

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

Meetings Live Streamed through **Microsoft Teams**® at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3TBp0zh>.

October 8, 2024

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 8th day of October, 2024, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1st District
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4th District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)
Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5th District
Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk
Matt Patzner, County Administrator
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

Members via phone:

Barb Efeld, Commissioner, 2nd District, Chairman

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Schlessiger called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the agenda and table Items E and F.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2024, Regular Meeting and the October 1, 2024, National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor Tri-County Special Meeting.

Commissioner Zimmerman 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 September 24, 2024, and ending October 8, 2024.

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

Commissioner Reif moved to approve appropriations for the period of September 24, 2024, to October 8, 2024. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

-There was no Old Business.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. PUBLIC PRESENTATION: Oxford Houses – Great Bend, Kansas:

-Mike Swalley, Oxford alumni, will provide details. Oxford Houses is transitional living for people in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. The houses are not a boarding house or a halfway house, but a home run democratically by the service participants themselves. The mission of the Oxford House is to provide a supportive, drug- and alcohol-free environment for people recovering from substance addiction.

Mike Swalley, Oxford alumni, said he was in long term recovery and what that meant was he had not had a drink, drug or mind-altering substance in his body since October 17, 2014. Oxford houses were financially self-supported, democratically ran three quarter houses. They were not state funded, and

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Everyone paid their equal share. They would like to set up a presentation for judges because lately, judges had been wanting to sentence people to an Oxford House. It was difficult for them to take on someone without the funds to support the house. The houses in Great Bend were ten person houses. There was a \$150 non-refundable move in fee and then \$110 - \$150 per week to live in the house. That included staples, laundry and wi-fi. It provided a stable place to practice recovery. Swalley said people from the Great Bend houses attended World Conference in Florida recently. They were among 2,600 attendees. DePaul University did a study every year on Oxford Houses and the statistics showed that if a person stayed in an Oxford House for 18 months, they had an 87.7% chance of never using again.

Tracy, (no last name given), Oxford House resident, said she had been in recovery since June 27, 2024. When she was last arrested for drugs and was in the jail, she knew who she could turn to because she had been in recovery for most of her adult life. She said Narcan had saved her life twice and it was in every Oxford House in Great Bend. Tracy said Oxford was a safe and structured supportive place. They held each other accountable. Everyone can stay in an Oxford House until they felt ready to leave as long as they were not disruptive, pay their rent and practice principles in their lives. She lost a son to suicide a couple of years ago and her mother passed 8 months prior to that.

Jacob Parks, Oxford House, said he had been in long time recovery. Some time back, he stepped away from the house and back into addiction. Parks said he attended the convention and brought back several tools to use in sobriety. One thing he loved about Oxford House was the comradery. He was also handicapped and on his own, would sit in his room and do nothing. In Oxford House, there was always something positive happening.

Chris Maher, Oxford House alumni, said he had been in recovery since July 14, 2022. When he first went into Oxford House, he did not believe in it, he was there to fake it until he made it. He was a very angry person and did not know how to live in society. He learned how to handle situations without anger. He now had an amazing job because of his experience in Oxford. He was in a house for a year serving as president and secretary. They run the house meetings much like the commission meetings with motions and seconds, not one voice in the house but many. The biggest thing he learned from Oxford was how to live in society and do it right. He would be completely lost without Mike Swalley and Oxford House.

Charles Rowe, Oxford House, said he had been using drugs since he was 12 years old. Oxford gave him a clean, safe place to live. He also attended the recent convention.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked how the trip to the convention was funded. Swalley said they had a president, secretary, treasurer, comptroller and shopper, a chain of command. They had houses, chapters and then a World Commission Committee. Houses pay dues to the chapter, the chapter paid dues to world and from there a fund was put together to go to world. Thirteen attended from Great Bend this year. It was the second largest number of delegates in the United States. Texas was the only one who sent more people. In Kansas, there were 24 chapters and Great Bend was probably the smallest with 4 houses. There were over 200 houses in Kansas and 4,000 worldwide. They hold fundraisers as well to raise funds and have one coming up in December to provide Christmas for the children in Oxford Houses. Last year, they raised over \$7,000. Swalley said he met his wife on a plane headed to the World Convention in 2011. In 2015, he and his wife were asked to help with the first house opened in Great Bend. Today, they have really nice houses for them to live in and take care of. There was a coordinator in every house who assigned chores to each resident.

Commissioner Reif said he was amazed at how brave they were and glad they came to the meeting today. He said Commissioner Esfeld helped bring awareness. Swalley said Commissioner Esfeld was on the board and owned an Oxford House.

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Commissioner Esfeld said she was proud of those present and they did a great job today on the presentation.

Swalley asked how they could go about setting up a presentation with the judges. Patrick Hoffman said there had been talk and there were changes coming in the judicial system in January. They would work on getting something facilitated.

Swalley said they liked to do presentations and educate about Oxford Houses.

B. PUBLIC HEALTH: Home Visitor of the Year – Savannah Bochy:

-Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, will provide details. Kansas Home Visiting is a voluntary program that brings a trained family-support professional to homes at no-cost to clients. In addition to home visits, the program offers prenatal support and programming for children to the age of one. Savannah Bochy, Maternal Child and Health (MCH) Home Visitor, has been named the Home Visitor of the Year by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in appreciation of her invaluable services and contribution to the Barton County Health Department and the Maternal and Child Health Universal Home Visiting program.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, said a year ago, they had the privilege of being invited to Oxford Houses in Great Bend and provided services. Winkelman said it opened her eyes and she was impressed by the structure, respect and trust.

Winkelman said she was here to recognize Savannah Bochy as Home Visitor of the Year in the State of Kansas. Bochy was recognized at the conference last week.

Bochy said she did 151 home visits. She goes into the homes helping new mothers and expectant mothers setting up cribs in correct areas, covering safe sleep, feeding routines, breastfeeding struggles and any questions they have, helping them one on one, supporting them through their journey. They cover home safety, water temperatures, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and giving them confidence.

Winkelman said Bochy planned to attend car seat certification training after the first of the year.

Bochy said she recently became certified as a safe sleep instructor to help lower the risk of SIDS.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Bochy how long she had worked at the Health Department. Bochy said a year this past August.

Winkelman said about six months after Bochy started working there, Winkelman realized she knew her as a baby.

Commissioner Reif said new parents were always scared and Bochy was a reassuring resource for them. Home Visitor of the Year by KDHE was a big deal.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to congratulate Ms. Bochy for being named the Home Visitor of the Year.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

C. PUBLIC HEALTH: Women, Infants and Children – Certified Breastfeeding Specialists:

Ms. Winkelman will provide details. After completion of a course offered through Lactation Education sources, Bev Frizell, Registered Dietician, and Emilee Foote, Registered Dietician, have both been

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arded the title of Certified Breastfeeding Specialist (CBS). The CBS supports families through pregnancy, breastfeeding initiation and the normal course of lactation. In addition, the CBS may offer individual support, lead lactation support groups and teach lactation classes. The current designation period is five years.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, said Bev Frizell and Emilee Foote, both Registered Dietitians, completed a course offered through the Lactation Education Resources. They searched out the education and had worked very hard. They bring a lot of breastfeeding education for the WIC Clients and Maternal and Child Health.

Bev Frizell said she had been employed at the Health Department for 33 ½ years and was the longest employee at the Health Department. Frizell said WIC was a nutrition education program and one of the things they did was provide the best nutrition for infants, which was breast milk. A lot of people thought WIC was just a place to get free formula but 80% of their families chose to breastfeed. The class was 6 months of studying and online coursework but would be very beneficial for their clients. Frizell said they would be going to Pittsburg, Kansas in November for a skills class.

Emilee Foote said she had worked for Barton County just a little more than 2 years. She worked part-time here and went to Stafford County about 12 hours a month.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked how many clients they serve. Frizell said it was just over 600.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to congratulate Bev Frizell and Emilee Foote upon completion of the Certified Breastfeeding Specialist designation.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

Yoted aye. Motion passed.

D. PUBLIC HEALTH: Acceptance of Grant Award - FY25 Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Grant:

-Ms. Winkelman will provide details. The Health Department was notified that they have received a \$160,956.00 grant for a joint project with the Family Crisis Center. The project grant period runs from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. Ms. Winkelman will expand on program goals and ask that the Commission accept the funding.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, said Kylee Graves, Family Crisis Center Executive Director and Misty Trudeau, Financial Officer at the Health Department were here today. Winkelman said they had wanted to do a project with the Family Crisis Center for some time. This project was to support community-based efforts to develop, operate and expand initiatives to prevent child abuse and neglect, coordinate resources and activities to support families to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect and to foster understanding and knowledge of diverse populations. The grant timeline was October 21, 2024, through September 30, 2025. The Health Department was a pass-through for the financial part with some of their social work time going to the project as well. Winkelman said they were excited to focus on the 0-5 age population.

Kylee Grave, Executive Director Family Crisis Center, said she was thrilled for the opportunity to work with the Health Department. She hired a person just for this program and they start next week. That person would go into daycares and preschools, working with those children 0-5 years of age. Graves said they would be offering parenting classes using the conscious discipline curriculum the Family Crisis Center purchased about a year ago. Part of the grant would be used to send her new staff and the Health Department social worker to training. They would also go into their shelter and work with those families.

Another part would be to offer daycare stipends to parents, it was hard to get a job if you did not have care.

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City Trudeau, Health Department Financial Officer, said Family Crisis Center came to one of their in-services a little over a year ago. Trudeau said when she learned more about what they offer, she wanted to find a grant for a joint project. They were passionate about kids, and this was a great opportunity to help children. Trudeau hoped this was the first of many partnerships.

Commissioner Zimmerman said kudos for your out of the box thinking and going after this grant.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to accept the \$160,956.00 FY25 Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Grant as provided by the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. Said funds to be used for a joint project with the Family Crisis Center.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ITEM TABLED

E. NATIONAL INTEREST ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION CORRIDOR TRI-COUNTY SPECIAL MEETING:

-Chairman Barb Esfeld will facilitate the discussion. On October 1, 2024, Barton, Pawnee and Russell Counties joined to hold a tri-County Special Meeting relative to the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor (NIETC). Included were federal and state officials along with input from the US Department of Energy, Kansas Corporation Commission and others.

ITEM TABLED

F. KANSAS LEGISLATIVE POLICY GROUP: Annual Meeting Update:

-Chairman Esfeld will provide an update. On October 3 and 4, 2024, the Kansas Legislative Policy Group held its Annual Meeting in Liberal, Kansas. The meeting included a legislative platform review, economic development program and a series of speakers.

No Executive Session Held

G. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

-Chairman 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.

V. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Schlessiger – Pawnee Rock car show next Saturday.

VII. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adjourn at 9:50 A.M.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman Pro-Tem