



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
February 23, 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	Remote	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
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
David Adams	Emergency Medical Services Director	Present	8:30 AM
Josh Gering	Assistant Emergency Medical Services Director	Present	8:30 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Ashlyn Easterday	REACH Chair	Present	8:30 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	8:30 AM
Aaron Broxterman	EMT	Present	8:30 AM
Gary Olds		Present	8:30 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	9:15 AM
Michael Rezkalla	Pawnee Mental Health Services Director	Present	9:00 AM
Bob Isaac	Planner	Present	9:00 AM
Michele Reid	Human Resources Manager	Present	9:15 AM
Darrin Hobbs	Planning Compliance Specialist	Present	9:15 AM
Craig Cox		Present	9:15 AM
Neil Horton		Present	9:17 AM

Sean Drew		Present	9:17 AM
Dennis Mullin		Present	9:17 AM
Brandon Peoples	KMAN/Manhattan Mercury	Present	9:17 AM
Mark Bachamp		Present	9:18 AM
Mike Dodson		Present	9:20 AM
Barry Wilkerson	Attorney	Present	9:29 AM
Diane Creek	Health Department Administrator	Present	9:29 AM
Russel Stukey	Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief	Present	9:34 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Easterday presented the Employee of the Month to Aaron Broxterman, EMS/Ambulance.

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Thursday post meeting I did meet with the group from Steel and Pipe to give them an update and answer questions and lay out some thoughts in terms of move to a County Administrator at some point. Had a very good and thoughtful conversation.

Thursday evening, I met with Riley County Attorney Barry Wilkerson to discuss a few items of concern, get some thoughts and ideas and just in general to catch up. Appreciate the time and the dialog as well.

Friday morning, I hopped on a jet and headed out to Washington, D.C. for the 2026 NACo Legislative Conference at the Washington Hilton. Took some time to get settled in and prepare as well as grabbing my proper credentials for the event.

Saturday morning was the all-day meeting of the Community Economic Workforce Development Committee. After some opening remarks from our Chair Angela Conley Commissioner, Hennepin County, Minnesota, we heard presentations on how to navigate the federal labor policy, key developments impacting workforce boards, and from the Economic Development Administration. After lunch we heard a panel presentation on "Counties for a Guaranteed Income (CGI)". We then got a federal policy update, a presentation on Housing Policy Trends "Industry Perspectives". Lastly we had our Community Economic Workforce and Development Business Meeting. We discussed numerous proposed interim policies from within the committee, talked through, discussed, and then voted on them so they can go to the NACo Annual Meeting in July in New Orleans.

Saturday night the Kansas Association of Counties hosted a dinner at Jack Rose for the Kansas delegation in attendance. There were officials from Douglas, Johnson, Shawnee, McPherson, and Ford counties that attended. Shoutout to KAC for being willing to do this.

Sunday morning, I attended the Midsize County Caucus Meeting. It was a panel discussion, and we had someone from Shawnee County on that panel as well.

Sunday afternoon I attended several educational workshops including “Navigating Local Governance and AI” as well as "Game On: NACo Edge Solution Showdown." Also Sunday afternoon we had our National Steering Committee Meeting of the Veterans and Military Services Advisory Council. After some opening remarks and room introductions from our Chair Sid Conklin, Presiding Commissioner, Randolph County, Missouri we heard and got a federal policy update and priorities from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. Then we got key policy priority updates from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and an update from the Office of Suicide Prevention. We ended this year’s meeting with a council discussion to pass thoughts, concerns, and ideas around as necessary.

McKinley’s Comments:

After our meeting Thursday, I met with Brittany Phillips to go over her questions on the reorganization plans. I then spent Thursday afternoon and Friday morning meeting with as many department heads as I could to go over the same plans.

Saturday morning, I attended the Riley County Republicans breakfast. We heard from several people running for state offices this year.

Sunday we went to the Kansas State rodeo at the new Bilbrey Event Center. It is a really nice building. My wife said it reminded her of all the times her grandpa used to take her to the rodeo. Since I am the age he would have been, I am not sure how to take that. Our seats ended up behind a superintendent I worked with at Osborne Construction back in the late 80's.

Focke’s Comment:

Thursday afternoon, I had lunch with a friend and then had a doctor’s appointment.

Friday morning, I attended the funeral of Cliff Spaeth at my church. Afterwards I had some personal appointments and did some housekeeping.

The weekend was pretty quiet and I spend a lot of time studying the reports from David Cooper concerning personnel and reorganization needs identified by Mr. Cooper for the county that we will be discussing later this morning. I also reviewed today’s agenda and documents.

Sunday, I attended church and later went to lunch with friends and spent time getting ready for the week.

Business Meeting

1. Appraisers Parcel Search Website Agreement

Move to approve the Real Estate Sales Data Search Service Agreement with Amy

Ketchum-McGhee.

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

2. Tax Roll Corrections

Move to approve the Tax Roll Corrections.

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

Review Minutes

3. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Feb 19, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of February 19, 2026 as amended.

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

Review Tentative Agenda

4. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM Michael Rezkalla, Pawnee Mental Health Services Director

5. Pawnee Mental Health Services update

Rezkalla presented a Pawnee Mental Health Services update.

9:15 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

6. Amendment to Section 5.2 Use Specific Standards, Short Term Rentals of the Riley County Land Development Regulations

Isaac presented the amendment to the Short-Term Rental standards in the Riley County Land Development Regulations.

Move to approve "Resolution No. 022326-06, Resolution amending the Riley County Land Development Regulations in Riley County, Kansas" - Section 5.2 - Use - Specific Standards (Short Term Rental).

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

9:30 AM**Press Conference**

7. Value Notices going out Wednesday - Anna Burson (2 minutes)

Burson said this is a reminder that the 2026 Change of Value Notices for Riley County will be mailed this Wednesday, February 25th. Property owners can expect to begin receiving their notices shortly after. Updated property information, including value notices and property record details, will also be available online through the Parcel Search on Friday, February 27th, by noon. Property owners who have questions or wish to appeal should review their notice carefully and follow the instructions included. Appeal request forms may be emailed, dropped off, or mailed no later than March 26th.

8. Public Notice - John Ellermann (1-2 minutes)

Ellermann said the Riley County Transfer Station building will be closed beginning March 2, 2026, for construction of a new tipping floor. During this time, both commercial and residential customers may use a designated temporary dump site. This construction phase has a tentative end date of April 10, 2026. Delays should be anticipated. For everyone's safety, please drive slowly and follow all posted signs.

9:35 AM**David Cooper, Attorney at Fisher, Patterson, Sayler & Smith, LLP**

9. Report on Investigation into Non-elected personnel

Focke stated this conversation is just between the Board and Mr. Cooper today.

Cooper discussed his report.

Cooper recommended the Board develop a County Administrator position with authority over the appointed department heads.

Cooper recommended developing a timeline to include internal and external communication on the reorganization.

No action taken.

10:05 AM**John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer**

10. Request to Fill Traffic Control Technician Position

Ellermann presented the request to fill the Traffic Control Technician position.

Move to approve that the Public Works Department advertise and fill the Traffic Control Technician position.

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

The Board of County Commissioners signed a Riley County Position Action Form for a Traffic Control Technician, in the Public Works Department, at a Range 5.

10:10 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

11. Administrative Work Session

Hansen discussed SB 244 on public bathrooms.

Hansen discussed legislation on single property appraisals.

The Board agreed by consensus for Hansen to work on the legislation with Burson.

Hansen discussed a meeting with legislators.

McKinley asked Hansen to look into HB 2777 on sales tax.

Focke asked to schedule an executive session on Thursday to discuss personnel.

Adjournment

Move to adjourn after the Intergovernmental Luncheon.

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

12:00 PM Intergovernmental Luncheon

12. Agenda

The Board attended the Intergovernmental Luncheon.