

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/4ckkv4S>

April 7, 2026

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 7th day of April, 2026, at the Barton County Courthouse.

Members present:

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1st District, Chairman
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4th District
Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5th District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)
Chris Saenz, Deputy County Clerk
Matt Patzner, County Administrator

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

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

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Minutes of the March 31, 2026, Regular Meeting, were not available.

II. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

APPROVAL OF APPROPRIATIONS:

-Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk, will present details. An Accounts Payable Register will be submitted to the Commission for the period of March 24, 2026, and ending April 7, 2026.

Chris Saenz, Deputy County Clerk, presented details and asked for approval.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to approve appropriations for the period of March 24, 2026, to April 7, 2026. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. PROCLAMATION 2026-03: Recognizing the 2025 – 2026 Ellinwood High School Lady Eagles Basketball Team:

-Commissioner Tricia Schlessiger will provide details. The families and communities of Barton County support students from kindergarten through senior year, coming to know the strength and capabilities of each individual. On occasion, there are teams that come together and make history in the most incredible way. At this time, the Commission will consider honoring the 2025 – 2026 Ellinwood High School Lady Eagles Basketball team.

Commissioner Tricia Schlessiger read the proclamation.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt Proclamation 2026-03, Recognizing the 2025 – 2026 Ellinwood High School Lady Eagles Basketball Team.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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PROCLAMATION 2026-04: World Autism Acceptance Month:

-Ros Neeland, Chairman of the Autism Committee, Autism Workshop, Pilot Club, will provide details. World Autism Acceptance Day is recognized on April 2 by Presidential proclamation in the United States of America. Autism is a complex, lifelong developmental disability affecting over five million young people and adults. This Proclamation calls for knowledge and acceptance as it allows people to understand how to be more inclusive and build better, more supportive experiences.

Ros Neeland, Chairman of the Autism Committee, Autism Workshop, Pilot Club, said April was Autism Acceptance Month. Neeland said they do more than the month of April, their commitment was ongoing throughout the year. They created sensory bags for emergencies and were able to outfit every emergency vehicle and hospital in Barton County. This year was the year for their bi-annual Autism Workshop to be held September 12th, and they had several speakers and panelists lined up. Neeland said by adding other neuro divergent conditions, they hoped to expand the workshop for teachers and families who also help these children. Neeland said Star, the therapy dog, was also here today.

Commissioner Reif thanked Neeland for bringing awareness to Barton County.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked them to share information about Star. Alyson Burkhart, Sunflower Early Education Center, said Star works with children with autism, ages 2 – 6 years old in the Applied Behavior Analysis Program.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to adopt Proclamation 2026-04, World Autism Acceptance Month. Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion passed.

PROCLAMATION 2025-05: National Public Health Week:

-Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, will present details. The week of April 6 – 12, 2026, is National Public Health Week and the 2026 theme is "Ready. Set. Action!" The Proclamation calls for recognizing the contribution of scientists, local, state and federal legislators, community activists, including public health workers in significantly improving our health and longevity and by encouraging the promotion of health and well-being for all citizens.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, shared a quote from a book written by Ed O'Malley, CEO, Kansas Health Foundation, "Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any county can have". Winkelman said he reminds us that leadership was not a position but an activity. Winkelman said she brought the majority of her staff along today because they were a team and all had leadership qualities and actively provided those services to their community. Public health embodied the mindset of mobilizing community partnerships, sharing power with those who had lived experiences and leading through collaboration to create changes. Winkelman said their supervisory team just returned from the Governor's Public Health Conference last week with a lot of good information. She said they were reminded that a lot of people want to help, they just were not sure how to help. One of the speakers said we do not judge, we speak to understand, and we look at things as we do not have problems, we have challenges. That was where we engaged others to make things happen. Winkelman said Kansas was ranked 29th in the nation according to America's health rankings after being ranked 8th in 1991. Winkelman read the proclamation.

Commissioner Zimmerman thanked Winkelman and her department for the very important work they do. Winkelman said they had been preparing for the FIFA World Cup and the influx of people and diseases expected with the event.

Commissioner Zimmerman asked Winkelman if any ideas had been offered as to why Kansas went from 29th in the nation. Winkelman said there were a lot of factors involved.

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Commissioner Schlessiger moved to adopt Proclamation 2026-05, National Public Health Week. Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion passed.

D. PUBLIC HEALTH: Evan Cushenbery – Show of Appreciation:

-Ms. Winkelman will provide details. Evan Cushenbery has been a proud supporter of public services for several years. Specifically, Mr. Cushenbery has provided financial support for the Health Department. His donations have allowed the department to purchase items needed to improve community relations.

