



**Board of Riley County
Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Minutes
August 27, 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
Brittany Phillips	Budget and Finance Officer	Present	8:30 AM
Derick Schroller	Information Technology Specialist	Present	8:30 AM
Elizabeth Ward	Human Resources Director	Present	8:31 AM
Rob Voelker		Present	8:31 AM
Arturo Mauricio	KMAN	Present	8:35 AM
Gary Olds		Present	8:55 AM
David Adams	Emergency Services Director	Present	8:55 AM
John Ellermann	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Present	8:55 AM
Cory Meyer	IT/GIS Director	Present	8:55 AM
Anna Burson	Appraiser	Present	8:55 AM
Michael Boller	Noxious Weed/HHW Director	Present	8:59 AM
Shilo Heger	Treasurer	Present	9:03 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

Commission Comments

Ford's Comments:

Monday afternoon, I attended the August Intergovernmental Meeting at Rockin K's. After some opening remarks and introductions we heard from Caleb Snider, USACE Operations Project Manager and he discussed their roles in providing flood control for the area and what that all entails. Then we heard from Jeff Wick, CEO WTC who went through the new Jobs & Growth Committee Stronger Together Presentation. Both answered some questions on their topics and then heard from the various agencies and what they are working this time of year, and we also discussed some legislative topics of interest and future agendas as well. Also, on Monday I did have an appointment with the cardiologist, and all went well; we seem to be in great shape with no real issues or red flags, which is good news. Will probably want to check back in at some point in the future just to compare.

Tuesday evening, I met with Riley County Attorney Barry Wilkerson to ask a few questions, bounce a few ideas and just a lay of the land on everything his department is working and some of the new challenges they are faced with as they work through their caseloads and work. Always appreciate the dialog and I always come out with some new knowledge and information I did not have before. Tuesday and Wednesday I also spent some time at work. Thankfully we are a little bit ahead in our production schedule and for this time of the year that tends to be a really good thing.

Wednesday afternoon, I spent working from home. I was able to finally finish the Pulse of Public Health: A Commissioner's Guide series with the last one being "Local Boards of Health"- What is Your Role? This call laid out some helpful statutes and foundations for these boards to function and operate as well as some useful resources and guides to be of assistance as well. Very educational and actually answered a handful of questions I've had along the way. Also, on Wednesday I listened to the National Association of Counties call "911 and Behavioral Health Building Coordinated Call Handling Systems. This call discussed and highlighted how counties are operating thousands of call centers and over 24 million behavioral health related calls each year as well as how counties are handling systems and infrastructure to strengthen crisis response and improved outcomes across the nation. To finish out Wednesday I worked on getting caught up on emails and other correspondence and getting prepared for this morning's discussion on a new county administrator.

McKinley's Comments:

Monday after our meeting I attended the Intergovernmental Luncheon. The first speaker was Caleb Snider from the Corps of Engineers. He talked about the levels of Tuttle during various floods. He showed how rainfall in Nebraska has a bigger effect on the lake levels than rain here and how releases are timed to downstream conditions. Second speaker was Jeff Wick from the Jobs and Business Growth Committee from the Chamber of Commerce. He talked about growth in the area and how great it is to give property tax breaks to businesses.

Focke's Comments:

This week has been pretty quiet as far as meetings, but a lot of phone calls and discussions, a PT session, hiring a new lawn/landscape person, and some water aerobics. On Wednesday evening, I attended the Keats monthly meal. It was well attended, and I had a lot of interest in

the construction that is starting on the lagoon. I have been taking my dog to Keats Park most evenings this week and have kept up on the project. A lot of trees and other foliage have been cleared, and the access road is being done – they are using part of the walking trail from the south park entrance to the lagoon site.

Business Meeting

1. Riley County Purchasing Card Request

Move to approve the Purchasing Card Request Form.

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

2. Riley County Employee Action Form

Move to approve the 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:

- Liam Shill, Parks Seasonal, in the Parks Department, for Separation from County Services, effective August 20, 2026.
- Alan Reynolds, Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire Department, for Separation from County Services, effective August 19, 2026.
- Alex Pena, a new hire, as a Volunteer Firefighter, in the Fire Department, at a Range TASND.
- Kaylob Corral, Customer Service Rep, in the Treasurer's Department, for Separation from County Services, effective August 21, 2026.
- Simon Hall, a new hire, as an Intern, in the Museum Department, at a Range TASND.
- Hannah Coates, for a position change, as a Paramedic PRN, in the EMS/Ambulance Department, at the Paramedic Range, at \$24.32 per hour.

Review Minutes

3. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Aug 24, 2026 8:30 AM

Move to approve the minutes of August 24, 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

4. Tentative Agenda

Press Conference Topics

9:00 AM

Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director

5. County Administrator Compensation Package

Ward presented the County Administrator Package.

The Board discussed the package.

The Board agreed by consensus the individual could choose if they prefer a cell phone stipend or county-issued cell phone.

The Board agreed by consensus to purchase a county vehicle with a county logo for the Administrator.

The Board agreed by consensus to not offer child care benefit.

The Board agreed by consensus to not offer relocation assistance.

The Board agreed by consensus to not advertise the 457 (B) contribution by the County but be open to during negotiations.

6. County Administrator First-Year Goals

Ward presented the discussion on the County Administrator First-Year Goals.

Ford said the most realistic and important thing is making sure the Administrative Services Department is established the best we can and get it right. He stated it does not need to be pushed and to take more time in getting it established correctly.

The Board discussed the goals.

The Board agreed by consensus on the following Goals presented below -

1. **County Budget:** Work with Department Heads to develop and present a structurally balanced 2028 Riley County budget that aligns revenues with ongoing expenditures and reduces reliance on reserves, while maintaining statutory obligations and essential County services.
2. **County Staffing:** Assist Commissioners to ensure personnel resources are strategically aligned with statutory responsibilities, service priorities,

workload demands, and the County's long-term financial capacity.

3. **County Service & Program Evaluation** — Review what the County does, why it does it, whether it is statutorily required, what it costs, who benefits, and what level of service the Commission wants to provide.
4. **Operational Efficiency & Modernization** — Identify processes that can be consolidated, simplified, automated, or redesigned to reduce cost and staff time while maintaining or improving service.
5. **Long-Term Capital & Asset Management** — Continue County prioritization of multi-year plan for facilities, equipment, technology, roads/infrastructure, and other major assets so future costs are anticipated.

9:40 AM

Michael Boller, Noxious Weed/HHW Director

7. Out of State Travel Request

Boller presented the out of state travel request.

Move to approve Out of State Travel Request.

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

9:45 AM

Executive Session to discuss department head evaluation

8. Michael Boller, Noxious Weed/HHW Director

9:52 a.m. Move that the County Commissioners, including Chairwoman Focke, Vice Chairman Ford, and Commissioner McKinley, with Elizabeth Ward, Human Resources Director, and Michael Boller, Noxious Weed/HHW 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 10:20 a.m.

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

10:20 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 no binding action was taken during the executive session.

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

Adjournment

The Board discussed the residency requirement for department heads.

Move to adjourn after the Ribbon Cutting and Open House for the Emergency Services Building/EOC.

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

Announcements

A Ribbon Cutting and Open House for the Emergency Services Building/EOC will be held today at 1:00 p.m. at 1130 Charles Little Road, Manhattan, Kansas.