



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
December 15, 2025**

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

Cindy Kabriel
785-565-6200

Family Child and Resource Center RM #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
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	8:33 AM
David Adams	EMS/Ambulance Director	Present	8:50 AM
Lori Muir	Administrative Services Manager	Present	9:11 AM
Megan Lewis	Community Corrections Director	Present	9:15 AM
Jessie Hubbard	Administrative Assistant II	Present	9:21 AM
Diane Creek	Health Department Director	Present	9:30 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	10:00 AM
Brandon Peoples	KMAN/Manhattan Mercury	Present	10:29 AM
Amy Manges	Register of Deeds	Present	10:33 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Hansen asked the Board to amend the agenda to add an executive session to his administrative time at 10:10 a.m. on today's agenda.

Move to add an executive session to the counselor's administrative time today.

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

Burson reminded the public the Appraiser's Office sets the values of properties based on market value, fair and equitable, and does not increase taxes.

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Monday afternoon I attended the long-awaited ribbon cutting for the new University Park Station 110 Fire Station. What a gamechanger this station will be for the firefighters at this station and for the community as a whole. So happy we were able to get this constructed and complete for our rural citizens up that way.

Tuesday I headed to Wichita for the Kansas Association of Counties 50th Annual Conference and Exposition. Great to have the afternoon to catch up and network with county officials whom I've gotten to know throughout the state.

Wednesday morning started with breakfast at the conference and the annual business meeting and passing of the KAC Policy and Legislative statements for 2026. Several breakout sessions took place afterward including housing, Midwest Nice a session on politeness, an update from Kansas Secretary of Transportation Calvin Reed, an update on revenue neutral rate, and lunch followed by breakouts by county populations. Afterward I visited the KAC Interactive Business Expo. I had the chance to talk to several vendors and look at all the new updated equipment.

Wednesday afternoon was the December Teams call of NACo's Community Economic and Workforce Development Committee. After some opening remarks and introductions from our Chair Angela Conelly, Commissioner, Hennepin County, Minnesota we heard from U.S. Representative Josh Hater (CA) who discussed the newly formed Bipartisan Build America Caucus and what that means for important legislation for housing and workforce moving forward. Jared Grigas, Legislative Assistant NACO/CEWD gave his usual update from Capitol Hill, and an open discussion as well as an update on the upcoming Legislative Conference in late February was discussed before the close of the meeting.

Also Wednesday afternoon I had a Teams call with Diane Creek and Heather Ritchey from the Riley County Health Department and members from the KDHE team to continue discussing the future of area childcare licensing. Nothing new to report on any front but its discussion to see what transitions will need to be made as the county will not be renewing the contract for service work with the other four counties.

Thursday morning started with breakfast at the KAC Conference once again, and a fabulous speech/presentation from former Kansas High School basketball coach and the inspiration for the character Ted Lasso starred by fellow Kansan Jason Sudeikis whom he coached. Kansas Affiliation Association had their meeting and business including the Kansas County Commissioners Association to close out the conference.

Thursday afternoon after getting back from Wichita I had the December Teams call with NACo's Veterans and Military Services Committee. After a call to order and welcome from Vice Chair Cat Nichols, Spokane County, Washington we heard about Community Engagement Best Practices Spotlight - Kim Donohue, Community Engagement Partnership Coordinator, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. We then heard about the Overview of The Mental Health First Aid program - Cody Clements, Client Development Partner II, The National Council For Mental Wellbeing and Jennifer Cox, Manager, National Trainer Network, The National Council For Mental Wellbeing as well as a Preview of the 2026 NACo Legislative Conference - Seamus Dowdall, NACo staff liaison followed by an open discussion and close - Vice Chair Cat Nichols, Spokane County, Washington.

Thursday afternoon I also had my monthly meeting with the doctor here at Stormont Vail. We are going to continue to hold serve till after the beginning of year to see what direction to head. So, nothing new to report here.

Saturday afternoon I watched as K-State beat Crieghton in Omaha 83-76 to move their record to 7-4 as the non-conference ends for them and a tough conference slate to start the new year. Sunday I watched the Jaguars beat the Jets at home 48-20 to stay in first place and move to 10-4 with three games left. The rest of the weekend I spent trying to get caught up on everything for the upcoming week and get some chores done at home as well.

Focke's Comments:

Monday afternoon I attended the ribbon cutting of the new Fire Station #110 in University Park. The station has been built very well and will serve the community long into the future. The ceremony was well attended by firefighters, administration, commissioners, and the public.