Karen Winkelman, Public Health Director, said she had known Cushenbery since he was a baby and was like his second Mom. Winkelman said Cushenbery was very humble and it was a challenge to get him here today. Cushenbery had been a silent supporter of interest in the community, the health of the community and the health of the workers. Winkelman said that as leadership changed at the beginning of COVID, Cushenbery showed up with a contribution to help the mental health of the Health Department staff. He valued the importance of keeping mental health on the forefront before they even knew they needed it. Winkelman said Cushenbery had continued that for several years and last year she felt something more permanent was needed. They now had their name with the public health logo and were able to purchase a backdrop for photo opportunities and presentations. Winkelman said Cushenbery was a lifelong Barton County resident and had been giving back in a silent way. Winkelman presented Cushenbery with a plaque in appreciation of his support.

Commissioner Schlessiger said in cooperation with the Health Department, move to present Mr. Cushenbery a plaque commemorating his support for Public Health.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

E. RESOLUTION 2026-10: Placement of a Stop Sign at the Intersection of Hidden Hills Drive and NE 130 Avenue, Independent Township:

-Josh Beckman, County Engineer, will provide details. The proposed Resolution calls for the placement of a stop sign at Hidden Hills Drive and NE 130 Avenue, Independent Township. Safety and engineering personnel recommend that signage be installed to stop eastbound traffic on Hidden Hills Drive at the intersection with NE 130 Avenue due to the sight obstructions in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the intersection.

Josh Beckman, County Engineer, said he was asked to review the intersection of NE 130 Avenue and Hidden Hills Drive. Beckman said he reviewed and evaluated the intersection. It currently had no signage and there were some sight obstructions for eastbound traffic. Beckman recommended a stop sign be installed and asked for approval by the commission.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Beckman how it was determined a stop sign was needed. Beckman said it was governed by UTCD, Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Beckman said sight obstructions were the number one reason and also traffic patterns and speed.

Commissioner Reif said in this instance traffic was pulling onto a paved road.

Commissioner Zimmerman moved to adopt Resolution 2026-10, Placement of a Stop Sign at the Intersection of Hidden Hills Drive and NE 130 Avenue, Independent Township.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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.. COUNTY ENGINEER: Agreement for Engineering Services, Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory (SNBI) Update Inspections:

-Mr. Beckman will provide details. The Agreement for Engineering Services, Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory (SNBI) Update Inspections, for the County's bridges east of US-281 will be considered at this time. Starting January 1, 2026, all bridge inspections must comply with the new [Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory \(SNBI\)](#), replacing the 1995 coding guide. As part of the SNBI Inspections additional data will need collected and recorded in KDOT's bridge inspection database. The data collection rate is \$300.00 per bridge. Data for 196 of the 372 bridges in the County will be collected in 2026, totaling \$58,800.00. Data for the remaining 176 bridges will be collected in 2027.

Josh Beckman, County Engineer, said the bridges inspected for 2027 must comply with the new specifications which required a lot of additional data to be collected. Beckman said it was federally mandated to be in compliance.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the Kirkham Michael Agreement for Engineering Services, Specifications for the National Bridge Inventory (SNBI) Update Inspections. Cost of the service, estimated at \$58,800.00, to be paid from the Special Bridge Fund, Professional Service Fees Line, 003-92-5475-92.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

G. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: Order of Vacation – A Portion of Kellam's Corner Subdivision:

Judy Goreham, Environmental Manager, will provide details. On February 12, 2026, the Barton County Planning Appeals Board approved the vacation of a portion of Kellam's Corner Subdivision described as Lots 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and the Wren Road Cul-de-sac, provided however that the covenants and restrictions remain on that portion of the plat. The Commission will be asked to approve the Order of Vacation.

Judy Goreham, Environmental Manager, said the subdivision was developed in the 1970's and fell within the City of Great Bend zoning jurisdiction. Goreham said a portion of it, 6 lots and a cul-de-sac, were never developed and also had a gas main through it. There was the main road in the middle of the subdivision that leads to a residence and falls outside of the subdivision. An individual has been interested for some time in purchasing the entirety to build a nice home. Goreham said this had been in the works for some time trying to figure out how to sell the property and have a clean deed. When the subdivision was created, there was no environmental code in place that regulated how many acres were needed for water well and septic systems. There also were no zoning regulations. Goreham said currently 3 acres were required for new development to install water wells or septic systems as well as the requirements of the city in their jurisdiction. Goreham said this area was less than 6 acres for 6 lots and a cul-de-sac. Goreham said at the public hearing, there was one resident in the subdivision with concern. They wanted the area to remain residential and for all of the covenants and restrictions to remain in place. The interested party was present at the public hearing and shared his plans. Goreham asked the commission for approval of the vacation.

