



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
May 21, 2026**

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

Cindy Kabriel
785-565-6200

Commission Chambers

10:00 AM

[District 1 – John Ford, Vice-Chair](#)

[District 2 – Greg McKinley, Member](#)

[District 3 – Kathryn Focke, Chair](#)

10:00 AM

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Kathryn Focke	County Commissioner	Present	10:00 AM
John Ford	County Commissioner	Present	10:00 AM
Greg McKinley	County Commissioner	Present	10:00 AM
Rich Vargo	County Clerk	Present	10:00 AM
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	10:00 AM
Derick Schroller	IT Specialist	Present	10:00 AM
Russel Stuke	Emergency Management Director	Present	10:00 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	10:00 AM
Steve Schurle	Commercial Real Estate Analyst	Present	10:00 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	10:02 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	10:20 AM
Bob Isaac	Planner	Present	10:32 AM
Jared Tremblay	Flint Hills MPO Director	Present	10:49 AM
Thomas Dunn		Present	11:25 AM
Sue Simons		Present	11:25 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Stuke reported we have received a new to us military truck for Fire District #1.

McMillan reminded the public the Transfer Station will not be open this Monday due to Memorial Day.

Commission Comments**Ford's Comments:**

Monday I made it the bout of severe weather that came through the area. It was wild to watch, and I did lose power at my place for about 3 hours but thankfully no damage to anything.

Tuesday I listened in on NACo's webinar on the U.S. House Bill 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act. Some major wins for the nation's counties are CDBG allocation penalties under "Build Now" capped, limiting local fiscal exposure, the Build Now program sunset moved up from 15 years to 5, the emergency exemption window under Build Now expanded—critical for counties in disaster-prone states, and likely significantly shrinking the overall impact, built-to-rent restrictions removed, protecting tenants from displacement, and keeping key development pathways open.

Tuesday and Wednesday I spent at work actually working my full schedule for a change as well. We are starting to pick up as we typically do this time of year.

Thursday morning, I attended the Legislative Appreciation Breakfast at the DoubleTree by Hilton hosted by the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce. It was good getting a 2026 Kansas Legislative update and summary and listening to the thoughts of those who were in attendance as well. Big thanks to Olsson for sponsoring the breakfast.

Congratulations to K-State baseball for beating both Utah and TCU to make it to the Big 12 Tournament Quarterfinals.

McKinley's Comments:

Monday was the Law Board meeting. The big item was of course the budget. We approved an amount for publication that includes a 1.5% COLA and would raise the budget 1.88%. However, we intend to keep the COLA but find other cuts in the budget to get closer to 0% increase.

Tuesday was the construction meeting for the EM/Fire remodel. A lot of the interior work is being completed. The flooring is starting this week. Still on pace for early July completion.

Wednesday was the Juvenile Detention meeting. The director had told us several months ago that he will be leaving October 1st. We named the assistant director as the interim director with the intention for her to become director on October 1st. Interesting phone call on my way to the meeting. A lady called me to complain about her City of Manhattan water bill going up. I explained to her that I am a Riley County Commissioner and she needed to call a Manhattan City Commissioner if she was not getting answers from the water department.

Focke's Comments:

Monday, after our meeting, I attended the May Law Board meeting. It included final budget presentations, with three options of COLA dollar amounts. We needed to finalize this decision

in order to publish the budget before our next meeting. We had several executive sessions and then the Law Board decided on Budget #2, which includes a 1.5% cost of living increase and additional funding for prisoner food and care increases. The proposed budget can be reduced but not increased after the required publication date. Board members will work on reducing several budget items to pay for the COLA increase for the final approved 2027 budget.

Wednesday I had some dental work done in the morning. I participated in an interview for the PIO position in the afternoon and then went to my BOCC office to drop off some paperwork and check on the shade installation. Afterwards, I had a physical therapy session.

