

# Barton County Commission 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](mailto:clerk@bartoncounty.org)

Meetings Live Streamed through **Microsoft Teams**® at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3V642di>.

August 13, 2024

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 13th day of August 2024, at the Barton County Courthouse.

*Members present:*

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1<sup>st</sup> District

Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2<sup>nd</sup> District, Chairman

Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4<sup>th</sup> District, *(Chairman Pro-Tem)*

Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5<sup>th</sup> District

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk

Matt Patzner, County Administrator

Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

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## BUDGET HEARING

At 9:02 A.M. Commissioner Schlessiger moved to enter into the Budget Hearing.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

### **BUDGET HEARING: 2025 Operating Budget:**

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. Elected officials, Department Heads and supported agencies were asked to submit budget requests for the 2025 Operating Year. The Commission reviewed the requests and, with the assistance of the Administrator, drafted a balanced operating budget. The proposed 2025 Operating Budget is now presented to receive public comment.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented the proposed 2025 Operating Budget to the commission. The main goals that led the commissioners to this proposed budget were to remain revenue neutral, maintain quality public services in a way that was sustainable for years to come, invest in our employees and contribute to expanding the tax base of Barton County enriching the quality of life for the citizens.

Patzner said every budget year was unique and presented its own challenges. This year was no different as the commission had to find a way to accomplish all of these goals with the continuing rising costs of commodities, services and quality personnel with the same or less ad valorem tax revenue as the year before. The proposed budget showed a mill levy of 35.767 for the countywide assessed valuation of \$334,375,603 which would generate a total of \$11,959,821 in ad valorem tax dollars. This was \$39,071 less than the amount generated for the 2024 budget. When comparing the mill levy to 2024, the proposed estimated mill levy would be a reduction of 1.379 mills, from 37.146 to 35.767. This budget came in exactly aligned with the revenue neutral rate of 35.767. When comparing the proposed 2025 budget to the 2021 budget, there could be a 10.551 mill levy reduction and a \$265,905 reduction in dollars levied in that time span if this budget were adopted as presented. Patzner said most of the changes were in payroll and there had been some reduction in staff due to attrition. Patzner shared a power point presentation.

Patzner thanked the commissioners for their hard work on the budget as well as elected officials, department heads and supported agencies. Patzner also thanked his staff for their time and assistance in putting the presentation together. This was a team effort, and he was proud to say this budget successfully reflected the goals and visions the board had provided.

Commissioner Esfeld said she was glad the pictures were added to the presentation as one tended to forget what we had been through in the last year.

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Commissioner Hutchinson asked Patzner if he would agree that some of the policies enacted over the last few years had started to show up in the numbers. Patzner said absolutely, starting to see the fruits of their labor going through the process.

Commissioner Zimmerman thanked Patzner for his hard work and said he was key to the process. She said it was interesting to note that in the last 4 years, we dropped the mill levy by 10.551, if the estimated levy comes in the same.

Commissioner Schlessiger thanked Patzner also.

Commissioner Reif thanked Patzner and said the pie charts make things easier to understand. It was an awesome thing to be able to stay revenue neutral.

Veronica Coons, Barton County Conservation District, asked if the supported agencies accounted for 3% of the General Fund budget. Patzner said that was 3% of the total countywide budget. Coons asked how many agencies were funded in that 3%.

Commissioner Hutchinson said around 10 agencies.

Coons asked Patzner, when you say revenue neutral, that meant the mill levy was staying the same. Patzner said the mill levy was actually going down, the total tax dollars generated was going down.

Commissioner Hutchinson pointed out that Barton County acted as the fiscal agent for the county. Tax dollars were collected here and then disbursed to the entities.

Commissioner Reif moved to close the Budget Hearing.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## CLOSE BUDGET HEARING

### AGENDA MEETING

Close of the Budget Hearing until Close

#### I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Esfeld called the meeting to order at 9:23 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2024, Regular Meeting. Minutes of the August 6, 2024, Regular Meeting were not available.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

#### II. APPROVAL OF APPROPRIATIONS:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will present details. An Accounts Payable Register will be submitted to the Commission for the period of July 30, 2024, and ending August 13, 2024.

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, presented details and asked for approval.

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Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve appropriations for the period of July 30, 2024, to August 13, 2024. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

### **III. OLD BUSINESS:**

-There was no Old Business.

### **IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **A. ADOPTION OF THE 2025 BARTON COUNTY OPERATING BUDGET:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. At the Budget Hearing for the proposed 2025 Operating Budget for Barton County, conducted prior to this Regular Agenda Meeting, public comments were received. The Commission is now asked to consider adoption of the budget.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said this was the opportunity to discuss any last-minute changes to the budget. Should it be adopted, the final draft would be delivered to the County Clerk. Patzner noted that items could be deleted but not added to the budget. The county could not increase the levy once the budget was published. Expenditure authority across all budgeted funds was up \$849,000 from 2024. The overall increase was from personnel costs, anticipated liability insurance costs, Road & Bridge contract instruction and road overlay costs, increased community development and outside agency support funding, 911 maintenance contracts and various increases to commodity and contractual lines. It was possible to absorb these increases in budget authority in 2025 by beginning the year with a higher cash carry forward position and increased anticipated revenue from sources other than ad valorem. Patzner said they had been committed to facilitating lean, efficient county operations, eliminating around nine positions through attrition over the past few years. The proposed raise structure was the equivalent of a dollar an hour increases for all county employees to be divided on a more merit-based system at the discretion of the managing department head.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the policies enacted over the last couple of years were starting to show in the numbers. He also applauded other taxing entities that had been able to hold the line on tax increases and wanted to encourage others to follow suit. There were only two ways to lower the taxes, cutting from the budget and services provided to the taxpayers or growth. Commissioner Hutchinson said the Façade Improvement Grant program was one of the ways the county had invested in growth. Over the last 4 years, they had invested a little over a million dollars into our downtown and local business owners.

Commissioner Esfeld said economic development was important as a county and investing in growth would save people money.

Commissioner Hutchinson to adopt the 2025 Barton County Operating Budget.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

#### **B. ADOPTION OF THE 2025 AUTHORIZED POSITIONS LISTING:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. To assure that offices are operating with appropriate personnel, the 2025 Authorized Positions listing is presented for adoption. The listing includes all County positions, including Central Kansas Community Corrections and 20th Judicial District Juvenile Services, as both fall under the umbrella of County operations.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said this added another level of transparency to the county's functionality. Patzner said you would notice that 2024 and 2025 were exactly the same as a lot of the changes because a lot of the changes made were effective now and would continue into 2025. There were 190 full-time employees.

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Commissioner Esfeld said as it was discussed about cutting staff through attrition, one thing important was the quality of staff.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the number one thing needed in Barton County was the work force.

Commissioner Schlessiger said departments had also become more efficient.

Commissioner Reif said they had met with employees and discussed issues, helping them make wise decisions.

Commissioner Esfeld said that was how they learned what was needed in the departments.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to approve the 2025 Authorized Positions Listing.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **C. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT PLANS:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. Through the budgeting process, Barton County transfers cash, as savings, to both the Capital Improvement and the Equipment Replacement Plans. These plans, revised annually, allow the County to plan for projected long-term expenditures.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said capital improvement centered on expenses dealing with buildings and other fixed assets. The plan covered a five-year period with items reviewed annually. The equipment replacement centered on the replacement of equipment costing more than the established threshold such as copiers, vehicles and heavy equipment.

Commissioner Reif moved to adopt the Capital Improvement and the Equipment Replacement Plans for 2025.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **D. SOUTHWEST DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, INC: Agreement for Services:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. Southwest Developmental Services, Inc. (SDSI) is the Community Developmental Disability Organization (CDDO) for the County. Under the 2025 service agreement, SDSI will provide all services required by Kansas statutes for a CDDO for a total of \$70,000.00.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said Barton County designated SDSI as the Community Developmental Disability Organization for the county in 2004. Presented today was the continuation of the agreement for 2025. Asked for consideration of approval.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the SDSI Agreement for Services for 2025 at \$70,000.00.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **E. 2023 AUDIT REPORT:**

-Jami Benyshek, Senior Audit Manager, AdamsBrown, will present the 2023 Audit Report to the Commission. The report will cover the financial condition of Barton County from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023.

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Jami Benyshek, Senior Audit Manager, AdamsBrown, applauded the commissioners for the budget hearings and discussions. It showed they had a great understanding of the budget process and really care. Benyshek said technically, there were two different audits, the financial statement audit that goes over revenues, expenditures and unencumbered cash; and the single audit covered federal expenditures. The single audit limit was \$750,000 for this audit but recently was increased to one million. A single audit was required if more than \$750,000 was spent. Benyshek said they had issued an adverse opinion on generally accepted accounting principles because of not using US GAP. Instead, Barton County opted into the regulatory basis that the budget was prepared on. For that, they issued an unmodified opinion, which was the best type of opinion they could issue. It essentially meant the financial statements were materially correct. Benyshek reviewed the summary statement of receipts, expenditures and unencumbered cash. She said there were certain Kansas Statutes they were required to look at to make sure the county was complying, there were two not in compliance. One was the county did not have two public works contracts properly bonded and the other was expenditures were not controlled. Benyshek noted that Barton County had no long-term debt. An auditor's report on internal controls over financial reporting would show if there were material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and there were none. The major program they tested this time was the Coronavirus state and fiscal recovery. Again, there were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Benyshek said overall, it was a super clean audit. Benyshek went over the Governance Letter, specific audit requirements they had to disclose, and discussions had with management. They recommended that deposits were made timely, there was a large deposit at the end of December that did not make it on the books until January. This happens occasionally and they were able to correct it. Recording that in 2023 then helped the 2025 budget. They appreciated all the time and hard work of Patzner and the departments in getting the audit completed.

Commissioner Hutchinson said that sounded like a 100% score. Benyshek joked that she would give it a 99.9%.

Commissioner Hutchinson said we have great people in our leadership roles here when it came to finances.

Benyshek said they appreciated it when they can come in and do the audit without having to reconcile because staff had already provided that level of service.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to accept the 2023 Audit Report as submitted by AdamsBrown. Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **F. COUNTY ENGINEER: Consideration of Bids for FAS 380 RCB Extensions Project:**

-Barry McManaman, County Engineer, will present details. Bids were opened on July 31, 2024, for this project which widens an existing Reinforced Concrete Box (RCB) Bridge number FAS 380 located on NE 190 Road 1.15 miles east of Beaver. L&M Contractors, Inc. submitted the low bid in the amount of \$119,944.00. The Commission is asked to consider approval of the bid.

Barry McManaman, County Engineer, said this was probably the worst box in the county and had a steep drop off along the edge of the white line. If approved, he would have the contractor add six feet on each side of the concrete box. Road & Bridge could then backfill the dirt and create some safe side slopes. McManaman said it was similar to the one done recently north of Claflin. Two bids were received:

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Wichita Construction Group \$274,186.00

L&M Contractors \$119,944.00

McManaman asked for the commissioner's approval.

Commissioner Zimmerman said having the local bid be so much lower made this an easy decision.

Commissioner Schlessiger said she appreciated McManaman's forward thinking in selecting these, there were quite a few needing done around the county.

Commissioner Reif said ag equipment was getting wider all the time, a ten- or fifteen-foot drop was very dangerous. It was great to improve these bridges built in the 1930's.

Commissioner Esfeld asked McManaman when they would start the project. McManaman said when L&M submitted their bid, they said tentatively, the first part of September and should be done by the end of October. When issued an award of contract, they would provide a better schedule. McManaman said the road would remain open during construction with flagmen during the day.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he really enjoyed McManaman's radio interview.

Commissioner Reif said the radio interviews were educational as well.

Commissioner Reif moved to accept the \$119,944.00 bid from L&M Contractors, Inc. for the FAS 380 RCB Extensions Project. Cost to be paid from the Special Bridge Fund, Construction Related Items Line, 003-92-6191-92. Direct the Commission Chairman to sign the Notice of Award and the Agreement between the County and L&M Contractors, Inc. Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **G. NOXIOUS WEED: Equipment Replacement - Purchase of a Truck:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. Earlier this year, Road and Bridge asked for vehicle quotes for a ¾ ton, 4x4, crew cab, full size 4-door truck. A vehicle was purchased for Road and Bridge as a result of that bid. It is now suggested that the 2024 2500 Tradesman Crew Cab 4 X 4, priced at \$46,784.00 by Marmie Motors, be purchased to replace a 1995 Ford F250 XL at Noxious Weed.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said after reviewing the bids, it was suggested to purchase the 2024 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 HD 4-wheel drive crew cab for \$52,840.20 from Ehler Chevrolet. The commission would now be asked to consider the purchase of a 2500 Tradesman Crew Cab from Marmie Motors to replace a 1995 Ford F250 XL for Noxious Weed. Patzner noted that the vehicle had a truck bed. Should the purchase be approved, it was anticipated the 1995 Ford would be sold at auction.

Commissioner Schlessiger said when the commission visited Noxious Weed, they discovered they were driving the 1995 truck and thought that should possibly be replaced soon. It was not a 4-door truck.

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Commissioner Reif said the Road & Bridge Department had had a pickup they spent \$20,000 on that still had problems and it had to be replaced. Change out the truck now before problems arose.

Commissioner Esfeld said she received a call and was told these old pickups were valuable.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the purchase of a 2024 2500 Tradesman Crew Cab 4 X 4, priced at \$46,784.00, from Marmie Motors. Cost to be paid from the Equipment Replacement Funds, Noxious Weed Line, 072-00-6480. Direct the County Administrator to include the 1995 Ford F250 in the County Auction to be held later this year.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **H. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

-Chairman Barb Esfeld will present. Any Commissioner may make a motion for the board to recess to executive session at this time as allowed by K.S.A. 75-4319. Any motion must contain the justification for the executive session, the subject matter to be discussed, any individuals in addition to the board who will attend the executive session and the time at which the regular session shall resume.

At 9:56A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved that the Commission go into Executive Session for a period of 15 minutes. The subject to be discussed will be consultation with the County Counselor to discuss matters related to attorney client privilege. The reason this needs to be discussed in Executive Session is to provide the attorney / client privilege and the County's position on the matter on which legal advice is being sought. The governing body, County Counselor, the County Administrator and Solid Waste Director to be included in said meeting. The Open Meeting will resume at 10:10 in this room.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

At 10:10 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved to return to regular session with no action taken.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **V. ENDING BUSINESS:**

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

## **VI. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Reif – informational meeting about the electric transmission corridor in Larned on August 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 P.M.

Commissioner Schlessiger – Katie Sawyer from Senator Roger Marshall's office was willing to come to Barton County for a meeting also. She would get one set up.

Commissioner Hutchinson – had been contacted by several people about NIETC. He reached out to Duke Strobel, Russell County Commissioner, and Bob Rein, Pawnee County Commissioner, and they had agreed to have a joint meeting addressing the topic.

Commissioner Zimmerman – wanted to recognize everyone that made Barton County Elections happen.

Bev Schmeidler – recognized employees from other county departments that assist and work with the County Elections Department to make it possible.

Commissioner Esfeld – come support the bake sale going on at the courthouse to support cancer patients.

Judy Goreham – said all funds raised from their fundraisers throughout the year were donated to the Cancer Fund at the Golden Belt Community Foundation for cancer related expenses in four counties.

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## **VII. ADJOURN:**

Commissioner Hutchinson made a motion to adjourn at 10:20 A.M.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bev Schmeidler  
Barton County Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Barb Esfeld, Chairman