

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/4qGSutw>

January 6, 2026

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 6th day of January, 2026, 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 December 30, 2025, Regular Meeting.
 Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.
 All voted aye. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE: Request for Approval – Added / Abated / Escaped / Refunded Taxes:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will present a listing of Added / Abated / Escaped / Refunded Taxes. Orders for these actions are kept on file in the County Clerk's Office. These are used to correct assessments and are requested by the County Appraiser's Office or the County Clerk's Office.

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

BATCH #2	VALUES	ESCAPED TAXES	ADDED / ABATED	REFUNDS
Gas				
Oil	(690,166)		(\$103,325.18)	\$43,363.00
Personal Property	(7,043)		(\$1,108.50)	\$424.07
Real Estate	(93,642)		(\$15,046.06)	\$2,358.48
16/20 M Trucks	(4,117)		(\$560.42)	\$0.00
State Assessed Utilities				
Special Assessments				
Grand Totals	(794,968)	\$0.00	(\$120,040.16)	\$46,145.55
Total Taxes	(\$120,040.16)			
Total Records Selected	40			

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/4qGSutw>

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the Listing of Added / Abated / Escaped / Refunded Taxes as reviewed by the County Appraiser and presented by the County Clerk's Office. Direct the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

B. BEAVER TOWNSHIP: Board Appointments:

-Ms. Schmeidler will provide details. Jennifer Steinert, Beaver Township Trustee, has resigned effective December 31, 2025. The remaining township board members recommend the appointment of Brian Miller effective January 1, 2026. It is the Commissioners' responsibility to make the appointment per KSA 25-1606.

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

Commissioner Reif moved to accept the resignation of Jennifer Steinert as the Beaver Township Trustee effective December 31, 2025. Further, move to approve the appointment of Brian Miller as the Beaver Township Trustee, effective January 1, 2026, with the position terming January 8, 2029.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

C. 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 the list of depositories.

Commissioner Esfeld asked Jordan to explain the benefit of different depositories. Jordan said he looks at which bank can give the county the best deal for our investment's percentage wise.

Commissioner Esfeld said we were blessed to have a number of banks for a competitive market.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Jordan what he thought the impact would be from House Bill 2152. Jordan said in his opinion, it was great for the banking business but horrible for the county. Jordan said the purpose of the bill was for the county to keep the money locally so the banks could loan it out. He said the problem was that the bill was in place because the state was taking the money and investing it outside of Kansas. Banking lobbyists wanted to keep the money in Kansas. Jordan thought it was good for the banks because their margins would probably be higher. He said he hoped they would pass that on to entities in interest rates and such.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the unanticipated revenue that Barton County amended the budget for last week was due to interest. He said 1.2 million was sale of tax credits used for the courthouse renovation and then replenished reserves. Commissioner Hutchinson said a lot of the remainder was due to Jordan working with the banks to get the best interest rates possible. He said unanticipated revenue was a good thing for the county that helped among other things, lowering property tax collections every year since 2021.

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/4qGSutw>

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the following depositories for 2026:

BMO, Great Bend
Bank of the Plains, 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
Wilson State Bank, Hoisington
Municipal Investment Pool

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

D. CONTRACTOR AGREEMENT: Media Consultant:

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. Barton County wishes to continue the provision of a media consultant contractor agreement with Elle Hutchinson. Barton County is committed to improving its media outreach, civic engagement and visibility of County services, policies and public engagement opportunities.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said proposals were first sought in 2025. He said Barton County remained committed to increasing transparency and communication with citizens, local businesses and other government agencies. The consultant played a crucial role in ensuring the county's initiatives were effectively communicated. Patzner asked the commissioners to consider approval of the agreement.

Commissioner Esfeld thanked Dale Hogg and Elle Hutchinson for bearing with them as they navigated the process, not sure of what they wanted from it. She said they wanted transparency and hoped it would help individuals understand what the commission was doing.

Commissioner Schlessiger said Commissioner Esfeld was correct in that they were not sure what was needed when they started and had been unsure what kind of local paper representation they would have. She said they had great print representation now, so it allowed them to shift more towards social media. The more information that could be put out, the better to help people understand.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she remembered with the courthouse remodel and Chad Ehrlich, helping to make sure that it was well documented. That spurred the idea of documenting to help explain what they were doing. That was a real learning curve for her.

Commissioner Reif agreed with the others saying they were still learning, and social media seemed to be the way to go at this point in time.

Commissioner Hutchinson said for full transparency, he was recusing himself from this vote and discussion.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the Media Consultant Agreement with Elle Hutchinson for the period ending December 31, 2026. Contractor to be paid \$720.00 per week for up to 20 hours of work per week. Cost of services to be paid through the Finance General Account of the General Fund, Miscellaneous Contractual Line, 001-26-5755.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.
Motion passed 4-0 with Commissioner Hutchinson abstaining.

