



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
April 16, 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	8:30 AM	Present
John Ford	County Commissioner	8:30 AM	Present
Greg McKinley	County Commissioner	8:30 AM	Present
Rich Vargo	County Clerk	8:30 AM	Present
Jacob Hansen	County Counselor	8:30 AM	Present
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	8:30 AM	Present
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	8:30 AM	Present
Michael Boller	Noxious Weed/HHW Director	8:30 AM	Present
Gary Olds		8:30 AM	Present
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	8:30 AM	Present
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	8:30 AM	Present
Rob Voelker		8:30 AM	Present
Anna Burson	Appraiser	8:46 AM	Present
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	9:10 AM	Present
Bob Isaac	Planner	9:13 AM	Present
Kirk Crabtree		9:15 AM	Present
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	9:15 AM	Present
Michele Reid	Human Resources Manager	8:45 AM	Present
Shilo Heger	County Treasurer	9:31 AM	Present
Roger Seymour		9:31 AM	Present

Pledge of Allegiance**Public Comment****Commission Comments**

Ford's Comments:

Monday afternoon I met with Jason Smith and Daryn Soldan at the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce to discuss several economic development ideas, some upcoming events, and several other related items. We had a good dialog and conversation and I appreciated the time as well.

Tuesday and Wednesday I spent time working my regular schedule.

Wednesday afternoon I attended the April meeting of the Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization at the Manhattan Public Library. After some opening remarks and welcomes we got a financial update and all is well including the monthly statement balance and revenue major expenses and staff updates from the MPO as well as KDOT. Action items included approval of the February meeting, the 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Plan Amendment #4, the Preservation Performance Improvement Program, the Mobility Performance Measure, and the 2027 Unified Planning Work Program population updates and local match percentages. Discussion items included the 2026 UPWP & local match estimates, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment #1, and the Big Blue River 2nd Connection Cost Benefit Analysis Public Information Meeting and then we adjourned.

Wednesday evening, I met with a group for Chinese food to discuss a handful of items, mostly the recent Data Center and Battery Backup moratorium as well the local property tax issues, budget, and our recent comprehensive plan. Great dialog and some really interesting things came up along the way as well.

McKinley's Comments:

Monday evening, I was a guest at the AAUW (American Association of University Women) meeting. They had federal, state, and local elected officials to discuss our priorities for the year. It was an interesting meeting.

Tuesday evening was the Fire Board meeting. Elizabeth Ward gave them an update on the emergency services reorganization. The rest of the meeting just covered the usual items.

Wednesday I attended ATA Bus Board meeting. Ridership for the first quarter of this year is up 26%. They have made special efforts to advertise and it has paid off. Last year's turnover was about 25%, which sounds high but the national average in transit is 50%. They are increasing efforts to lower the turnover. Later that morning I attended part of the department head meeting to discuss the ongoing reorganization. We had a good back and forth about what we should be doing. After the meeting I met with Elizabeth Ward, had a brief meeting with

Brittany Phillips and then met with Rich Vargo. When all that was done I attended the REDAB meeting. Discussed efforts they are making to get information about economic development opportunities out to the smaller communities.

Focke's Comments:

Business Meeting

1. Change Order Transfer Station Tipping Floor

Move to approve Change Order #3 with NF Construction for the Riley County Tipping Floor project in the amount of \$6,650.00 for a total of \$604,290.00.

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

2. Keats USDA supplemental funding application - Loan Resolution

Webb presented the Keats USDA supplemental funding application.

Move to approve the Loan Resolution for Keats Sanitary Sewer for USDA.

RESULT:	Passed
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:

- Carter Kaus, for a status change from As Needed to Full Time, as an EMT, in the EMS/Ambulance Department, at a Range EMT, effective May 9, 2026.
- Jeff Crawford, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.

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 Intergovernmental Luncheon Monday, April 27th at 12:00 (noon) at Rockin K's

5. Approve payroll/accounts payables (when completed)

Move to approve the payroll vouchers in the amount of \$768,491.02 and the following warrant vouchers for April 17, 2026:

2026 Budget

County General	\$ 828,830.41
Disaster Fund	406,422.97
Health Department	112,251.17
Court Services	150.00
County Auction	161.85
Motor Vehicle Operations	580.05
Capital Improvements Fund	84,644.65
Emergency 911	8,026.40
Solid Waste	289,680.33
County Building	9,249.16
Road & Bridge Cap Project	34,578.00
RCPD Levy/Op	28,021.92
Landfill Closure	588.42
Riley Co Fire Dist #1	39,170.29
2023 R&B Project Sales Tx	67,627.93
University Park W&S	7,485.37
Hunters Island Water Dist	143.61
Carson Sewer Benefit Dist	2,579.94
H.I. Water Capital Replace	509.11
Deep Creek Sewer	736.39
Moehlman Bottoms	333.67
Valleywood Operations	2,160.99
Terra Heights Sewer	529.58
Konza Water Operations	1,850.80
University Park Lagoon	9.73
KDOC Adult Services	15,630.05
KDOC Juvenile Services	5,695.48
KDOC Juv Reinvestment	1,268.33
BJA Grant	1,832.01
21st Jud Dist DC ADSAP	150.00
City Alcohol Funds	1,634.69
RL Salary Appropriations	1,146.60
GMCF Grant	31.05
Adult Services Carry-Over	2,625.82

TOTAL \$1,956,336.77

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

Review Minutes

6. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Apr 13, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of April 13th 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

Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

8. Bison Ridge Recycling Contract

Webb presented the Bison Ridge Recycling Contract.

Ford expressed concern with proceeding with the contract.

Move to deny extending the Contract for Recycling Services with Bison Ridge Recycling through February 2031.

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

9:10 AM

Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

9. Administrative Work Session

Hansen said April 20th should be the day the Governor either vetoes or signs the property tax legislation.

Hansen stated he is working on the Nuisance Abatement Court case for tomorrow.

Hansen and the Board discussed the letter to the City of Manhattan and Pottawatomie County.

9:30 AM Bob Isaac, Planner

10. Sam N Rogers Sixth Subdivision

Isaac presented the request to plat the Sam N. Rogers Sixth Subdivision.

Move to approve "Resolution No. 041626-11, A Resolution approving the Sam N Rogers Sixth Subdivision plat and accepting the street rights of way, easements and licenses as shown to be dedicated on said plat" as it was determined that it meets the requirements of the Riley County Land Development Regulations and Articles 26-5, 26-8 and 26-9 of the Manhattan Development Code.

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

9:40 AM Board of County Commissioners

11. Work Session for Reorganization

Ward presented an overview of the Board's consensus and vote on the county administrator's duties from the last work session.

The Board discussed the Riley County Administrator position.

Ward and Hansen discussed if the Riley County Counselor's Office is under the administrator or a separate department.

Hansen recommended the Counselor sit out on an island itself.

The Board agreed by consensus the Riley County Counselor's Department should be a separate department not under the administrator.

Ward discussed the level of oversight the administrator will have over the other appointed departments.

Ward presented the following two options:

Option 1: Department Head Supervision: "Administrator will work in conjunction

with the Board of County Commissioners to supervise, hire, fire, discipline and evaluate department heads of Riley County”

Option 2: Department Head Collaboration: “Administrator will work in conjunction with the Department Heads to administer the administrative services, budgets, policies and strategies set forth by the Riley County board of County Commissioners”

Ford said he has pivoted and needs to think about what the administrator is and what they are educated and trained to do. He stated the administrator needs to handle the county administrative functions, including hiring and firing. He said that is how it is set up in all other counties.

McKinley and Focke disagreed.

Ward stated full administrative authority is how it is set up in all other counties. She said the commissioners are still in control as the administrator reports to the Board.

Ford stated the relationship between the administrator will work directly with the appointed department heads and elected officials.

Focke said she does not want to give up the direct contact with the department heads.

Ward expressed that the Riley County Commissioners are the ultimate responsibility with the authority over the administrator.

The Board discussed the authority of the administrator over the appointed department heads.

Focke asked if any department heads have any comments.

Adams said he likes the idea of being able to come to the commissioners and being able to communicate. He said he likes direct access to the commission and the Board would have the hiring and firing authority.

Burson stated her concern is with the Riley County Commission appointing the appraiser. She would not want the administrator to have firing authority.

Ward said the County Counselor will remain separate from administrative services and will report directly to the Board of County Commissioners. Two potential options were presented about the administrator’s role with the department heads. More clarification is needed on the expectation of the role. The topic was tabled.

The Board asked Ward to come back in a week to discuss further on Monday, April 27th.

Adjournment

10:30 a.m. Move to adjourn.

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