Commissioner Schlessiger thanked Goreham for her attention to the matter.

Commissioner Zimmerman said she visited the area and felt it would enhance the area.

Goreham said the responsibility of moving the gas main would fall to the new owner. The landowner to south that receives gas by way of that main was content with it being moved.

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Commissioner Schlessiger moved to adopt the Order of Vacation for that portion of Kellam's Corner Subdivision described as Lots 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and the Wren Road Cul-de-sac and leave the existing covenants and restrictions in place.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

H. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: Trash Hauling Service:

-Darren Williams, Facilities Director, will provide details. The County requested proposals for trash hauling services for County office buildings. There are generally three pick up dates per week for service year 2026. Nisly's Brothers Inc. submitted the only bid at \$583.00 per month.

Darren Williams, Facilities Director, said the county had a contract with Unruh Brothers last year for trash service. They were bought out by Nisly who honored the Unruh contract until the end of February. Bids were sought but Nisly was the only bidder at an increase of \$63.00 per month.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked Williams how long bids were open. Williams said for three weeks.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he was conflicted. He would like it to go to a local vendor but also, Nisly was probably the landfill's biggest customer.

Commissioner Reif asked if this contract would be for a year. Williams said it would be until the end of December.

Commissioner Esfeld asked how many commercial contractors were local. Williams said some were leaving out of the business, there were not many available.

Judy Goreham suggested mailing something to local trash services requesting a bid in the future.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to award the 2026 Trash Hauling Services bid to Nisly's Brothers Inc. with an option to renew for two additional years. The \$583.00 monthly fee to be apportioned as previously determined.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

No Executive Session Held

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

-Chairman Duane Reif 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:

Commissioner Esfeld – spoke about some bills on the Governor's desk to be signed or vetoed.

Commissioner Esfeld – attended the SDSI Meeting a couple of weeks ago. They would be visiting soon.

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VII. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to adjourn at 9:52 A.M.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:



Chris Saenz
Barton County Deputy Clerk



Duane Reif, Chairman

PROCLAMATION 2026-03

RECOGNIZING THE 2025 – 2026 ELLINWOOD HIGH SCHOOL LADY EAGLES BASKETBALL TEAM

WHEREAS, Barton County has a long tradition of supporting local high school students in areas such as academics, arts, leadership and athletics; and

WHEREAS, the families and communities tend to support students from kindergarten through senior year, coming to know the strength and capabilities of each individual; and

WHEREAS, there are individuals and teams that come together and make history in the most incredible way and these students, their coaches, teachers, administrative staff and parents are to be commended for enforcing the dedication and perseverance needed to excel at key moments in life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that Tuesday, April 7, 2026, is known as Ellinwood High School Lady Eagles Basketball Team Day; and

FURTHER, throughout the 2025-2026 season, the EHS Lady Eagles have demonstrated outstanding excellence, discipline and sportsmanship, finishing with an exceptional 27-2 record and achieving a history making run at the 2A State Title, having won the district and sub-state championships earlier in the month; and

FURTHER, that the Central Prairie League named Julia Schlessiger and Brynn Widener to their 1st Team; Mette Maxwell and Alyvia Batchman to 2nd Team with Regan Widener receiving honorable mention to the All-League Team; and

FURTHER, that Sports in Kansas All-State named Julia Schlessiger to their 1st Team and Mette Maxwell to 2nd Team with honorable mention to Brynn Widener and Alyvia Batchman; and

FURTHER, that Julia Schlessiger was named as the All-Star Game MVP scoring 17 points and having 13 rebounds; and

FURTHER, that the Kansas State High School Athletic Association named Julia Schlessiger to its 2nd Team and Alyvia Batchman, Mette Maxwell and Brynn Widener received honorable mention; and

FURTHER, that the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association named Julia Schlessiger to its 1st Team and Alyvia Batchman to its 2nd Team with Mette Maxwell received honorable mention.

