



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
May 4, 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
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	8:30 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	8:30 AM
Russel Stuke	Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief	Present	8:55 AM
Major Mark French	RCPD	Present	9:10 AM
Lori Muir	Administrative Services Manager	Present	9:18 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	9:30 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	9:30 AM
Barry Wilkerson	County Attorney	Present	9:30 AM
Jessie Hubbard	Administrative Assistant II	Present	9:37 AM
Josh Gering	Assistant EMS/Ambulance Director	Present	9:48 AM
Roger Seymour		Present	9:49 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	9:49 AM

Daniel Skucius	Extension Director	Present	9:54 AM
Joseph Godown	Real Estate Specialist	Present	10:40 AM
Kent Glasscock		Present	10:59 AM

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

Ford's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I had a second meeting with my dietitian. All is going well so far as we are making some changes to my diet overall.

Friday morning I had a Teams call with Amanda Webb, Riley County Planning Director and Oleg Alba from Acre Strong who I met last week while in Hutchinson for the annual KCCA Conference. Took some time to discuss the concept of data centers and all that goes into them. We may get a full presentation from him at a later date. Friday afternoon I attended the special session that took place over at the Riley County Health Department. Overall, I think things went well in those discussions.

The weekend was relatively quiet. I got some things done at home and got caught up on a couple of TV shows I've been wanting to watch as well.

McKinley's Comments:

Spent a lot of time preparing for today's meeting. Reviewing the department budgets presented today and working on the reorganizational plans.

Focke's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I met with Erin Freidline, Assistant Director of RCPD, to discuss some Law Board member concerns with budgeting. We discussed several solutions and decided to try one.

Friday the BOCC had several executive meetings with personnel, and a general, open meeting with employees of the Riley County Health Department. Later that evening I went to the opening of the 2025/26 Democratic headquarters in downtown Manhattan.

Saturday, I did some yard work and then went to the Discovery Center for their large event. It was a huge success, with a big crowd and numerous vendors.

Business Meeting

1. Tax Roll Corrections

Move to approve the Tax Roll Corrections.

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

2. Riley County Employee Action Forms

The Board of County Commissioners signed Riley County Employee Action Forms for the following:

- James Montgomery, a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, for Separation from County Service, effective April 23, 2026.
- Howard Hawkins, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.
- Sharon Eckhoff, 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 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 30, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of April 30, 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 Jacob Hansen, County Counselor**

5. 2027 Counselor Budget

Hansen presented the Counselor's 2027 budget request.

9:10 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

6. Data Centers & Battery Energy Storage Systems - Work Session

Webb discussed data centers & energy storage systems.

McKinley said he is concerned with the water usage.

Webb said water and energy are the biggest questions with data centers.

Focke discussed concerns with agricultural impact.

Ford stated location could be an issue, besides the water and energy.

The Board agreed for more information and that education is needed.

9:30 AM Press Conference

7. RCPD update - Captain Scott Hajek and Major Mark French (2-3 minutes)

French presented a Riley County Police Department jail update.

8. 2025 Second Half Taxes Due - Shilo Heger (2 minutes)

Heger said the 2025 real estate and personal property tax 2nd half payments are:

- Due Date: May 11, 2026
 - **Tax payments must be postmarked by this date**
 - Interest will start accruing on May 12th
- No motor vehicle transactions may be processed if personal property taxes, intangible taxes, watercraft taxes, 16/20m truck taxes, or oil/gas taxes are delinquent after May 11th
- We offer several ways to pay:
 - In person at 110 Courthouse Plaza 7:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday-Thursday and 7:30 am to 12:00 pm on Friday
 - Drop box located in front of the building
 - Online – credit/debit card or E-Check: <https://rileycountytreasurer.us>
 - Credit/Debit card payments will incur 2.5% fee with a

minimum charge of \$2.95

- E-Check will incur a \$1.50 fee
- Pay by telephone – 785-377-5385 – convenience fee will be added
- By mail if postmarked by May 11th, 2025
- Call our office at 785-537-6321 if you have any questions or if you need any additional information

9. Public Notice - Lori Muir (1 minute)

Muir said the asphalt overlay project on Winkler Mills Road and Fancy Creek Road is scheduled to begin Monday, May 11, 2026.

9:35 AM Barry Wilkerson, Attorney

10. 2027 Attorney Budget Request

Wilkerson presented the County Attorney's 2027 budget request.

9:45 AM Megan Lewis, Community Corrections Director

11. 2027 Community Corrections Budget

Lewis presented the Community Corrections 2027 budget request.

10:00 AM Josh Gering, Emergency Services Assistant Director and Russel Stuke, Emergency Management Director

12. 2027 Emergency Services Budgets

Gering presented the Emergency Services 2027 budget request.

Stuke presented the Fire District #1 & 911 2027 budget request.

10:10 AM Daniel Skucius, County Extension Director

13. 2027 Fairgrounds Budget Request

Skucius presented the Fairgrounds 2027 budget request.

10:20 AM John Ford, Riley County Commissioner

14. Insight on a County Administrator from Kansas Administrators' perspective - Janelle Dockendorf, Dickinson County Administrator

Ford introduced Janelle Dockendorf, Dickinson County Administrator.

Dockendorf, Dickinson County Administrator, provided insight on the County

Administrator's position.

10:40 AM Board of County Commissioners

15. Work Session for Reorganization

Ward discussed the proposed County Administrator duties.

Focke spoke against the County Administrator being the lead administrative official.

McKinley proposed the administrator coordinates the administrative operations of the departments, consistent with the budgets, policies, and strategies set forth by the Board of County Commissioners. Subject to input from the commissioners, evaluates appointed department heads and provides feedback for improvement and development of objectives for department and personal development. The Board of County Commissioners retains the sole authority to hire, fire, and discipline appointed department heads.

Focke stated she liked the proposal presented by McKinley.

Ward discussed the definition of coordinates with who and on what.

Ford said he believes the administrator should have full administrative authority.

McKinley asked so do the commissioners cut their salary in half.

Ford stated he thinks so.

Move to adopt that the administrator coordinates the administrative operations of the departments, consistent with the budgets, policies, and strategies set forth by the Board of County Commissioners. Subject to input from the commissioners, evaluates appointed department heads and provides feedback for improvement and development of objectives for department and personal development. The Board of County Commissioners retains the sole authority to hire, fire, and discipline appointed department heads.

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

Adjournment

11:01 a.m. Move to adjourn.

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

NAYS:	None
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