

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/3Mq8Zqd>

August 10, 2022

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 10th day of August 2022, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Kirby Krier, Commissioner, 1st District
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District, *(Chairman Pro-Tem)*
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District, Chairman
Jon Prescott, Commissioner, 4th District
Jennifer Schartz, Commissioner, 5th District
Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk
Matt Patzner, Director of Operations
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

Commissioner Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Commissioner Schartz moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Krier seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Minutes of the July 13, 2022, July 20, 2022, July 27, 2022, and August 3, 2022 Regular Meetings were not available.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION: Revenue Neutral Rate:

-Matt Patzner, Director of Operations, will provide details. During the 2021 legislative session, the tax lid was removed and the Kansas Legislature enacted Senate Bill (SB) 13. This legislation established notice and public hearing requirements if a taxing entity's proposed budget will exceed the property tax levy's revenue neutral rate (RNR). Generally, the RNR is the tax rate in mills that would generate the same property tax revenue in dollars as levied the previous tax year using the current tax year's total assessed valuation. Senator Alicia Straub has been invited to discuss the RNR law.

Matt Patzner, Director of Operations, said Senator Alicia Straub was present to discuss the Revenue Neutral Rate.

Alicia Straub, Senator 33rd District, said her district currently included Pratt, Stafford, Barton, part of Rice, Ness, Rush, Lane, Scott, Pawnee, Edwards, Kiowa, and most of Hodgeman counties. With the redistricting, in 2024, it will change to Pratt, Stafford, Barton, all of Rice, all of Ellsworth, Rush, Ness, Pawnee, Edwards, Kiowa and Comanche counties. The legislature passed SB 13 in 2021. Straub said she did vote in favor of it. When she was on the commission in 2015, she was an opponent of the tax lid that the legislature imposed on the counties. It took away local control. She supported the bill because it removed the tax lid and provided other measures to provide for transparency in taxation. Straub said it was costly to mail to every taxpayer in the county and had asked about just making it available for anyone to see. The law states that the County Clerk must mail the notices. Straub had contacted the Revisor's Office and will have proposed changes as trailer bills. One of the changes she would propose is the numbers a County Clerk was working with on June 15th to calculate the Revenue Neutral Rate should be numbers the county was held accountable for. Another proposed change would be that no refunds of less than \$5.00 would have to be made.

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Commissioner Hutchinson asked if instead of a refund, could a credit be put towards taxes owed. Jim Jordan, County Treasurer, said a credit could be run through the AAE process.

Straub said that most legislators were not county commissioners and do not see things from the same point of view. She understands the county level and wants to make changes to help. Straub added that it bothers her that the state had their thumb on the local entities and wished they would put the same restraints on themselves. One of her biggest points of grief has been the APEX bill. It is a multimillion-dollar corporate tax incentive program presented as an economic development tool. It really was corporate welfare to entice a specific company. Legislation was not to be crafted to benefit one specific entity. This company came to leaders in Topeka asking them to specifically make tax policy to benefit them. That company was Panasonic, and they plan to put an electric vehicle plant in DeSoto, Kansas. They are giving away a billion dollars or more tax dollars to a multibillion-dollar, foreign owned company that will manufacture electric vehicle batteries. Agriculture and oil fuel this area, they are killing western Kansas.

Patzner said one of the issues was that the Revenue Neutral Rate was expressed in mill levies. Valuation is variable and will change between July 15th and adopting budget. It would be better if it were expressed in dollar amounts instead of mills.

Commissioner Scharz said it was going to be confusing to taxpayers.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the commissioners did not intend to raise taxes but are being required to send out the notices that the intent was to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate. Hoped the media could help get the message out to taxpayers.

Mike Courson, Eagle Radio, asked if there would be several different notices sent out or one notice sent out to include all taxing entities. Schmeidler said one notice with all entities who submitted an intent to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate listed.

Commissioner Esfeld asked if only one entity intended to exceed, would every taxpayer in the county receive a notice. Schmeidler said only the taxpayers in that taxing entity if it were not county wide.

Commissioner Krier said in the future, the taxing entities that intend to exceed, would have to pay for having the notices sent.

Dale Hogg, Great Bend Tribune, asked if multiple entities caused notices to be sent, who would pay for them. Straub said the law states that the County Clerk may recover those costs from the taxing entities.

Straub voiced concerns about election security. She felt that voter registration needed to be audited. She said County Clerks go through them periodically and remove deceased persons and those who had updated their driver's license, but for most purposes, they are not audited. Reno County was having to perform a hand recount due to machine malfunctions. Straub inquired if an audit had been done in Barton County and how it was done, was there any hand counting.

Schmeidler said they were told by the Secretary of State Office which contests Barton County was to audit. Barton County had to audit 5 different contests, one precinct for each of those as well as the State Treasurer – Republican contest in which they audited 5 precincts. It was done by an independent board and was all hand counted. The audit was clean with no discrepancies.

Straub shared concerns about the accuracy of voter rolls. She wanted to work on some ways to audit and keep voter rolls more current.

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Ronica Coons, Barton County Conservation District, asked how this effects homeless people when they go to vote. Someone could have been kicked out of their home and still be in possession of a drivers license, how would that be handled. Schmeidler said there were measures in place for homeless to be able to vote.

Straub added that a photo id was not needed to register to vote, and you can even register online. A person can request a mail ballot and not show a drivers license. Schmeidler said a driver license number must be put on the application and can be verified.

B. COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE: Bulk Mailer for Revenue Neutral Rate Notices Final Billing:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will provide details. On July 13, 2022, the Commission approved a bid from Postalocity for bulk printing and mailing the Revenue Neutral Rate notices as required by Kansas law. Once printed, the number of notices were double that of the original projection which resulted in a final billing of \$14,920.37. At this time, the Commission will be asked to ratify the payment of the remainder of the billing at \$9,032.90.

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, presented details.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to ratify the \$9,032.90 payment to Postalocity for the remainder of the Bulk Mailer for Revenue Neutral Rate Notices billing. Cost to be paid from the Clerk's Account of the General Fund, Professional Services Line, 001-04-5475 and to be reimbursed by the State of Kansas.

Commissioner Krier seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Schartz asked Schmeidler when the State would be reimbursing the county. Schmeidler said she had not been given that information yet. Senator Straub said she would look into it.

C. COUNTY ENGINEER: Emergency Repair of Off-System Bridge No. 297:

-Barry McManaman, County Engineer, will provide details. Off-System Bridge No. 297 crosses Cow Creek on NE 70 Road approximately 0.2 miles west of NE 150 Avenue. The existing corrugated steel deck is failing. Under an agreement submitted by Kirkham Michael, design, bid and inspection services will be provided at a cost of \$19,000.00.

Barry McManaman, County Engineer, said a resident called to report rippling on the deck of the bridge. McManaman and Darren Williams, Road & Bridge Department, checked it and contacted Kirkham Michael. This was a steel beam bridge with corrugated metal decking and that decking had reached end of life. McManaman felt this needed to be acted on quickly and wanted to avoid closing the road. Kirkham Michael submitted an engineering agreement for consideration. It included design and a bid package for the project. A corrugated steel deck was similar in price to a new concrete deck. McManaman felt a concrete deck would be the best way to go and would give decades of service life. He thought the current one had been put on in the 1980's.

Commissioner Schartz asked McManaman when this bridge was last inspected. McManaman said it was inspected in 2021. It was hard to see due to there being asphalt and gravel covering the deck.

Commissioner Krier said what possibly happened was a grader nicked the top in some spots and corrosion started. McManaman said the vast majority of the bridges in the county are concrete decks.

Commissioner Prescott moved to approve the Agreement for Engineering Services between Barton County, Kansas, and Kirkham, Michael & Associates, Inc. for services relative to Barton County Off-System Bridge #297. The \$19,000.00 fee to be paid from the Special Bridge Fund, Construction Related ns, 003-92-6191-92.

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Commissioner Krier seconded the motion but want to reiterate our Road & Bridge crews actually built this bridge.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

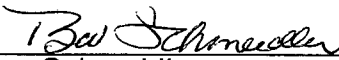
VI. ADJOURN.

Commissioner Schartz moved to adjourn at 10:00 A.M.

Commissioner Krier seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Shawn Hutchinson, Chairman