyks.gov

Cindy Kabriel
785-565-6200

Commission Chambers

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
Bryant Parker	Counselor/Director of Administrative Services	Present	8:30 AM
Jacob Hansen	Deputy County Counselor	Present	8:30 AM
Emma Loura	Manhattan Mercury	Present	8:30 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:46 AM
Lynne Berry	Extension	Present	9:25 AM
Daniel Skucius	County Extension Director	Present	9:25 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	9:25 AM
Gregg Eyestone	Extension Agent	Present	9:25 AM
Jared Tremblay	MPO Planning Manager	Present	9:31 AM
Doug Russell	Deputy Fire Chief of Operations	Present	11:05 AM
Jake Konrardy	Deputy Fire Chief of Administration	Present	11:05 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

1. Public Comments

Commission Comments

2. Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I had my monthly National Steering call with NACo's Veterans and Military Services Committee. After some opening remarks and introductions by our Chair Sid Conklin, Presiding Commissioner, Randolph County, Missouri, we heard from Madison Moore, Senior Advisor, Elizabeth Dole Foundation on the Rand Military and Caregivers Study as well as other items pertaining to the legislation. Next we heard from our very own Kaylyn Speth, WIC Supervisor here in Riley County, and she gave an outstanding presentation on all the services through Irwin Army Community Hospital through our WIC Program. Next we heard from Kevin Moore, Legislative Assistant, NACo who gave us a legislative update from Capitol Hill. Lastly we heard from Chair Sid Conklin who provided some general discussion and wrap up.

Friday afternoon I met with Gina Synder, Director of Downtown Manhattan, Inc. to discuss a few items pertaining to the vitality of downtown, including the mall, office space, and new small businesses to name a few. It has a great dialog and it had been a long time since we had the chance to catch up.

Sunday afternoon I attended the K-State-UCF baseball game at Tointon Family Stadium. The Wildcats tried to give it away in the end but pulled it out 8-6 to win the series 2 out of 3 and stay in the top half of the conference standings.

Focke's Comments:

Friday morning, I had some lab work done at my doctor's office in preparation for the annual physical this week. That afternoon I met two members of the 383 school board for a discussion on RHID's in the community and how they may help the affordable housing problem in the area. I advised them on the policy that we had made and comments on the presentations that we have had. Later that afternoon, I attended the Pre-Law Board meeting where we went over the draft agenda for April 21st. John Matta attended the meeting via Zoom. After the meeting, I went on a tour of the jail, which I had not done for several years. They have really made some important improvements since then.

This weekend, there were a lot of activities in the community and I went to the KSU Gardens for a short time and called it a day, except for reviewing today's agenda and meeting documents.

Sunday, I went to church, then to lunch with my "lunch bunch" friends and then spent some time catching up around the house and yard.

McKinley's Comments:

A quiet weekend for county business. I tried to set up a couple of meetings Friday but they were away. I kept busy around the house.

Business Meeting

3. Sign Riley County Employee Action Form(s)

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

- James House, a Public Works Operator II, in the Public Works Department, for Separation from County Service, effective April 25, 2025.
- Perry Stevenson, a new hire, as a Building Maintenance Technician II, in the Public Works Department, at a Range 6, at \$28.49 per hour.

Review Minutes

4. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Apr 10, 2025 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes.

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

Review Tentative Agenda

5. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

6. Discuss Press Conference

9:00 AM Rich Vargo, County Clerk

7. Year to date budget and expenditure reports

Vargo presented year to date budget and expenditure reports.

9:15 AM Laurie Harrison, Emergency Management Coordinator

8. Out of State travel request

Harrison presented the out of state travel request.

Move to approve the Out of State Travel Request and meal reimbursement for Robert Cox to attend the Emergency Management Institute's Master Exercise Practitioner Program in Maryland May 5-8, 2025.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

9:20 AM Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director and Vivienne Leyva, PIO

9. NACo and Flint Hills Leadership Programs Proposal for 2025

Ward and Leyva presented the Leadership Course Proposal.

