



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
June 25, 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 Commissioner	Present	8:30 AM
Jacob Hansen	County Counselor	Present	8:30 AM
Kirk Crabtree	Rural Economic Development Advisory Board Member	Present	8:30 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	8:32 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	8:33 AM
Michele Reid	Human Resources Manager	Present	9:22 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	9:23 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	9:47 AM
Katharine Hensler	Museum Director	Present	9:47 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	10:04 AM
Joseph Godown	Real Estate Specialist	Present	10:40 AM
Gary Olds		Present	10:40 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	10:41 AM

Pledge of Allegiance
Public Comment
Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Monday over the lunch hour I attended my second meeting of the Manhattan Area Technical College Foundation Board. Had a pretty good turnout and a great discussion as well. Some of the items up for discussion were the continued facilitation of partnerships to help the college secure funding and other necessary resources moving forward and to pursue grants and to garner more alumni and former student interaction. We discussed software to help in that regard. We discussed better plans to help in marketing and development putting together a foundation manual and possibly electing officers and going through a resource development process with a possible consulting firm as well. We will meet again in August.

Tuesday morning, I came down to make a blood donation with the American Red Cross. Certainly, glad to see these important blood drives are once again here at the Riley County Board Chambers. Got in and out quickly as usual and love the on-line setup "Rapid Pass" they have established, and they will also let me know where my donation was received when the time comes as well.

Tuesday afternoon I also attended the Kansas Employment Exploration Program (KEEP) Tour moderated panel out at the Manhattan Technical College. Done this a few times throughout the years including last year. This program welcomes transitioning service members and families and connects them with employers and resources from around the region including Riley County as they move from the military into civilian careers. I took some time to answer questions and explain all that Riley County has to offer in hopes of finding some great and experienced talent that will stay in the area.

Also Tuesday afternoon I attended the June meeting of the Board of Directors for Pawnee Mental Health. After the usual pre-meeting of the Finance Oversight Committee to update the financials and the 27 budget we jumped right into the general meeting with some introductions of new staff and welcomes. We then heard an Individual Placement Program update from Jani Berry, a Chief Financial Officer's report from Lindsay Miller, as well as a report from the Finance Oversight Committee. Mike Rezkalla gave his usual Chief Executive Officer's report as well as a Marketing and Development report. We finished the meeting with an updated Pawnee Mental Health organizational chart discussion.

Tuesday evening, I stopped by to check out the Open House that provided information on the U.S. 24 Corridor Management Study that is taking place for Riley and Pottawatomie counties. The Open House had KDOT project team members available to answer questions, provide information, and garner public input all of which will help the Management Plan evaluate the 32-mile span and options for future enhancements between U.S. 77 in Riley County to Airport Road just east of Wamego.

Wednesday afternoon I listened in on the Council of Foreign Affairs webinar titled "Ebola Update and the State of Outbreak Preparedness." It has been a while since I have been invited to these webinars, but they are always educational and informative. Stephanie Psaki, Senior Fellow for Global Health and National Security at CFR and Michael T Osterholm, Director for the Center of Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota provided updates on current infection disease threats including Ebola and Hantavirus and also discussed on the ground state and local preparedness to respond to these threats and practical implications for

officials and their constituents. A brief question and answer session followed as well.

Wednesday afternoon I listened in to the National Association of Counties and National Association of Homebuilders webinar “Collaborative Leadership Leads to Housing for All”. Supervisor Laura Capps, Santa Barbara Counting, CA and Commissioner Bill Truex, Charlotte County, FA discussed and highlighted how county leaders continue toward shared solutions to address housing challenges in their communities and beyond.

McKinley’s Comments:

Tuesday afternoon was the special Law Board meeting. It has been in the news. We approved the amended contract for Director Peete to end his contract at the end of this year and allow him to move to Topeka for the rest of the year.

Wednesday, I attended the ATA Bus meeting. The primary purpose was to review the budget for next year. We had a good discussion about all phases of the budget and the final approval will be at our July meeting. After the meeting we had long discussions solving the area’s problems. Subjects included the Green Valley incorporation, data centers, the KSU Foundation’s commercial development, and what NIL and other things are doing to college sports.

Focke’s Comments:

Monday I attended the Intergovernmental Luncheon at Rockin K’s event space. The presentation was on the highway expansion proposals.

Tuesday I came to the office, visited with Jacob Hansen for a brief time and went to some of the offices in the other building.

Later that day, we had a special Law Board meeting in the second floor conference room of the County Office Building to discuss Police Director Peete’s employment contract during an executive session. We did get an agreement finalized.

Wednesday I had some contractors come to work at the house and then went to Via Christi for an injection. I didn’t get it done because of a mix-up with the billing codes. I went to the doctor’s office to get it worked out and will get it re-scheduled when the order gets changed.

Tuesday and Wednesday I spent time going over the agenda and documents for today’s meeting and continued to review data from the Riley County Health Department investigation.

Wednesday evening, I attended the Keats Community meal.

Business Meeting

1. Rate Resolutions for Benefit Districts

Move to approve "Resolution No. 062526-23, A Resolution modifying the rates for

water usage in the Hunters Island Water Benefit District in Riley County, Kansas, and repealing resolutions in conflict therewith."

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

Move to approve "Resolution No. 062526-24, A Resolution modifying the rates for sewer usage in the Deep Creek Sewer Benefit District in Riley County, Kansas, and repealing resolutions in conflict therewith."

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

Move to approve "Resolution No. 062526-25, A Resolution modifying the rates for sewer usage in the Terra Heights Sewer Benefit District in Riley County, Kansas, and repealing resolutions in conflict therewith."

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

2. Advisory Board appointment

Move to sign a letter and approve "Resolution No. 062526-26, A Resolution appointing a Riley County representative (Daniel Skucius) to the Rural Economic Development Advisory Board."

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

3. Riley County Employee Action Form

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

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

- Brant Floyd, a Utility Technician, in the Public Works Department, for Separation from County Services, effective June 17, 2026.
- Caden Hickel, a new hire, as an Intern, in the IT/GIS Department, at a Range TASND.
- Vanessa Gray, a new hire, as a Public Information Officer, in the Clerk's Department, at a Range AA.
- Aly Gall, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.
- Elliot Read, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, at a Range TASND.

4. Approve payroll/accounts payables (when completed)

Move to approve the payroll vouchers in the amount of \$832,563.42 and the following warrant vouchers for June 26, 2026:

2026 Budget

County General	\$ 708,757.96
Disaster Fund	38.00
Health Department	101,092.15
Court Services	150.00
County Auction	4,983.19
P.A.T.F.	350.00
Motor Vehicle Operations	1,124.02
Special Alcohol	26,066.95
Capital Improvements Fund	37,261.66
Economic Development	5,000.00
Emergency 911	4,979.68
Solid Waste	294,297.54
County Building	6,794.91
RCPD Levy/Op	1,319.33
Landfill Closure	688.14
Riley Co Fire Dist #1	34,734.97
2023 R&B Project Sales Tx	86,692.46
University Park W&S	11,512.42
Hunters Island Water Dist	1,308.74
Carson Sewer Benefit Dist	1,169.95
Deep Creek Sewer	524.89
Deep Creek Capital Replac	4,000.00
Moehlman Bottoms	243.27
Valleywood Operations	1,550.66
Terra Heights Sewer	4,070.67
Konza Water Operations	2,026.68

University Park Lagoon	10,198.77
KDOC Adult Services	19,040.30
KDOC Juvenile Services	8,142.25
KDOC Juv Reinvestment	1,018.23
21st Jud Dist DC ADSAP	61.65
City Alcohol Funds	150.00
RL Salary Appropriations	1,230.35
Adult Services Carry-Over	433.16
Juvenile Svcs Carry-Over	62.46

TOTAL. \$1,381,075.41

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

Review Minutes

5. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Jun 22, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of June 22, 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

6. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director

7. REDAB Quarterly Update

Crabtree presented the REDAB quarterly update.

9:15 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

8. Administrative Work Session

Hansen said he is working on eliminating the SB 384, the Nuisance Abatement law sunset. He said Riley County has had eight nuisance abatement cases.

Hansen stated on Monday he will present a resolution on eminent domain on a piece of property in the Deep Creek area for public sewer system access.

Hansen discussed MHK Brewing and A&H Farms resolution regarding alcohol sales at the Riley County Fair.

Hansen reported the tax sale is tomorrow.

Hansen discussed Vargo being subpoenaed for the League of Women Voters vs. Secretary of State Schwab.

9:35 AM Cory Meyer, IT/GIS Director

9. Staff update

Meyer presented the IT/GIS staff update.

9:50 AM Michele Reid, Human Resources Manager

10. Auto-Enrollment Plan 457 Pilot Program

Reid presented the request to participate in the Auto-Enrollment Pilot Program. She recommended Riley County participate.

The Board discussed the program.

Move to approve Riley County participate in the Auto-Enrollment Pilot Program.

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

10:00 AM Katharine Hensler, Museum Director

11. Requesting Museum Closure for Saturday, July 4, 2026

Hensler requested the Historical Museum be closed on Saturday July 4, 2026 in observation of the holiday.

Move to approve the request for closure of the Historical Museum on Saturday, July 4, 2026.

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

10:05 AM Executive Session to discuss department head evaluation

12. Cory Meyer, IT/GIS Director

10:05 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, and Cory Meyer, IT/GIS Director, recess into executive session pursuant to the non-elected personnel matters exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, in order to evaluate the performance of a department head, the open meeting to resume in the County Commission Chambers at 10:35 a.m.

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

10:35 a.m. Move the Board of County Commissioners come out of executive session.

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

Move the record reflect no binding action was taken during the executive session.

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

10:35 AM David Adams, Riley County Emergency Services Director

13. Pottawatomie County Request

Adams presented the Pottawatomie County request to use the Riley County Emergency Services patient hauler.

Move to approve Pottawatomie County's request to use the Riley County Emergency Services patient hauler during the timeframe noted.

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

10:40 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

14. 2027 Budget Work Session

Phillips presented the 2027 Budget Work Session worksheets.

The Board discussed suspending or canceling renovation contracts.

The Board agreed by consensus to cancel the Health Department Space Study.

Phillips stated the IT/GIS relocation study is complete. The only item for the Board to consider is to proceed with the renovation contract or not.

Phillips reviewed the 2027 Budget Development worksheets.

The Board asked for another work session on 2027 appropriations.

Move to reject the presented 2027 Budget as presented. The Board instructed the Budget and Planning Committee to bring back a recommendation for the Board to consider and adjust.

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

The Board agreed by consensus to eliminate the \$2,000,000 transfer to CIP in the 2027 Budget Proposal.

Phillips stated we are getting low in time, July 20, 2026, in certifying to the County Clerk exceeding the RNR or not. She asked if the Board is willing to hold afternoon sessions.

Phillips said the deadline to certify to the County Clerk is October 1, 2026.

The Board agreed by consensus to hold a Special Meeting on the 2027 Budget, Wednesday, July 1, 2026 beginning at 1:00 p.m.

11:10 AM Board of County Commissioners

15. Reorganization Work Session

Ward presented the job description and pay grade for the county administrator position and elected officials pay.

Move to approve the job description for the Riley County Administrator position.

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

Ward presented information on new incoming elected officials beginning pay.

Heger said on the elected, who files, is the fee based on the current pay or a different amount?

The Board was in favor of lowering the fee to be based on the lowest pay on the pay grade.

Ward said she would look into if it can be based on experience and different pay levels for commissioners.

Ford stated current commissioners could be grandfathered in and new commissioners' salary would be in the pay range based on experience and qualifications.

The Board agreed by consensus to follow the current policy on elected officials and commissioners' pay.

Ward discussed the advertising and hiring process for the county administrator position.

The Board agreed the county administrator position can be recruited internally.

The Board discussed placement of the county administrator position and department.

Ward said the Board will need to consider if the county administrator is hired by contract or a regular employee.

Adjournment

11:36 a.m. Move to adjourn.

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