

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/37Vt5ty>

July 13, 2022

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 13th day of July 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 Krier moved to amend the agenda and add Item F. Matt Patzner will talk about Midwest Energy Pipeline situation.

Commissioner Hutchinson said it was about a letter of support.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Minutes of the June 30, 2022, Special Meeting and July 6, 2022, Regular Meeting were not available.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE: RFP – Bulk Mailer for Revenue Neutral Rate Notices:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will provide details. The "revenue neutral rate" is the property tax rate in mills that would generate the same property tax revenue in dollars as levied during the previous tax year using the current tax year's total assessed valuation. All Kansas counties are required to mail every property owner an estimated tax notice with information relative to each specific property's taxes and the revenue neutral rate (RNR) compared to the proposed rate for each taxing subdivision. The Clerk's Office solicited proposals for the bulk mailing of the notices as prepared in cooperation with area taxing entities. The approximately 17,000 – 18,000 notices, as prepared through the CIC program, must be mailed by August 10, 2022. Postalocity submitted the only bid at an estimated \$8,950.54.

Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, presented details.

Commissioner Schartz asked if the County or State would be paying for the mailers. Schmeidler said the State had said they would reimburse counties this year and next year.

Commissioner Krier asked if every entity would be on the notices. Schmeidler said every entity that gives notice of intent to exceed Revenue Neutral Rate would be listed.

Commissioner Esfeld asked Schmeidler if she was using a service because it would be too time consuming and overwhelming to do in house. Schmeidler said the Primary Election was August 2nd and the notices must be mailed by August 10th. There would not be time for County Clerk staff to conduct the canvass and mail the required notices.

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Commissioner Esfeld said in her experience, Postalocity had been higher than other companies and asked if the notices could be modified with language that the commission wanted to add.

Commissioner Schartz said maybe not modify but add an additional page with a message from the commissioners.

Commissioner Krier asked Schmeidler if it would increase the cost to add a page. Schmeidler said she was sure that it would be an additional charge.

Commissioner Esfeld said she wished other companies had bid on the project and did not know why Postalocity was so much higher. Commissioner Esfeld asked County Treasurer Jim Jordan if he had ever used Postalocity and if Masters Touch was less expensive. Jordan said he had used Masters Touch but now uses Postalocity because they charged less.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked how many notices were going to be sent out. Schmeidler said that was unknown until all notices of intent were received.

Commissioner Esfeld said a service would be cheaper than using staff to issue the notices.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he wanted it known that he felt it was an egregious waste of time and money. The commission was not going to exceed Revenue Neutral, that was the consensus of the commission at this time. Because of the way the State had set it up forces the county to say they may exceed.

Commissioner Prescott moved to approve the estimated bid of \$8,950.54 from Postalocity for the Bulk Mailer for Revenue Neutral Rate Notices. Authorize the Director of Operations to encumber up to \$10,000.00 for the mailing from the Clerk's Account of the General Fund, Professional Services Line, 001-04-5475.

Commissioner Schartz seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

B. TREASURER'S OFFICE: Operational Costs:

-Jim Jordan, County Treasurer, will provide details. During the last legislative session, the Kansas County Treasurer's Association introduced a bill that called for increased registration and title fees for services performed by county treasurers and the division of vehicles and decreased fees related to administrative costs, to include the elimination of the modernization surcharge. It is anticipated that the bill will be reintroduced this year. Mr. Jordan will discuss the need for this legislation and the potential impact on his office.

Jim Jordan, County Treasurer, said a group of legislators, Kansas Department of Revenue and County Treasurers was formed in 2018 to develop an understanding of the current fee structure for the office. County fees had not been increased in decades and were among the lowest in the nation. The State receives 85% of the fee revenue while the County receives 15%. The Treasurers Offices in most counties are operating in the red, including Barton County. They had to put into place a facility fee which was mandated by the State to reduce the cost of doing business. Barton County was approximately \$120,000 in the red. Kansas County Treasurers voted in support of a new model fee that was presented to legislators and moved through to the Senate for debate. The Senate President would not put the bill up for debate or move it above lines to be voted. The Treasurers Association plans to reintroduce the bill next session. We need to get this bill passed for the taxpayers, so they do not have to fund the Motor Vehicle Department.

Commissioner Schartz asked if a letter of support from the commission would be helpful. Jordan said that would be welcomed next session.

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C. RESOLUTION: A Resolution Defining the Parameters under which County Employees or Contractors May Seek, Apply for or Manage Grants:

-Commissioner Kirby Krier will provide details. The Commissioners, understanding that reliance on property tax dollars and user fees to support local government endeavors is shortsighted, seeks monies to supplement local funding through competitive federal, state, local and private grant sources. As such, it is important that the Commission outline the parameters for the use of the time County employees and / or contractors may dedicate to that endeavor. Generally, assistance shall be limited to local municipalities with a moratorium on assisting for-profit, private and property tax exempt businesses and agencies.

Commissioner Krier said the commissioners had talked as a group but had not defined the parameters and how to utilize a grant writer. It is important to decide this before someone would be hired for the position.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked to clarify that a grant writer should not be spending time writing grants for someone not contributing to the tax base. Commissioner Krier said the resolution stated that it would be for the taxing entities such as rec commissions and smaller cities who did not have a grant writer. The County's grant writer could assist if time allowed.

Commissioner Schartz said we have not had any problems in the past and she would prefer not to have a resolution. She did not want to hamstring future commissions.

Commissioner Krier said he disagreed 100%. This was needed to define the limits of a grant writer.

y Boxberger, Community Corrections Director, asked if when The Center for Counseling, for instance, reaches out, would she be able to write letters of support for their grants. Commissioner Krier said a letter of support had nothing to do with writing a grant.

Commissioner Hutchinson said at first he was not sure about this but thought it was worth a try.

Commissioner Krier said if it did not work, the resolution could be rescinded or changed.

Commissioner Krier moved to implement Resolution 2022-18 for managing grants.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion so there could be a vote.

Commissioners Krier and Hutchinson voted aye. Commissioners Prescott and Schartz voted nay.

Commissioner Esfeld said I want to ask a question first; I am on the fence. I was wishing we could handle it a little different. Amy and Marissa now have me, I do not like the way it is working.

Commissioner Krier said they are a part of, you are County employees, right. Okay, you have told us that how many times. So why would you be worried about grants. I am sitting here going, you are County.

Commissioner Esfeld said they just made me think of a bigger picture. I almost would rather our grant writer, we just, you know he is going to let us know when he is writing, because there are a lot of taxing entities that would fall into what you might consider tax exempt. They do not pay taxes, but they are funded out of tax. I would rather him just come to us on a case-by-case basis. My mind went a whole, I vote no. We opened a whole can of worms.

Commissioner Hutchinson said let's do this again. All those in favor, say aye.

Motion failed 3-2. Commissioners Esfeld, Schartz and Prescott nay. Commissioners Krier and Hutchinson aye.

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RESOLUTION: Clarification of County Travel Policies, to be used in coordination with the Barton County Employee Handbook, Policy 509, Business Travel Expenses:

-Commissioner Krier will provide details. According to the IRS, the definition of business travel is travel the employee does 'away from their home' for business purposes. County expectations for employees are found under the Barton County Employee Handbook, Policy 509, Business Travel Expenses. In an effort to clarify that travel process, it is suggested that, with the exception of travel in the Kansas City, Missouri, area, all out of state travel must be approved by a majority of the Commission and that employees of the County Attorney, the County Clerk, the County Treasurer, the Register of Deeds and the Sheriff are exempt from this provision.

Commissioner Krier said an individual requested travel expenses to go to Boston. The expenses would be reimbursed by the National organization. That instance was signed by the Commission Chairman. Commissioner Krier said according to the Barton County Employee Handbook, it should be decided by majority of the commissioners, not just the Chairman. This was to clarify the policy.

Commissioner Schartz asked if this was changing anything.

Commissioner Krier said to clarify that approval would be done by a majority of the commissioners.

Commissioner Krier moved to implement Resolution 2022-18 for approving travel expenses.

Commissioner seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

E. STORM DAMAGE UPDATE: Severe Weather, July 6, 2022:

-On the evening of July 6, 2022, Barton County, particularly the City of Ellinwood and surrounding area, was impacted by severe weather. Several County offices responded to the event. The Commission will provided an update on local efforts.

Matt Patzner, Director of Operations, said last Wednesday severe weather impacted Ellinwood and the surrounding area. Tree limbs were down, and some residents were without power. There were no injuries he was aware of. Barton County Health Department went to Ellinwood and gave free tetanus shots for anyone helping with clean up.