Move to open applications and selection of two employees for each NACo High Performance Leadership Academy and Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program in collaboration with department heads.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

9:30 AM Press Conference

10. Saturday's Earth Day event at the Zoo - Gregg Eyestone (2-3 minutes)

Eyestone said the Riley County, K-State Research and Extension

Master Gardeners will be participating in the Party for the Planet at the Sunset Zoo on April 19th from 12:00 (noon) p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Master Gardeners will have a booth at the Downtown Farmers Market on April 26th from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and at the Flint Hills Festival at the Blue Earth Plaza on May 3rd from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

11. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition for Years of Service to Lynne Berry - Greg McKinley (3-5 minutes)

McKinley presented a Certificate of Recognition for 49 Years of Service to Lynne Berry in the Riley County Extension Office and Riley County, Kansas.

Berry said she is very honored to have started in the County Clerk's Office when she was 18 years old.

9:40 AM Jared Tremblay, MPO Planning Manager

12. Flint Hills Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan

Tremblay presented the Flint Hills Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan.

10:10 AM John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer

13. Public Works Project Update

Ellermann presented the Public Works projects update.

10:25 AM Bryant Parker, Counselor/Director of Administrative Services

14. Administrative Work Session

Parker discussed the no action taken by the Kansas Legislature regarding taxing authority.

15. Pending County Projects County Counselor

Hansen said the City of Manhattan will be hearing the first RHID proposal.

10:45 AM **Bryant Parker, Counselor/Director of Administrative Services**

10:45 AM 16. Executive session to discuss confidential legal advice regarding potential litigation issues

Move the County Commission, including Chairman McKinley, Vice Chairwoman Focke, and Commissioner Ford, recess into executive session on potential litigation for the purpose of consultation with Bryant Parker, County Counselor, and Jacob Hansen, Deputy County Counselor, attorneys for the Riley County Commission, and Anna Burson, County Appraiser, which would be deemed privileged in the attorney-client relationship, an exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 10:55 a.m.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

10:55 AM Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

Move the record reflect action shall be taken consistent with the consensus reached in executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

10:55 AM **Bryant Parker, Counselor/Director of Administrative Services**

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RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

11:05 AM

Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

Move the record reflect action shall be taken consistent with the consensus reached in executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

11:05 AM

Russel Stukey, Emergency Management Director

18. Report on Harmony RD fire and have general discussion on State statutes and county resolutions that regulate burning in Riley County

Russell discussed the Harmony Road Fire.

Stukey referenced State statutes and the Riley County resolution regarding controlled burns.

Russell and Stukey discussed processes they use to determine if controlled burns are allowed.

Stukey thanked Leyva for her assistance during fire calls.

11:20 AM Board of County Commissioners

- 11:31 AM 19. Executive session to discuss a performance matter involving non-elected personnel

Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairman McKinley, Vice Chairwoman Focke, and Commissioner Ford, with Bryant Parker, County Counselor, attorney for the Riley County Commission, recess into executive session on a performance matter of non-elected personnel, an exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of discussing the work conduct of an employee, and to protect the privacy of the employee, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 12:00 p.m.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

- 12:00 PM Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

Move the record reflect no binding action was taken during the executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

- 12:01 PM Executive Session

Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairman McKinley, Vice Chairwoman Focke, and Commissioner Ford, with Bryant Parker, County Counselor, attorney for the Riley County Commission, recess into executive session on a performance matter of non-elected personnel, an exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, for the

purpose of discussing the work conduct of an employee, and to protect the privacy of the employee, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 12:20 p.m.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

12:20 PM

Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

Move the record reflect action shall be taken consistent with the consensus reached in executive session.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley

12:21 PM

Adjournment

Move to adjourn.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ford, County Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner
AYES:	Ford, Focke, McKinley