



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
June 22, 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
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
Gary Olds		Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	8:39 AM
Michael Rezkalla	Pawnee Mental Health Services Director	Present	9:02 AM
Megan Lewis	Community Corrections Director	Present	9:08 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	9:28 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	9:29 AM
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	9:35 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	10:30 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	10:32 AM
Joseph Godown	Real Estate Specialist	Present	10:32 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	10:48 AM
Jo Reed	Deputy Register of Deeds	Present	10:56 AM

Michael Boller	Noxious Weed/HHW Director	Present	11:00 AM
Barry Wilkerson	County Attorney	Present	11:01 AM

Pledge of Allegiance**Public Comment**

Hansen asked to amend the agenda and change his administrative time to an executive session today.

Move to amend the agenda and replace Hansen's administrative time with an executive session on personnel.

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

Olds discussed the professional pay scale adjusting for the administrator's and clerk's positions. He encouraged the Board to not increase their salary for 2027.

Olds asked the Board to not give a COLA to the department heads or other elected officials.

Ellermann reminded everyone about the 24 Highway Corridor meeting tomorrow at 4:30 p.m. at Pottorf Hall.

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I met briefly online with my doctor to go through some recent test and lab results. Will meet with the specialist later this week as well.

Also Thursday I had a meeting over at the CL Hoover Opera House in Junction City with members from the United States Department of Agriculture, Small Business Administration, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development as well as area leaders from Riley, Geary, and Dickinson counties to discuss area concerns and challenges and how these federal partners may be able to assist. Thanks to the staff from U.S. Senator Roger Marshall's office for setting this up.

Friday morning, I met with former Riley County Commissioner Dave Lewis at Vista to discuss an on-going project being discussed for the Riley County Fairgrounds. It was good to catch up and get an update on everything that is going on.

Friday afternoon I met with Kent Glasscock from the Fint Hills Regional Council on some possible grant and other opportunities after Thursday's discussion with federal partners to see how things can possibly align. Good dialog and there will be some more conversation as well.

Late Friday I met with Peter Lazarz and Ben Ledo from MakeMyMove; Amanda Webb, Riley County Planning Director; and members from the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce to discuss the second round of possible funding for the Home in the Heartland grant. I believe that will be on agenda to discuss next Monday.

The rest of the weekend was rather quiet. Congratulations to the men's soccer team for securing the pool play in their group by winning their second game in a row for the first time since 1934. Also, glad Saturday night's storm wasn't nearly as bad as predicted as well.

McKinley's Comments:

Saturday I went on the Extension garden tour. A couple of the smaller ones were very impressive.

Focke's Comments:

Thursday's meeting concluded at the Health Department to have an update with their employees on the progress of the department investigation. All interviews have been done and reports are in the hands of the three Riley County Commissioners and Riley County Counselor. We received resignations from Diane Creek, Breva Spencer, and Kaylyn Speth prior to the completion of the investigation. David Adams will continue to be the acting director until a new one is hired. He is not available to be permanent in the position.

Friday, the offices were closed for the Juneteenth national holiday. I met with Dave Lewis in the afternoon in my office to go over a proposal he has been working on for Fairgrounds/Event space. He is meeting with the three of us to discuss it and it sounds promising. He was very impressed with the remodel we have done in the commission chambers.

This weekend, I didn't go to several events due to the weather but went to a private party on Saturday afternoon/evening. I did get in some yard work, mainly pulling weeds, but the heat and humidity were limiting. With all the issues to think about – the County, Law Board, RCPD, Health Department, reorganization, etc. I needed some time to decompress, so tried to keep the weekend quiet.

I spent a good amount of time reviewing all the documents for today's meeting and will have some comments later on various items in the presentations.

Business Meeting

1. Wind Turbine Removal Agreement

Move to approve the Asset Purchase and Removal Agreement with PowerGrid Partners for removal of wind turbines at Public Works.

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

NAYS:	None
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2. Riley County Employee Action Form

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

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

- Brevia Spencer, a Public Health Clinic & Family Services Manager, in the Health Department, for Separation from County Service, effective June 11, 2026.
- Diane Creek, a Health Department Director, in the Health Department, for Separation from County Service, effective June 11, 2026.
- Kaylyn Speth, a WIC Supervisor, in the Health Department, for Separation from County Service, effective June 11, 2026.

Review Minutes

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

Move to approve the minutes of June 18, 2026 as presented.

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

Review Tentative Agenda

4. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM Michael Rezkalla, Pawnee Mental Health Services Director

5. Pawnee Mental Health Services update

Rezkalla presented the Pawnee Mental Health Services update.

9:15 AM Megan Lewis, Community Corrections Director

6. Staff Update

Lewis presented the Community Corrections staff update.

9:30 AM Press Conference

7. Public Notice - Evan McMillan (1-2 minutes)

McMillan reported the Transfer Station will be closed Saturday, July 4, 2026 in observance of the holiday.

9:35 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

8. Data Centers and Battery Energy Storage Systems

Webb discussed data centers and battery energy storage systems.

Webb asked if the Board is ready to give staff direction or if there is additional information she can provide.

The Board discussed data centers.

9:55 AM Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director

9. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Contract Renewal - Pawnee Mental Health

Ward presented the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contract renewal.

Stukey said we do need a confidential resource for volunteers to use.

Move to approve the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Contract for Services with Pawnee Mental Health Services covering Riley County employees and their families.

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

10:10 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

10. Administrative Work Session

10:10 a.m. Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairwoman Focke, Vice Chairman Ford, and Commissioner McKinley, with Jacob Hansen, County Counselor, attorney for the commission, and Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director, recess into executive session for personnel matters of non-elected personnel, an exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, and to protect the privacy of the employee(s), to discuss the conduct of employee(s), the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 10:30 a.m.

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

10:30 a.m. 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

10:30 AM Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director

11. County Clerk Compensation Review

Ward presented the Riley County Clerk Compensation grade review.

The Board asked for additional comparable information from other counties.

12. County Commissioner Compensation Review

Ward presented the Riley County Commissioner compensation grade review.

The Board discussed the commissioner's compensation.

Ford suggested reducing the commissioner's salary to \$55,000.

Move to set the County Commissioner's Salary for 2027 at the 2024 rate of \$56,613.96.

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

11:00 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

13. 2027 Budget Overview

Phillips presented the 2027 budget overview.

The Board agreed by consensus to review the current facilities renovation contracts.

Adjournment

11:27 a.m. Move to adjourn after the Intergovernmental Luncheon at 12:00 p.m. at Rockin K's.

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

12:00 PM Intergovernmental Luncheon

14. Intergovernmental Luncheon Agenda

The Board attended the Intergovernmental Luncheon.