

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/4ge5Lri>

August 25, 2026

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 25th day of August 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)
Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk
Matt Patzner, County Administrator
Casey Hubbard, Assistant County Administrator
Todd Powell, 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: 2027 Operating Budget:

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. Elected officials, Department Heads and supported agencies were asked to submit budget requests for the 2027 Operating Year. The Commission reviewed the requests and, with the assistance of the Administrator, drafted a balanced operating budget. The proposed 2027 Operating Budget is now presented to receive public comment.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, said this budget was an organizational blueprint to maintain delivery of quality services at an affordable cost to the taxpayers. The main goals that led the commissioners to the proposed budget were to remain revenue neutral, maintain quality public services in a way that was sustainable for years to come, invest in the employees and continue to expand the tax base of Barton County and enrich the quality of life of our citizens. Patzner said every budget year was unique and presented its own challenges with this year being no different. The commissioners had to find a way to accomplish all of the goals with continuing rising costs. Patzner said the proposed budget showed a mill levy of 33.434 which would generate a total of \$11,922,421 in ad valorem tax, an \$18,933 reduction from 2026. When comparing the 2027 proposed budget to the 2021 budget, there could be a 12.884 mill levy reduction and \$303,305 reduction in dollars levied. Patzner said the major theme of this year's budget was organizational restructuring and service delivery monetization. Over the past year, Barton County had reduced its authorized workforce by 7 full-time positions through attrition and strategic changes. Despite the structural changes, the proposed budget continued to invest in the workforce through a countywide compensation increase equivalent to \$0.50 per hour for all employees along with a targeted salary adjustment in the County Attorney's Office to improve recruitment and retention in a highly competitive professional field. Cash carry forward, motor vehicle tax, sales and use tax, departmental revenue, fees, transfers, interest, special county highway funds and grants made up the rest of the financial resources needed to fund a balanced budget.

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

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Commissioner Schlessiger said it felt they had worked on the budget for a very long time. Commissioner Zimmerman said this was a difficult budget. It was very tight with not a lot of room in it. She applauded Patzner and the others for trying to keep costs down as much as possible.

Commissioner Hutchinson noted this was the sixth consecutive year of reduced property tax dollars brought in by the county.

Commissioner Esfeld said this budget had been the hardest in her time as a commissioner.

Commissioner Reif also thanked Patzner and said they had all worked very hard on the budget.

Commissioner Schlessiger said they did it without sacrificing roads and bridges or any of our services.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to close the Budget Hearing.

Commissioner Esfeld seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

CLOSE BUDGET HEARING

AGENDA MEETING

Close of the Budget Hearing until Close

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

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

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2026, and the August 18, 2026, Regular Meetings.

Commissioner Esfeld 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 August 11, 2026, and ending August 25, 2026.

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

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve appropriations for the period of August 11, 2026, to August 25, 2026. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

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NEW BUSINESS:

A. ADOPTION OF THE 2027 BARTON COUNTY OPERATING BUDGET:

-Mr. Patzner will provide details. At the Budget Hearing for the proposed 2027 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 commissioners to consider adoption of the 2027 budget as presented.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt the 2027 Barton County Operating Budget.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

B. 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 one essential part of the budget process was the accompanying capital improvement and equipment replacement plans. Capital improvement centered on expenses dealing with buildings and other fixed assets. Equipment replacement centers on things such as heavy equipment and vehicles. Patzner asked the commission to consider adopting the plans for 2027.

Commissioner Zimmerman to adopt the Capital Improvement and the Equipment Replacement Plans for 2027.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

C. 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 2027 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, presented details and asked for consideration of approval.

Commissioner Esfeld asked Patzner what they were given last year. Patzner said it was the same amount.

Commissioner Esfeld said the amount had not increased since she had been a commissioner and was glad they have access to some funds they had put back. She thought they had asked for \$140,000.

Commissioner Esfeld moved to approve the SDSI Agreement for Services for 2027 at \$70,000.00.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

No Executive Session Held

D. 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 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.

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.. ENDING BUSINESS:

1. Announcements
2. Appointments

VI. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

VII. ADJOURN:

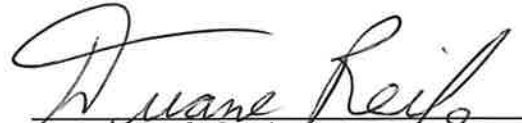
Commissioner Hutchinson made a motion to adjourn at 9:23 A.M.

Commissioner Zimmerman seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Duane Reif, Chairman