

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

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August 5, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 5th day of August, 2025, 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 July 29, 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. 2024 AUDIT REPORT:

-Jami Benyshek, Senior Audit Manager, AdamsBrown, will present the 2024 Audit Report to the Commission. The report will cover the financial condition of Barton County from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

Jami Benyshek, Senior Audit Manager, AdamsBrown, said 95% of the information for the audit gets sent to them electronically before they come onsite, which helped in completing the audit. She wanted to thank Matt Patzner, the finance team and departments, for helping with documents for the audit. Benyshek said they had an adverse and unmodified opinion. An adverse opinion on US generally accepted accounting principles essentially meant they were not using an opinion on US GAAP. The commissioners waive the US GAAP and instead use the K mag or Kansas statutes. Benyshek said an unmodified opinion was the best type of opinion they could issue and meant financial statements were materially correct. Benyshek said the county had 22,682,000 at the end of 2024 and started the year with 22,000,138, a slight increase in unencumbered cash was always a good thing. She said there were a few funds with negative unencumbered cash. Typically, you do not want to have a negative balance, but these funds were exceptions because they were reimbursable grant funds. The money had to be spent and then the county gets reimbursed. Benyshek said regarding the financial statements, they would have noted any statute violations, but there were none. Benyshek also noted that the variance column showed how far under budget the county was, that was something she liked to point out. Benyshek said in addition to the Financial Statement Audit, Barton County also had a Single Audit due to spending more than \$750,000 in federal expenditures. With the Single Audit, they issued two more opinions, another unmodified opinion and no financial statement findings. Benyshek said three programs had to be tested. They still had an

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unmodified opinion, but there was one finding noted. The three tested were Coronavirus, ARPA funds, as well as Distance Learning and Telemedicine. There was an internal control that was not documented correctly and had to be noted. This particular one was in reference to the Distance Learning and Telemedicine loan and competitive versus non-competitive bids. The county policy was just a little more lenient than what the federal grant required. Benyshek spoke about the governance letter.

Commissioner Hutchinson thanked Matt Patzner for his hard work and having a nearly perfect audit. He thanked Benyshek also.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to accept the 2024 Audit Report as submitted by AdamsBrown.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

B. COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS OF AMERICA: Mid-Year Training Institute Recap:

-Tyler Morton, Prevention Advocate with Juvenile Services, and Nichelle Holinde, Family Crisis Center, Youth Crew stakeholder member and parent of a Youth Crew member, will provide details. Five area youth attended the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) Mid-Year Training Institute in Nashville, Tennessee, in July.

Tyler Morton, Prevention Advocate with Juvenile Services, said they attended a weeklong training. The trip went smoothly, in contrast to past years. Morton said five youths went on the trip. Three of them attended the conference last year, for two of them, this was their first conference. The two first timers were on the early training track called Key Essentials. They get everything they need right out of the gate. It hit on some of the education we do here but longer sessions. Morton said it was nine-hour days with lots of note taking, they were immersed in learning the foundation of prevention. Morton said over 2,000 students were in attendance. He was proud of them for stepping outside their comfort zone and speaking in public.

Morton said the other three had attended before and were on the Breakout Track. Morton said he received many compliments about the students, not only from other youth coalitions and their advisors but also from the CADCA team. These were people they met at previous conferences, and they remembered the students by name, that spoke volumes to the work they were doing.

Nichelle Holinde, Family Crisis Center, Youth Crew stakeholder and parent of a Youth Crew member, said last year the kids were a little shy but were anything but shy this year. Holinde said they were the first to raise their hands, cooperated and participated in everything. She said it was great to see the growth in them from last year. Good leaders and great group.

Morton thanked Holinde for accompanying the group and said there were great conversations. He shared a video about the trip.

Morton said there were some really fun moments, a lot of bonding as well as some difficult sessions.

Mya Brewer, Branson Holinde, Brooklyn Cooley, Janey Weber, and Matilda Philbern, Youth Crew Members, spoke about their experiences

Morton said there was a lot of learning in four or five days.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she was proud of the Youth Crew members. It was hard to participate in some of these events, and it was great to see them put themselves out there and be apart of it. She added that coming in here was not easy to do. They were wonderful and she wished them the best going forward in life.

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Commissioner Hutchinson told Mya, Branson, Brooklyn, Janey and Matilda, you have a big responsibility to take what you learned and share that with your friends. That was part of being a leader.

Commissioner Reif thanked Morton and Holinde for taking the group. He said they did an amazing job speaking.

Commissioner Esfeld asked when the kickball tournament was being held. Brewer said it was this coming Friday at 6:00 P.M. at the Great Bend Sports Complex.

Commissioner Esfeld asked if they would do the same thing next year or did they have different ideas. Brewer said building off the past years, they would have more ideas and wanted to raise awareness.

Commissioner Schlessiger thanked the group for coming and sharing their experiences.

Commissioner Schlessiger said to take a five minute recess to take pictures.

C. PUBLIC HEALTH: Authority to Accept Grant Award – US DOT FY2025 BUILD Grant – Barton County Accessible Public Transportation (BCAPT) Planning Project:

-Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, will provide details. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) awarded Barton County a Fiscal Year 2025 BUILD Grant for the Barton County Accessible Public Transportation (BCAPT) Planning Project. Using a community engagement process that will include surveys, focus groups and community events, grant funds will be used to assess and develop a master transportation plan covering the entirety of the County. The Health Department was awarded the full grant at \$239,138.00. The Commission will be asked to authorize the Commission Chairman to approve the grant award for a two (2) year period that begins October 1, 2025, and ends September 30, 2027.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, asked the commission to authorize approval of the grant award for a two-year period and approve the acceptance of the commission chair to sign off on it once the agreement was complete. Winkelman said the grant award was \$239,138 and that was the total cost of the plan. The product description was to develop an accessible public transportation plan for Barton County. This would involve a lot of community engagement in each of the county's census tracts. Winkelman said they were invited to each of the hospitals for their community health needs assessment meetings. The top three things needed in each community included transportation, access to healthy foods, food insecurity and mental health awareness. Transportation seemed like the thing they needed to explore as public health. Winkelman said the project scope was to hire a rural public transportation consultant which was part of the grant requirement. That person would assist with the RFP. Winkelman said they would undertake the community engagement process to survey Barton County residents and carry out education and evaluation recommendations from a 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Winkelman said it was a two-year reimbursement grant, meaning they incur the expenses but would be reimbursed. The entire plan is October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2027. This budget would support hiring a rural transportation consultant as well as support individuals of Winkelman's staff. It would cover part of their salary and contracting census workers.

Commissioner Schlessiger thanked Winkelman and Misty Trudeau for going after this grant, transportation was a huge issue.

Commissioner Zimmerman said it was a county-wide initiative.

Winkelman said they worked with the grant writer, looking at each community and what was already available. She said it was the third time they applied for this grant. They built on it each time and were persistent because of the great need.

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Commissioner Reif thanked the Health Department for pursuing the grant and noted that there was no match for this particular one.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he had been involved in economic development planning for over five years and one of the main things that always came up was transportation.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to direct the Commission Chairman to approve acceptance of the Grant Award US DOT FY2025 BUILD Grant – Barton County Accessible Public Transportation (BCAPT) Planning Project for \$239,138.00 subject to review of the agreement by the County Counselor.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

D. FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2: Appointment of a Board of Trustees:

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, 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. Positions for North Homestead and South Homestead are vacant. The positions expire December 31, 2026.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said Fire District No. 2 consisted of the townships of Albion, Eureka, North Homestead, South Homestead and Union as well as the cities of Hoisington, Olmitz and Susank. Patzner asked the commission to appoint Richard Ward, representing South Homestead, to the board.

Commissioner Reif moved to appoint Richard Ward, representing South Homestead Township, to the Board of Trustees for Fire District No. 2, Barton County, Kansas. The uncompensated term ends December 31, 2026.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

No Executive Session Held

E. 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 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 Zimmerman – attended the Stepping Up meeting, asked Marissa Woodmansee to provide an update.

Marissa Woodmansee – currently in the pilot process, have four questions to answer.

Commissioner Esfeld – attended Golden Belt Community Foundation meeting.

Commissioner Schlessiger – commissioners would soon begin taxpayer listening tour. If anyone would like them to visit, contact the County Administrator's office.

Commissioner Hutchinson – reminded everyone to go vote if they lived in Great Bend Ward 2.

Winkelman – Health Department would be at Barton Community College on Friday and Saturday afternoons from 1:00 to 3:00 for students arriving for the new school year.

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VI. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adjourn at 10:07 A.M.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:

Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk

Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman