



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
April 13, 2026**

115 N 4th Street
Manhattan, KS 66502
www.rileycountyks.gov

Cindy Kabriel
785-565-6200

Commission Chambers

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
Kathryn Focke	County Commissioner	Present	8:30 AM
John Ford	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
Derick Schroller	IT Specialist	Present	8:30 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	8:30 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	8:47 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	8:47 AM
Michael Boller	Noxious Weed/HHW Director	Present	8:47 AM
Russel Stukey	Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief	Present	9:05 AM
Doug Russell	Deputy Fire Chief	Present	9:05 AM
Jake Konrardy	Deputy Fire Chief	Present	9:05 AM
Joshua Gering	Assistant Emergency Services Director	Present	9:05 AM
Alex Protzman	Emergency Services Staff Development Specialist	Present	9:05 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	9:10 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	9:16 AM
Jan Scheideman	Child Care Supervisor	Present	9:21 AM
Heather Ritchey	Child Care Licensing Supervisor	Present	9:21 AM
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	9:28 AM
Diane Creek	Health Department Director	Present	9:28 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	9:28 AM

Joseph Godown	Real Estate Specialist	Present	10:40 AM
Katharine Hensler	Museum Director	Present	10:50 AM

Pledge of Allegiance**Public Comment**

Ward asked what time on Thursday the Board wants to have the reorganization discussion.

The Board agreed by consensus to leave it at the 11:00 a.m. scheduled time.

Commission Comments**Ford's Comments:**

Thursday afternoon I had my monthly meeting with the doctor. Not a lot of change as of now but there will be some things changing hopefully here in the near future.

Also on Thursday I met with Riley County Planning Director Amanda Webb, and Cameron Witthuhn and Ania Krutul from Plus Power. Had a good opening introduction. I know this item is on the agenda so I will let it at that for the moment, but certainly an interesting concept.

Lastly on Thursday I was finally able to complete both my state and federal income taxes for the year. Overall, I ended up with a smaller balance to owe than in prior years which was nice for a change.

Friday morning I met with Harry Watts from MATC over at Flight Crew. We discussed several items pertaining to an upcoming MATC Foundation Board and several other current events pertaining to Riley County as well. Certainly, appreciated the time and the insight as well, and I look forward to future conversations as they present themselves.

The weekend was rather quiet as usual. I do know both K-State and the Royals won 2 of 3 of their series at home over the weekend and it was nice to finally get some measurable rain, hopefully that will bring things back to life finally.

McKinley's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I had a discussion with David Adams.

Friday morning, I had meetings with John Ellermann, Jacob Hansen, and Anna Burson. Friday afternoon was the pre-law board meeting. Most of the items are the usual things covered, but we will start the discussion on budget.

Focke's Comments:

Friday afternoon I attended the pre-law board meeting at the Riley County Police Department.

We went over the agenda and various items and concerns for the next meeting on April 20th.

Saturday I did some shopping downtown and worked in my office organizing various items. I spent some time going over the agenda for today's meeting and checking e-mails.

Sunday I went to church and then home to do some household chores. I spent some time with some friends in the afternoon and did some walks with the dog. Later, I went over today's agenda and read through the proclamations and other items that I didn't get to on Saturday.

Business Meeting

1. Child Abuse Prevention Month 2026 Proclamation

Move to approve the Child Abuse Prevention Month 2026 Proclamation.

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

2. 2026 Week of the Young Child Proclamation

Move to approve the 2026 Week of the Young Child Riley County Proclamation.

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

Review Minutes

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

Move to approve the minutes of April 9, 2026 as presented.

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

Review Tentative Agenda

4. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM

Rich Vargo, County Clerk

5. Year to Date Budget and Expenditures

Vargo presented the year to date budget and expenditure reports.

9:15 AM David Adams, Emergency Services Director

6. Update on Consolidation of RCFD#1, EM, 911 and EMS

Adams presented an update on the transition of the RCFD #1, EM, 911 and EMS/Ambulance.

Move to approve the position descriptions.

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

9:30 AM Press Conference

7. Presentation of the Week of the Young Child Proclamation - Kathryn Focke and Jan Scheideman (3 minutes)

Focke presented the Week of the Young Child Proclamation to Jan Scheideman.

8. Presentation of the Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation - Kathryn Focke and Heather Ritchey (3 minutes)

Focke presented the Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation to Heather Ritchey.

9:40 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

9. Data centers / battery energy storage systems - discussion

Webb presented the data centers/battery energy storage systems.

Webb asked if the Board wants a moratorium on them until regulations are in place.

McKinley said he feels a moratorium until regulations are in place and they understand them better.

Hawthorne stated with a moratorium you would need to define a time frame.

Webb suggested a 6-month moratorium.

The Board agreed.

Webb stated they will move forward with a 180-day moratorium.

10:00 AM John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer

10. Project Update

Ellermann presented the Public Works projects update.

11. Request to Fill Customer Service Representative - Transfer Station

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

Move to approve the Public Works-Solid Waste Division fill the vacant Customer Service Representative position at the transfer station.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	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 part-time Customer Service Representative I, in the Public Works/Solid Waste Department, at a Range 4.

12. Request to Fill - Parks Seasonal Positions

Ellermann presented the request to fill the Parks Seasonal positions.

Move to approve Public Works to fill the Seasonal Parks positions.

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

The Board of County Commissioners signed a Riley County Position Action Form for Parks Seasonal (4680 hours, 3-4 positions), in the Public Works/Parks Department, at a Range Seasonal.

10:25 AM Michael Hawthorne, Assistant County Counselor

13. Executive session for attorney-client consultation regarding pending litigation

10:25 a.m. Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairwoman Focke, Vice Chairman Ford, and Commissioner McKinley, with Michael Hawthorne, Assistant County Counselor, attorney for the commission, recess into executive session for the attorney-client consultation regarding pending litigation, an exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 10:35 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 action shall be taken consistent with the consensus reached in executive session.

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

10:40 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

14. Administrative Work Session

15. Staff Update

Hansen discussed working with Ward on the reorganization.

Hansen said he is working on a policy regarding the bathroom bill.

Hansen reported he is working on the citizens on the agenda policy.

Hansen said he is preparing for the court case on Friday for the nuisance abatement property up north.

Hansen discussed the property tax bill, HB 2043. He said the worst part of the legislation has been taken out.

Phillips discussed the potential budgetary impacts.

11:00 AM Katharine Hensler, Museum Director

16. March Staff Update

Hensler presented the Museum staff report.

Adjournment

11:14 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

Riley County Planning Board/Board of Zoning Appeals meeting will be held tonight at 7:00 p.m. in Room #124 at the Family & Child Resource Center, 2101 Claflin.