

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

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March 11, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 11th day of March, 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 March 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:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will present details. An Accounts Payable Register will be submitted to the Commission for the period of February 25, 2025, and ending March 11, 2025.

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

Commissioner Reif moved to approve appropriations for the period of February 25, 2025, to March 11, 2025. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.
Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: Service Awards:

-Judith Castro, Employee Engagement Committee President, will present details. Barton County employees are recognized for continuous service for five, ten, fifteen, twenty and other years. The County Commission will recognize employees for their service.

Judith Castro, Employee Engagement Committee President, said there were 20 employees to be recognized today for years of service.

Warren Peterson
Marissa Woodmansee
Shette Sanders

Sheriff's Office
Juvenile Services Director
Health Department

40 years
25 years
20 years

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| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Chris Doze | Sheriff's Office | 20 years |
| Karla Newport | County Attorney | 15 years |
| Matt Patzner | Administrator | 10 years |
| Bryan Volkel | Sheriff's Office | 10 years |
| Taylor Saindon | Road & Bridge | 10 years |
| Rita Sunderland | County Attorney | 10 years |
| Jonathon Hamby | Noxious Weed | 5 years |
| Chris Schartz | County Works Director | 5 years |
| Mark McNett | Road & Bridge | 5 years |
| Rosa Delgadillo | Facilities | 5 years |
| Mark Lang | Road & Bridge | 5 years |
| Richard Estes | Road & Bridge | 5 years |
| Kyle Bingaman | Road & Bridge | 5 years |
| Bailey Rankin | Register of Deeds | 5 years |
| Judith Castro | Administration | 5 years |
| William Burns | Road & Bridge | 5 years |
| Lindsey Creamer | Shared Clerk | 5 years |

Commissioner Reif said this was what made Barton County great.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to recognize those employees with 5, 10, 15, 20 and other years of service.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

COMMISSION: Employee Engagement Committee:

Judith Castro will provide details. The Employee Engagement Committee (EEC) is charged with creating short- and long-term goals and project development to improve employee retention and employee satisfaction. All terms expire December 31, 2025.

Judith Castro, Employee Engagement Committee President, asked the commission to reappoint the five members to a term expiring December 31, 2025.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she thought the smaller group was very effective and had great communication.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to appoint the following persons to the EEC for terms expiring December 31, 2025:

Trent Bitter, Facilities Management
Judith Castro, Administrator's Office
Richard Estes, Road and Bridge
Charlotte Konrade, Appraiser's Office
Ryan Lichter, Juvenile Services

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

C. COMMUNITY SUPPORT: Barton County Rural Water District No. 2:

Mark Dean, Rural Water District No. 2, will provide details. Barton Rural Water District No. 2 provides safe water to approximately 400 people in the Bissell's Point, Walnut Creek, Richter and BoMAR

divisions as well as the Wetlands Education Center, the State of Kansas Office at Cheyenne Bottoms

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of the Barton County Landfill. It has been determined that nitrate levels will require the District to develop a new water source. Engineering estimates put the cost of that source at \$980,000.00. The Water District is requesting \$65,000.00 in support funding.

Mark Dean, Rural Water District No. 2, had the other board members introduce themselves: David Meter; Todd Gilkison, Secretary and James Kuhlman, Chairman.

James Kuhlman said Barton County Rural Water District No. 2 formed in 1974, providing safe drinking water to Bissell's Point, Walnut Creek, Richter and Bomar subdivisions. The district employs two people and has seven board members. They also supplied water to the Barton County Landfill, Wetlands Education Center and Cheyenne Bottoms. Kuhlman said they owned the pipeline and had one well, they were also interconnected with BCC and their two wells. The well by the former Eazy Street has seen a rise in nitrates over the last ten years. It had now exceeded KDHE limits. They exhausted all remediation efforts in the last few years so they must develop a new water source. They acquired water rights further north and east of the existing well for a new well.

Mark Dean said they received a letter from KDHE in 2021 requiring them to correct the issue. Dean said they were going to go east of the creek and tie into the existing mains from the new well. In the Walnut Creek subdivision, they were going to extend a larger line and put in a fire hydrant. The new well and chlorine facility will be installed 1.1 miles north of the current main. Part of the project was to purchase new water meters as some of them were more than 20 years old and some not operating. Dean said the estimated cost of the project was \$980,000.00 plus the funds they had already expended to attempt to repair the current well. They had already spent \$140,000.00 which was not reimbursable by the grant they received. Dean said they applied for several grants that were unsuccessful before receiving a grant. They were not a wealthy district. They made enough to pay the bills and hopefully pay for repairs. Any additional funding would help reduce the debt load and keep rates reasonable. They increased their monthly rates by 58% and usage rates by 50% a couple years ago to raise funds for the project. They had used nearly all of it already and were now requesting funds from the county.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she appreciated the district's work increasing the rates, doing what they could trying to fund the project as well as applying for grants.

Commissioner Hutchinson said they were told no several times. They did not give up, went out and found their own grant writer and got it done. It was a good investment.

Commissioner Schlessiger said great job securing a grant.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to encumber \$65,000.00 in support funding for the Barton County Rural Water District No. 2 Water Source Project. Cost to be paid from the Capital Improvement Fund, Improvements Not Buildings Line, 071-00-6310.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

D. COUNTY ENGINEER: 2025 NE 30 Road Resurfacing Project Bids:

-Barry McManaman, County Engineer, will provide details. The County accepted bids until February 26, 2025, for the 2025 NE 30 Road Resurfacing Project. The project includes a 1.5-inch hot mix asphalt overlay, milling, rock edge wedges and permanent pavement markings on NE 30 Road from NE 30 Avenue to the K-156 highway intersection. Venture Corporation submitted the only bid for \$527,030.85. If awarded, Venture anticipates doing the work sometime in July of this year.

Barry McManaman, County Engineer, presented details and said the project was a continuation of the done earlier from US 281 Highway to NE 30 Avenue. McManaman said only one bid was received

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It was from Venture Corporation in the amount of \$527,030.85. Venture anticipated doing the work sometime in July of this year.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to award the 2025 NE 30 Road Resurfacing Project Bid to Venture Corporation for a total bid of \$527,030.85. That amount to be paid as follows – \$370,000.00 from the Road and Bridge, Professional Service Fees, Road Overlay Line, 002-92-5475-96 and \$157,030.85 from the Capital Improvement Fund, Federal Funds Exchange Line, 071-00-6336. Authorize the Commission Chairman to sign the Notice of Award and the Agreement between the County and Venture Corporation. Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

E. APPRAISER'S OFFICE: Updated Pricing for Bulk Mailing – Valuation Notices:

-Wendy Prosser, County Appraiser, will provide details on this item. Due to an increase in postage costs, the Masters Touch billing totaled \$8,704.92. This represents an overage of \$247.89. It is requested that the overage be approved with payment made through the Appraiser's Account of the General Fund.

Wendy Prosser, County Appraiser, said she came before the commission in January with proposals of the mass mailing of valuation notices. One was from The Masters Touch for \$8,457.03 and one from Lineage Connect for \$10,292.39. Both of these were less than it would cost for staff to do the mailings. Prosser said she received the final bill for a total of \$8,704.92, \$247.89 over the original bid. The reason for the slight overage was due to not knowing exactly how many envelopes had to be mailed as well as postal rate increases. Prosser asked for approval to pay the difference.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the \$247.89 overage cost for The Masters Touch. Said amount to be paid from the General Fund, Appraiser's Account, Professional Service Fees Line – 001-14-5475.
Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

F. CENTRAL KANSAS COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS: Letter of Support for Increased Funding:

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. The Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) provides grants to county departments to fund community corrections. These grants help counties supervise and support people who have been convicted of felonies. While the KDOC is currently considering different funding formulas, statistical information indicates Central Kansas Community Corrections is largely underfunded. The Commission will consider a Letter of Support for increased local funding.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said CKCC was underfunded in the 20th Judicial District. Patzner read some points from the letter: the 20th Judicial District covered over 4,000 square miles making it the 5th highest in square miles in Kansas and the necessary drive time chipped away at available client time; with an average CKCC daily population of 237 clients, our ISO's have the 7th highest caseload in Kansas; CKCC received the 28th lowest amount of funding per client out of 31 districts at a mere \$3,408.83 per client a year, well below the state average of \$3,560.00. Patzner asked the commissioners to consider signing the letter of support for additional funding.

Commissioner Schlessiger said she brought this forth after sitting in on a 3-hour ZOOM meeting with Director Haulmark on the funding formula for Community Corrections. The differences in funding for the different judicial districts became very clear in that meeting. Commissioner Schlessiger felt it had a direct impact on our community.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he felt we needed to let them know that she was not getting funded at the same level as the other districts.

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Commissioner Schlessiger said she wanted to let them know that the underfunding was noticed and needed to bring to their attention.

Brooke Haulmark, CKCC Director, said that over the past year, they had been able to put numbers to how many clients were being served, the square miles served and the time frame it took to provide the services needed to accurately show how they were underfunded. Haulmark said ultimately it harms the community and in order for them to do better, they needed to be funded properly.

Commissioner Schlessiger said she thought they had come up with an amount of \$300,000.00 for two more ISO's and the support for them. She said Haulmark had told her how many hours short her office was every week. Haulmark said they had one ISO resign due to being overworked and said they were 288 staff hours short every month.

Commissioner Zimmerman said that was concerning with employee turnover and burnout, it was a critical situation.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it took 6 months to a year to train a new ISO.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the Letter of Support for Increased Funding for Central Kansas Community Corrections.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked that copies be sent to our legislators as well.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS: FIG 25:

Mr. Patzner will provide details. On March 6, 2025, the Commission held an information meeting for the upcoming FIG program. For 2025, Barton County has pledged \$120,000.00 for Façade Improvement Grant projects in Claflin, Ellinwood, Great Bend and Hoisington. Area cities were asked to provide funding to improve program reach. An overview of the meeting will be provided.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details and asked the commissioners to give an overview of the meeting.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she felt it was a good meeting with a good turnout. Everyone was able to network and she was excited to see what the future held.

Commissioner Schlessiger said the communication between city and county officials was great. She felt there would be some exciting projects coming out of the next round.

Commissioner Esfeld said she appreciated meeting everyone and putting faces to the names. It was good to do projects with everyone working together and having a direct impact.

Commissioner Reif said he felt there was a good connection with the city officials, and they did not feel left out.

Commissioner Hutchinson said it was one of those moments that were few and far between, it was what he thought it would be to serve as a commissioner. The cooperation between the cities and the county was good.

Commissioner Schlessiger said you can drive down Main Streets in each community and see the differences.

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No Executive Session Held

H. 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.

V. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Reif – Lions Club in Claflin will have a seafood buffet Friday evening.

Commissioner Reif – Albert Fire Department would have their 35th Annual Pancake Feed on Saturday.

VII. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to adjourn at 9:39 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk



Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman