

Clafin Fire District No. 1 Agenda Meeting Minutes

Recorded audio is available on compact disk upon KORA request to the Barton County Clerk's Office, 1400 Main – Room 202, Great Bend, Kansas 67530.
Phone (620) 793-1835 \ Fax (620) 793-1990 \ Email clerk@bartoncounty.org
Meetings Live Streamed through Microsoft Teams@ <https://bit.ly/3V6DEzY>

August 20, 2024

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened as the Governing Body of Fire District No. 1, this 20th day of August 2024, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1st District
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District, Chairman
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4th District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)
Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5th District
Chris Saenz, Deputy County Clerk
Matt Patzner, County Administrator
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

NOTICE TO EXCEED REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE AND BUDGET HEARING

At 10:00 A.M. Commissioner Schlessiger moved to enter into the Budget Hearing for Fire District No. 1. Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

NOTICE TO EXCEED REVENUE NEUTRAL RATE AND BUDGET HEARING: 2025 Operating

Budget:

Matt Patzner, Barton County Administrator, will provide details. Fire District officials were asked to submit a preliminary budget request for the 2025 Operating Year. The public is hereby notified that, should the budget be adopted as presented, it will exceed the revenue neutral rate. Budget information will now be presented for public comment.

Matt Patzner, Barton County Administrator, said the notices were published in the Great Bend Tribune on August 1, 2024, meeting the ten-day notice period required by Kansas Statute. The notice included prior year actual numbers as well as 2024 budget numbers and proposed 2025 budgeted numbers. A few facts about this proposed budget, it showed a mill levy increase of .512 mills, an assessed valuation increase of \$463,333 and an increase in budget authority of \$13,400. Most of the increase was to plan transfers to reserves for equipment replacement needs. They were applying for grants but will have replacement needs even if those grants did not come through. A total of \$11,300 increase in ad valorem dollars collected.

Don Hurtgen, Clafin resident, said he had some questions about the revenue neutral rate increase for the fire district. He was in the fire service for 35 years, 27 of those years working for a fire district. Hurtgen said under the Kansas Open Records Act, he should be able to request budgets for the current and previous years as well as expenditures. He said he was not opposed to the increase and added that what they were asking for was minuscule, but he wanted to know what they were wanting to buy. He felt when he asked for the information, he was met with aggression and hostility. Hurtgen asked the commission if they were aware that a privatized ambulance service was being run out of the station.

Chris Steiner, Captain, Clafin Fire District, said Hurtgen had asked for the 2022, 2023 and 2024 budgets and the 2025 proposed budget. Steiner said he was informed that each year the published budget was put on the county website.

Hurtgen said expenditures were not published, he wanted to see where the money had gone.

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Steiner said Hurtgen also asked for the run counts. Steiner said they checked with the Clafin City Attorney and Patzner. Steiner learned that there was a procedure to go through with the county to obtain open records and they were going to make Hurtgen aware today of how to obtain the information. Steiner said there were actually two private services being run out of the station. One was Clafin Ambulance Service, a private 501(c)(3), which they meet with the commission every year for a budget and Barton County Transfer Service. Those are two separate entities that are not a part of Fire District No. 1.

Commissioner Esfeld told Hurtgen that the form for a KORA request was available online and here at the courthouse for him to request documents.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the fees were to cover the time spent gathering the information and materials.

Commissioner Zimmerman said Barton County, being the governing body of Fire District No. 1, all bills were paid through the Accounts Payable in the County Clerk's Office.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he had been in a similar situation before and what had worked was for the parties involved to shake hands and hit the factory reset button. Commissioner Hutchinson said he knew Chris Steiner and Ryan Oeser to be good and honorable people.

Commissioner Schlessiger asked Patzner the reason for exceeding RNR was due to equipment replacement. Steiner said it began with a work comp issue and there was concern of going over the budget because of that. The issue was cleared up and they obtained insurance.

Ryan Oeser, Assistant Fire Chief, said they had applied for grants through FEMA the last 6 years for air pack replacements. They were denied the last 5 years and should know by the end of September if they would receive anything this year. Even if they get denied, the air packs must be replaced and will cost approximately \$140,000.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked how old the current air packs were. Steiner said they were three years past; they were unable to renew bottles. They had been trying to get grants instead of asking for taxpayer money. Steiner said they had only \$145,000 in their reserves and if they spent the reserves on air packs and then had a truck break down, they would be in a bind. Even if they were denied the grant, they would be ordering air packs in October. Steiner continued that they had been applying for grants and trying to raise money themselves. If they received the grant, they will have other things that need to be purchased. Steiner said 60%-70% of their runs were motor vehicle accidents with EMS assistance. The jaws and spreader were 17 years old and would need to be replaced soon.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked if the gun raffle was to raise funds for the Fire District. Steiner said the funds were 100% for the fire district. Steiner said they had less than 15 tickets left.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked how much money they would raise on their own with the raffle. Oeser said \$30,000.

Commissioner Hutchinson noted that they raised more than double the amount they would exceed RNR. Steiner said bunkers only lasted 10 years and were \$5,000 each, with 29 firefighters it added up quickly. They need to keep their guys safe.

Hurtgen said taxpayers wanted to see the best for their agencies.

Steiner said they had one township that paid the fire district for coverage that were out of the area that went into a fund.

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Commissioner Esfeld said she appreciated Hurtgen attending the meeting and wished more taxpayers would attend.

Commissioner Reif said he asked good questions and commended Fire District No. 1 and EMS; they did an excellent job and everything was very expensive.

Commissioner Esfeld asked how much an air pack costs. Hurtgen answered from \$12,000 - \$15,000.

Commissioner Esfeld asked what air packs they planned to purchase. Steiner said MSA, the same as Great Bend Fire used. They were getting the same because that was the biggest entity in the county and the one they most often work with on mutual aid.

Commissioner Reif said he wished all of Barton County fire departments ran the same. Steiner said Scott company did not want to work with them anymore, they did not bring anything out to demo.

At 10:31 A.M. Commissioner Hutchinson moved to close the Notice to Exceed Revenue Neutral Rate and Budget Hearing.
Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Esfeld called the meeting to order at 10:31 A.M.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to call the meeting to order.
Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the agenda.
Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2024, Regular Meeting.
Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. ADOPTION OF THE 2025 FIRE DISTRICT OPERATING BUDGET:

-Matt Patzner will provide details. The Budget Hearing for the proposed 2025 Operating Budget was conducted prior to this Regular Meeting. The Governing Body is now asked to consider adoption of the proposed budget.

Matt Patzner, Barton County Administrator, asked the commission to consider adopting the budget as previously presented.

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Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt the 2025 Operating Budget for Fire District No. 1.
Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

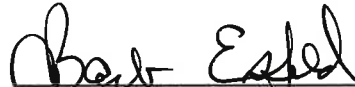
There was no other business.

V. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Reif made a motion to adjourn at 10:34 A.M.
Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Barb Esfeld, Chairman