

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/3ZNX8vi>

February 11, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 11th day of February, 2025, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1st District, *(Chairman Pro-Tem)*

Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District

Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District

Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4th District, Chairman

Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5th District

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk

Matt Patzner, County Administrator

Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

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

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Reif moved to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2025, Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

III. APPROVAL OF APPROPRIATIONS: 13th Month – 3rd Batch:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will present details. An Accounts Payable Register will be submitted to the Commission for the period ending December 31, 2024. This is considered the third "13th Month" for 2024 expenditures.

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

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve 13th appropriations for the period ending December 31, 2024.

Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF APPROPRIATIONS:

-Ms. Schmeidler will present details. An Accounts Payable Register will be submitted to the Commission for the period of January 28, 2025, and ending February 11, 2025.

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

Commissioner Reif moved to approve appropriations for the period of January 28, 2025, to February 11, 2025. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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/3ZNX8vi>

NEW BUSINESS:

A. COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE: Request for Approval – Added / Abated / Escaped / Refunded Taxes:

-Ms. Schmeidler will present a listing of Added / Abated / Escaped / Refunded Taxes. Orders for these actions are kept on file in the County Clerk's Office. These are used to correct assessments and are requested by the County Appraiser's Office or the County Clerk's Office.

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, presented details and asked for approval of AAE's.

BATCH #4	VALUES	ESCAPED TAXES	ADDED / ABATED	REFUNDS
Gas				
Oil				
Personal Property	(4,746)		(\$631.46)	\$631.46
Real Estate	(64,562)		(\$10,210.52)	\$1,926.69
16/20 M Trucks				
State Assessed Utilities				
Special Assessments				
Grand Totals	(69,308)	\$0.00	(\$10,841.98)	\$2,558.15
Total Taxes	(\$10,841.98)			
Total Records Selected	19			

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the Listing of Added / Abated / Escaped / Refunded Taxes as reviewed by the County Appraiser and presented to the County Clerk's Office. Direct the Chairman to on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

B. BARTON COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: Policy Updates:

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. From time to time, the Employee Handbook is reviewed to ensure that policies reflect current practices and federal and state law. At this time, it is suggested that policies related to discretionary time and business travel expenses be updated.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said essentially for discretionary time, the time accumulated would match the typical hours worked in a day. For instance, Communications worked 12 hour shifts so a discretionary day would be 12 hours for those employees to allow them to take a shift off. Patzner said Policy 509, Business Travel Expenses, would change the daily limits from \$35 to \$50 and the per meal limit to \$25. It would eliminate the language regarding breakfast, lunch and dinner to allow the employee more leeway. Patzner asked the commission to consider approval of the changes.

Commissioner Hutchinson said Discretionary Day was intended for an employee to have a day off, equivalent to the number of hours normally worked. Patzner said that was correct. An employee at Communications had to supplement the Discretionary Day with 4 hours of vacation time to take a day off, this would correct that time.

Commissioner Esfeld said that was a good change.

Commissioner Reif said this was something they should revisit each year because things changed.

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/3ZNX8vi>

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Patzner if he had talked to the other players about the changes to the meal expenses to see if there were any problems. Patzner said he had the EEC look at it and they agreed it would clear up the issues.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Patzner how long it had been since it had been changed. Patzner said they had not changed since 2010. There had been a lot of things happen since 2010 that made those numbers out of date.

Commissioner Schlessiger said this was one of the things brought up during lunches with departments.

Commissioner Hutchinson said it was also brought up that the employees were not allowed certain things for meals, such as a smoothie.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to adopt revised Policy 300, Discretionary Time, and Policy 509, Business Travel Expenses. Authorize the Administrator to make such revisions as are necessary to incorporate the updates into the Barton County Employee Handbook and to provide such updates to County employees. Commissioner Reif seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion passed.

C. KANSAS NATURAL RESOURCE COALITION: 2025 Membership:

-Mr. Patzner will present details. The Kansas Natural Resource Coalition (KNRC) serves as a conduit between local, state and federal governments to promote balanced, necessary and effective administrative policymaking initiatives that materially affect the natural or human systems governed by individual member counties. The Commission has been asked to consider membership for 2025.

At Patzner, County Administrator, said the membership cost was \$5,000.00 which was the same as last year and asked for consideration of approval.

Commissioner Schlessiger said she felt this was an important organization for them to be a part of. They had been actively involved in the NIETC Corridor and the Quivira water issues.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she could not agree more.

Commissioner Reif said the cost had not changed since they first joined and was a good investment.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked if anyone remembered how many member counties there were, around 30 or so.

Commissioner Hutchinson said she was in the ballpark and noted KNRC was instrumental in the three-county joint meeting.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the 2025 membership to the Kansas Natural Resource Coalition. The \$5,000.00 payment is to be made from the Courthouse General Account of the General Fund, Dues, Memberships, Subscriptions Line, 001-18-5455. Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion passed.

D. 2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDING: Project-based Economic Development Funding:

-Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, will provide details. Barton County has historically given unrestricted funding to Great Bend Economic Development (GBED). The Commission has discussed that one disadvantage of unrestricted funding is the loss of direction on how funds are ultimately used. On December 17, 2024, then-Chairman Barb Esfeld and Mr. Hoffman notified GBED that the Commissioners

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/3ZNX8vi>

County transition to “project-based economic development funding” effective January 1, 2025, in order for GBEC to prepare for a potential change in funding. The letter stated that Barton County intends to continue to be a funding source for projects benefiting the economic development of the entirety of the County. Rather than releasing funds directly to Great Bend Economic Development, the Commission would consider prioritized funding based on project selection. The County has also considered using economic development funding to contract with a professional grant writing firm to address community needs.

Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, said Barton County had always put money into an economic development line item. Historically, that was just for projects as they came up. The reason counties funded economic development was because the county had an opportunity to increase the tax base. A few years ago, the commissioners looked into changing the way they funded economic development. Instead of doing it as things happen, treat it as one of the directly funded partner agencies. Every year when planning the budget, there were a list of agencies that money was planned to give to directly such as the Humane Society. Hoffman said in doing that, they went the same as with the Humane Society where a board member served and gave direct funding. They had done that the last couple of years but found that Economic Development was different than the Humane Society because they only did a couple of basic functions. Economic Development was broader, more complicated and creative. Hoffman said that there were discussions in study sessions about going back to the old way, item by item. This past December, Hoffman and Commissioner Esfeld worked on a letter to alert Economic Development because it would affect their funding. Hoffman said today the commission needed to decide if they wanted to formally take action and go back to funding on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Zimmerman said when the county received Spark and ARPA funds, a lot of people came forward with needs. This money would allow them to help agencies and other municipalities with their needs. She had seen Barton County budget for Economic Development for a number of years and not do anything with it. The current board had a lot of ideas and things they would like to see done and the money would be well used.

Hoffman said this was an evolution of how the county could be more involved, maybe in a different way than they had the last couple of years.

Commissioner Reif said Economic Development was doing an excellent job. He felt as a commissioner, they tried to be transparent on how they spent money. This would be a better way to answer the taxpayers.

Hoffman said it would be easy to track.

Commissioner Schlessiger said today's environment demanded they be more transparent. They had some great ideas and projects to move forward on.

Commissioner Zimmerman said in reference to 2025 Economic Development Funding, move to transition to project-base economic development funding effective January 1, 2025, using a prioritized funding based on project section which benefits the entirety of the County. Budgeted funding shall not, therefore, be automatically distributed to Great Bend Economic Development.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

E. KANSAS REHABILITATION TAX CREDITS: Courthouse HVAC Project:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. In late 2024, the County solicited bids from interested parties in purchasing Kansas Rehabilitation Tax Credits that were issued for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) project at the Barton County Courthouse. On November 26, 2024, the Commission

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/3ZNX8vi>

arded the Kansas Rehabilitation Tax Credits bid to Clocktower Tax Credits for \$1,463,440.00 in tax credits at a bid price of \$1,358,218.66. The tax credits have now been received by the County.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the tax credits were sold at \$0.93 on the dollar. Barton County had received the funds in our account. Patzner said the total cost with change orders was around \$5,182,000. When you took the tax credits off, it brought the total of the HVAC project to \$3,823,000, which was under the original bid of \$4.182 million. This was the last step of the project. The project was completed on time and approximately \$358,000 under budget. Patzner said Patrick Hoffman put in a lot of work and he appreciated everything he did to help.

Hoffman said 110 years ago, Barton County built this beautiful, 4 story stone, tank of a courthouse and did not have any idea what modern plumbing or air conditioning would be like at the time. Commissioners should be very proud that they basically gutted the building, moved everyone out and then back in while staying under budget and on time. Hoffman said it was difficult for the employees for a year, but nothing went wrong. Patzner and the commissioners worked hard and did a great job coordinating everything. It was an amazing project. Hoffman admitted that he sat in the back corner thinking this was the craziest thing they were undertaking. Thrilled to have this final piece in place.

Commissioner Esfeld said in looking back, it was scary. She said she really thought they would go over budget and it would take twice as long. It was awesome to have the taxpayer dollars back to be used where they should be used, and the building would be around for another 100 years.

Commissioner Reif said the building was going to last a long time. The kids in kindergarten now would probably be the next ones to have to worry about it. Coming in as a new commissioner, having to take on the project was mind boggling. Everything turned out great.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she was glad to be a part of the team to see this project. It was a big vote in the second week of being a commissioner. She thanked the employees and everyone who helped with the project.

Commissioner Schlessiger agreed it was stressful in that second week as a commissioner, but she was proud of the project.

Commissioner Hutchinson said people would say they were not really under budget but went over budget. He said technically, that was true, but they did not go over budget with things they did not foresee. He said they went over budget by doing additional things in a shorter amount of time such as redoing the public restrooms and moving the Treasurers Office to the first floor. These things were done to make the building more functional for the taxpayers. Commissioner Hutchinson said they had an ace in the hole with the state tax credits.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she could not wait to get the money moved into reserves. Patzner said they could talk about that next week.

No Executive Session Held

F. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

-Chairman Tricia Schlessiger 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.

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/3ZNX8vi>

ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Hutchinson – he had constituents reach out to him about College Hill. He asked the city of Great Bend about brining NE 30 Road on the hill with the impending weather forecast. They declined due to staffing and not wanting to set a precedent among others.

Commissioner Hutchinson – Mike Courson was leaving the radio station and would not be covering commission meetings any longer. He thanked Courson for always being honest, accurate and fair, a true gentleman.

VI. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Reif moved to adjourn at 9:33 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman