



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
May 14, 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
Gary Olds		Present	8:30 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	8:30 AM
Jared Tremblay	Flint Hills MPO Planning Manager	Present	8:45 AM
Gina Snyder	Downtown Manhattan Director	Present	8:45 AM
Virginia Peterson	Riley County Genealogical Society	Present	9:05 AM
Daphne McNelly	aTa Bus	Present	9:30 AM
Anne Smith	aTa Bus Director	Present	9:30 AM
Christine Benne	Flint Hills Veterans Coalition	Present	9:40 AM
Christian Bishop	Flint Hills Veterans Coalition	Present	9:40 AM
Jason Smith	Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce	Present	9:40 AM
Cheryl Grice		Present	9:40 AM
Scott Carmichael	Riley County Conservation District	Present	9:40 AM
Stephanie Pearce		Present	9:40 AM
Liz Holle	Big Lakes Developmental Center Director	Present	10:10 AM

Emily Wagner	Manhattan Emergency Shelter Director	Present	10:00 AM
Kevin Larson	Riley County Council on Aging	Present	10:10 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	10:20 AM
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	10:30 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	10:30 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	10:30 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	10:30 AM

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

Ford's Comments:

Monday afternoon I attended the May County Officials Luncheon here in the board room. It was good to get caught up on things occurring and taking place here in Riley County. The presentation on changes on KORA record requests and retention was informative as well.

Tuesday afternoon I listened in on NACo's Webinar titled "Opportunity Zones 2.0: Economic Development and Community Revitalization." They had several HUD Regional Administrators on hand to discuss framework for new opportunity zones. The designation process starts on July 1st.

Spent Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday at work trying to get caught back up.

Wednesday evening I met with a group at Vista Drive Inn to discuss their concerns on Data Centers, budget discussion, property tax, and several other topics. Dialog went about as well as one can expect, but everyone was happy for the discussion and appreciated the answers provided.

Wanted to provide an update on the newly launched Fort Riley Safe Passage launched by the base and the Flint Hills MPO along with Lyft. The program kicked off on May 8th. During the first weekend, 38 rides were taken. The vouchers from the grant paid \$961.03 (84%) of the total of \$1,142.64 (including tips and priority rides). They are meeting with Fort Riley staff to make some tweaks for the program, but they are off to a great start.

It also wouldn't be right if I didn't mentioned K-State losing another legend with the passing of Jim Colbert on Sunday. Didn't know him personally but you can't underestimate the contributions he made to the university and to the community.

McKinley's Comments:

Tuesday morning was the Flint Hills Veterans Coalition meeting. Early discussion on scholarships and the Veterans Day parade. I mentioned that Director Peete has asked the Law Board about changing policy and charging for RCPD presence at events including parades. That led to a spirited discussion.

Focke's Comments:

Monday after our meeting, we had the County Officials Luncheon. Topics included the re-organization process and time frame, the relocation of HR to the health department spaces (west side) and the signage needed, and handle of KORA requests.

Tuesday I met with some constituents who went to the Pottawatomie County presentation on Data Centers. Apparently, it was a pretty contentious presentation, with many organizations and citizens against the proposed center. They are also active members in some environmental groups. I will let them know when we will be discussing it again.

Tuesday and Wednesday I spent time going over some budget issues and other reading materials. I studied today's agenda and documents, including the budget requests that we will have today, plus the draft job description of the County Administrator position.

Wednesday morning, I went to Fort Riley to get an updated yearly pass. Later, I went to lunch with a friend downtown and then came to my office to work on today's meeting. I had inadvertently left my cell phone at home so couldn't log into the computer and caught up later at home. Wednesday evening, I went to bell choir practice at my church.

Business Meeting

1. Highway Use Permit 2026-006 RCRWD#1

Move to approve the Application for Highway Use Permit granting Riley County Rural Water District #1 permission to bore and install 4" sleeve with 2" carrier pipe to service 4980 and 4970 Anderson Avenue.

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

2. Randolph Lions Club Fireworks Display Permit

Move to approve the Public Fireworks Display Permit for the Randolph Lions Club on July 4th.

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

3. Temporary Appointment of Local Health Program Administrator

Move to appoint the Interim Director of the Health Department as the Local Health Program Administrator and such appointment to last until the BOCC has determined the Interim Director as no longer needed.

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

4. Tax Roll Correction

Move to approve the Tax Roll Correction.

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

5. Riley County Employee Action Form

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

- Stephanie Dewey, an Appraiser I - Residential, in the Appraiser's Department, for Separation from County Service, effective May 11, 2026.
- Addison Birkes, a new hire, as an Intern, in the Community Corrections 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

6. Approve payroll/accounts payables (when completed)

Move to approve the payroll vouchers in the amount of \$774,851.15 and the following warrant vouchers for May 15, 2026:

2026 Budget

County General	\$ 556,339.62
Disaster Fund	753.45
Health Department	98,758.81
Motor Vehicle Operations	1,478.73
Capital Improvements Fund	549,156.17

