

# 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](mailto:clerk@bartoncounty.org)

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November 25, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 25th day of November, 2025, at the Barton County Courthouse.

## *Members present:*

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1<sup>st</sup> District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)  
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4<sup>th</sup> District, Chairman  
Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5<sup>th</sup> 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 November 17, 2025, Regular Meeting.  
Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.  
All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **II. OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business.

## **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. COUNTY ENGINEER: KDOT Agreement No. 291-25, Project No. KA-6022-01:**

-Barry McManaman, County Engineer, will provide details. The Kansas Department of Transportation requests approval of Agreement No. 291-25. This is a KDOT project expanding US-56 to a 4-lane roadway from the east city limit of Great Bend to the K-156 junction. The agreement specifies the future maintenance and administrative responsibilities on the relocated local road connections that will be constructed. The agreement also specifies the terms of the local match that the County will contribute to meet KDOT's requirements to move forward with the project.

Barry McManaman, County Engineer, said KDOT had sent an agreement in regard to the plan for lane expansion of US-56 Highway from Kiowa Road to the US-56/K-156 junction, commonly known as Doonan's corner. KDOT planned to expand the current two-lane highway to a four-lane divided highway with a grass median. McManaman said as part of the project, they had asked that local government participate with 10% of the estimated costs which would be around \$1.8 million for Barton County. McManaman said instead of just cutting a check, they would like to see us do work that would benefit us. He said there were discussions about what projects the county had that would tie into the project and would satisfy their needs. McManaman said there was a bridge on NE 20 Avenue, just north of the KDOT shop, that needed replaced. Along with that, the county has done two overlay projects on Juco Road the last two years, they understood that by improving the road, it would help their cause because some traffic would choose to use Juco Road instead of going through the construction area. Now that those projects were completed, they were willing to consider those expenditures to count for the local match.

McManaman said the county spent approximately \$790,000 in 2024 on Juco Road and \$527,000 this year. The estimated cost of the bridge replacement was \$938,000, which put the county portion above

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,000,000 and would meet what they had said was the local match. McManaman said the offer had been made by KDOT and by memorializing the agreement, they would recognize the county's expenses towards the local match. McManaman said another part of the agreement was three relocated connections, some entrances and side roads would be closed and be locally maintained by the township. One of those was East Barton County Road. Currently, it turns to go past Kiowa Kitchen restaurant, it would be rerouted to Kiowa Road. Another one is NE 40 Avenue, west of Doonan corner on the north side. There would no longer be direct access to the north, but a frontage road would be created. The third one was the field entrance east of Fort Zarah on the north side, it would be eliminated as well.

Commissioner Schlessiger asked McManaman if KDOT would acquire rights-of-way and contact landowners. McManaman said that KDOT had communicated with landowners but was not yet purchasing rights-of-way. McManaman said as the project gets put into the construction pipeline, they would start purchasing and doing utility adjustments. The plan was to have utility adjustments done by 2029 so they could go out for bids in 2030.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked McManaman about the proposed timeline. McManaman said they plan was to begin in 2030 but did not offer a timeline, that information would come later.

Commissioner Reif said that it just showed that it took a lot of time, a long process.

Commissioner Schlessiger said she would be in favor of the agreement because it would cap the amount Barton County would contribute, even if construction costs increased.

Commissioner Hutchinson said this had been a difficult decision for him. He wanted to lower property taxes. McManaman explained to him that they were looking for partnerships in rural Kansas and this would help the community.

Commissioner Zimmerman to approve KDOT Agreement No. 291-25, Project No. KA-6022-01 relative to the US-56 expansion to a 4-lane roadway. The County's ten percent local match to include credit for hot mix overlay projects on NE 30 Road and the replacement of Off-System Bridge No. 190 on NE 20 Avenue at NE 3 Road at the County's expense. Said bridge expenditures to be determined at a later date.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **B. ENGINEERING SERVICES: Firm Selection:**

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. Earlier this year, Barry McManaman, County Engineer, announced he was retiring. That led the County to seek applicants for that position and to release a request for qualifications for an engineering firm. At this time, Mr. Patzner will review the qualification listing as submitted by Kirkham-Michael and Kaw Valley Engineering, Inc.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said they interviewed two engineering firms, Kirkham-Michael and Kaw Valley Engineering, Inc. Both companies submitted bids based on the discussions in the interviews. Patzner said one of the specifications was essentially 12 hours per month minimum and attending a Commission Meeting at least once a month with a contingency of an hourly rate outside of the 12 hours if they were needed more frequently. Patzner said the Kirkham-Michael bid was for \$2,800/month and Kaw Valley Engineering was for \$2,580/month.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Patzner about the time frame for the contract. Patzner said the county was in control of that, creating a service agreement.

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Rick Hoffman, County Counselor, said his recommendation would be for one year at a time, starting with a new firm.

Patzner said this was new territory, handling engineering differently, a lot to figure out in this first year.

Commissioner Reif said we were new to this and it would be a learning process. He said the public may wonder why the county would hire a firm instead of an engineer, there was a shortage of engineers currently.

Commissioner Schlessiger asked Patzner if there were any qualified applicants. Patzner said the applicants were not more attractive than outsourcing.

Commissioner Esfeld said there was potential to save tax dollars. She said McManaman would be missed.

Commissioner Zimmerman said McManaman left big shoes to fill and not only would the county miss him, but townships would as well.

Hoffman said that Barton County had been spoiled by having a resource such as McManaman on staff. Most Kansas counties did not have that available to them.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to hire Kirkham-Michael to provide engineering services to Barton County for one year. Direct the County Counselor to work with the Administrator and the successful firm to develop a service agreement.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **C. BARTON COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: Policy Updates:**

-Mr. Patzner 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 compensatory time be updated.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the handbook stated that compensatory time had to be used so that it could be paid by the last paycheck of the year. After speaking to the auditors, there would be no problem with allowing employees to use comp-time through December 31<sup>st</sup>. It would not cause any burden on payroll, and the change would allow employees to use it through the year end but also give department heads the discretion to require staff to use the time.

Commissioner Reif moved to adopt revised Barton County Employee Handbook, Policy 504.1, Compensatory Time. 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 Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## ***No Executive Session Held***

## **D. 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 attend the executive session and the time at which the regular session shall resume.

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## **IV. ENDING BUSINESS:**

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

## **V. OTHER BUSINESS:**

There was no other business.

## **VI. ADJOURN:**

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adjourn at 9:29 A.M.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler  
Barton County Clerk

  
Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman