



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
March 2, 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
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	8:30 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	8:30 AM
Gary Olds		Present	8:33 AM
Susan Boller	Elections Supervisor/Deputy Clerk	Present	8:55 AM
Major Mark French	RCPD	Present	9:20 AM
Laurie Harrison	Emergency Management Coordinator	Present	9:20 AM
Russel Stuke	Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief	Present	9:25 AM
Gina Snyder	Downtown Manhattan Director	Present	9:25 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	9:25 AM
Diane Creek	Health Department Director	Present	9:45 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	9:55 AM
Audra Goldsmith	Project Manager Kansas Stepping Up Tech Assistance Center	Present	10:15 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Specials Projects Director	Present	10:32 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Didn't have a lot going on toward the end of the week and over the weekend.

Friday afternoon I did donate some blood with the American Red Cross at the latest Riley County Blood Drive over at the Senior Center. Pretty packed house mid-afternoon but got in and out in a pretty good fashion. They are really struggling these days to keep up with demand so those donated are indeed critical.

The rest of the weekend I spent catching up on things at home, watching a little college basketball here and there, and getting prepared for what appears will be a pretty busy week.

McKinley's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I met with a group of department heads to go over their questions about the reorganization plans for HR and budget. They had several questions I was able to clear up.

Friday I had a call with Jacob Hansen to go over several items.

I also had an email exchange with Ned Seaton correcting the misinformation in his Wednesday editorial.

Focke's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I met with a member of the Law Board to discuss a possible agenda item for this month's meeting concerning a discussion of the 287(g) Task Force Model for safer communities.

Friday and Saturday were pretty quiet, catching up on some personal business and chores around the house.

Saturday, I did some work in the yard and enjoyed the warm weather. Later, I reviewed the agenda and documents for today's meeting.

Sunday, I played with the bell choir at church and then had lunch at the Parkside Café with some friends. The restaurant's last day is March 15th. I later went over today's meeting again and scheduled some appointments for this week.

Business Meeting**Review Minutes**

1. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Feb 26, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of February 26, 2026 as presented.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner Greg McKinley

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

Review Tentative Agenda

2. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics**9:00 AM****Jacob Hansen, County Counselor**

3. Administrative Work Session

Hansen discussed the SCR 1616 and HB 2745 on property tax.

Hansen discussed SB 254 regarding illegal individuals receiving any public benefits. He said it mainly impacts the Health Department.

Hansen discussed SB 319 regarding property tax rebate.

Hansen reported that SB 404 on treasurer's fees is moving forward.

Hansen discussed County Day tomorrow in Topeka.

Hansen discussed a potential special session this Friday which some Board members agreed to and others did not.

4. Staff Update

Hansen presented a counselor's office staff update on various projects.

9:20 AM**Susan Boller, Elections Supervisor/Deputy Clerk**

5. Request to Fill

Boller presented the request for the part-time Elections Clerical Assistants.

The Board of County Commissioners signed a Riley County Position Action Form for part-time Elections Clerical Assistants, in the Clerk/Elections Department, at a Range TASND.

Move to approve advertising for Election Assistants for the Clerk/Elections Department.

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

9:30 AM**Press Conference**

6. RCPD update - Captain Scott Hajek and Major Mark French (3-5 minutes)

French provided an update on the Riley County Police Department jail.

7. Downtown Manhattan update - Gina Snyder (3-5 minutes)

Snyder presented the Downtown Manhattan update.

8. Severe weather awareness week in Kansas and the National Weather Service presentation - Laurie Harrison (3 minutes)

Harrison reported this week is Severe Weather Awareness Week in Kansas.

Harrison discussed having an emergency kit and plans.

Harrison reported the Statewide Tornado Drill is Wednesday, March 4, 2026.

9:45 AM Break

10:00 AM Diane Creek, Health Department Director

9. Interim MCH Clinic Manager

Move to recess as the Board of County Commissioners and convene as the Board of Health.

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

Creek presented the request for the Interim Public Health Clinic and Family Services Manager.

McKinley asked if the current employee is doing the Clinic, who will be doing MCH?

Creek said she will do both.

McKinley asked how long is interim.

Creek said three months.

Move to approve the interim Public Health Clinic and Family Services Manager position, including the temporary compensation adjustment during the transition period and until a final merged plan is established and presented for the Riley County Commission's consideration.

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

NAYS:	None
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The Board of County Commissioners signed a Riley County Position Action Form for a Public Health Clinic & Family Services Manager, in the Health Department, at a Range 20 (temporary placement for 3 months ending NLT May 29, 2026).

Move to recess as the Board of Health and reconvene as the Board of County Commissioners.

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

10:15 AM Audra Goldsmith, Project Manager Kansas Stepping Up Technical Assistance Center

10. Stepping Up Riley County

Goldsmith presented the Stepping Up Riley County program.

10:45 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

11. Potential membership expansion for Riley County Rural Economic Development Advisory Board

Webb discussed allowing a regional member of the Riley County Rural Economic Development Advisory Board.

The Board agreed by consensus for one position as regional, with a preference in Riley County and one position from the City of Manhattan.

11:05 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

12. Executive session to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel

10:59 a.m. Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairwoman Focke, Vice Chairman Ford, and Commissioner McKinley, with Jacob Hansen, County Counselor, attorney for the commission, and Rich Vargo, County Clerk, recess into executive session pursuant to the non-elected personnel matters exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, in order to discuss the working conditions of certain employees, and to protect the privacy of the employees, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 11:30 a.m.

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

Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

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

Move the record reflect no binding action was taken during the executive session.

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

Adjournment

11:32 a.m. Move to adjourn.

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

Announcements

County Day at the Capitol will be held Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

The 2026 Annual Riley County Township Officials Meeting will be held Wednesday, March 4, 2026 from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Pottorf Hall, CiCo Park, 1710 Avery Avenue, Manhattan, Kansas.