



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
July 13, 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
Vanessa Gray	PIO	Present	8:30 AM
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Joe Godown	Real Estate Specialist	Present	8:30 AM
Arturo Mauricio	KMAN	Present	8:30 AM
Evan McMillan	Assistant County Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	8:30 AM
Michele Reid	Human Resources Manager	Present	8:43 AM
Michael Boller	Noxious Weed/HHW Director	Present	9:14 AM
Michael Hawthorne	Assistant County Counselor	Present	9:15 AM
Katharine Hensler	Museum Director	Present	9:15 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	9:30 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	9:30 AM
Cathy Jones	WIC Dietitian	Present	9:30 AM
Shanika Rose	Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Coordinator	Present	9:30 AM
Michelle Horstmeier	Emergency Response Coordinator	Present	9:30 AM
David Williams	Museum Intern	Present	9:30 AM
Lauren McCaffrey	Health Department Intern	Present	9:30 AM

Jamia Roberts	Health Department Intern	Present	9:30 AM
Addi Hays	Health Department Intern	Present	9:30 AM
Caden Hickel	IT/GIS Intern	Present	9:30 AM
Megan Lewis	Community Corrections Director	Present	9:30 AM
Brian Peete	RCPD Director	Present	9:30 AM
Erin Freidline	Assistant RCPD Director	Present	9:30 AM
Major Mark French	RCPD	Present	9:30 AM
Gary Olds		Present	10:10 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	10:25 AM
Amanda Webb	Planning/Special Projects Director	Present	10:25 AM
Steve Schurle	Commercial Real Estate Analyst	Present	8:30 AM
Kathy Oliver	Court Administrator	Present	10:43 AM
Amy Manges	Register of Deeds	Present	10:49 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Vargo presented the corrected June Certified Value of 891,481,402 for a mill levy rate of 891,481.

Phillips asked the Board to amend the agenda to add the Riley County Notice of Revenue Neutral Rate Intent to today's agenda.

Move to amend the agenda and add the Notice of Revenue Neutral Rate Intent to today at 9:15 a.m.

RESULT:

MOVER: Commissioner Greg McKinley

SECONDER: Commissioner John Ford

AYES: Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford

NAYS: None

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Not a lot going on towards the end of the week and over the weekend which was good because I wasn't feeling well throughout.

I did catch up on some phone calls on various items, and have a few more to do. Caught up on some other correspondence and things as well.

McKinley's Comments:

Thursday I had a call from Randy Holle about the fairgrounds proposal that was presented at our meeting. He had heard about it and wanted more details and how it would affect the rodeo.

Friday was the Pre-Law Board meeting. Director Peete had an interesting proposal for funding that he will be discussing here today.

Saturday I had breakfast with Gary Olds. We talked about the budget and other things going on in the county. Then solved all the problems of the county, city and the country.

Over the weekend I spent more time looking at our budget.

Focke's Comments:

Thursday, I spent some time in the office after our meeting. I sorted out some paperwork, answered messages and e-mails.

Friday I had an appointment with my chiropractor, took my car to Briggs for service, and then attended the Pre-Law Board meeting at the RCPD offices. Director Peete went through the grant that they are going to present today. There is a lot of money available for buildings, which is unusual for a grant.

The weekend was pretty quiet, as I have been trying to follow my physical therapist's advice to take it easy. I also spent some time getting things organized for my trip to Virginia tomorrow.

Business Meeting

1. Review and approval of Indemnification & Hold Harmless Agreement

Move to approve the Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement for the Kaw Valley Rodeo.

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

2. Change Order University Park Water Line Relocation

Move to approve Change Order Number 1 with Riley County Rural Water District #1 for the University Park Water Line Relocation Project in the amount of -\$10,805.00 for an adjusted total of \$80,847.00.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Commissioner John Ford
SECONDER:	Commissioner Greg McKinley

AYES:	Greg McKinley, Kathryn Focke, John Ford
NAYS:	None

3. Riley County Purchasing Card Request

Move to approve the Riley County P-Card Request.

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

4. Riley County Employee Action Form

Move to approve the 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:

- Sydney Breyfogle, for a status change, as an As Needed Museum Assistant, in the Museum Department, at a Range TASND, at \$15.00 per hour, effective July 13, 2026.
- Macy France, for a status change, as a Facility Grounds Technician I, in the Public Works/Parks Department, at a Range 4, at \$19.41 per hour, effective July 18, 2026.

Review Minutes

5. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Jul 9, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of July 9, 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

Rich Vargo, County Clerk

7. YTD Budget and Expenditures

Vargo presented the year to date budget and expenditures reports.

9:15 AM

Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

8. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Riley County Rural Fire District #1

Phillips presented the RNR for Riley County Rural Fire District #1.

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Riley County Rural Fire District #1.

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

9. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Valleywood Operations Benefit District

Phillips presented the RNR for Valleywood Operations Benefit District.

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Valleywood Operations Benefit District.

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

10. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for University Park Water & Sewer District

Phillips presented the RNR for University Park Water & Sewer District.

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for University Park Water & Sewer District.

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

11. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Terra Heights

Phillips presented the RNR for the Terra Heights Benefit District.

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Terra Heights Benefit District.

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

12. Indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Carson Sewer

Phillips presented the RNR for the Carson Sewer Benefit District.

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Carson Sewer Benefit District.

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

Phillips presented the RNR for Riley County, Kansas.

The Board discussed the RNR rate.

No motion on the Riley County, Kansas, RNR notice of intent.

The Board agreed by consensus to address the Notice of Intent for Riley County later in the agenda.

9:30 AM

Press Conference

13. Primary Election update - Rich Vargo (2 minutes)

Vargo reported voter registration closes on July 14, 2026 for the August 4th Primary Election. He said advance voting in person and by mail will begin Wednesday, July 15, 2026. He said advance voting will be open through Monday, August 3, 2026 at 12:00 (noon).

9:35 AM

Michele Reid, Human Resources Manager

14. Intern Introduction

Reid introduced David Williams with the Museum; Lauren McCaffrey, Jamia Roberts, and Addi Hays with the Health Department; and Caden Hickel with the IT/GIS Department.

9:45 AM

Brian Peete, RCPD Director

15. DOJ FY 2026 Bridging Immigration-related Deficits Experienced Nationwide ("BIDEN") Program - Grant

Freidline presented the DOJ FY 2026 Bridging Immigration-related Deficits Experiencing Nationwide Program Grant.

Move to approve the application of the DOJ FY 2026 Bridging Immigration-related

Deficits Experienced Nationwide (“BIDEN”) Program.

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

9:55 AM Katharine Hensler, Museum Director

16. Museum Staff Update for June 2026

Hensler presented the Museum staff update.

10:10 AM John Ellermann, Public Works Director/County Engineer

17. Monthly Project Update

Ellermann presented the Public Works staff report.

10:25 AM Jacob Hansen, County Counselor

18. Administrative Work Session

Hansen discussed the negotiation on the recently proposed eminent domain resolution.

19. Peterson Ranch Benefit District Assessment Resolution and Notice of Hearing

Hawthorne presented the Peterson Ranch Benefit District Assessment Resolution and Notice of Hearing.

Move to approve Resolution No. 071326-29, setting a public assessment hearing on July 27, 2026 at 10:20 a.m. and authorize the Chair to sign the Notice of Public Hearing.

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

10:45 AM Brittany Phillips, Budget and Finance Officer

20. 2027 Budget Work Session

Phillips presented the 2027 Budget Development Worksheets.

Ford said we could take all appropriations, \$1.7M, down to zero.

Ford stated he can go with a flat mill levy.

McKinley suggested taking \$5.15 M from CIP to County General as a one-time fix.

The Board agreed by consensus to transfer \$5.15 M from CIP to County General to fund the 2027 Budget.

Move to approve the indication of Revenue Neutral Rate for Riley County.

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

Adjournment

Move to adjourn after the County Officials Luncheon.

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

12:00 PM

County Officials Luncheon

21. Agenda

The Board attended the County Officials Luncheon.

12:51 p.m. Adjourned.

Announcements

The Riley County Planning Board/Board of Zoning Appeals meeting will be held tonight at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse Plaza East Building, 115 N. 4th Street.