Thursday morning, I attended the Legislative Appreciation Breakfast at the DoubleTree by Hilton.

Business Meeting

1. Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)

Move to approve the 2025 EMPG grant application.

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

2. Appraisers Parcel Search Website Contract for First National Bank of Kansas

Move to approve the Real Estate Sales Data Search Service Agreement with First National Bank of Kansas for the Appraiser's Office.

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

3. Appraisers Parcel Search Website Contract with Gareth Rohr

Move to approve the Real Estate Sales Data Search Service Agreement with Gareth Rohr for the Appraiser's Office.

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

4. University Park Improvement District Secretary Appointment

Move to accept Kelli Nelson's resignation and appoint Jo Ann Zahner as the new secretary for University Park Improvement District.

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

5. 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

6. Riley County Employee Action Forms

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

- Jamia Roberts, a new hire, as an Intern, in the Health Department, at a Range TASND.
- Kerry Free, a Public Works Operator II, in the Public Works Department, for Separation from County Service, effective May 28, 2026.
- Danica Scheve, a new hire, as an Election Assistant, in the Clerk/Election Department, at a Range TASND, at \$15.00 per hour.
- Lindsay Newland, a new hire, as an Election Assistant, in the Clerk/Election Department, at a Range TASND, at \$15.00 per hour.
- Addison Hays, a new hire, as an Intern, in the Health Department, at a Range TASND.
- Ethan Samenus, a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, for Separation from County Service, effective May 14, 2026.
- Steve Nicholson, 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

Review Minutes

7. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - May 18, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of May 18, 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

8. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics**10:15 AM Brian Peete, RCPD Director**

9. RCPD Update

Freidline presented the Riley County Police Department update.

10:30 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

10. Administrative Work Session

Hawthorne discussed the work on the tax sale foreclosure process.

Hawthorne said he is working on the cleanup on a nuisance abatement property.

Hawthorne stated he is working with the resident in Tattarrax who wishes to purchase the lot from Riley County personally and lease it back to the Tattarrax Association.

Focke said some residents have expressed concern to her about it.

10:50 AM Bob Isaac, Planner

11. Riley County Driveway Standards

Focke opened the Public Hearing.

Isaac presented the Riley County Driveway Standards.

No public comment.

Focke closed the Public Hearing.

Move to approve "Resolution No. 052126-19, A Resolution adopting amendments to the driveway standards in the unincorporated area of Riley County, as incorporated by reference in Resolution No. 120621-49, adopted December 6, 2021."

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

11:05 AM Jared Tremblay, Flint Hills MPO Director

12. Big Blue 2nd Connect Cost-Benefit Analysis

Tremblay presented the Big Blue 2nd Connect Cost-Benefit Analysis.

11:25 AM Bob Isaac, Planner

13. Plat Lots 1 and 2 of Sleepy Hollow Subdivision, along with two (2) unplatted tracts, together into a single lot.

Isaac presented the Sleepy Hollow Unit Two Plat and street rights of way.

Move to approve "Resolution No. 052126-20, A Resolution approving the Sleepy Hollow Unit Two 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 Sanitary Code.

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

11:35 AM Daniel Skucius, Extension Director

14. Staff Update

Skucius and Simons discussed the VITA Tax Program.

11:50 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

15. FFY27 WIC Budget Application

Move to recess as the Board of County Commissioners and convene as the Board of Health.

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

Phillips presented the FFY27 Local Agency Application and budget.

Move to approve the FFY27 Local Agency Application and budget as presented.

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

Move to recess as the Board of Health and reconvene as the Board of County Commissioners.

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

Adjournment

Move to adjourn.

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

Announcements

A Legislative Appreciation Breakfast will be held today 8:00-9:30 a.m. at the DoubeTree by Hilton.

Riley County Offices will be closed Monday, May 25th due to the observance of the Memorial Day Holiday.

The Board of County Commissioners will not be in session Monday, May 25th.