

# 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/4IEEZm>

August 19, 2025

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 19th day of August 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

## BUDGET HEARING

At 9:00 A.M. Commissioner Zimmerman moved to enter into the Budget Hearing.  
Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.  
All voted aye. Motion passed.

### **BUDGET HEARING: 2026 Operating Budget:**

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. Elected officials, Department Heads and supported agencies were asked to submit budget requests for the 2026 Operating Year. The Commission reviewed the requests and, with the assistance of the Administrator, drafted a balanced operating budget. The proposed 2026 Operating Budget is now presented to receive public comment.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said it was his privilege to present the proposed 2026 operating budget. This budget was the organizational blueprint to maintain delivery of quality public services at an affordable cost to the taxpayer. The main goals were to remain revenue neutral, meaning to levy the same or less tax dollars, maintain quality public services in a way that was sustainable for years to come, invest in our employees to deliver these quality services and contribute to the expanding tax base, enriching the quality of life of the citizens. Patzner said every budget year was unique and presented its own challenges. They had to find a way to accomplish all these goals with continuing rising costs for commodities, services and quality personnel with fewer ad valorem tax dollars than the previous year. The proposed budget showed a mill levy of 33.921 for the countywide assessed valuation of \$352,016,332 which would generate a total of \$11,941,414 in ad valorem tax. This was \$18,407 less than the amount generated from the 2025 budget. When comparing the mill levy to 2025, the proposed estimated mill levy would be a reduction of 1.898 mills from 35.819 to 33.921. Patzner said this budget came in at .004 mills under the prescribed revenue neutral rate of 33.925 as provided by the County Clerk. Furthermore, when comparing the proposed 2026 budget to the 2021 budget, there could be a 12.397 mill levy reduction and \$284,312.00 reduction in dollars levied if this budget was adopted as presented. The mill levy went down quite a bit in that time span, some of which was due to increased valuation, but the amount of tax dollars collected had gone down \$284,000. Patzner said expenditure authority across all budgeted funds was up 820,305 from 2025 largely due to increases in personnel costs, health liability insurance costs, anticipated Road & Bridge expenditures, increased community development and outside agency support funding, 911 maintenance contracts and various increases to commodity and contractual lines. It was possible to absorb these increases in budget authority in 2026 by beginning the year with a higher cash carry forward position and increased anticipated revenue from sources other than ad valorem tax such as sales tax, departmental revenue and interest. Patzner said we committed to facilitating lean, efficient county operations, eliminating 11 positions through attrition over the past few years. The proposed raise structure was equivalent to \$0.50 per hour for all county employees. Patzner showed a chart for anticipated revenue for all levied funds. Ad valorem tax made up

# 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/4IEEZrm>

less than half of the total revenue required for the county to have a balanced budget. Patzner noted that this was the first time since he had been involved in the budget that this piece had been less than half. He said in 2020 and 2021, it was around 59%-60%, we have reduced it by 10%-11% over the past few years.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Patzner what you are saying is that less than half of our budget was being funded by property tax dollars. Patzner said that was correct. Patzner said when we go through the process of creating the budget, that really illustrated what we can control, how being lean and stretching every dollar, is a result of that. It was a good goal to work towards each year, keeping the ad valorem tax piece of the pie chart as low as we possibly could.

Patzner continued that as with all budgets, the goal was to maintain quality public services. We will try to keep the ad valorem tax number as small as possible to be good stewards of the taxpayer's money. Cash carry forward, motor vehicle tax, sales and use tax, departmental revenue, fees, transfers, interest and special county highway funds and grant funds make up the rest of the financial resources that we need for a balanced budget. Patzner shared a chart showing the six different categories of general government services, public safety, public works, solid waste, public health, community development and agency support. Of the 25,979,755 in expenditure authority across all funds, 67% is either public safety, public works, solid waste or public health. 31% were general government services and 2% was community development and outside agency support. Dependent upon where a taxpayer lived, only 18%-22% of their property tax dollars supported Barton County government.

Patzner said in summary, the 2026 budget was funded by a mill levy that was 1.898 mills less than the previous year and consistent with a prescribed revenue neutral rate which generates \$11,941,414. This was made possible with careful planning and the foresight to begin 2025 with a sufficient level of cash carry forward to deal with project costs, inflation and ever-increasing contract and commodity prices while making a healthy transfer into reserves for the future. As future budgets present themselves, they would bring with them unique challenges. With adequate cash reserves, zero debt and careful planning, the county can address these in a sustainable way with the leadership of the county commissioners, the diligence and care of department heads and high quality of employees. Barton County remained fiscally sound and was in a position to maintain a sustainable mill levy for years to come while still contributing to the expansion of the tax base and providing quality public services.

Patzner thanked the commissioners for their hard work on the budget as well as the elected officials, department heads and supported agency heads. He wanted to recognize his staff in the Administrator's Office for their time and assistance in putting the presentation together. He said it was a team effort and he was proud to say the budget successfully reflected the goals and vision the board had provided.

Commissioner Zimmerman thanked Patzner for his hard work.

Commissioner Hutchinson said it had been five years of lowering taxes and reinvesting in the community. It had been one of the best experiences of his life and he wanted the public to know that they really were here to serve them. Commissioner Hutchinson said we are trying to grow our tax base so that everyone's piece of the pie was smaller.

Commissioner Reif thanked Patzner, directors, department heads and employees for their part.

