

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/4ir0QjX>

April 22, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 22nd day of April, 2025, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1st District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)

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

Members absent:

Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

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

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to amend the agenda to add Item E, a proclamation honoring former commissioner Jim Nolte.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2025, Regular Meeting. Minutes of the April 15, 2025, Regular Meeting were not available.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

III. APPROVAL OF APPROPRIATIONS:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will present details. An Accounts Payable Register will be submitted to the Commission for the period of April 8, 2025, and ending April 22, 2025.

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

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve appropriations for the period of April 8, 2025, to April 22, 2025. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. PROCLAMATION 2025-09: Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day:

-Amy Ferguson, Rise Up Central Kansas Coordinator, and partners who are actively involved in the Drug-Endangered Children in Kansas (DECK) Project, will present details. The proposed Proclamation marks April 24, 2025, as Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day in Barton County. This designation sheds light on the families impacted by substance use disorder, the risks associated with early exposure and the profound influence of intervention services.

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Joy Ferguson, Rise Up Central Kansas Coordinator, thanked the commissioners for allowing them to come today. Ferguson said Oxford House residents were present today. She said they were often the first step in getting families back together and helping them address children who were drug endangered. Ferguson said they wanted to bring awareness to an often overlooked group, children who were living in homes where substance use was present. These were drug endangered children who were significantly affected by instability, trauma and neglect. Ferguson said the goal was to unite community partners, people with lived experience, healthcare providers, advocates and law enforcement to better identify and support these children. The proclamation served as a formal recognition of their needs and commitment to working together, providing them with safety, stability and hope. Ferguson said it was a gift to be happy, joyous and free.

Ferguson and Oxford House residents read the proclamation.

Commissioner Zimmerman thanked them all for being here and bringing awareness to an important issue.

Commissioner Reif thanked them also.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt Proclamation 2025-09, Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Façade Improvement Grant 2025:

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. Barton County and the participating Cities of Claflin, Ellinwood and Hoisington are proud to announce the opening of the Façade Improvement Grant Program 2025. This program provides financial assistance to businesses and property owners for façade improvements to defined areas to create a visual impact and increase economic prosperity, accessibility and quality of life in Claflin, Ellinwood, Great Bend and Hoisington, Kansas. Planned are two projects each in the participating Cities of Claflin, Ellinwood and Hoisington (\$20,000.00 cap) and six in Great Bend (\$10,000.00 cap).

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details.

Commissioner Hutchinson said today was the kickoff for FIG 25 and was actually Round 4 of the program. Commissioner Hutchinson said he had now lived more than half of his life in Barton County. He said the program had created the biggest changes he had seen in the downtown of our communities. He said we started with ARPA Funds that were designated to help spark the economy following COVID and he was proud it could continue. As the ARPA Funds dwindled, the way to continue was to split the costs with the cities. He looked forward to seeing the applications and what people wanted to improve.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Patzner how many projects had been completed. Patzner said around 60-65 projects. Commissioner Zimmerman said that was something to celebrate and it was exciting to have been a part of it.

Commissioner Reif noted that all the work had been done by local contractors, and it was great how they had benefitted from it. He said the program started the year before he became a commissioner and admitted that he was a little hesitant at first. Commissioner Reif thanked Commissioner Hutchinson for motivating the program and added that was exactly what ARPA Funds were intended to be used for.

Commissioner Hutchinson said it could not have continued without the support of the commissioners. He thanked the three newer commissioners for jumping in and supporting the program so it could continue.

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Commissioner Hutchinson said there had been 63 projects with 10 still incomplete. Some of those were waiting for historical approvals among other things. There have been 43 local contractors utilized so far. What an amazing contribution we have been able to make.

Commissioner Schlessiger said there were very few things they had done that had such an immediate visual impact. In Ellinwood, Sauer's were finishing their project. They had well exceeded the budget and put their own money into it.

Commissioner Zimmerman said you could see pride when you drive through the communities, it looked like a great place to live. It was good for business recruitment as well as other things.

Commissioner Reif said it was not just the funds the county provided but the owner contributed also and helped the local communities.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it was great to see everyone come together when they had the meeting with Ellinwood, Claflin and Hoisington.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the total award was \$1.08 million which turned into \$1.926 million.

C. RESOLUTION 2025-08: A Resolution Transferring and Carrying Over 2024 Unexpended Funds to the Capital Improvement and Equipment Replacement Funds:

-Mr. Patzner will present details. After accounting of all 2024 transactions, monies are suggested for transfer to the Capital Improvement and Equipment Replacement Funds.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said it was the County's practice to transfer unexpended funds from year to the next. After discussions with the commissioners and in light of the uncertainty of the economy, the proposed transfers would better position the County for the future.

To Capital Improvement, Total Transfer -	\$464,804.09
General Fund	\$300,000.00
Federal Funds Exchange	\$164,804.09

To Equipment Replacement, Total Transfer -	\$150,000.00
Road & Bridge	\$150,000.00

Patzner noted that the \$1.3 million in tax credits was not included as that occurred in 2025 and this was a snapshot of the end of 2024.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Patzner what that brought the balances to in both reserve funds. Patzner said all in, right around \$8 million with everything.

Commissioner Zimmerman said that was something to celebrate when you think about how hard that vote was to make when the three commissioners had just taken office, deciding to repair the courthouse.

Commissioner Schlessiger said they had all been concerned about where they would come out with the reserves and that vote was difficult.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he was proud to serve with them. They took office and in their second week had to make the decision to repair the building. It was difficult but they got through it.

Commissioner Reif said a lot of hours were spent debating the decision.

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Commissioner Hutchinson said the three of them were informed because they had attended commission meetings as well as meetings with the architects and contractors prior to taking office.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it was a lot different sitting in the audience than sitting in the commission seat.

Commissioner Reif moved to adopt Resolution 2025-08, A Resolution Transferring and Carrying Over 2024 Unexpended Funds to the Capital Improvement and Equipment Replacement Funds.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

D. CITY OF ELLINWOOD: Petition and Consent for Annexation:

-Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, will present details. The Ellinwood Hospital and Clinic opened a new facility at 300 N Park, Ellinwood, Kansas. As a part of opening the facility at this site, the County will request that the City annex certain real estate.

Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor, said this was a housekeeping issue to approve annexing a portion of a roadway. Ellinwood was in the process of cleaning up their boundary lines with the new hospital area. This would annex half of the roadway not currently in the city limits, but they would like to add to the city limits. Hoffman said allowing this annexation would have no negative impact on the county and cost zero dollars. He strongly recommended supporting it.

Commissioner Reif said at first it sounds like a large area, but it was actually minimal.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it was basically 30 feet of road.

Hoffman said it was common for boundary lines to be in the middle of the road but the City of Ellinwood was requesting to add the entire road.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the Petition and Consent for Annexation for certain real estate with the City of Ellinwood.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ADDED ITEM

E. PROCLAMATION 2025-10: Honoring the Life and Service of Commissioner James H. Nolte:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. James H. Nolte (May 19, 1927 - April 20, 2025), District 2, of Great Bend served as a Barton County Commissioner from 1989 – 1997. The Commission is asked to adopt a Proclamation in honor of the lifelong dedication shown to this community.

Commissioner Zimmerman said it was learned yesterday that former County Commissioner Jim Nolte had recently passed. She remembered him well; he served a couple of terms. Commissioner Zimmerman said Nolte served with Marlin Isern and Jeannette Shirer when there were only three commissioners.

Commissioner Zimmerman read the proclamation.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt Proclamation 2025-10, Honoring the Life and Service of Commissioner James H. Nolte.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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No Executive Session Held

F. 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.

V. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

Karen Winkelman – Drug Take Back Day, Saturday, April 26th from 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. on the east side of the courthouse with the Sheriff's Office. The partnership had been twice a year since 2016, and they had collected over 3,000 pounds of medication. The Health Department Clinic would also be open at the same time for services.

Bev Frizell – Community Baby Shower on Thursday, April 24th from 4:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. at the Great Bend Events Center.

VI ADJOURN:

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adjourn at 9:33 A.M.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman

PROCLAMATION 2025-09

Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day

WHEREAS, in Kansas and across the nation, children are at risk and may be exposed to legal and illegal substance at any time; and

WHEREAS, children in families affected by substance use disorder face significant risks, as early exposure can lead to feelings of insecurity and neglect, contributing to Adverse Childhood Experiences; and

WHEREAS, substance use has extended beyond the family setting into schools, sports and other activities, necessitating our acknowledgment of this reality; and

WHEREAS, while acknowledging these risks, it is widely recognized that prevention and early access to intervention services for children and their families can disrupt the intergenerational impact and cycle of substance use.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that Thursday, April 24, 2025, is designated as Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day; and

FURTHER, Rise Up Central Kansas, Central Kansas Partnership, Oxford Sober Living, Kansas Children's Service League, the Barton County Health Department, Central Kansas Community Corrections, Barton County Probation Services, 20th Judicial District Juvenile Services, Barton County Youth Care, the Barton County Young Men's Organization, The Center for Counseling and Consultation, Essdack, First United Methodist Church, the Kansas Department of Children and Families and public health and law enforcement agencies join in supporting the more than eight million children younger than age 18 who live with at least one adult who has a SUD.

FURTHER, through the study of Adverse Childhood Experiences, trauma-informed care and recovery support for those with substance abuse disorders, Barton County citizens will impact lives and provide a safe haven for all children; and

FURTHER, the Commission urges citizens to invest in local children and support the All Hands on DECK (Drug-Endangered Children in Kansas) Project.

Dated this 22nd day of April, 2025.

BARTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Chairman Tricia Schlessiger


Commissioner Barb Esfeld


Commissioner Shawn Hutchinson


Commissioner Duane Reif


Commissioner Donna Zimmerman

ATTEST:



Bev Schneider
County Clerk

RESOLUTION 2025-08

A RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING AND CARRYING OVER 2024 UNEXPENDED FUNDS TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT FUNDS

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, in the adopted budget for 2024, approved budget transfers from various funds to the Capital Improvement and Equipment Replacement Funds.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, FIRST, that the following funds, not to be exceeded by the amounts listed, be transferred to the Capital Improvement Fund as of the close of business for 2024:

To Capital Improvement, Total Transfer –	\$464,804.09
General Fund	\$300,000.00
Federal Funds Exchange	\$164,804.09


SECOND, that the following funds, not to be exceeded by the amounts listed, be transferred to the Equipment Replacement Fund as of the close of business for 2024:

To Equipment Replacement, Total Transfer –	\$150,000.00
Road & Bridge	\$150,000.00

THIRD, that those funds remaining in both the Capital Improvement and the Equipment Replacement Fund, as of the close of business for 2024, be carried over into the same fund for 2025.

Dated this 22nd day of April, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman


Barb Esfeld, Commissioner


Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner


Duane Reif, Commissioner



Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler,
County Clerk



APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Patrick Hoffman,
County Counselor

PROCLAMATION 2025-10

Honoring the Life and Service of Commissioner James H. Nolte

WHEREAS, in Kansas, a County Commissioner is an elected official overseeing the operations of local government, managing its finances, enacting local law and representing the County's interests at various levels. A Commissioner is responsible for a wide range of duties, including setting policy, managing the budget and ensuring the functionality of services; and

WHEREAS, a Kansas County Commissioner does not act alone, but in concert with fellow Board members. The person in this position must, therefore, be cooperative in nature, astute in business, understand the need for structure and prepare for a better tomorrow through budget, policy and careful planning.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that the Life and Service of Commissioner James H. Nolte is hereby honored; and

WHEREAS, James H. Nolte (May 19, 1927 - April 20, 2025), District 2, of Great Bend served as a Barton County Commissioner from 1989 – 1997; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Nolte, an Army Veteran, was in the Oil Industry and committed to civic causes including the Masonic Lodge, the Elks Lodge, the American Legion and the Boy Scouts; and

WHEREAS, during this time in office, Commissioner Nolte was involved in several loans through the Community Development Block Grant program; the establishment of the 911 system; the State-wide move to establish regional juvenile correction facilities; the purchase of the Administrative Building for the Sheriff's Office and the Boogarts Building for corrections; the creation of the Barton County Economic Development Committee and the establishment of the home rehabilitation grant project; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Nolte was a champion for employees, visiting offices, asking questions of front line personnel and seeking new ways to improve pay, safety and moral; and

WHEREAS, above all else, Commissioner Nolte was a proud husband and father, bringing that same dedication to his public service and hosting County employee celebrations at his farm in Stafford County; and

WHEREAS, that Tuesday, April 22, 2025, shall be known as Commissioner James H. Nolte Day in Barton County in honor of the lifelong dedication shown to this community.


Adopted this 22nd day of April, 2025.

BARTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Chairman Tricia Schlessiger


Commissioner Barb Esfeld


Commissioner Shawn Hutchinson


Commissioner Duane Reif


Commissioner Donna Zimmerman

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler
County Clerk