



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
July 2, 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
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	8:30 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Vanessa Gray	PIO	Present	8:30 AM
Bruce McMillan	Baker McMillan Architects	Present	8:30 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:30 AM
Kris Schneider	Network Systems Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	8:30 AM
Michael Boller	Noxious Weed/HHW Director	Present	8:46 AM
Michele Reid	Human Resources Manager	Present	9:15 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	9:40 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	9:55 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	9:55 AM
Megan Lewis	Community Corrections Director	Present	10:07 AM
Joanna Lee	Adult ISO I	Present	10:07 AM
Dan Clark	Adult ISO I	Present	10:07 AM

Gary Olds		Present	10:17 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	10:20 AM
Amy Manges	Register of Deeds	Present	10:22 AM

Pledge of Allegiance**Public Comment**

Vargo introduced Vanessa Gray, the new Riley County Public Information Officer.

Vargo acknowledged the great work of the Riley County Information Technology Department and staff.

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Monday I watched the National Association of Counties webinar "Coordinating Housing & Transportation with HUD Thriving Communities" we joined NACo, ICF, and Smart Growth America for a discussion on the connections between housing, transportation, and land use policy. Participants will explore strategies for aligning housing development with transportation investments, identifying opportunities to increase housing supply, and advancing policies that support sustainable community growth. Was a pretty informative meeting to say the least.

Also, on Monday I met with Gimmie Jo Jansonius from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Amanda Webb, Riley County Planning Director to discuss some possible federal funding that could offset some local cost for area programming and services. Had a very informative dialog and she gave us a lot of possibilities to discuss as well.

Tuesday I spoke with Geary County Commissioner Keith Asher to discuss 2027 budget challenges they are having; they are starting to have many of the same concerns as we are and were wanting some thoughts and suggestions.

Wednesday morning, I had a Teams call with the National Association of Counties Community Economic and Workforce Development Committee on a special resolutions call in advance of the upcoming Annual Conference and Exposition being held in New Orleans. We discussed policy resolutions dealing with affordable housing, Small Business loans and grant, CDBG funds, Housing and Urban Development, and a modernization of disaster relief for local jurisdictions just to name a few. Those policy resolutions will be discussed in length and passed during the upcoming annual conference.

Wednesday afternoon I attended the Special 2027 Budget Session here in the BOCC Chambers as we continue to develop and work through the 2027 budget.

Also Wednesday afternoon I met with the team from MakeMyMove and Daryn Soldan from the Chamber to discuss in a little more depth the upcoming Home in Heartland Grant application and how maybe we still can make that work for the future considering budget

constraints moving forward.

Lastly congratulations to the US Soccer for beating Bosnia-Herzegovina yesterday 2-0 to make it to the round of sixteen.

McKinley's Comments:

No comments.

Focke's Comments:

Tuesday, I had a meeting with David Adams to go over the information and update on the Health Department. We spent time going over programs offered, and I requested some numbers of people that we serve in each department. He will get those to us as we go through the budget.

Later that evening, I attended a program organized by the Flint Hills Coalition for Fair Courts at the KSU Student Union, concerning the upcoming ballot question on the election of Kansas Supreme Court Justices. Retired Chief Justice, Landon Nuss, was the featured speaker opposing the ballot question and presented a lot of information. Logan Stenseng of Kansas Applesseed also spoke about the ballot question and its ramifications. There was a Q&A session with a lot of participation. It was a very good program with many in attendance.

Wednesday afternoon, we had a special budget session of the Board of County Commissioners, who discussed ways to bring down the 2027 budget. We will continue the discussion going forward.

Business Meeting

1. Bid Recommendation for IT/GIS Remodel

Move to approve the bid from BHS Construction. Not the lowest bid, but their bid included all the required paperwork.

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

2. Riley County Purchasing Card Request

Move to approve the Riley County P-Card Request.

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 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 Personnel Action Forms for the following:

- Sandi Wikoff-Harper, an ISO Supervisor, in the Community Corrections Department, for Separation from County Service, effective June 30, 2026.
- Amber Chafee, a new hire, as an ISO-I, in the Community Corrections Department, at a Range 11, at \$29.12 per hour.
- Kyle Ward, a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire District #1 Department, for Separation from County Service, effective June 30, 2026.
- Anna Isern, a Child Care Licensing Specialist, in the Health Department, for Separation from County Service, effective June 30, 2026.

4. Discuss County Officials Luncheon Monday, July 13th at 12:00 (noon) in Commission Chambers

Phillips said the department heads suggested further discussion on the budget and the impact on strategic planning.

The Board agreed by consensus to hold the County Officials Luncheon to discuss budgets and the impact on strategic planning.

Review Minutes

5. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Jun 29, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of June 29, 2026 as amended.

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

Review Tentative Agenda

6. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

- Rich Vargo - Primary Election update

9:00 AM Michael Hawthorne, Assistant County Counselor**7. Administrative Work Session**

Hawthorne said the department head committee voted for the Board to consider placing documents in the packet that are presented to the Board when reorganization is on the agenda.

Hawthorne clarified they will include the documents in the BOCC packet.

9:15 AM Michael Boller, Noxious Weed/HHW Director**8. Riley County Noxious Weed Staff Update**

Boller presented the Noxious Weed staff update.

9:30 AM Anna Burson, Appraiser**9. Appraiser's Office July Staff Update**

Burson presented the Appraiser's office staff update.

9:45 AM Evan McMillan, Assistant County Engineer**10. Request to Fill Open Position**

McMillan presented the request to fill the utility technician position.

Move to approve for Public Works to fill the vacant utility technician position.

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 a Riley County Position Action Form for a Utility Technician, in the Public Works Department, at a Range 10.

9:55 AM Amanda Webb, Planning/Special Projects Director**11. 2026 Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program nominations**

Webb presented the Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program recommendations.

Move to approve Brittany Phillips, Budget & Finance Officer, and Robert Cox, Emergency Management Planner, for the Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program 2026.

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

12. Staff Update

Webb presented the Planning and Development staff update.

10:15 AM Megan Lewis, Community Corrections Director and Joanna Lee, Adult ISO

13. Out of State Travel Requests for Megan Lewis, Joanna Lee and Dan Clark

Lewis presented the out of state travel requests.

Move to approve the Out of State Travel Requests for Megan Lewis, Joanna Lee, and Dan Clark to attend the Tall Cop Emerging Drug Trends Conference in Dallas, Texas.

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

10:20 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

14. 2027 Budget Work Session

Phillips presented the 2027 Budget Development Worksheets.

Move to take the 15% reduction off the Downtown Manhattan appropriation.

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

Phillips reviewed the cuts made to date.

Phillips reported the Leavenworth County Health Department has a \$1.5M budget with 14 employees. She reported Riley County Health Department is \$6M with 42 employees.

The Board agreed to ask the departments to find an additional 2% cut to the budget to fund COLA and expanded positions.

Meyer asked when the Board wants the numbers back to the Board.

The Board suggested having the numbers completed by Thursday, July 9, 2026 Board meeting.

Adams reported the Certificate of Occupancy has been received on the Emergency Management/Fire District #1 renovated facility.

Adjournment

10:53 a.m. Move to adjourn.

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