

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/3OQT3QB>

June 10, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 10th day of June, 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 Zimmerman moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Reif moved to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2025, Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

Item Tabled

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. RESOLUTION 2025-10: Appointment of Wendy Prosser as Interim County Appraiser:

-Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, per Kansas statute, an Appraiser must be appointed for a four-year term every fourth year following July 1, 1997. Wendy Prosser, currently serving as County Appraiser, was first appointed to a term beginning December 1, 2020. At this time, the Commission will consider the appointment of Ms. Prosser as the interim Barton County Appraiser. Due to an issue with required training with the Kansas Department of Revenue, Property Valuation Division, Ms. Prosser's eligibility has changed. It is anticipated that the issue will be resolved within six months and that Ms. Prosser will fulfill the remainder of the term.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to table this item until June 24th.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Item Tabled

B. COUNTY APPRAISER: Updated Employment Agreement:

-Mr. Hoffman will provide details. With the adoption of a Resolution appointing Ms. Prosser as Appraiser, it is appropriate to consider an employment agreement covering that same term.

Commissioner Reif moved to table Item B until June 24th.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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Jessa Prosser, CPR Horse Team, said they had qualified for the 2026 Nationals through Horse Quiz Bowl. Prosser said entry fees were covered by the state, but they were having a fundraiser to cover the other travel expenses. They would be having a Celebrity 4-H Horse Quiz Bowl with Commissioner Shawn Hutchinson and two other public figures competing against the intermediate team. Prosser introduced Samantha Rathbun, coach; Wendy Prosser, coach; and a future team member, Catarina Debes. Prosser said the Quiz Bowl will be held June 26th at 7:30 A.M. at the Business Breakfast on the Barton County Fairgrounds. Prosser invited everyone to attend.

Samantha Rathbun said only four girls in the state competed this year. The girls had prepared for this since they were nine years old. Rathbun added that this was the first time in Barton County history that they made it to Nationals, it was a big accomplishment. Two of the girls would compete for the last time this year. Any support would be greatly appreciated. Rathbun said they were almost veterinary level on horses after studying for so long.

Commissioner Esfeld asked if there were tickets to purchase. Prosser said there would be jars to choose who the person thinks will win. Rathbun said there will be free will donations as well, filling a boot and western cowboy hat.

C. REQUEST FOR QUOTE: Media Consultant:

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. Earlier this year, the County accepted quotes for media consultation. Under the RFQ, the successful vendor(s) will assist Barton County in improving its media outreach, civic engagement and visibility of County services, policies and public engagement opportunities. After an interview process, the Commission will consider offering an agreement for services extending to December 31, 2025.

Pat Patzner, County Administrator, said the work would involve communication with various internal and external audiences, encompassing areas such as public relations, media relations and communications needs to build and maintain a positive reputation. Barton County was committed to increasing transparency and communication with citizens, local businesses and other government agencies. The consultant will play a critical role in ensuring the County's initiatives are effectively communicated. Work would center on media services, public information campaigns, press releases, graphic design, videographer and photography as well as social media consultation. Patzner said with the quotes submitted, the commission had interviewed two candidates and would now consider how to proceed.

Commissioner Schlessiger said she wrote something down when attending her first County Commissioner Conference. She wrote that culture starts at the top, culture of transparency. She felt this was part of their vision to be more transparent. She wanted the public to be engaged and know what they were doing every week. The more information they could get out to the public, the better. She said that went for all departments, not just the commissioners.

Commissioner Esfeld said she wanted the departments to know that the funding for the consultant would not come from employee benefits. She added that not only would it benefit the departments but also tied into economic development.

Commissioner Reif said our biggest job was for transparency and promoting Barton County. One of the most valuable things going for Barton County was its employees and we need to promote ourselves.

Commissioner Zimmerman said Chad Ehrlich did a great job with the videos during the HVAC project. It was wonderful to have those as history showing how the building was saved. She had always wanted to document work done on elections, but it never worked out.

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Commissioner Schlessiger said we have people that have done work to this point, like Diana Watson with Facebook posts and such, but she also had a full-time job to do.

Commissioner Zimmerman said there was a lot of great content created by departments.

Commissioner Esfeld said the Health Department had a lot of content to put out to the public.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he would be recusing himself for obvious reasons, but it would be great if Keith Lippoldt from the Tribune or Cole Reif from Eagle Radio could cover everything, it was logistically impossible.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to direct staff to prepare Media Consultant Agreements with Elle Hutchinson and Dale Hogg for the period ending December 31, 2025. Contractors to be paid, and I want to make sure this is it 35 or 36, that we agreed upon because I left.

Patzner said I believe we discussed 36.

Commissioner Esfeld continued to \$36 per hour for up to a 20 hour week. Cost of services to be paid through the Finance General Account of the General Fund, Miscellaneous Contractual Line, 001-26-5755. Direct the Commission Chairman to sign said agreements once prepared.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked when we are saying contract is to be paid for up to 20 hours a week, is that combined or each.

Commissioner Schlessiger said I think we are saying combined, is that correct.

Commissioner Reif said that was what I understood.

Commissioner Esfeld said very good that we know that is combined.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

Motion passed 4-0 with Commissioner Hutchinson abstaining.

Item Tabled

D. COMMISSION APPRECIATION: Chad Ehrlich:

-Commissioner Barb Esfeld will provide details. During the Courthouse remodel, Chad Ehrlich produced several Facebook posts that detailed work progression. Mr. Ehrlich will be recognized for assisting Commissioner Esfeld and the County in preserving history and creating media content during the Courthouse renovation.

Commissioner Barb Esfeld moved to table Item D until June 17th.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

E. 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.

At 9:17 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved that the Commission enter into Executive Session for a period of 20 minutes. The subject to be discussed will be non-elected personnel. The reason this needs to be discussed in Executive Session is to discuss the performance of a County non-elected employee. The governing body, the County Counselor and the County Administrator are to be included in said meeting. The Open Meeting will resume at 9:37 A.M. in this room.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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9:37 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved that we return to Regular Session and also reenter into Executive Session for a period of 20 minutes. The subject to be discussed will be non-elected personnel. The reason this needs to be discussed in Executive Session is to discuss the performance of a County non-elected employee. The governing body, the County Counselor and the County Administrator are to be included in said meeting. The Open Meeting will resume at 9:57 A.M. in this room.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

At 9:57 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved that we return to Regular Session and also reenter into Executive Session for a period of 20 minutes. The subject to be discussed will be non-elected personnel. The reason this needs to be discussed in Executive Session is to discuss the performance of a County non-elected employee. The governing body, the County Counselor and the County Administrator are to be included in said meeting. The Open Meeting will resume at 10:17 A.M. in this room.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

Motion passed 4-0. Commissioner Hutchinson was not in the room.

At 10:17 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved that we come out of Executive 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 – four of the commissioners attended the Mental Health Town Hall Meeting at the Center last week.

VI. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to adjourn at 10:19 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk



Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman