



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
January 29, 2026**

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, Vice-Chair](#)

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

[District 3 – Kathryn Focke, 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
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
Alvin Perez	Operations & Fleet Manager	Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	8:30 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
Steve Schurle	Assistant County Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Melanie Berry	Appraiser IV	Present	8:30 AM
Julian Wurtz	Appraiser III	Present	8:30 AM
Karen Grater	Appraiser II	Present	8:30 AM
Patty Council	Appraiser III	Present	8:30 AM
Allen Todd	Appraisal Analyst	Present	8:30 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	8:32 AM
Diane Creek	Health Department Director	Present	8:41 AM
Kaylyn Speth	WIC Supervisor	Present	8:45 AM
Jessie Hubbard	Administrative Assistant II	Present	10:06 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

1. Presentation of retirement plaque to Karen Grater - Kathryn Focke (3 minutes)

Focke presented a retirement plaque to Karen Grater, Appraiser's Office, for 19 years of service to Riley County.

Grater thanked everybody for the 19 years at Riley County.

Commission Comments**McKinley's Comments:**

Thursday afternoon I received a call from Senator Moran. In the appropriation bill that was signed by the President last Friday was an additional grant for the Keats sewer project in the amount of 1 million dollars. Since then, I have been talking to his staff in Manhattan to learn what paperwork we need to get started on.

Friday was the Regional Growth Summit. We first heard from Matt Tarleton about the Regional Growth Plan and new positive trends in the area. NABF was next and said they have been released from the hiring freeze and will be hiring 150 people this year. Next speaker discussed some of the problems facing real estate development, particularly in smaller communities. We had a campaign speech by Senator Marshall and then a panel discussion with staff from Senator Moran and Representatives Mann and Schmidt. Colonel Nunziato, who is always entertaining, gave a Fort Riley update pointing out that though a large number of soldiers will be deployed, there will still be a large number of family members who will be staying. Later we had community updates and an update on Yuma Street Cultural Center plans.

The weekend was mostly spent huddled up trying to stay warm. We did venture out to see the K-State men's basketball lose another game at the end.

Monday was the Intergovernmental Luncheon. We heard about a website by Kansas State called All Things Kansas. It is a free interactive tool with multiple layers of data compiled for all of the state.

Tuesday was the construction meeting for the EM/Fire project. They were able to complete most of the exterior concrete in the unseasonably warm weather before this weekend.

The most discouraging part of the week has been exchanging emails with a couple of state legislators. I tried to explain why some the proposed legislation on taxes and elections will cause problems but they could not be persuaded.

Ford's Comments:

Thursday post BOCC meeting I took the time to get stocked up before the pending snow and cold and was able to get a couple of personal meetings rescheduled from when I was sick.

Friday I attended the Regional Growth Summit hosted by the Manhattan Area Chamber of

Commerce at the K-State Alumni Center. We first had a few welcomes and introductions from Andrew Brookings from Stormont Vail. We later got an update from Matt Tarleton who was the consultant on last year's growth study. Also heard from the team at NBAF on all that is going on there. We then heard from Justin Pregont, Managing Pomeroy Development and Properties, who gave a presentation called "Inside the Deal....Why Development is Harder Than It Looks". We then had a moderated housing panel with Travis Hecht, Realtor, Tyler Holloman from Frontier, and Stacy Eichem, Wamego City Manager. Got an update from U.S. Senator Roger Marshall and then had a congressional staffer panel with Reid Petty from Senator Moran's office, Dawson Maring from Representative Mann's office and Fran Oleen from Representative Schimdt's office. After lunch we had a handful of community updates including Fort Riley Garrison Commander Jerry Nunziato, Junction City, Manhattan and Wamego Chambers, MHK Regional Airport, and the Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation. I missed the rest of the dialog as I had other things I needed to get done before the winter storm came in. Well attended and informative as usual.

Stayed in all weekend due to the weather and got some pressing things done at home. Watched K-State men's and women's basketball bomb pretty bad against Kansas and watched both NFL Championship games on Sunday.

Tuesday I attended the January Board of Directors meeting with Pawnee Mental Health via Zoom. Had my usual Finance Oversight Committee meeting for November and December pre general meeting. General meeting started with a call to order, welcomes and introductions of new members and staff, a Chief Financial Officer's report by Lindsay Miller, a Chief Executive Officer report by Mike Rezkalla, a Marketing and Development report, and a Finance Oversight Committee report. Other business included hiring of legal counsel, reports on board appointments/new appointments, elections of officers, transfer of custody documents, review committee chairs/members, checking account signature list, organizational chart update, updated board member list, and we had two executive sessions on non-elected personnel.

Wednesday afternoon I attended Local Government Day in Topeka hosted by the Kansas Association of Counties. We started with a meeting/presentation with various county officials and KAC staff to discuss the issues and challenges we are facing. Then later we headed over to The Beacon and met up with our municipal colleagues and we heard from Governor Laura Kelly and then a moderated open discussion that included Jay Hall from KAC, Topeka Mayor Spencer Duncan, and League of Municipalities, Nathan Eberline. Finished things off with an evening social to interact and network with various State lawmakers.

Focke's Comments:

Monday the Riley County offices were closed due to weather and road conditions. At noon, I attended the Intergovernmental Luncheon at Rockin K's. A presentation was made on "An Overview of All Things Kansas" by Jessica Gnad and Jennifer Tidball from KSU's economic development office. All Things Kansas is an on-line guide to our 105 counties and has 30,000 data layers with free interactive tools to reports and insights for each area. The common areas of interest in our region would be agriculture, economy, health and health care, population trends and profiles, water, and many other topics. It was difficult to see the presentation, but it would be a good source of information, especially for grants and other studies. The City of

Manhattan is hosting the 2026 meetings and the next one will be on February 23, 2026.

Monday evening I attended the Riley County Livestock Association Annual Banquet held at Pottorf Hall. A short business meeting after dinner was followed by a presentation by Dr. Cassandra Olds. She is a veterinary entomologist from KSU and gave a report on the Asian Longhorn Tick and the threat it plays to Kansas cattle and humans. There was a silent auction, followed by an auctioneer for the items not bid on, plus other larger items. I don't recall the exact amount raised but it was around \$3,500.00.

Wednesday I worked on some frustrating on-line computer issues, went through today's BOCC packet, worked on some Law Board items for the next meeting and spent a lot of time on the phone with constituents and others on some upcoming issues for the board. In the evening, I went to our bell choir practice at church.

Business Meeting

2. Consent Request Letter with Howie's

Move to approve the Assignment of the Agreements from Howie's to Buyer and sign the Consent Letter.

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

3. Consent Request Letter with HAMM, LLC

Move to acknowledge and consent to the assignment of the contract to Republic, a subsidiary of Allied Waste Systems, Inc. with Hamm, LLC.

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

4. Walsburg Road Reinforced Concrete Box (RCB) Recommendation

Move to approve the quote submitted by McPherson Concrete Companies in the amount of \$34,030.15 for reinforced concrete box for Walsburg Road.

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

5. Tax Roll Corrections

Move to approve the Tax Roll Corrections.

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

6. Riley County Employee Action Form

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

- Dalton Clark, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.
- Sophie Lenkiewicz, a new hire, as an intern, in the Museum Department, at a Range TASND.
- Lawrence Davis, a new hire, as a Custodian, in the Public Works Department, at a Range 1, at \$19.62 per hour.
- Trevor Clark, a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, for Separation from County Service, effective January 22, 2026.
- Samuel Switzer, a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, for Separation from County Service, effective January 22, 2026.
- Erin Kurtz, a Fiscal Analyst, in the Health Department, for Separation from County Service, effective January 30, 2026.

Move to approve the requested Employee Action Forms.

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

Review Minutes

7. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Jan 22, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of January 22, 2026 as amended.

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

Review Tentative Agenda

8. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM

Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

9. Executive session to discuss confidential legal advice regarding personnel matters

9:00 a.m. Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairwoman Focke, Vice Chairman Ford, and Commissioner McKinley, along with Jacob Hansen, County Counselor, and Michael Hawthorne, Assistant County Counselor, attorneys for the Commission, and Diane Creek, Health Department Director, and Kaylyn Speth, WIC Supervisor, recess into executive session for legal consultation regarding personnel matters, an exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 9:20 a.m.

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

9:20 a.m. Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

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

9:20 AM

John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer

10. Request to Fill Customer Service Representative I Position

Ellermann presented the request to fill a Customer Service Representative position.

Move to approve that the Public Works Department advertise for and fill the Customer Service Representative I position.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	County Commissioner Greg McKinley
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 a Customer Service Representative I, in the Public Works Department, at a Range 4.

11. Health Department Space Needs Assessment Recommendation

Ellermann presented the Health Department space needs assessment recommendation.

Move to approve the selection of Archimages to perform the Space Needs Assessment for the Health Department and Family and Child Resource Center.

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

12. 2026 Community Park Fund Allocation Request and Transfer to CIP

Ellermann presented the 2026 Community Park Fund allocation request and transfer to CIP.

Move to approve the 2026 Community Park allocations as presented and recommended by the Riley County Park Advisory Board and the transfer of \$20,000 to CIP for future larger projects.

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

13. 2025 City of Manhattan Park Receivables Account Write-Off

Ellermann presented the 2025 City of Manhattan park receivables account write-off.

Move to approve the City of Manhattan's outstanding balance in the Park accounts receivable, in the amount of \$465.56 be written off as per auditor's instruction.

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

9:50 AM

Alvin Perez, Operations and Fleet Manager

14. Bid opening for 2026 steel materials for bridge replacement

The Board of County Commissioners opened the following bids for 2026 steel materials for bridge replacement.

Company	Estimated delivery date	Total Bid
Salina Steel and Supply 234 E Avenue A Salina, KS 67401	February 3, 2026	\$ 8,252.56 partial bid
Oden Enterprises	Late March	\$101,573.41

PO Box 26 Wahoo, NE 68066		
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Move to refer the bids to staff for evaluation and recommendation.

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

10:00 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

15. Administrative Work Session

Hansen discussed the Prairiewood hearing before the Kansas Supreme Court.

Hansen discussed the legislative session and SB 329 regarding appraisals and HB 2457 Homestead tax exemption.

10:10 AM Jessie Hubbard, Administrative Assistant II

16. Staff Update

Hubbard presented the Community Corrections staff update.

17. Funding application for the Greater Community Manhattan Foundation

Hubbard presented the funding application for the Greater Community Manhattan Foundation.

Move to allow for Riley County Community Corrections to apply for the 2026 Greater Manhattan Community Foundation Grant.

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

18. Out of State Travel Requests for Megan Lewis and Brett Clark

Hubbard presented the out of state travel requests.

Move to approve the Out of State Travel Requests for Megan Lewis and Brett Clark to attend the MATCP Conference in Branson, Missouri.

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

19. Out of State Travel Request for Andrew Pellant

Hubbard presented the out of state travel request.

Move to approve the Out of State Travel Request for Andrew Pellant to attend the All Rise Community Supervision Practitioner Conference in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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

Adjournment

10:19 a.m. Move to adjourn.

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