



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
March 12, 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
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	8:30 AM
Brad Jager	RCPD	Present	8:30 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	9:00 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	9:10 AM
Christian Bishop	Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce	Present	9:40 AM
Katharine Hensler	Museum Director	Present	10:32 AM
Michele Reid	Human Resources Manager	Present	10:38 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	10:44 AM
Amy Manges	Register of Deeds	Present	10:50 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Not an incredibly busy week to be honest.

Tuesday I actually went back to work at Florence for the first time in almost 3 weeks after my trips to Washington, D.C., Topeka for County Day, and our Annual Township meeting all of which took place on the Tuesdays and Wednesdays the days I usually work. Felt good to get back on track actually.

Tuesday evening, I did watch the K-State men's opener in the Big 12 Basketball Tournament in Kansas City. We actually did hang in there for a good portion of the game till the Cougars ran away late and destroyed us 105-91 ending the Wildcats very disappointing season at 12-20.

Also, on Wednesday evening the K-State Bat Cats picked up a solid mid-week win at home vs. Wichita St. 7-5 running their early season record to 13-4.

Wednesday afternoon our monthly call for NACo's Community Economic and Workforce Development Committee was canceled due to the short proximity to the recent legislative conference. Not sure when a rescheduled time will occur.

Wednesday evening, I attended the March Business After Hours at my Alma Mater Manhattan Area Tech College hosted by the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by both Landmark National Bank and KS State Bank as well. Over 150 people were in attendance, and both the food and fellowship were top notch as usual.

McKinley's Comments:

After the County Officials luncheon, I met with Jacob Hansen and then David Adams to discuss reorganization and miscellaneous county business.

Tuesday morning was the first meeting of the year for Flint Hills Veterans Coalition and they reviewed last year's Veterans Day parade and discussed things that might be changed this year. After that I met with Megan Lewis to discuss the reorganization and catch up with what is going on in Community Corrections.

Tuesday afternoon I attended the groundbreaking for the Yuma Street Cultural Center. I think it will be a great feature for the city. I have always thought that was an interesting building and wanted to see inside the building as is but I am sure for safety reasons we could not.

Wednesday morning I met with Rich Vargo to discuss the Manhattan housing review at Tuesday night's meeting. The new commissioners stated that workforce housing should be \$200,000 to \$250,000 not \$320,000. They also said that they don't think RHID should be used in Manhattan and any tax breaks and subsidies to developers should be closely monitored. I need to go back and watch the full discussion.

Next on Wednesday was the quarterly meeting for ATA Bus. The audit for last year was

presented. The results of the transit study were presented which showed how routes could be changed or added to better serve the public. One item was that there is a need for more routes in Junction City. Unfortunately, this cannot be done because Junction City, Geary County, and USD 475 are all cutting their funding to FHATA. A contract was signed for a bus shelter near 5th and Leavenworth to be part of a city project. Also signed a contract for a new software system which will improve staff time and ease use for riders. The final item was the Triennial Review that is required by the feds. One small deficiency was found and has been corrected.

In the afternoon I sent some time with Jacob Hansen and then Shilo Heger to go over county business.

Focke's Comments:

Monday I attended the County Officials Luncheon in our temporary chambers. Discussion was held on several issues plus on the upcoming changes in the county structure. Several good ideas were presented to the group and commissioners.

Later that afternoon, I had a meeting with a contractor on some fencing in my yard. I used this contractor last year for similar work and we came to agreement on what needed to be done and the time frame.

Tuesday, I had an appointment with my chiropractor and then went to our downtown offices and looked at various spaces in the building for upcoming needs. Later, I spent time reading documents for the Law Board meeting next week and then went to Wildcat Park with my dog. The park really looks good with some trees trimmed and all the dry grasses mowed. It was a beautiful day, and we really enjoyed the time there.

Wednesday, I caught up on paperwork and started working on 2025 taxes. I spent time reviewing the agenda and documents for today's meeting and upcoming agendas. That evening, I practiced with my bell choir and attended the weekly Lenten service at the church.

Business Meeting

1. Highway Use Permit 2026-004 Twin Valley 8908 N 52nd ST

Move to approve the Highway Use Permit with Twin Valley to bore telecommunications service/drop on N 52nd between Anderson Avenue and Silver Creek Road.

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

2. Riley County Purchasing Card Request

Move to approve Riley County P-Card Request.