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/4qGSutw>

Commissioner Hutchinson thanked the commissioners for the opportunity. She said it had been especially rewarding to help raise awareness of the meaningful work that Barton County, as a whole, departments and commission, had accomplished.

E. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES: 2026 Membership:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. The National Association of Counties (NACo) has submitted a \$510.00 renewal notice for the 2026 membership. 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 NACo strengthens America's 3,069 counties, serving nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Patzner said the dues for 2026 were \$510.00, the same as in 2025.

Commissioner Schlessiger said she utilized their website when she was writing a grant application for the child development center in Ellinwood.

Commissioner Efeld said they do not usually go out of state to attend meetings but NACo has a presence at our meetings. They provide legislative coverage.

Commissioner Reif agreed that the dues were not out of line.

Commissioner Reif moved to approve the 2026 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 Efeld seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

F. KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES: 2026 Membership:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. The Kansas Association of Counties (KAC) has submitted a renewal notice for the 2026 membership. Based on a calculation that includes a base fee, population and valuation, the dues are \$6,577.84. The Association sponsors the annual KAC Conference, various educational meetings throughout the year and lobbies the State and Federal Legislature on behalf of Kansas Counties.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the dues were up just over \$15 from last year.

Commissioner Hutchinson said this group was our main lifeline to the state.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the 2026 KAC Membership Dues of \$6,577.84. Payment to be made from the Courthouse General Account of the General Fund, Dues, Memberships, Subscriptions Line, 001-18-5455.

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

G. KANSAS LEGISLATIVE POLICY GROUP: 2026 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 retention 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

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/4qGSutw>

ics of the day. At this time, the Commission will consider renewal of the membership, priced at \$6,273.67.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the dues for this year increased significantly from last year and were up \$1,368.70.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Patzner if they provided any information about the increase, did some counties back out. Patzner said they did not provide an explanation.

Commissioner Esfeld said she served on the group. She said the attorneys had not received a pay increase for approximately the last 20 years. That was one of the reasons for the increase.

Commissioner Zimmerman said there were approximately 35 member counties, and it represented the western portion of the state well. She said it was very beneficial when Barton County joined the lawsuit on the oil and gas depletion trust fund. We were able to put that money in our reserves.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the 2026 KLPG Membership Dues of \$6,273.67. Payment to be made from the Courthouse General Account of the General Fund, Dues, Memberships, Subscriptions Line, 001-18-5455.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

H. THE LEAGUE OF KANSAS MUNICIPALITIES: 2026 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 people who live within Kansas.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said they advocated on behalf of cities. The county did benefit from contacts in the organization. Patzner said Barton County had not been a member since 2015.

Commissioner Reif said he did not feel this would really help the county.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Patzner if he was advocating for the county to be a member. Patzner said it came in and he wanted to bring it to the commissioners but did not think the county had really missed anything by not being a member lately.

Commissioner Schlessiger asked if everyone agreed to pass on the membership. All agreed to pass.

I. KANSAS NATURAL RESOURCE COALITION: 2026 Membership:

-Mr. Patzner will present details. The Kansas Natural Resource Coalition (KNRC) serves as a conduit between local, state and federal governments to promote balanced, necessary and effective administrative policymaking initiatives that materially affect the natural or human systems governed by individual member counties. The Commission has been asked to consider membership for 2026.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said the mission was to monitor, analyze, understand, communicate and participate in the initiatives that materially affect the natural or human systems governed by individual member counties. KNRC members had joined together for collective coordination on natural resource and environmental policy initiatives as well as the response of federal government actions. Patzner said each KNRC county had adopted by resolution, the Natural Resource Land Use Plan. The dues remained unchanged from last year.

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/4qGSutw>

Commissioner Schlessiger said she was very active with the group and they represented us on the Quivira water issue. They also had represented the Lesser Prairie Chicken and were currently researching the Monarch butterfly issues. She felt it was important to remain a member county. She said there were currently 35 counties that were members with another 12 possibly joining.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked if the member counties were primarily western Kansas.

Commissioner Schlessiger said primarily west of Salina.

Commissioner Hutchinson said this was the organization that helped set up the tri-county meeting.

Commissioner Schlessiger said yes, the NIETC Corridor.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the 2026 membership to the Kansas Natural Resource Coalition. The \$5,000.00 payment is 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.

No Executive Session Held

J. 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.

IV. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Schlessiger – said it was her last meeting as Chairman and thanked the other commissioners. She gave a short recap of 2025 accomplishments.

VI. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Reif moved to adjourn at 9:34 A.M.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman