

# 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)

Meetings Live Streamed through **Microsoft Teams**® at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3LXjB4V>

January 20, 2026

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 20<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026, at the Barton County Courthouse.

*Members present:*

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1<sup>st</sup> District, Chairman  
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4<sup>th</sup> District  
Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5<sup>th</sup> District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)  
Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk  
Matt Patzner, County Administrator  
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

## **I. OPENING BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Reif 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 Schlessiger moved to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2026, Regular Meeting.  
Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.  
All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business.

## **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. RESOLUTION 2026-03: A Resolution to Expand Fire District No. 2 to Include Fairview, Grant and Wheatland Townships, and the City of Galatia, Barton County, Kansas:**

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will present details. Created in 2018, Fire District No. 2 consists of Albion, Eureka, North Homestead, South Homestead, Union Townships and the Cities of Hoisington, Olmitz and Susank. It has been proposed that the District be expanded to include Fairview, Grant and Wheatland Townships, and the City of Galatia. Should this Resolution be adopted, the Barton County Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at the Barton County Courthouse, 1400 Main – Suite 106, Great Bend, Kansas, regarding the expansion. It is anticipated that the Board of Trustees, as appointed by the County Commission, would expand to a minimum of four (4) and a maximum of twelve (12) members.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details and asked the commission to consider adoption of the resolution.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked if the reason for the expansion was to give each entity a seat on the board. Patzner said that was correct.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he asked Commissioner Reif briefly this morning and found it interesting that the district was already being covered by Fire District No. 2.

Commissioner Reif said that most of the time when there was a fire in that area, Fire District No. 2 was also paged out due to a lack of personnel to respond in those townships.

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Commissioner Hutchinson said they were already covering the area, but it would then give them authority in the area.

Commissioner Zimmerman said it was more of a funding change; they would be included in the taxing district as opposed to them paying a fee. Commissioner Reif said that was correct.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt Resolution 2026-03, A Resolution to Expand Fire District No. 2 to include Fairview, Grant and Wheatland Townships, and the City of Galatia, Barton County, Kansas. Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **B. FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2: Appointment of a Board of Trustees:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. Per Resolution 2018-10, which created Fire District No. 2, the members of the Fire District Board of Trustees shall consist of not more than one (1) appointee from each participating township and not more than one (1) from each participating city. There is one unexpired term ending December 31, 2026, open for North Homestead Township. Curtis Peterson has reapplied to represent the City of Olmitz. That term expires December 31, 2027.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, asked the commission to consider reappointing Curtis Peterson to represent the City of Olmitz.

Commissioner Reif said Peterson lived in Olmitz and had been on the board since its inception.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to reappoint Curtis Peterson, representing the City of Olmitz, to the Board of Trustees for Fire District No. 2, Barton County, Kansas. The uncompensated term ends December 31, 2027.

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

## **C. COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE: 2025 Action Report:**

-J. Colin Reynolds, County Attorney, will provide the Commission with a 2025 action report that includes case filings, convictions and other relative statistics.

J. Colin Reynolds, County Attorney, introduced Ryan DeYoung. DeYoung came from the Great Bend Police Department and replaced Casey Hubbard, who left after 23 years. Reynolds said he would classify 2025 as a rebuilding year with DeYoung coming onboard and some senior staff retiring. Reynolds said that let them take a look at things and bring in new people and were coming into 2026 fully staffed. He felt they had a very good team in place and could continue to improve.

Reynolds shared statistics about criminal case filings from 2018 to the present. He said they had seen an uptick, and it was the first time since 2018 to file over 500 criminal cases. Reynolds said the uptick showed they took crime seriously and were willing to devote the resources they had to bring it down. He said he could not go into conviction side of things as he did not have clean numbers on those yet as some cases were taking longer to resolve. He said he attributed that to the attorney shortage statewide. Reynolds said the shortage was statewide but was particularly affecting the rural western communities. He said they had to work with the State Board of Indigent Services to where they had to bring in attorneys from Wichita and Kansas City to cover particularly high-level cases. Reynolds said the commission was going to feel that shortage when trying to replace Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, and how that had changed the market and availability of qualified individuals.

Commissioner Reif thanked Reynolds for the update, the numbers were impressive.

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Commissioner Esfeld asked Reynolds if all the criminal cases mentioned were felonies or were they lesser offenses as well. Reynolds said they would include both felony and misdemeanor charges. More toward felonies because some misdemeanors were handled in city courts. Reynolds said there had been some changes at the city level, a little over a year ago, they began taking misdemeanor marijuana cases.

Commissioner Esfeld said she wanted to pass on a compliment she heard at the Humane Society meeting last week. She said they really appreciated how easy it was to work with his office. Reynolds said they had made a very concerted effort to strengthen the relationships with all the local partners.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Reynolds about methamphetamine, had it gone up or down, stayed the same. Reynolds said that it was hard to quantify because for the crimes that it was not directly a drug crime, it was still the underlying cause for a lot of crime. He said he felt methamphetamine had stayed high, but they had also seen upticks in several other areas. Reynolds said cocaine was making a resurgence and fentanyl had started to be more of a problem. They were seeing more of a diversification of drug types in the area. Reynolds said their partners in probation had been putting a strong emphasis on drug treatment.

Commissioner Esfeld said that Reynolds had helped put together a meeting with Kiwanis and she recently learned the school district was interested in incorporating it with the D.A.R.E. program in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Reynolds said they were trying to expand training opportunities with the staff. They were able to attend the National District Attorney's Conference in Kansas City last year. He said they also recently discovered that a certain amount of court costs was set aside in a prosecutor's training fund.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Local Emergency Planning Committee:**

Sean Kelly, Emergency Management Director, will provide details. The Barton County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is comprised of representatives from the following groups: state/local officials; law enforcement; firefighting; emergency management; health; hospital; broadcast media and/or communications media; transportation; local environmental group; community service/civic group; emergency medical services; and facilities/industries regulated by SARA Title III. Nominations have been sought for appointment according to LEPC bylaws.

Sean Kelly, Emergency Management Director, said LEPC was started in the 1980's with the Right to Know Act, making people aware of what was happening in their communities with hazardous materials. The terms were 2 years, uncompensated with half the committee appointed each year.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the January 15, 2026, Membership List of the Barton County Local Emergency Planning Committee to include the following reappointments:

Judy Goreham- Barton County Environmental Management

Jennifer Hamby- Barton County Solid Waste

Megan Elmore- Hoisington EMS

Martin Miller- Great Bend Airport

Jamie Tomlinson- Russell Rural Water #3

Lindsey Ensley- Barton County Health Department

Donna Zimmerman- Barton County Commission

Christina Jimenez- Sunflower Diversified Services

Luke McCormick- Clara Barton Hospital

Brittney Glenn- Ellinwood EMS

Sean Kelly- Barton County Emergency Management

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Direct Mr. Kelly to forward the complete membership list to the Kansas Division of Emergency Management and the Kansas Commission on Emergency Planning and Response.  
Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.  
All voted aye. Motion passed.

## *No Executive Session Held*

### **E. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

-Chairman Duane Reif 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.

### **IV. ENDING BUSINESS:**

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

### **V. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Esfeld – attended the Humane Society Meeting. She said the Director, Rachelle Sharp, was doing a great job with Facebook and the website. She was getting animals adopted much quicker.  
Commissioner Esfeld – would miss next week's Commission Meeting as she will be in Topeka with KLPG about legislative issues.

Commissioner Reif – wished Commissioner Esfeld a belated Happy Birthday.

### **VI. ADJOURN:**

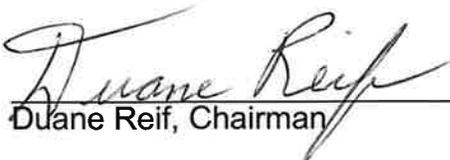
Commissioner Zimmerman moved to adjourn at 9:27 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bev Schmeidler  
Barton County Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Duane Reif, Chairman

A RESOLUTION TO EXPAND FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2 TO INCLUDE FAIRVIEW,  
GRANT AND WHEATLAND TOWNSHIPS, AND THE CITY OF GALATIA,  
BARTON COUNTY, KANSAS

**WHEREAS**, the health and safety of County citizens is of utmost importance to the local governing units; and

**WHEREAS**, it is vital to Barton County constituents that each governing body work with the other agencies to provide such services that are necessary to ensure the good health and well-being of all citizens and their property; and

**WHEREAS**, a cooperative effort has been made by local governing bodies to determine a more effective and efficient method for delivering emergency response related to fire suppression, prevention and education; and

**WHEREAS**, the Townships of Fairview, Grant and Wheatland, and the City of Galatia have requested to be added to Fire District No. 2 in Barton County, Kansas.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that it is advisable and in the public interest that Fire District No. 2 be expanded to include Fairview, Grant and Wheatland Townships, and the City of Galatia, all in Barton County, Kansas, for the protection of lives and property from the hazards of fire.

**FURTHER**, the Barton County Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at the Barton County Courthouse, 1400 Main – Suite 106, Great Bend, Kansas, regarding the expansion of such fire district pursuant to KSA 19-3601 et. seq.

**FURTHER**, a copy of this Resolution shall be published in a newspaper published and of general circulation in the area where the lands are located and in the official County newspaper once a week for three consecutive weeks. The aforementioned Public Hearing shall be held not less than 10 days after the date of last publication. A map of the proposed district, included as Attachment A, shall be published with this Resolution.

**ADOPTED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026.

**BARTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

  
Chairman Duane Reif

  
Commissioner Barb Esfeld

  
Commissioner Shawn Hutchinson

  
Commissioner Tricia Schlessiger

  
Commissioner Donna Zimmerman

**ATTEST:**

  
Bev Schmeidler,  
County Clerk



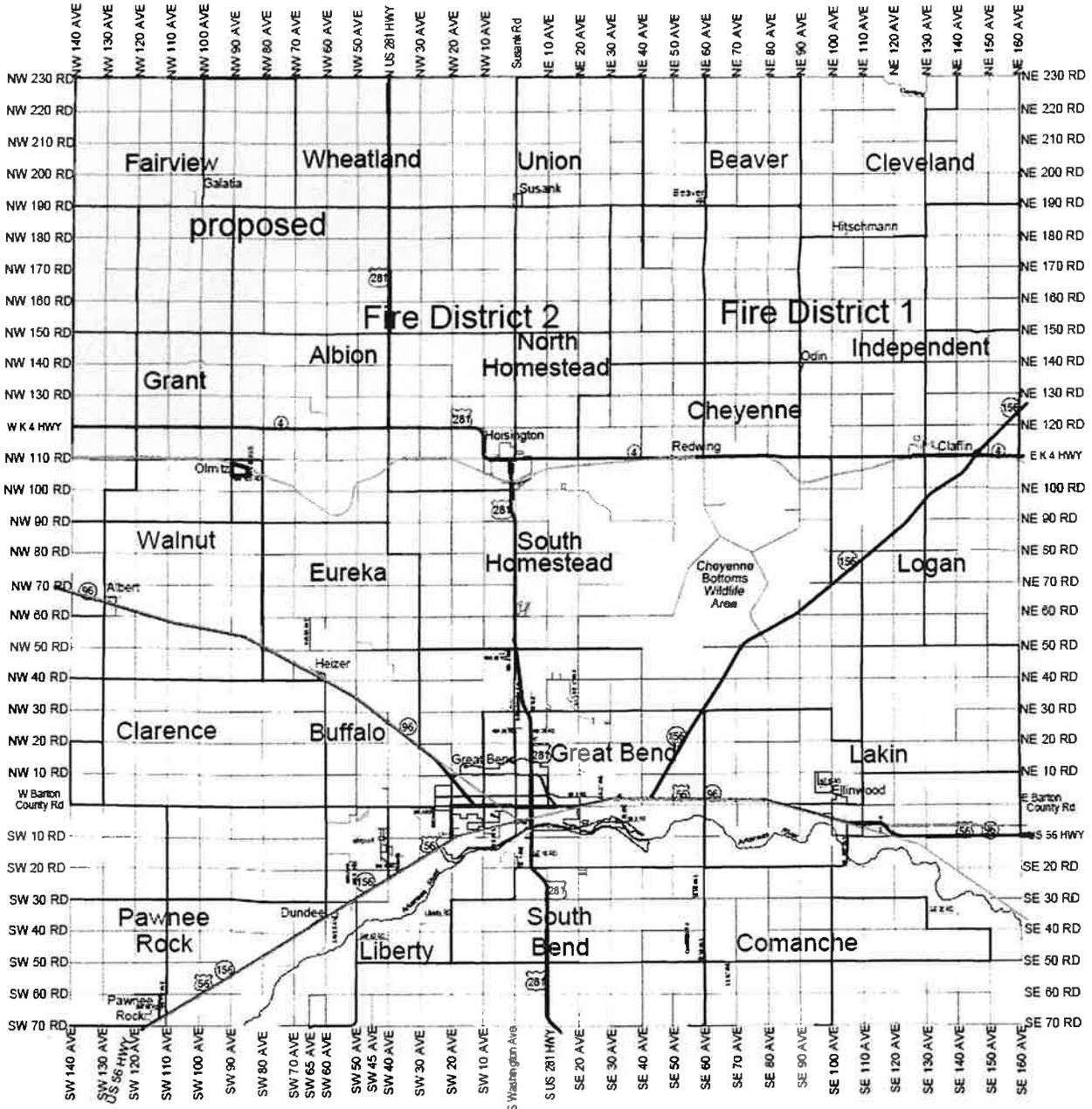
**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

  
Patrick Hoffman,  
County Counselor

# ATTACHMENT A

## A Map of the Proposed District

### Barton County Kansas Fire Districts



**BARTON COUNTY**  
 The contents of this map were prepared for the use of the various departments of Barton County. Property descriptions and other information as indicated on the map are unofficial and are not intended for conveyance. The map is not a legal survey. Barton County does not assume responsibility for any use of the map beyond the regulations or guidelines established for the county departments.

Map Date: 11/15/2011  
 111 addresses reflect the distance from the E/W & N/S dividing roads in 1/100's of a mile.  
 The E/W dividing roads are #Washington Ave-Susank Rd. The N/S dividing road is Barton County Rd. The even number addresses are on the east and north sides of the road and the odd numbers are on the west and south sides of the road.  
 SE 245 NE 30 RD (BCCC) is about 2.5 miles east of N Washington Ave on the south side.

Kansas State Plane - South Zone, NAD 83  
 US Foot NAD 83