

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/4e9cCig>

January 7, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 7th day of January, 2025, 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

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk

Matt Patzner, County Administrator

Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Esfeld 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 Hutchinson moved to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2024, and the December 17, 2024, Regular Meetings.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. ALBION TOWNSHIP: Board Appointment:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will provide details. Raymond V. Christians has resigned from the position of Albion Township Trustee. The remaining Albion Township board members have nominated Ethan Ludwig to fulfill the term of Township Trustee. It is the Commissioners' responsibility to make the appointment per KSA 25-1606.

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, presented details and asked the commission to appoint Ethan Ludwig.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked if Christians could resign when he had not started his term yet in January. Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, asked if Christians was currently on the township board. Schmeidler said he was the current Trustee. Hoffman said he could resign, and it worked the same way as if he declined the election.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to accept the resignation from Raymond V. Christians from the Albion Township board. Further, move to appoint Ethan Ludwig to fulfill the term of Albion Township Trustee, effective January 7, 2025, with the position terming on January 8, 2029.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL DEPOSITORIES FOR COUNTY FUNDS:

-Jim Jordan, County Treasurer, will present details. A designation of Barton County financial institutions as official depositories comes before the Commission. Such institutions must meet the 100% pledged securities requirement for all County funds. According to County Resolution 2023-07, all depositories must provide to the County Treasurer proof of security for these funds whenever such information is requested.

Jim Jordan, County Treasurer, asked for approval of designation of official depositories of county funds and named the following:

BMO, Great Bend
Central National Bank, Great Bend
Equity Bank, Great Bend
Farmers Bank and Trust, Albert / Great Bend
First Kansas Bank, Great Bend / Hoisington / Claflin
Landmark National Bank, Hoisington / Great Bend
Peoples Bank & Trust, Great Bend / Ellinwood
Plains State Bank, Great Bend
Wilson State Bank, Hoisington
Municipal Investment Pool

Commissioner Reif moved to approve the following depositories for 2025 as Jim had listed.
Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 2025-01: A Resolution of the Board of Barton County Commissioners Authorizing Participation in the Rural Opportunity Zone Student Loan Repayment Program Calendar Year 2025:

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. The Rural Opportunity Zone (ROZ) Student Loan Repayment Program provides up to a \$15,000 benefit as a workforce recruitment tool for eligible persons establishing domicile in Barton County. The Kansas Department of Commerce requires counties to pass a resolution obligating them to participate in this ROZ program for at least five years. Under the proposed Resolution, Barton County pledges a match of the \$15,000 benefit.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said Barton County had been a part of the program for the last four years but had not provided a match. When adopting the budget last year, \$15,000.00 was included as a match for the ROZ Program.

Commissioner Hutchinson said Barton County proposed a match with the cities and asked Patzner if he had heard from any of them. Patzner said he had not heard from any of them yet.

Commissioner Esfeld asked Patzner how students find out about the program. Patzner said he believed the ROZ Program put out marketing material and would send something to the county so we could promote it.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt Resolution 2025-01, A Resolution of the Board of Barton County Commissioners Authorizing Participation in the Rural Opportunity Zone Student Loan Repayment Program Calendar Year 2025.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES: 2025 Membership:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. The National Association of Counties (NACo) has submitted a renewal notice for the 2025 membership. The balance due is \$510.00. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate county priorities in federal policymaking; promotes exemplary county policies and practices; nurtures leadership skills and expands knowledge networks; optimizes county and taxpayer resources and cost savings and enriches the public's understanding of county government.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the National Association of Counties strengthens Americas 3,069 counties serving nearly 40,000 elected county officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo united county officials to advocate county priorities. Dues this year were \$510, reduced from \$553 the last few years.

Commissioner Esfeld said NACo did a lot of good and kept the county informed.

