



**Board of Riley County  
Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes  
June 29, 2026**

115 N 4th Street  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
[www.rileycountyks.gov](http://www.rileycountyks.gov)

Cindy Kabriel  
785-565-6200

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**Commission Chambers**
**8:30 AM**


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[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 |
| Anna Burson       | Appraiser                             | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Evan McMillan     | Assistant County Engineer             | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Jessie Hubbard    | Administrative Assistant II           | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Michael Hawthorne | Assistant County Counselor            | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Doris Zimmerman   | District Court Clerk                  | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Rob Voelker       |                                       | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Molly Mathis      | REACH Committee Vice Chair            | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Amanda Webb       | Planning/Special Projects Director    | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Bruce McMillan    | Baker McMillan Architects             | Present | 9:18 AM |
| Michele Reid      | Human Resources Manager               | Present | 9:18 AM |
| Cory Meyer        | IT/GIS Director                       | Present | 9:19 AM |
| Ben Ledo          | MakeMyMove                            | Present | 9:20 AM |
| Peter Lazarz      | MakeMyMove                            | Present | 9:20 AM |

|                 |                                       |         |         |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Gary Olds       |                                       | Present | 9:28 AM |
| Susan Boller    | Elections Manager/Deputy County Clerk | Present | 9:43 AM |
| Bret Ballou     |                                       | Present | 8:30 AM |
| Lynn Blecha     |                                       | Present | 9:30 AM |
| Barry Wilkerson | County Attorney                       | Present | 9:30 AM |
| Brad Jager      | RCPD                                  | Present | 9:30 AM |
| Erin Freidline  | Assistant RCPD Director               | Present | 9:30 AM |
| Kim Ewing       |                                       | Present |         |
| Dane Boyd       |                                       | Present |         |
| Jason Prier     |                                       | Present |         |
| Emma Kasselmann |                                       | Present |         |

### Pledge of Allegiance

### Public Comment

Hanson asked the Board to strike the 9:00 a.m. Authorization for Eminent Domain with respect to the Deep Creek Sewer Benefit District.

Move to cancel the 9:00 a.m. Authorization for Eminent Domain with respect to the Deep Creek Sewer Benefit District.

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner Kathryn Focke              |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |

Mathis presented the Employee of the Month Award to Doris Zimmerman in District Court.

### Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I met with my nutritionist in person. Still waiting to see or hear a prognosis to develop a path forward diet wise, but we do have several ideas we can plug and play and see how it goes which will be a good thing moving forward and hopefully have something fully working by the end of July.

Thursday evening, I attended the Established Business Leaders Summer Social at the Advanced Technology Center up at MATC. I enjoyed socializing with other community and business leaders from around the area and we also heard from the new president, Patrick Avila from Ascension Via Christi who provided an update on his work here at the hospital in

Manhattan.

Friday morning, I met with the specialist to work through all the recent tests and labs. We do now have a prognosis and will begin following the plan put in place as advised and hopefully get the issues solved here real soon.

Friday afternoon I met with Harry Watts from MATC at Flight Crew to discuss some items relevant to both the college and for the Foundation Board. Had a great dialog and came up with some solid ideas to move forward on as well.

Wanted to give a shout out to Manhattan High's very own Cameron Carr for being drafted in the first round (24th pick) of the NBA Draft last week. Was drafted by the recent NBA Champion New York Knick but was then traded to the Los Angeles Lakers thereafter. Also good to see fellow Indians moving on to big and better things in life.

Weekend once again was rather quiet, not really looking forward to and adjusting to this summer heat just yet so I kind-of stayed indoors and got caught up on other things instead.

McKinley's Comments:

Thursday afternoon I met Dave Lewis to go over some possible plans for fairgrounds. They will be making a presentation at one of our meetings soon.

Friday, I met with Larry Fox. We spent some time just getting to know each other. We had a general discussion about things going on in the city and the county. Also discussed restarting the city/county/county meetings in the future.

Focke's Comments:

No comments.

### Business Meeting

1. 2026 Asphalt Overlay Change Order

Move to approve Change Order Number 1 with Shilling Construction for the 2026 Asphalt Overlay Program in the amount of a reduction of \$7,706.92 for a total project cost of \$1,625,686.54.

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner John Ford                  |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |

2. Advisory Board appointments

Move to sign the appointment letters and approve "Resolution No. 062926-27, A Resolution reappointing representatives to the Joint Corrections Advisory Board."

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner John Ford                  |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |

### Review Minutes

3. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Jun 25, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of June 25, 2026 as presented.

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner John Ford                  |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |

### Review Tentative Agenda

4. Tentative Agenda

### Press Conference Topics

**9:00 AM**

#### **Jacob Hansen, County Counselor**

5. Administrative Work Session

Hansen said the tax sale was held Friday and his office did a fantastic job.

Hawthorne reported the tax sale went smoothly and every single property sold. He thanked the Clerk's, Treasurer's and Public Works' offices for their assistance.

Hansen stated his office is doing a lot of contract renewal work.

6. Authorization for Eminent Domain with respect to the Deep Creek Sewer Benefit District.

Cancelled.

**9:20 AM**

#### **Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director**

7. Home in the Heartland grant funding

Webb presented the Home in the Heartland grant funding request. She said a new funding application period will be opening and wanted to know if the Board wants to apply again.

Ledo discussed the opportunity with the 80/20 split with the State for the program.

McKinley asked about the in-kind contribution.

Webb stated it is for her and chamber staff's time. She said it is \$15,000 of the first round.

Phillips said we pay a lot of it up front prior to receiving funds from the State.

Ford discussed the success of the program.

Focke expressed concerns with cutting off the local program and continuing a new program.

**9:30 AM Press Conference**

**9:35 AM John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer**

**8. Bid Recommendation for IT/GIS Remodel**

Ellermann presented the bids for the IT/GIS remodel project.

Ellermann stated the BHS Construction bid met all the required qualifications. He stated Schultz was lower, but did not meet all requirements.

Ellermann said staff recommends BHS Construction be awarded the bid due to meeting all the requirements.

Ballou discussed Schultz Construction's bid that was submitted.

Hansen suggested legal counsel review the bid if the commission is considering a "non-responsive bid", not meeting all the qualifications.

B. McMillan said the stipulation of the Qualifications Statement was included in the original county documentation.

The Board agreed by consensus for the counselor to review the IT/GIS remodel bids.

**9:50 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer**

**9. Peterson Ranch Specials Discussion**

Phillips and Hawthorne presented the Peterson Ranch Street Benefit District information for specials.

Phillips said typically a timeline is in the initial resolution, but it was not this time. She stated the Peterson Ranch HOA is asking for the specials to be over 15 years. She stated that typically street specials are done over 10 years due to the life of streets and maintenance being needed at the end of 10 years.

The Board discussed the Peterson Ranch Street Benefit District.

Blecha discussed the special assessments for the district.

Move to approve to assess special assessments for the 10-year period of time.

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner John Ford                  |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |

**10:00 AM Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director**

## 10. New &amp; Expanded Positions Request 2027

Reid presented the new and expanded positions request for 2027.

Wilkerson and Freidline presented the request for the Attorney's Office investigator.

Ford said he will be a "no" on all of them and with the increase due to the administrator's cost, but the budget gap is too big.

Hansen presented the request for a Human Resource Assistant or Administrative Assistant.

Vargo and Boller presented the request for the expanded position of the Elections Specialist position.

Move to approve the Elections Specialist position.

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner Kathryn Focke              |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |

Move to deny the Criminal Investigator position.

|                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>              |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner John Ford     |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, John Ford   |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | Kathryn Focke              |

Move to table the HR/Administrator Assistant position.

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner John Ford                  |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |

**10:30 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer**

## 11. 2027 Appropriations Discussion

Phillips presented the 2027 appropriations discussions.

The Board discussed appropriations.

Move to approve the following appropriations for 2027.

| <b>Appropriation</b>               | <b>2027 Approved</b> |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Big Lakes Developmental Center     | 197,782              |
| Riley County Council On Aging      | 278,784              |
| ATA Bus                            | 126,375              |
| Manhattan Emergency Shelter        | 16,000               |
| Pawnee Mental Health Services      | 297,500              |
| Riley County Genealogical Society  | 3,500                |
| Be Able                            | 10,000               |
| Flint Hills Veterans Coalition     | 1,000                |
| Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce | 50,500               |
| Downtown Manhattan                 | 4,250                |
| Riley County General               | 100,000              |
| MPO Contribution                   | 3,131                |

|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley   |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner Kathryn Focke   |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | John Ford                    |

### Adjournment

Move to adjourn.

|                  |                                         |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                           |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Commissioner Greg McKinley              |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Commissioner John Ford                  |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | None                                    |