Tuesday afternoon I met with Mr. Trent Armbrust to go over the KSU plans to finish development of the Edge District.

Wednesday I had eye surgery in Topeka and then had a follow up appointment on Thursday, so was unable to attend the KAC Conference in Wichita. My eye has been healing, and I hope to have a good checkup next week with my regular eye doctor.

McKinley's Comments:

After our meeting last Monday I met with Elizabeth Ward about several HR things.

In the afternoon we had the opening of the fire station at University Park. There were a lot of

people in attendance. This building should serve the area well for a long time.

That evening, I attended the K-State basketball game with Mississippi State. It was very sparsely attended with the fewest students I have seen at a game. In fact, we went to mass at St Isidore's after the game and there were a lot more students there.

Tuesday thru Thursday was the KAC conference in Wichita. Two great speakers and some informative breakout sessions. Discussions with other county commissioners you find very similar problems in other counties.

Saturday I had Christmas with my brothers in Topeka.

Sunday we attended the Holiday Harmonies performance by the local Barbershop groups. It was a great show.

Business Meeting

1. 2025 Audit Engagement Letter

Move to approve the engagement letter with James Gordon & Associates, CPA, P.A. commencing 2025 audit services.

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

2. Tax Roll Correction

Move to approve the Tax Roll Correction.

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

3. Riley County Employee Action Form

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

- Jim Cook, an Appraiser III-Residential, in the Appraiser's Office, for Separation from County Service, effective December 19, 2025.
- Abby Rounbehler, an EMT, in the EMS/Ambulance Department, for Separation from County Service, effective December 8, 2025.
- Jackie Castle, a new hire, as a Clinic Intern, in the Health Department, at a Range TASND.

Move to approve the requested Riley County Employee Action Forms.

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

Review Minutes

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

Move to approve the minutes of December 8, 2025 as presented.

RESULT:	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

Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

6. Public Hearing for 2025 Budget Amendment

Phillips presented the 2025 Budget Amendment.

McKinley opened the 2025 Budget Amendment Public Hearing.

No comment.

McKinley closed the Public Hearing.

Move to approve the Amended Certificate for Calendar Year 2025 as presented.

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

9:15 AM

David Adams, EMS/Ambulance Director

7. Staff Update

Adams presented the EMS/Ambulance staff update.

9:30 AM

Press Conference

8. Public Notice - Evan McMillan (1-2 minutes)

Muir said the Transfer Station will close at 12:00 (noon) on Wednesday, December 24, 2025, and will remain closed through Thursday, December 25, 2025. We will reopen for business at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, December 26, 2025.

Muir said the Transfer Station will also be closed on Thursday, January 1, 2026, and reopen for business at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, January 2, 2026.

9:35 AM Megan Lewis, Community Corrections Director

9. FY2026 Kansas Specialty Court Grant Application

Lewis presented the Community Corrections application for the FY2026 Specialty Court Funding Opportunity.

Move to approve the Riley County Community Corrections department submit the application for the FY2026 Specialty Court Funding Opportunity.

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

9:45 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

10. November Cash Flow Reports

Phillips presented the cash flow reports.

11. 5-Year Analysis for Out-of-State Travel

Phillips presented the out-of-state travel analysis.

9:55 AM Shilo Heger, Treasurer

12. Staff Update

Heger presented the Treasurer's Office reports.

10:10 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

13. Administrative Work Session

10:10 Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairman McKinley, Vice Chairwoman Focke, and Commissioner Ford, with Jacob Hansen, County Counselor, and Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director, recess into executive session pursuant to the attorney-client consultation exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, regarding confidential legal advice on sewer districts and the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 10:20 a.m.

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

NAYS:	None
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10:20 a.m. Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

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

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

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

Hansen said the Prairiewood case is going to the Supreme Court next month.

Hansen discussed the Animal Control Services between Manhattan City and RCPD. He discussed drafting an MOU with Manhattan City regarding the facility. He said he will be discussing the facility with the Manhattan City Attorney.

10:30 AM Katharine Hensler, Museum Director

14. Historical Museum Staff Update

Hensler presented the Historical Museum staff report.

10:45 AM Anna Burson, Appraiser

15. Request to fill Residential Appraiser III Position

Burson presented the request to fill the Appraiser III-Residential position.

Move to approve refilling the position at the earliest opportunity.

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

The Board of County Commissioners signed a Riley County Position Action Form for an Appraiser III - Residential, in the Appraiser's Office, at a Range 12.

12:00 PM Law Enforcement Agency Meeting

16. Law Board Meeting Agenda Packet

Adjournment

10:48 a.m. Move to adjourn.

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