Emergency 911	3,711.09
Solid Waste	6,587.72
County Building	8,433.81
RCPD Levy/Op	43,803.72
Landfill Closure	678.67
Riley Co Fire Dist #1	21,469.16
2023 R&B Project Sales Tx	757.97
University Park W&S	3,832.55
Hunters Island Water Dist	137.75
Carson Sewer Benefit Dist	491.36
Deep Creek Sewer	107.75
Moehlman Bottoms	4.59
Valleywood Operations	420.23
Terra Heights Sewer	777.34
Terra Heights Sinking	3,063.55
Konza Water Operations	612.13
University Park Lagoon	297,330.00
KDOC Adult Services	12,282.20
KDOC Juvenile Services	5,771.89
KDOC Juv Reinvestment	1,201.55
21st Jud Dist DC ADSAP	52.48
City Alcohol Funds	1,122.83
RL Salary Appropriations	1,251.39
Caroline Peine Grant	11.75
GMCF Grant	200.00
Daniel Keating Foundation	200.00
Adult Services Carry-Over	1,643.65
Juvenile Svcs Carry-Over	92.00

TOTAL \$ 1,622,535.91

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

Review Minutes

7. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - May 11, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of May 11, 2026 as presented.

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

NAYS:	None
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Review Tentative Agenda

8. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics**9:00 AM Jared Tremblay, Flint Hills MPO Planning Manager**

9. 2027 Flint Hills MPO Budget Request

Tremblay presented the 2027 Flint Hills MPO appropriation request.

9:10 AM Gina Snyder, Downtown Manhattan Director

10. 2027 Downtown Manhattan Budget Request

Snyder presented the 2027 Downtown Manhattan appropriation request.

9:20 AM Michael Rezkalla, Pawnee Mental Health Services Director

11. 2027 Pawnee Mental Health Budget Request

Rezkalla presented the 2027 Pawnee Mental Health appropriation request.

9:30 AM Daphne McNelly, aTa Bus

12. 2027 aTa Bus Budget Request

Smith presented the 2027 aTa Bus appropriation request.

9:40 AM Virginia Petersen, Riley County Genealogical Society

13. 2027 Budget Appropriation Request

Peterson presented the 2027 Riley County Genealogical Society appropriation request.

9:50 AM Jason Smith, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce

14. 2027 Manhattan Chamber Request

Smith presented the 2027 Chamber appropriation request.

Bishop spoke on the support requested for military relations.

Pearce discussed support for the Innovate program for entrepreneurs.

10:00 AM Scott Carmichael, Riley County Conservation District

15. 2027 Conservation District Request

Carmichael presented the 2027 Conservation District appropriation request.

10:10 AM Liz Holle, Big Lakes Developmental Center Director

16. 2027 Big Lakes Request

Holle presented the 2027 Big Lakes Developmental Center appropriation request.

10:20 AM Emily Wagner, Manhattan Emergency Shelter Director

17. 2027 Manhattan Emergency Shelter

Wagner presented the 2027 Manhattan Emergency Shelter appropriation request.

10:30 AM Kevin Larson, Riley County Council on Aging

18. 2027 Riley County Council on Aging Budget Request

Larson presented the 2027 Council on Aging appropriation request.

10:40 AM Scott Voos and Jarad Garren, Be Able

19. 2027 Be Able Request

Voos and Garren presented the 2027 Be Able appropriation request.

10:50 AM Christian Bishop, Flint Hills Veterans Coalition

20. 2027 Flint Hills Veteran's Coalition

Hansen announced with the possibility of losing power the commission meeting agenda will continue in the event we lose live stream.

Benne presented the 2027 Flint Hills Veterans Coalition appropriation request.

11:00 AM John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer

21. RCPD Generator

Ellermann presented the RCPD generator request.

Ellermann said Foley has one on site as a "sole source purchase" at a cost of \$229,000.

Move to approve the purchase of the generator from Foley Power Solutions under the Sole Source provision of the Riley County Procurement Code.

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

11:05 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

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

11:08 a.m. Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairwoman Focke, Vice Chairman Ford, and Commissioner McKinley, with Jacob Hansen, County Counselor, and Michael Hawthorne, Assistant County Counselor, attorneys for the commission, recess into executive session pursuant to the attorney-client consultation an exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, regarding confidential legal advice on pending litigation and 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 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

11:25 AM Board of County Commissioners

23. Work Session for Reorganization

Ward discussed the list of to do's for the reorganization discussion.

Ford said it looks like we are headed in the right direction with the job description.

Focke stated it is very wordy.

Ford asked about the recruitment process.

Ward discussed options to consider.

Focke stated she wants to be sure the position knows when the constituent contacts the administrator, they refer them to the appropriate commissioner.

Ward focused on clear direction and guidance from the Board.

Focke said on secondary functions she wants to be sure department heads and elected officials can talk to the Board directly.

Ward stated the intent is for the administrator to be sure collaboration is taking place.

McKinley questioned the primary point of contact for internal and external contacts and the ability to make commitments.

Ward said clear communication from the Board on authority would be required.

The Board agreed with the organizational chart presented.

Ward asked about the to do list timeline presented.

The Board agreed by consensus for Ellermann and Meyer to develop a plan for the administrative office space.

Ward discussed the administrative space for Human Resources.

The Board said the current location is temporary.

The Board agreed by consensus on the proposed County Administrator position.

The Board discussed the reorganization.

Adjournment

12:00 p.m. Move to adjourn.

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