RESULT:	Passed
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MOVER:	Commissioner Greg McKinley
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:

- Sydney Tracy, an EMT, in the EMS/Ambulance Department, for Separation from County Service, effective May 21, 2026.
- Robert Mullen, a Paramedic, in the EMS/Ambulance Department, for Separation from County Service, effective April 27, 2026.
- Kyle Keogh, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.
- Peggy Grater and Pedro Sandoval, Elections Workers, in the Clerk/Election Department, for Separation from County Service, effective March 16, 2026.

Move to approve the requested Riley County Employee Action Forms.

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

4. Discuss Joint City/County/County Meeting

5. Discuss Intergovernmental Luncheon

Review Minutes

6. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Mar 9, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of March 9, 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

7. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM

Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

8. Administrative Work Session

Hansen said not much on legislation changed since the update by our lobbyist, Tom Bruno.

Hansen discussed the public restroom law. Hansen said there is not a temporary restraining order on the law.

Ford discussed the proposed legislation on taxes.

9. Lease Agreement for New Aggieville Substation

Hansen presented the RCPD Substation lease agreement.

Focke said this new substation has not been presented to the Law Board.

Jager said it would be minimal expense for RCPD.

The Board asked to table the item until the Law Board reviews it at the next week.

The lease agreement will be placed on next Thursday's Business Meeting.

9:20 AM

Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

10. Riley County Rural Economic Development Advisory Board - membership expansion

Webb presented the resolution to expand the Rural Economic Development Board.

Move to approve "Resolution No. 031226-07, A Resolution of Riley County, Kansas restating and reestablishing the Rural Economic Development Advisory Board for Riley County stating the membership, purpose, functions and powers."

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

9:30 AM

Shilo Heger, Treasurer

11. February 2026 Treasurer Staff Update

Heger presented the Treasurer's update.

The Board agreed by consensus for staff to provide written testimony in support of SB 404 on behalf of the Board.

9:45 AM

Jason Smith, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce

12. Economic Development Update

Bishop presented the Chamber Economic Development report, work force and talent, and an update on Fort Riley activities.

10:00 AM Executive Session to discuss department head evaluation

13. Anna Burson, Appraiser

Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairwoman Focke, Vice Chairman Ford, and Commissioner McKinley, with Jacob Hansen, County Counselor, attorney for the commission, Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director, and Anna Burson, County Appraiser, recess into executive session pursuant to the non-elected personnel matters exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, in order to evaluate the performance of a department head, and to protect the privacy of the employee, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 10:30 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

10:30 AM Budget and Planning Committee - Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

14. Cash Flows

Phillips presented the cash flow reports.

10:40 AM Katharine Hensler, Museum Director

15. Museum Staff Update - February 2026

Hensler presented the Museum staff update.

Hensler asked for clarification on when there is a non-federal holiday, on a Sunday, work day.

The Board agreed for her to bring it to the Board at her next update.

10:55 AM Board of County Commissioners

16. Begin discussion on the timeline for the organization

McKinley said before we schedule a timeline we need to get a list of items which need to be accomplished. He said the department heads and HR need input.

Focke discussed what Hansen has presented as a list to begin with including space requirements.

Ford said the Board needs to discuss how they are going to budget for it.

Focke suggested by June 1, 2026.

Hansen stated if the Board appoints a committee or working group the meeting may be subject to KOMA.

Meyer discussed the following potential timeline:

Phase 1 – Organizational Design: By March 18, 2026

- Determine Reorganization Structure

Phase 2 – Position Development: By April 15, 2026

- Develop a Position Description for the Director of Administrative and Financial Services

Phase 3 – Financial Planning: By May 15, 2026

- Prepare a full financial analysis and projections

Phase 4 – Position Recruitment & Marketing: Beginning in May 2026

- Recruitment Posting: Late May 2026
- Candidate Interviews: July-Aug 2026
- Director Start Date: October-December 2026

Phase 5 – Department Activation

- Transition of divisions under New Director
- Date TBD based on Hire Date

Meyer discussed the importance of defining the county administrator or county manager position.

Ford said he prefers to start the administrator position in 2027.

Phillips said funding in 2026 would be possible for one position in 2026, but not the whole department.

The Board agreed to provide a list of items for the reorganization to be discussed at next Thursday's commission meeting.

Adjournment

11:18 a.m. Move to adjourn.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner John Ford
SECONDER:	Commissioner Greg McKinley

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