

# 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](mailto:clerk@bartoncounty.org)

Meetings Live Streamed through **Microsoft Teams**® at the following link: <https://bit.ly/49vYM8a>

April 29, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 29<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2025, at the Barton County Courthouse.

## *Members present:*

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1<sup>st</sup> District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)  
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2<sup>nd</sup> District  
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4<sup>th</sup> District, Chairman  
Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5<sup>th</sup> 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 April 15, 2025, and April 22, 2025, Regular Meetings.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.  
Voted aye. Motion passed.

## **II. OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business.

## **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. PROCLAMATION 2025-11: Honoring the Life and Legacy of Commissioner Homer Kruckenberg:**

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. From January 12, 2009, until January 11, 2021, Commissioner Homer Kruckenberg served as the Commissioner for District Two in Barton County, Kansas. This proposed Proclamation details his impact on countless generations through his generous nature and dedication to community.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details and read the proclamation.

Commissioner Esfeld said she spoke to Homer Kruckenberg prior to deciding to run for commissioner to be sure he supported her running in his district. Commissioner Esfeld said when she was circulating her petition to file for office, several people would not sign it until they verified with Kruckenberg. She said he was a wonderful man, and she appreciated everything he had done. She added that he frequently quoted scriptures.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she was not fortunate to have had Kruckenberg as an instructor but was grateful for the opportunity to work with him when she was County Clerk. He was always interesting; she had a pile of coins from him and remembered him sharing coins with local teams and those he wanted to inspire.

Commissioner Schlessiger said Kruckenberg touched many lives. She first met him lining up entries for the Ellinwood After Harvest Festival Parade.

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Commissioner Esfeld moved to adopt Proclamation 2025-11, Honoring the Life and Legacy of Commissioner Homer Kruckenberg.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **B. RECOGNITION OF RETIRING EMPLOYEE: Lt. David Paden, Barton County Sheriff's Office:**

-Sheriff Brian Bellendir will provide details. Lt. David Paden was hired by the Sheriff's Office on November 2, 1992. Hired as a Detention Officer, Lt. Paden has also served as a patrol officer, K9 officer, detective, detective sergeant and ends his career with the Sheriff's Office as the Lieutenant. The Commission will honor Lt. Paden for his 33 years of exemplary service.

Sheriff Brian Bellendir shared details of his service and said on behalf of the Sheriff's Office, they would like to recognize Lieutenant David Paden who was retiring today. Bellendir said his first conversation with Paden was telling him to get a haircut. Bellendir presented Paden with a plaque honoring his legacy at the Sheriff's Office. He thanked him for his service and dedication to Barton County.

Commissioner Zimmerman read a letter that was written to Paden.

Paden said he was humbled and honored to have served Barton County. He and his wife raised three boys in Barton County. He knew law enforcement would never make him rich money wise, but he was rich with family. Paden thanked the commissioners for the benefits Barton County provided, he was able to retire and support his family.

Commissioner Reif said he had not known Paden well but whenever his name came up, it was with great respect. He thanked him for keeping Barton County safe for 33 years.

Commissioner Hutchinson said Paden approached being a Sheriff's Officer with common sense and a cool head. He appreciated the personality along with the badge.

Commissioner Zimmerman said strength, dedication, compassion and leadership were some of the ways to describe Paden and said Barton County would surely miss him.

Commissioner Esfeld said it was rare to find someone with that much compassion. She added that he was serious about keeping Barton County safe and never looked down on anyone. He had changed a lot of lives and would be greatly missed.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to recognize Lt. Paden with a Letter of Appreciation.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Dr. Witt wanted to let the commissioners know that Acciona had dropped out of the solar project. They returned the situation back to Tenaska. Witt said he had been in contact with Mike Roth, Tenaska, and had offered him a tour of Cheyenne Bottoms. Roth said he was from Salina and had been to the Bottoms many times. Witt thanked the commissioners for all the work they had done to protect Cheyenne Bottoms. He knew that they represent everyone in the county, him, as well as the landowners and investors. Witt said he was grateful for everything. Witt said Representative Sherri Brantley was developing a proclamation to present declaring Cheyenne Bottoms a historical site.

Commissioner Hutchinson said that in his time as a commissioner, one of the things he was most proud of was the eight months spent developing the regulations. When it began, community members were against each other but by the time we were done, people shook hands and were neighbors again.

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Commissioner Esfeld thanked Witt for his efforts. She said that Michael Roth had reached out to her while she was in Manhattan to insure her that he also cared about Cheyenne Bottoms.

Kip Spray, Venture Corporation, said they started mixing the cold mix asphalt for Barton County this morning and invited the commissioners to visit the site.

## **C. COMMISSION REPORT: Kansas County Commissioners Association Meeting:**

-Commissioner Barb Esfeld will provide details. The Kansas County Commissioners Association held their annual meeting last week in Manhattan. Information from the meeting will be shared at this time.

Commissioner Esfeld said Wendy Prosser, County Appraiser, and Christina Doyle, Deputy County Appraiser, attended a session about serving the public. Commissioner Esfeld said Monday night she attended the Kansas National Resource Coalition Meeting. They reviewed their accomplishments made on the county's behalf. Jay Hall, Counsel for KAC, and Mike Taylor, lobbyist, went over this year's legislative session. They said it had been the most difficult year as things changed repeatedly. They were reminded that they could face cuts if the federal government cuts at the state level and that should be considered when working on the budget. Commissioner Esfeld said a study would be done this summer about possible legislation to cut property taxes. There were several bills regarding property tax but none of those passed. They were going to look at eliminating sales tax exemptions totaling \$8.7 billion. If that were to be successful, that would go towards property taxes.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked if they provided examples of who would no longer be tax exempt.

Commissioner Esfeld said it would include everyone.

Commissioner Esfeld said she found it interesting that SB119 did not pass due to Senator Francis not believing the Treasurer's numbers were correct. She said there would be an audit done this summer in all Treasurer's Offices. Registration fees on electric cars increased from \$100 to \$165, gas taxes went down some but would still increase to help fund the byways. There were several election bills, one was to eliminate the three-day grace period for receiving mail ballots beginning in 2026. Even though fireworks could now be sold year-round by SB199, it would still be up to the cities and counties about times for discharging fireworks. County websites will need to be ADA compliant, not sure what that involved yet. The state will pay for Revenue Neutral Rate notices to be mailed for the next two years and the form changed for 2025. Commissioner Esfeld said there were sessions regarding cyber security and Dereck Hollingshead, IT Director, had Barton County covered. Other things addressed were building prosperity for housing needs, AI tools and KAC was wanting to create a program to shape County Commissioners. The bill that boats and ATV's would be tax exempt passed with the elimination of airplanes. There were sessions on the commissioner's responsibility for public health and mental health, the state food sales tax was now gone as well as the state's 1.5 mills was gone for now.

## **D. 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, provided details and asked for approval.

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ATCH #7	VALUES	ESCAPED TAXES	ADDED / ABATED	REFUNDS
Gas				
Oil	(285,303)		(\$38,963.70)	\$18,041.95
Personal Property	(112,432)		(\$16,968.34)	\$1,094.04
Real Estate				
16/20 M Trucks				
State Assessed Utilities				
Special Assessments				
Grand Totals	(397,735)	\$0.00	(\$55,932.04)	\$19,135.99
Total Taxes	(\$55,932.04)			
Total Records Selected	20			

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.

## **E. COUNTY ENGINEER: Kansas Department of Transportation Federal Funds Exchange:**

-Barry McManaman, County Engineer, will provide details. The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has offered to exchange the County's annual federal fund distribution for state funds at an exchange rate of ninety percent. The County has the option of using the full share of federal funds in the amount of \$177,410.37 on a project designed with all federal requirements and restrictions. If the exchange is accepted, the County would have the freedom to use the money on road and bridge projects without following federal requirements. There is \$159,669.33 available for reimbursement if the exchange offer is accepted.

Barry McManaman, County Engineer, presented details and said were the offer accepted, the county could use the funds at their discretion without having to follow all the federal requirements. McManaman said the county had participated in the exchange since 2013. It had served the county's needs well and asked for approval.

Commissioner Zimmerman said McManaman explained that if we did not do the exchange and had to follow the requirements and restrictions, it would cost more money. McManaman said that was correct. McManaman said the funds could also be shared on different projects such as bridge repairs and overlay budget.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she understood most Kansas counties participated in the exchange program.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to accept the KDOT federal funds exchange rate of ninety percent making the amount available to Barton County \$159,669.33. Authorize the County Engineer to submit the Request to Exchange Federal Funds to KDOT. Once received, said monies are to be deposited in the Road and Bridge Fund, State Funds Received Line, 002-00-4325.

Commissioner Zimmerman 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:**

There was no other business.


### **VI ADJOURN:**

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adjourn at 9:45 A.M.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler  
Barton County Clerk

  
Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman

## **PROCLAMATION 2025-11**

Honoring the Life and Legacy of Commissioner Homer Kruckenberg

**WHEREAS**, Commissioner Homer Kruckenberg, February 7, 1935 – April 13, 2025, was first and foremost, an historian. Quoting Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy Jr. in the classroom and Commission Chambers, Kruckenberg challenged those around him to be better, to do better, to make the world better; and

**WHEREAS**, Commissioner Kruckenberg was an American farmer, working to feed our Nation while watching the markets and the weather, hoping for a paying crop; and

**WHEREAS**, Commissioner Kruckenberg taught history at Great Bend High School, impacting the lives of multiple generations and sharing his knowledge of the great men that made America; and

**WHEREAS**, from January 12, 2009, until January 11, 2021, Commission Kruckenberg, already a great man of local history, served as the Commissioner for District Two in Barton County, Kansas; and

**WHEREAS**, given his impact on countless generations through his generous nature and dedication to community, it is incumbent upon the current Commissioners to honor the life and legacy of Commissioner Kruckenberg.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that Tuesday, April 29, 2025, shall be known as Commissioner Homer Kruckenberg Day in appreciation for his life of service; and

**FURTHER**, the Commission recognizes that Commission Kruckenberg served two years in the United States Army; that he taught school for 44 years; spent 6 years on the USD 428 Board of Education and dedicated another 12 years to the public as a Barton County Commissioner; and

**FURTHER,** the Commission recognizes Gretchen Titus-Schmidt and Kaydene Truitt, their children and grandchildren and those family members that passed before Commission Kruckenberg upon this occasion; and

**FURTHER,** the Commission congratulates all those persons that Commissioner Kruckenberg gifted with a silver dollar or two-dollar bill. Know that he saw in you the ability to make our world better.

Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> 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