Commissioner Schlessiger said the five of us could not do this without everyone else that worked for the county. We have been able to eliminate 11 positions in the last 5 years.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to close the Budget Hearing.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

# 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/4iEEZm>

## CLOSE BUDGET HEARING

### AGENDA MEETING

Close of the Budget Hearing until Close

#### **I. OPENING BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Schlessiger called the meeting to order at 9:13 A.M.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Minutes of the August 12, 2025, Regular Meeting were not available.

#### **II. OLD BUSINESS:**

-There was no Old Business.

#### **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **A. ADOPTION OF THE 2026 BARTON COUNTY OPERATING BUDGET:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. At the Budget Hearing for the proposed 2026 Operating Budget for Barton County, conducted prior to this Regular Agenda Meeting, public comments were received. The Commission is now asked to consider adoption of the budget.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, asked the commission to consider adoption of the budget as presented in the Budget Hearing.

Commissioner Zimmerman to adopt the 2026 Barton County Operating Budget.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

##### **B. ADOPTION OF THE 2026 AUTHORIZED POSITIONS LISTING:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. To assure that offices are operating with appropriate personnel, the 2026 Authorized Positions listing is presented for adoption. The listing includes all County positions, including Central Kansas Community Corrections and 20th Judicial District Juvenile Services, as both fall under the umbrella of County operations.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said this was adopted outside of the budget document and could be adjusted throughout the year. The only change was trimming the total of full-time employees from 191 to 189.

Commissioner Reif moved to approve the 2026 Authorized Positions Listing.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

##### **C. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT PLANS:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. Through the budgeting process, Barton County transfers cash, as savings, to both the Capital Improvement and the Equipment Replacement Funds. The plans, revised annually, allow the County to prepare for projected long-term expenditures.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said an essential part of the budget process was the Capital Improvement and Equipment Replacement Plans. Capital Improvement centered on expenses dealing with buildings and other fixed assets. Equipment Replacement centered on the replacement of items such

# 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/4IEEZm>

as copiers, vehicles and heavy equipment. The plans covered a five-year period and were reviewed annually. Patzner asked for consideration to approve the plans for 2026.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to adopt the Capital Improvement and the Equipment Replacement Plans for 2026.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **D. SOUTHWEST DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, INC: Agreement for Services:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. Southwest Developmental Services, Inc. (SDSI) is the Community Developmental Disability Organization (CDDO) for the County. Under the 2026 service agreement, SDSI will provide all services required by Kansas statutes for a CDDO for a total of \$70,000.00.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said Barton County designated SDSI in 2004. Asked for approval of the agreement.

Commissioner Esfeld said the amount had stayed the same for a number of years. Patzner said probably close to 10 years.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the SDSI Agreement for Services for 2026 at \$70,000.00.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **F. FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT: R&M Gunn LLC, Buckle, Great Bend:**

Patzner will provide details. R&M Gunn LLC, on behalf of the Buckle, 1313 Main, Great Bend, Kansas, has applied for \$10,000.00 in grant funding. The Commission will consider this \$81,154.50 project which includes a \$71,154.50 match by the applicant which equates to 88% of the project.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details and asked for consideration of approval.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it was a fabulous grant application, the project looked great.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the project total was \$71,000 so we would get a commercial valuation uptick.

Commissioner Esfeld said it increases the value of downtown when businesses upgraded.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve a Façade Improvement Grant for R&M Gunn LLC for a total of \$10,000.00. Direct the Commission Chair to sign the Grant Agreement with the Applicant. Direct the County Administrator to encumber the award from the Finance General account of the General Fund, Façade Improvement Grant line, 001-26-6925.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **F. FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT: L and K LLC, Sarge's Saloon, Great Bend:**

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. L and K LLC, Sarge's Saloon, 2801 Main, Great Bend, Kansas, has applied for \$10,000.00 in Façade Improvement Grant funds. The Commission will consider this \$21,860.00 project which includes a match of \$11,860.00 by the applicant which equates to 54% of the project.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details and asked for consideration of approval.

# 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/4IEEZm>

Commissioner Esfeld said this was another exciting project. It was the first thing you saw coming into town from the north. She said it was a good business and nice to see them clean up the area.

Commissioner Zimmerman said the rendering was quite impressive.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it was a lofty goal.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve a Façade Improvement Grant for L and K LLC for a total of \$10,000.00. Direct the Commission Chair to sign the Grant Agreement with the Applicant. Direct the County Administrator to encumber the award from the Finance General account of the General Fund, Façade Improvement Grant line, 001-26-6925.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **G. 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.

At 9:25 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved for the Commission to recess into Executive Session with the County Administrator and the County Counselor present. The subject matter to be discussed will be applicants for employment with the county and justification for the use of Executive Session is to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel with privacy as allowed by K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1), and the meeting to resume in open session in 30 minutes at 9:55 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

At 9:55 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved to return to Regular Session with no action taken.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

At 9:55 A.M., Commissioner Zimmerman moved for the commission to recess into Executive Session with the County Administrator and the County Counselor present. The subject matter to be discussed will be applicants for employment with the county and justification for the use of Executive Session is to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel with privacy as allowed by K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1), and for the meeting to resume in open session in 20 minutes at 10:15 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

At 10:15 A.M., Commissioner Hutchinson moved that we come out of Executive Session with no action taken and resume regular meetings.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

## **IV. ENDING BUSINESS:**

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Esfeld – shoutout to the Appraiser's Office for meeting substantial compliance.

# 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/4IEEZm>

## v.i. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Hutchinson made a motion to adjourn at 10:18 A.M.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler  
Barton County Clerk



Tricia Schlessiger, Chairman