



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
July 17, 2025**

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

Cindy Kabriel
785-565-6200

FCRC 2101 Claflin Rd

9:00 AM

[District 1 – John Ford, Member](#)

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

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

9:00 AM

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
John Ford	County Commissioner	Present	9:00 AM
Kathryn Focke	County Commissioner	Present	9:00 AM
Greg McKinley	County Commissioner	Present	9:00 AM
Rich Vargo	County Clerk	Present	9:00 AM
Jacob Hansen	Interim County Counselor	Present	9:00 AM
Vivienne Leyva	PIO	Present	9:00 AM
Anna Burson	County Appraiser	Present	9:00 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	9:00 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	9:00 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	9:00 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	9:30 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	9:33 AM
Daniel Skucius	County Extension Director	Present	10:00 AM
Brian Peete	RCPD Director	Present	10:11 AM
David Adams	EMS/Ambulance Director	Present	10:25 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	10:30 AM
Russel Stukey	Emergency Management Director	Present	10:53 AM
Jo Reed	Deeds Supervisor/Deputy Register of Deeds	Present	10:54 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	10:54 AM
Barry Wilkerson	County Attorney	Present	11:04 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

1. Public Comments

Commission Comments

2. Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Monday afternoon I was able to watch the swearing in ceremony of new NACo President J.D. Clark and see him address county leaders at the 2025 Annual Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His address even came complete with an acoustic guitar version of a song called “3,069-Hold That County Line” which I thought was pretty creative.

Tuesday afternoon I attended the monthly Board of Directors meeting of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce. Among the items of discussion were approval of the agenda, the consent agenda items including minutes of the June 17, 2025, meeting, financials through June 30, 2025, and membership accounts. Discussion items included an update and presentation from Stephanie Pierce at Innovate 24, discussion and approval of a letter of support to the Manhattan City Commission on the Wareham project, approval on a Chamber reorganization strategy including a new purpose, value, and mission statement and governance structure, and a Growth Strategy Site Evaluation by Daryn Soldan. Lastly we heard several updates from staff on what they continue to work on and the events they are planning on moving forward.

Wednesday afternoon I listened in on a Telephone Town Hall from Congressman Tracey Mann. He gave an update on everything he and his staff have been working on here recently in Washington D.C. also what he will be working on upcoming on Capitol Hill and answered a handful of questions from those on the line afterwards as well.

Wednesday evening, I was surprised by having some friends pop into town from Kansas City, they were on their way to Wichita for a family reunion over the rest of the week and weekend and stopped in to have dinner at Longhorns and chat and catch up. Always nice to catch up and have dinner with some long time friends I don't get to see and hangout with much anymore so that was great.

Thursday morning, I attended the July Policy Breakfast hosted by the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce at the DoubleTree by Hilton. Guest speakers included 2025 Chamber President Stacy Kohlmeier and Riley County Commission Chair Greg McKinley and a big thanks to the Trust Company for sponsoring this morning's breakfast.

Focke's Comments:

Tuesday I had a birthday lunch with some friends and later, a physical therapy session.

Wednesday I caught up on some watering and pruning in the morning and worked in my home office most of the afternoon. Spent time going over and reducing the paper that had accumulated. I went over today's agenda and documents and made notes for the budget discussion. I received a call from a concerned citizen on the 10% property increase discussion in Tuesday's newspaper and had a lengthy discussion.

Thursday morning, I attended the "Policy Breakfast" hosted by the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. A presentation was made by Chairman McKinley on the projects we have completed using ARPA funding and by Stacy Kohlmeier, Chair of the Chamber of Commerce.

McKinley's Comments:

No comments.

Business Meeting

3. Sign a Tax Roll Correction

Move to approve the Tax Roll Correction.

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

4. Sign Riley County Employee Action Form(s)

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

- Drew Montgomery, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.
- Anne Johnson, a Custodian I, in the Public Works Department, for Separation from County Service, effective July 25, 2025.
- Mindy Ferry, Donita Kaye Trout, and Alexis Plaza, Election Day Workers, in the Election Department, for Separation from County Service, effective July 9, 2025.

Review Minutes

5. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Jul 14, 2025 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes.

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

Review Tentative Agenda

6. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

7. Discuss Press Conference

9:30 AM

Jacob Hansen, Interim County Counselor

8. Administrative Work Session

Hansen asked the Board if they are okay to reduce the Riley County Counselor's Office administrative time on the agenda to once a week.

The Board agreed by consensus to keep the Riley County Counselor's administrative work session to each meeting.

Hansen reported a large hydrogen deposit has been located in Wabaunsee County and Riley County.

Hansen said the KAC Legislative Policy Committee is asking for input from counties for legislative priorities.

9. MakeMyMove

Move to authorize MakeMyMove to apply for the Home in the Heartland Grant on behalf of Riley County.

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

9:50 AM Shilo Heger, Treasurer

10. June 2025 Revenue Reporting - Riley County Treasurer

Heger presented the Treasurer's report.

10:00 AM Daniel Skucius, Extension Director

11. Extension staff update

Skucius presented the Extension staff report.

10:15 AM Brian Peete, RCPD Director

12. RCPD update

Peete reported they are seeing a rise in big burglaries and encouraged residents to secure their belongings.

Peete presented a Riley County Police Department update.

10:30 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

13. Comprehensive Plan Update - DRAFT Economic Development Goals discussion

Webb presented the draft Economic Development Goals.

11:00 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

14. 2026 Budget Work Session

Phillips presented the revised 2026 Budget Development Worksheets and Revenue Neutral Rate forms.

The Board discussed the Criminal Investigator position for the County Attorney's Office.

Wilkerson discussed the need for the Criminal Investigator position.

Ward discussed the estimated cost if the position was as-needed or part-time. She also discussed the potential as a contract attorney.

The Board agreed by consensus to proceed with the 2026 Riley County budget as presented.

15. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Riley County

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Riley County.

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

16. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Riley County Rural Fire District #1

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Riley County Rural Fire District #1.

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

17. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Valleywood Operations

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Valleywood Operations benefit district.

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

18. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for University Park Water & Sewer District

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for University Park Water & Sewer District.

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

19. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Terra Heights

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Terra Heights Benefit District.

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

20. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Carson Sewer

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Carson Sewer benefit district.

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

Adjournment

Move to adjourn after the Joint City/County/County Meeting at 4:00 p.m. at City Offices.

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

4:00 PM

Joint City/County/County Meeting (at City Offices)

21. Joint City/County/County Meeting Agenda

The Board attended the Joint City/County/County Meeting.