Chris Komarek, Ellinwood City Administrator, said the storm rolled in around 6:00 P.M. with 70-80 mph winds and some large hail. Most of the damage was tree damage and power loss to parts of town. There were a few homes without power for about 12 hours. Five large trees were lost in the parks. Komarek said that Commissioner Hutchinson and Matt Patzner reached out to see if they needed assistance. Barton County Road & Bridge and Lakin Township brought personnel and equipment to help. The City of Great Bend also offered assistance. All help was appreciated, and everything was cleaned up in two days in time for the After Harvest Festival.

Commissioner Schartz asked if an Emergency Disaster Declaration was needed. Komarek said they would not qualify.

ADDED ITEM

F. Letter of Support for Grant Application Midwest Energy Infrastructure Improvements:

-Matt Patzner, Director of Operations, provided details.

Matt Patzner, Director of Operations, said Midwest Energy was applying for grant funding to replace 42 miles of leak prone top of ground bare steel pipe. Midwest Energy reports they will replace 32 miles of 6 inch bare steel with 6 inch polyethylene pipe and 10 miles replaced with 2 inch pipe. The leak prone

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Clay pipe was estimated to be over 60 years old. Midwest Energy was requesting a letter of support from the commission to apply for the grants for this project.

Commissioner Prescott moved to approve a letter of support for grant applications for Midwest Energy Infrastructure improvements.

Commissioner Krier seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

- Patzner – Midwest Energy project, all but 1 ½ miles will take place in Barton County.
- Commissioner Esfeld – Candidate Forum July 21st at 6:30 P.M.
- Amy Boxberger – Connections with Peer Navigators and Recovery Resources Friday at Walnut Bowl from 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.

VI. ADJOURN.

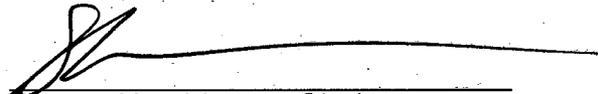
Commissioner Krier moved to adjourn at 9:43 A.M.

Commissioner Schartz seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

TEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Shawn Hutchinson, Chairman

RESOLUTION 2022-18

CLARIFICATION OF COUNTY TRAVEL POLICIES

To be Used in Coordination with the
Barton County Employee Handbook, Policy 509, Business Travel Expenses

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, adopted the Barton County Employee Handbook to describe some of the expectations of employees and to outline the policies, programs and benefits available to eligible employees. Included therein are certain policies dealing with business travel; and

WHEREAS, according to the IRS, the definition of business travel is travel the employee does 'away from their home' for business purposes and for Barton County's purposes, this may include, but is not limited to, educational activities related to the employee's position, legislative testimony, networking, the repair of or obtaining equipment, securing prisoners or other activities; and

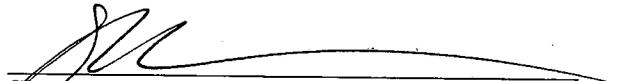
WHEREAS, the actual costs of travel, meals, lodging and other expenses directly related to accomplishing business travel objectives are the fiscal responsibility of Barton County.

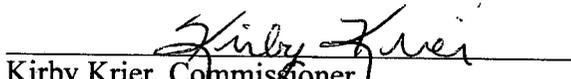
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, further defines the following statement in Section 509, Business Travel Expenses: Out of state travel must be additionally approved by the County Commissioners, with the exception of travel in the Kansas City, Missouri, area, to mean the following:

1. That out of state travel must be approved by a majority of the Commission; and
2. That exempted from the travel policy shall be the employees of the County Attorney, the County Clerk, the County Treasurer, the Register of Deeds and the Sheriff.

Adopted this 13th day of July, 2022.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

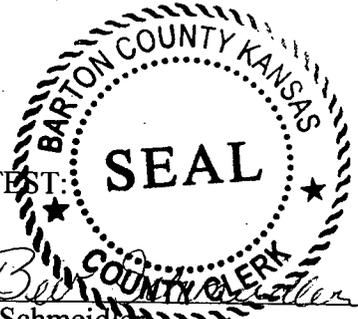

Shawn Hutchinson, Chairman


Kirby Krier, Commissioner


Barb Esfeld, Commissioner


Jon Prescott, Commissioner


Jennifer Schartz, Commissioner


ATTEST: **SEAL**

Bev Schmeidler
County Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Patrick Hoffman,
County Counselor