



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

115 North 4th Street  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
[www.rileycountyks.gov](http://www.rileycountyks.gov)

Cindy Kabriel  
785-565-6200

**FCRC 2101 Claflin Rd**

**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**

| <b>Attendee Name</b> | <b>Title</b>                          | <b>Status</b> | <b>Arrived</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 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        |
| Vivienne Leyva       | PIO                                   | Present       | 8:30 AM        |
| Gary Olds            |                                       | Present       | 8:30 AM        |
| Rob Voelker          |                                       | Present       | 8:30 AM        |
| Rose Gruenbacher     | Manhattan Mercury                     | Present       | 8:32 AM        |
| Katharine Hensler    | Museum Director                       | Present       | 8:50 AM        |
| John Ellermann       | Public Works Director/County Engineer | Present       | 8:51 AM        |
| Elizabeth Ward       | Human Resources Director              | Present       | 9:01 AM        |
| Ben Cole             | Historical Society Administrator      | Present       | 9:15 AM        |
| Amanda Webb          | Planning/Special Projects Director    | Present       | 9:26 AM        |
| Ben Hamill           | Planning & Development                | Present       | 9:26 AM        |
| Jacob Clarke         | Clinic Supervisor                     | Present       | 9:36 AM        |
| Anna Burson          | County Appraiser                      | Present       | 9:37 AM        |
| Cory Meyer           | IT/GIS Director                       | Present       | 9:46 AM        |
| Brittany Phillips    | Budget and Finance Officer            | Present       | 9:30 AM        |
| Diane Creek          | Health Department Director            | Present       | 10:00 AM       |
| Ben Ledo             | MakeMyMove                            | Remote        | 10:00 AM       |
| Peter Lazarz         | MakeMyMove                            | Remote        | 10:00 AM       |
| Amy Manges           | Register of Deeds                     | Present       | 10:10 AM       |
| Megan Lewis          | Community Corrections Director        | Present       | 10:10 AM       |
| Jacob Hansen         | Interim County Counselor              | Present       | 9:47 AM        |

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Comment**

1. Public Comments

Olds discussed the 2026 budget process. He discussed the COLA for RCPD, Riley County, and City of Manhattan. Olds said if you all use the same data then how can you all arrive at a different COLA. He just asked that the Board be as transparent as possible with the public. Olds suggested finding a better way to show the increase due to RCPD and that it is not all Riley County expenses.

Olds stated the high exemption rate makes it difficult for the Board.

### **Commission Comments**

#### **2. Commission Comments**

Ford's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I attended the July meeting of the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) at the conference room downtown. The major topic of discussion was the upcoming 2025 CIT class and schedule that will take place here in Manhattan out at the Riley County Public Works Building starting July 21<sup>st</sup> and running through July 25th. We discussed each days' worth of classes and the breakdowns of all the presenters and topics they will be presenting on those days.

Went through each of the meeting agendas for NACo's Community Economic and Workforce Development and the Veterans and Military Services Committees as those meetings were taking place at the Annual Conference and Exposition in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania over the weekend.

Spent the rest of the weekend at home catching up on correspondence and preparing for the upcoming week.

Focke's Comments:

Friday I attended the Pre-Law Board Meeting held at the Riley County Law Enforcement Center. The agenda for the July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting was discussed. Several items were changed or eliminated. There will be an executive session at the meeting. Meetings temporarily scheduled in the county are on August 28<sup>th</sup> in Leonardville and September 15<sup>th</sup> in Ogden. A vote of the Board will be required for a contract for services at the "Rock the Plains" event on August 9<sup>th</sup>. Several other items were discussed but not put on the agenda for the July 21<sup>st</sup>.

Saturday I attended and provided flowers for the wedding of two good

friends held at “Union Hall” on Poyntz Avenue. It is a really good event venue.

Sunday, I attended church and in the afternoon went over today’s agenda and documents.

McKinley's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I met with the owner and manager of Tuttle Creek Developers. They are doing a lot of work in Olsburg and Randolph. In Olsburg they were one of the first RHID projects, starting in 2019. They have completed six homes that were all sold before completion and have two more they will be starting soon. In Randolph they renovated the old stone house on Highway 77 into their offices. They have done some commercial development along the highway and have plans for housing behind that area. They just wanted to meet to discuss their work and their plans for the future.

### Business Meeting

3. Sign Riley County Employee Action Form(s)

The Board of County Commissioners signed a Riley County Employee Action Form for Jesse Evan McDonald, a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, for Separation from County Service, effective July 7, 2025.

### Review Minutes

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

Move to approve the minutes.

|                  |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>        |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | John Ford, County Commissioner     |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Ford, Focke, McKinley              |

### Review Tentative Agenda

5. Tentative Agenda

**Press Conference Topics**

6. Discuss Press Conference

**9:00 AM John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer**

7. Public Works Project Update

Ellermann presented the Public Works projects update.

**9:15 AM Katharine Hensler, Museum Director**

8. Monthly Staff Update - June 2025

Hensler introduced Ben Cole the new Historical Society Administrator. She said he is not a Riley County employee or funded by Riley County.

Hensler presented the Museum monthly update.

**9:30 AM Press Conference**

9. Public Notice - Alvin Perez (2-3 minutes)

Ellermann said a structure replacement project on W. 69th Avenue is scheduled to begin Tuesday, July 22, 2025. Project is located approximately 30 feet north of Anderson Avenue. Traffic on Anderson Avenue will not be affected by this project. The intersection of W. 69th Avenue at Anderson Avenue will be closed to through traffic during construction. Closure will occur from Anderson Avenue north to the intersection of N. 48th Street during the project. The project is expected to be completed by Thursday, July 24, 2025, weather permitting.

**9:35 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director**

10. Wastewater 101 Presentation

Hamill presented a PowerPoint on wastewater systems.

**10:00 AM Jacob Hansen, Interim County Counselor**

11. Pending County Projects County Counselor

Hansen presented the Commission Projects List.

12. Contract and Grant Application for the Community Talent Recruitment Program

Hansen presented the Community Talent Recruitment Program.

The Board discussed the program.

The Board agreed by consensus for staff to do further financial analysis of the obligation and funding sources through the MakeMyMove Program.

**10:10 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer**

13. 2026 Budget Work Session

Phillips presented the revised 2026 Budget Development Worksheets.

Vargo discussed changes and impacts to the proposed 2026 budgets.

The Board reviewed the new position requests.

The Board agreed by consensus with the proposed Appraiser's Office positions reorganization.

The Board discussed the Health Department's Public Health Nurse request.

Clarke discussed changing the nurse position from full-time to part-time.

The Board agreed by consensus to add back in the \$15,061 to the Seasonal Public Health Nurse position and approve the Billing and Coding Clerk position.

Hensler discussed the impacts for the request of the As-Needed Museum Assistant position.

Ford said he would not support approving the last three new personnel request.

Move to approve the As-Needed Museum Assistant for 325 hours.

|                  |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>ADOPTED [2 TO 1]</b>            |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Greg McKinley, County Commissioner |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Focke, McKinley                    |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | Ford                               |

Lewis presented the Juvenile Intake Officers expanded as-needed additional hours.

The Board agreed by consensus to approve the Juvenile Intake Officers additional hours.

The Board agreed by consensus to not approve the County Attorney's Office Criminal Investigator position.

Ford suggested taking the CIP budget request down \$750,000.

McKinley discussed reducing the CIP budget request by \$1,500,000.

Ford said they could reduce Public Works \$250,000 to lessen the impact on CIP.

The Board agreed by consensus to reduce the Public Works budget by \$250,000 and the CIP transfer by \$1,000,000.

## 11:19 AM Adjournment

Move to adjourn.

|                  |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>         |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | John Ford, County Commissioner     |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Kathryn Focke, County Commissioner |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Ford, Focke, McKinley              |