Commissioner Hutchinson said organizations such as this had gotten lawsuit settlements for counties.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to approve the 2025 NACo Membership Dues of \$510.00. Payment to be made from the Courthouse General Account of the General Fund, Dues, Memberships, Subscriptions Line, 001-18-5455.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

E. KANSAS LEGISLATIVE POLICY GROUP: 2025 Membership:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. The Kansas Legislative Policy Group (KLPG) is a bi-partisan coalition of western Kansas counties with the common interest in the preservation of the counties tax base and continuation of local control. The KLPG serves as a policy and decision-making body establishing legislative priorities at its annual meeting and providing speakers to address KLPG members about the important topics of the day. At this time, the Commission will consider renewal of the membership, priced at \$4,904.97.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the dues in 2023 and 2024 were \$5,471.34, \$5,112.13 in 2022, \$4,869.33 in 2021 and \$4,993.56 in 2020. This year the dues were \$4,904.97. Patzner asked the commission to consider continuing membership with KLPG.

Commissioner Esfeld said the annual meeting would be January 21st and 22nd in Topeka.

Commissioner Zimmerman said KLPG was who helped Barton County get funds through a lawsuit.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the 2025 KLPG Membership Dues of \$4,904.97. Payment 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.

F. THE LEAGUE OF KANSAS MUNICIPALITIES: 2025 Membership:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. The mission of the League is to strengthen and advocate for the interests of the municipalities of Kansas to advance the general welfare and promote the quality of life of the people who live within Kansas.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the League of Kansas Municipalities was a membership association that advocated for cities, offering training and guidance. Patzner said the 2025 dues were

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... slightly from the previous year and noted that the county had not been a member since 2015. It was more focused on cities but wanted to bring before the commission for a decision.

Commissioner Esfeld said last year KLPG and the League of Kansas Municipalities combined their meetings and seemed to be an active group.

Commissioner Zimmerman said they were a wealth of knowledge for the cities, much like KAC was for the counties. She was not in favor of renewing the membership.

Commissioner Hutchinson said it would be redundant.

Commissioner Reif said he thought a lot of the cities belonged and were helped by the League but was unsure how it would benefit the county.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked if anyone was advocating for it. Everyone said no.

Commissioner Esfeld said no motion was needed.

G. RESOLUTION 2025-02: A Resolution Authorizing Participation in the Online Application Intake System for Telecommunications Programs and the USDA's Online Financial Reporting and Compliance System:

-Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, will provide details. Barton County has historically participated in the USDA grant program. A requirement of participation in the online financial reporting and compliance system is the adoption of a Resolution naming a Representative-Signature-Certifier and an Administrator. It is suggested that Mr. Hoffman and Matt Patzner, Administrator, be assigned to those roles, respectively.

Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, said this was some housekeeping. We currently have a grant for some telecommunications equipment and a part of the grant was some reporting to the USDA. A resolution was a requirement to get onto the portal.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to adopt Resolution 2025-02, A Resolution Authorizing Participation in the Online Application Intake System for Telecommunications Programs and the USDA's Online Financial Reporting and Compliance System.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

H. COMMISSION: Extension of the Employment Agreement for the Barton County Administrator:

-Chairman Barb Esfeld will provide details. In 2021, Matt Patzner was promoted from the position of Finance / Human Relations Officer to Operations Director. In 2023, that position was changed to County Administrator, in keeping with Kansas statutes. This updated agreement shall extend through January 31, 2029.

Commissioner Barb Esfeld asked Patzner how long he was Finance / Human Relations Officer before being promoted to Operations Director. Patzner said he became Finance Director in mid-2016 and took on HR at the end of 2016 or beginning of 2017.

Commissioner Esfeld asked Patzner when he started with Barton County. Patzner said he started in the Treasurer's Office in 2014.

Commissioner Esfeld said she was proud of Patzner and happy for Barton County as the position was changed to County Administrator in 2023. She said not many Kansas counties were fortunate enough to

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ve someone do finance like he does as well as be the County Administrator. She said he was exceptional.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she would echo all of Commissioner Esfeld's comments and added that it had been a joy working with Patzner. She was fortunate enough to be in on the interview process when he was hired and knew he would be a gem for Barton County. He had proven to be that and then some.

Commissioner Hutchinson said himself and Patzner were new to their roles together and learned along the way. He had seen true character and appreciated Patzner.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it was great to have a fiscally and financially minded person at that desk, she really appreciated him.

Commissioner Reif said he agreed with all the commissioners and Patzner was easy to work with.

Commissioner Esfeld said they interviewed people from all over and Patzner did not get the position just because he was a local guy, he out shone everyone.

Commissioner Reif moved to approve the Employment Agreement for the Barton County Administrator. Said agreement, between Mr. Patzner and Barton County, to extend to January 31, 2029.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

I. COMMISSION: Extension of Independent Contractor Agreement for County Counselor:

-Chairman Esfeld will provide details. Several years ago, the County entered into an agreement with Rick Hoffman for independent contractor services as the County Counselor. The Commission will now consider extending those services into January 2029.

Commissioner Esfeld said Hoffman was here before the current commissioners were elected and asked Hoffman to share the history with Barton County.

Hoffman said one of his philosophies of being a County Counselor was that nobody came to these meetings to hear the County Counselor talk. In 2018, his law partner and then Barton County Counselor, Carey Hipp, was elected as judge. He responded to the RFP for a County Counselor. He was interested in local government. He was going into his seventh year. Hoffman said he did not get mentored as a County Counselor so he does what he felt one should do. He had not planned to be a local government attorney, that was not his focus but was thrilled he fell into it. Hoffman said he could look back at things that were done over the last six years and felt things had been done to help people's lives. Local government did matter.

Commissioner Esfeld said she really appreciated him and his knowledge. She said Hoffman was always there for them, even helping move furniture when moving out of and back into the courthouse. Commissioner Esfeld said between Hoffman and Patzner, Barton County had a rockstar team.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Hoffman what other roles as attorney he currently held. Hoffman said he was City Attorney for Ellsworth and Lyons as well as County Counselor for Barton County and Reno County. He hoped to do this for the rest of his career.

Commissioner Zimmerman said for as busy as Hoffman was, she always appreciated that when they reached out to him, he responded quickly.

Commissioner Hutchinson said Hoffman had always been there for him and went above and beyond.

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Commissioner Schlessiger said they had a great team.

Commissioner Reid said he always felt he could reach out to Hoffman.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the Independent Contract Agreement for Counselor. Said agreement, between Mr. Hoffman and Barton County, to extend to January 31, 2029.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

J. 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 9:33 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved that the Commission enter 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 as this matter is protected by 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, the County Counselor and the County Administrator are to be included in said meeting. The Open Meeting will resume at 9:50 A.M., in this room.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

9:50 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved to return to regular session with no action taken.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Schlessiger – shoutout to Road & Bridge for the phenomenal job against difficult circumstances during the storm.

Commissioner Hutchinson – wanted to recognize the Sheriff's Office, 911 Communications, Road & Bridge, Noxious Weed and Emergency Management.

Commissioner Hutchinson – the City of Great Bend passed the solar regulations last night that were very similar to Barton County.

Commissioner Hutchinson – the Kansas Legislature increased their pay by 93%, he hoped having them compensated fairly would bring in a diverse group.

VI. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adjourn at 9:55 A.M.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk



Barb Esfeld, Chairman

RESOLUTION 2025-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF BARTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE RURAL OPPORTUNITY ZONE STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM CALENDAR YEAR 2025

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS,

Section 1. Pursuant to K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 74-50,223, the Board of County Commissioners expressed its intent to participate in the Rural Opportunity Zone (ROZ) student loan repayment program.

Section 2. Barton County has been designated a Rural Opportunity Zone pursuant to K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 74-50,222. As of July, 2023, the County population was 25,080 as certified by the Kansas Department of Revenue.

Section 3. Barton County Commissioners hereby obligate Barton County to participate in the ROZ student loan repayment program as provided by K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 74-50,223 for a period of five years, which shall be irrevocable.

Section 4. Barton County agrees to pay in equal shares with the State of Kansas the outstanding student loan balance of any resident individual for five years if the resident individual meets the terms of qualification provided by the State of Kansas in K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 74-50,223, and the appropriate rules and regulations. The number of qualified resident individuals receiving such payments will be subject to the availability of funds.

Section 5. Barton County intends to enter into partnerships with Cities, Employers and Foundations for the direct sponsorship of Rural Opportunity Zone Applicants. Sponsored Applicants must meet all qualifications of the ROZ program. All sponsorships will be subject to ROZ student loan repayment rules and regulations.

Section 6. The maximum student loan balance for each qualified resident individual to be repaid jointly by Barton County and the State of Kansas shall be \$15,000 over a term of five years.

Section 7. Barton County shall allocate \$15,000.00 for Operating Year 2025 for the purpose of matching payments from the State of Kansas to qualified resident individuals. Barton County shall revise its ROZ budget on an annual basis submitting a new Resolution to the State of Kansas by January 30th each year. Barton County shall submit their obligation in full to the Department of Commerce before the first day of October each year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be published once in the official County newspaper and shall be in effect from and after its date of publication.

Adopted this 7th day of January, 2025, by the Board of Barton County Commissioners, Barton County, Kansas.

BARTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Barb Efeld, Chairman



Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner



Duane Reif, Commissioner



Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner



Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler,
County Clerk



The seal is circular with a double-line border. The outer ring contains the text "BARTON COUNTY KANSAS" at the top and "COUNTY CLERK" at the bottom, separated by two stars. The center of the seal contains the word "SEAL" in a bold, serif font.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Patrick Hoffman,
County Counselor

RESOLUTION 2025-02

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE ONLINE APPLICATION INTAKE SYSTEM FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS AND THE USDA'S ONLINE FINANCIAL REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE SYSTEM

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners, of Barton County, Kansas, that **PATRICK G. HOFFMAN, ATTORNEY AT LAW**, County Counselor for the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, having been assigned the Representative-Signature-Certifier security role on behalf of Barton County, shall be responsible for providing signatures, authorizing certifications, entering/updating applications, submitting applications for consideration, and assigning access to new users in USDA's Online Application Intake System for Telecommunications Programs. If application(s) are awarded under these Programs, the Representative-Signature-Certifier security role on behalf of Barton County, shall also be responsible for authorizing certifications, entering/updating compliance reports, submitting compliance reports, and assigning access to new users in USDA's Online Financial Reporting and Compliance System; and

RESOLVED that **MATT J. A. PATZNER, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**, for the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, having been assigned Administrator security role on behalf of Barton County, shall be responsible for assigning access to new users and entering/updating application(s) in USDA's Online Application Intake System for Telecommunications Programs. If applications are awarded under these Programs, the Administrator(s) security role on behalf of the Corporation, shall also be responsible for assigning access to new users and entering/updating compliance reports in USDA's Online Financial Reporting and Compliance System; and

RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that the Representative-Signature-Certifier and Administrator for Barton County shall comply fully with all security procedures and policies of the Online Application Intake System for Telecommunications Programs and USDA's Online Financial Reporting and Compliance System.

Adopted this 7th day of January, 2025.

BARTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Chairman Barb Esfeld



Commissioner Shawn Hutchinson



Commissioner Duane Reif

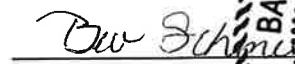


Commissioner Tricia Schlessiger



Commissioner Donna Zimmerman

ATTEST:



Bev Schneider,
County Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Patrick Hoffman,
County Counselor

AUTHORIZATION

I, **BEV SCHMEIDLER, BARTON COUNTY CLERK**, do hereby certify that: I am the County Clerk and Secretary for the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, as is authorized by Kansas Statute; and

That the following is a true and correct copy of **Resolution 2025-02, A Resolution Authorizing Participation in the Online Application Intake System for Telecommunications Programs and the USDA's Online Financial Reporting and Compliance System**, duly adopted by the County Commission at its regular meeting held **January 7, 2025**, and entered into the regular minutes of said meeting; and

Further, that the meeting was duly and regularly called and held in accordance with Kansas law and that the above noted Resolution was adopted therein and that said Resolution has not been rescinded or modified as of the date above written.

Bev Schmeidler, Barton County Clerk
Bev Schmeidler, Barton County Clerk

January 7, 2025
Date