FURTHER, that Coach Greg Maxwell was named as a Sports In Kansas 2026 Girls Basketball Coach of the Year Finalist; and

FURTHER, that the Lady Eagles, to include Freshman Mallory Batchman, Paisley Knop, Blayre Moore, Avery Panning and Kenna Stickney; Sophomores Emmi Auwater, Eleanor Joiner, Mette Maxwell, Ayla Ritchie, Lexi Thomas, Brynn Widener and Reagan Wirtz; and Juniors Alyvia Batchman, Bennett Jacobs, Addison Stickney and Reece Stickney and Seniors Julia Schlessiger and Regan Widener, have set a new standard of excellence under the leadership of Coach Greg Maxwell and Assistant Coach Mark Panning and Assistant Coach Michael Widener and;

FURTHER, that the success of this team is a direct reflection of the guidance and mentoring from Coach Maxwell, his staff, the Ellinwood High School, the school district, the families and the community's commitment, discipline and determination.

Dated this 7th day of April, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Duane Reif, Chairman



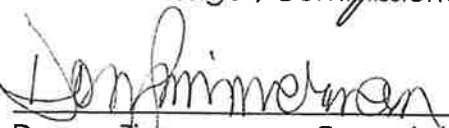
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner



Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner



Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner



Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk



The seal is circular with a double-line border. The outer ring contains the text "BARTON COUNTY KANSAS" at the top and "COUNTY CLERK" at the bottom, separated by a small star on the right. In the center of the seal, the word "SEAL" is written in a bold, serif font.

PROCLAMATION 2026-04

WORLD AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

WHEREAS, autism is a complex, lifelong developmental disability that affects essential human behaviors such as social interaction, the ability to communicate ideas and feelings, imagination, self-regulation, and the ability to establish relationships with others. Current statistics show that one in 31 children and one in 45 adults are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder; and

WHEREAS, acceptance comes with understanding, and while individuals and families living with autism face this life every day, there is still a need for factual education and awareness for the general public. Knowledge promotes acceptance because it allows people to understand how to be more inclusive and build better, more supportive experiences; and

WHEREAS, our communities can help these individuals and families through the gift of grace and understanding and by learning more about the signs of autism, understanding the challenges faced by those with autism spectrum disorders, and supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that April, 2026, is recognized as World Autism Acceptance Month; and

FURTHER, citizens are urged to celebrate differences as we work to build an inclusive society where individuals with autism live fully through connection and acceptance; and

FURTHER, while we will work to educate others about autism, we understand that fostering acceptance to ignite change through improved support and opportunities in education, employment, accessible housing, affordable health care and comprehensive long-term services and supports that are vital to our community.

ADOPTED THIS 7th day of April, 2026.


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Duane Reif, Chairman



Barb Esfeld, Commissioner



Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner




Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner




Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk



PROCLAMATION 2026-05

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

WHEREAS, the week of April 6, 2026, is National Public Health Week and the theme is "Ready. Set. Action!" highlighting that public health actions occurring through scientific discoveries, legislation and community initiatives have significantly improved the health of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, significant strides have been made in public health since the inception of National Public Health Week in 1994, including the following public health successes to include reduced childhood mortality, smoking rates, HIV / AIDS deaths and lead poisoning and improvements made in mental health awareness and treatment, the impact of climate change and pandemic preparedness; and

WHEREAS, racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States continue to experience disparities in the burden of illness and death as compared with the entire population of the United States; and

WHEREAS, a person's health status can differ drastically by ZIP code due to differences in the built environment, environmental quality, community context, access to healthy food, access to education and access to health care; and

WHEREAS, public health organizations use National Public Health Week to educate public policymakers, public health professionals and the public on issues that are important to improving the health of the people of the United States; and

WHEREAS, public health professionals help communities prevent, prepare for, withstand and recover from the impact of a full range of health threats, ranging from infectious disease outbreaks to natural disaster preparedness; and

WHEREAS, efforts to adequately support public health and the prevention of disease and injury can continue to transform a health system focused on treating illness into a health system focused on preventing disease and injury and promoting wellness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Barton County, Kansas, that the week of April 6-12, 2026, is hereby proclaimed as National Public Health Week in Barton County, Kansas, and we call upon our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers and leaders to recognize the contribution of scientists, local, state and federal legislators, community activists, including public health workers in

- (1) adopting initiatives that have significantly improved the health and longevity of the people of our state; and
- (2) encouraging continual vigilance to promote health and well-being for all citizens, as the theme states, "Ready. Set. Action!"

Dated this 7th day of April, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Duane A Reif, Chairman



Barb Esfeld, Commissioner



Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner




Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner



Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner

ATTEST:


The seal is circular with a double-line border. The outer ring contains the text "BARTON COUNTY KANSAS" at the top and "COUNTY CLERK" at the bottom, separated by two stars. The center of the seal contains the word "SEAL" in a bold, serif font. Overlaid on the seal is the signature of Bev Schneider, with the text "Bev Schneider, Clerk" printed below it.