

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/46Kbygr>

April 9, 2024

The Board of Barton County Commissioners convened this 9th day of April 2024, at the 1500 Kansas location.

Members present:

Duane Reif, Commissioner, 1st District
Barb Esfeld, Commissioner, 2nd District, Chairman
Shawn Hutchinson, Commissioner, 3rd District
Tricia Schlessiger, Commissioner, 4th District, (Chairman Pro-Tem)
Bev Schmeidler, County Clerk
Matt Patzner, Director of Operations
Patrick Hoffman, County Counselor

Members absent:

Donna Zimmerman, Commissioner, 5th District

I. OPENING BUSINESS:

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

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to approve the agenda.
Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2024, Regular Meeting. Minutes of the March 29, 2024, Special Meeting and the April 2, 2024, Regular Meeting were not available.
Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

II. 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 26, 2024, and ending April 9, 2024.

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

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to approve appropriations for the period of March 26, 2024, to April 9, 2024. Authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the Commission.
Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.
All voted aye. Motion passed.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

-There was no Old Business.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. PROCLAMATION 2024-06: Barton Community College Men's Basketball Day:

-Matt Patzner, County Administrator, will provide details. The 2023 – 2024 Barton men's basketball team claimed the NJCAA Division I National Championship at the Hutchinson Sports Arena on March 30, 2024, with an 88-73 victory over Triton College. In honor of that victory, and with the acknowledgement of the value of student participation in extracurricular activities and the effort that goes into playing for, and coaching, any team, the Commission will consider the adoption of a Proclamation calling for Barton Community College Men's Basketball Day.

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Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details.

Trevor Rolfs, Athletic Director, said he had been at Barton Community College for 13 years. He said Jeremy Coombs, Men's Basketball Coach, came to BCC 3 years ago. Coombs led BCC to their first ever, men's or women's, National Basketball Championship in the history of BCC. The players present were the ones who put in all of the work and made it happen under the leadership of Coach Coombs, Coach Austin Downing and Coach Tyson Downing. Rolfs thanked the commissioners for the invitation and the proclamation celebrating the team. Rolfs said he was proud of the championship but was just as proud of the young men and their accomplishments off the floor. The young men had done just as much or more community service than any other team or program.

Jeremy Coombs, BCC Men's Basketball Coach, echoed Rolfs and said he was so proud of the great young men on the team. One of the most important things to him was the impact the young men had made in the community.

Commissioner Esfeld asked Coombs where he came from. Coombs said he was at Neosho Community College prior. Commissioner Esfeld asked where he grew up. Coombs said he grew up in Topeka.

Commissioner Esfeld asked the players to introduce themselves.

Mike Johnson, BCC Trustee, thanked the commissioners for celebrating the team. Johnson said he had been following BCC for 35 years and it was great to finally see the dream become a reality. He said this team, as well as all of the others, had really embraced the community.

Commissioner Schlessiger said congratulations and she knew their work ethic started many, many years ago. They had put in the hours in the gym and on the court, what an honor.

Commissioner Reif said the community service was impressive and he commended them for having so much respect for the community.

Commissioner Hutchinson said it was pretty cool.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to adopt Proclamation 2024-06, Barton Community College Men's Basketball Day.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

B. PROCLAMATION 2024-07: 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, 2024, 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.

Amy Ferguson, Rise Up Central Kansas Coordinator, thanked the commissioners for declaring April 24, 2024, Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day. Ferguson introduced Theresa Browne, Director of Barton County Youth Care, Inc. and Barton County Young Men's Organization, housing 14 minors; Jillian Doyle, Family Support Specialist, Kansas Childrens Service League, currently serving 51 families, most of whom were drug endangered; Tacoa Underwood; M.J. Ramirez; Brandy Wondra; Jonna Roop; Melissa McGinness and Kristy Perez. They had a combined clean time of 18 years, 13 children and were repairing and healing the reality of their past. Everyone here was doing their part to raise awareness and improve the lives of drug endangered children. With the current fentanyl crisis in the nation, Barton

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County was no exception. Overdoses have been seen in Barton County including in the youth population. Ferguson said this was a big job and took all sectors to get involved. Ferguson said they meet the last Wednesday of every month from noon to 1:00 by Zoom and in person and invited the commissioners to join them. She said it could be a different commissioner each month.

Commissioner Esfeld asked where they met. Ferguson said in a conference room at Community Corrections.

Everyone Ferguson introduced read the proclamation.

Commissioner Esfeld thanked them for never giving up.

Commissioner Hutchinson said there was nothing more important than our children.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to adopt Proclamation 2024-07, Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

C. PROCLAMATION 2024-08: National Public Safety Communications Officer Week, April 14 – 20, 2024:

-Dena Popp, 911 Director, will present details. The Commission is asked to adopt Proclamation 2024-08, National Public Safety Communications Officer Week. In part, the Proclamation honors Public Safety Communications Officers for their vital role in protecting the life and property of Barton County citizens.

Dena Popp, 911 Director, said prior to 1968, seven digits were required to be dialed to summon emergency services. A state politician in Alabama was the first person to call 911 in February 1968. In Barton County, 911 became a consolidated Public Safety Answering Point in 1989. Ever-changing technology has led to challenges for staff. The introduction of Next Generation 911, rapid deploy for mapping in locating callers, texting to 911, video to 911 and the What 3 Words application were some of those changes. There has been constant changing of passwords, calls for road crews, electric companies, wreckers and burn permits. Going back to COVID with additional questions needing to be asked to help reduce the spread and amount of personal contact to protect emergency service personnel. The extreme multitasking, constant change of pace, high stress, rotating shifts, nights, holidays and weekends was not for everyone. For some dispatchers, the things they hear can take a toll on a person's mental health. One of the dispatchers administered CPR twice and delivered a baby all in a 60-day period. Both of those CPR calls resulted in lives being saved. Popp said she was very blessed and grateful for the committed staff she had. Eight of the fourteen positions had been employed for three years or more up to almost twenty-nine years. The commitment, sacrifice and dedication did not go unnoticed, was very much appreciated and made Popp proud.

Popp said every year, the second week of April was recognized across the nation as National Public Safety Telecommunications Week and asked the commissioners to recognize the dedicated Barton County 911 dispatch staff.

Commissioner Esfeld said the staff was awesome.

Commissioner Reif said they were the most important people you never see.

Commissioner Schlessiger commended them for a job well done.

Popp read the proclamation.

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Commissioner Hutchinson said his mother was a dispatcher while his father was a Sheriff's Deputy.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to adopt Proclamation 2024-08, National Public Safety Communications Officer Week, April 14 – 20, 2024.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

Popp said to be sure to check their Facebook page for weather alerts and educational information.

Commissioner Schlessiger asked if there were still openings at Communications. Popp said she still had one full time opening and two part-time positions.

D. LETTER OF SUPPORT: The Lofts at the Zarah Project – Submission of Kansas Housing Investor Tax Credit (KHITC) Program Application for the Development of Housing:

-Mr. Patzner will present details. The Lofts at the Zarah Project, 1917 Lakin, Great Bend, Kansas, received an award from the Kansas Moderate Income Home ARPA Program to develop 24 apartments. A decision to add four additional units to the project was made mid-way through the design process, which will allow for the renovation of the fourth floor of the Zarah building. The project meets the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation criteria for an additional \$128,000.00. The Commission will consider approval of a Letter of Support for the program application.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the barometer of a community's mental and emotional health was the quality of their downtown and downtown properties. At the county, we believed in this philosophy and created the Façade Improvement Grant Program. This program invested a million dollars in local business owners' downtown properties. The citizens of this community had repeatedly told us that they want growth and wanted more businesses to come to the community as well as more people. This sentiment was summed up with one of his old quotes, "we do not need more taxes in Barton County, we need more taxpayers in Barton County". Commissioner Hutchinson said he firmly believed this began with local business owners in our downtowns. Downtowns can also be a tool to improve our communities mental and emotional health, requiring continued investment in partnerships. This reminded him of hazardous confined space military training. When using supplied air to enter a confined space, you must have a trained soldier at the door to rescue in case of emergency. That soldier's training was to be sure oxygen was flowing and their mask was secured properly before entering the space to help. The reason behind this was so you did not end up with two people in need of rescue. Commissioner Hutchinson said that was an important analogy because he believed if we do not put the oxygen mask on our downtown buildings first, we can end up needing rescue on two fronts. This was where we begin, this was the foundation for growth, our downtowns. Right now, three of our largest downtown properties in Great Bend are either in the process of being renovated or in the process of applying for grants to help with renovations. Those three buildings were the Barton County Courthouse, owned by the citizens of Barton County; the Zarah Mall and the old JCPenney's building. The Zarah Mall itself was a huge win for Great Bend's loft program that could bring in 28 downtown apartment style lofts. If the only lofts developed were at the Zarah Mall, this would still be a resounding success for Great Bend's loft program. The old JCPenney's building was a 50,000 square foot building that sat without power or plumbing for 7 years. Barton County moved into the building with the intention of it coming back to life in downtown Great Bend. We have had employees in this building for almost a year and the building has gone from a rundown vacant building to a building that was halfway usable and halfway there to contributing to our economic health and well-being in this community. Both of these buildings were in a vacant and somewhat dilapidated state, detractors from our overall downtown appearance. Commissioner Hutchinson said he would implore anyone with a decision-making capacity to support improving these properties to the fullest

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extent possible. He would say that the county had put their money where their mouth was, we had lived with less than desirable conditions at the JCPenney's building. We have helped bring it to a point of being usable again, at least the first floor was usable. We have also brought \$636,407.00 to the city of Great Bends property owners to improve the appearance of downtown properties. When you combine that total with the property owner's additional investment to meet the grant requirements and additional money they put in, that total grows to over \$1.3 million just in downtown Great Bend. For that reason, he invited fellow commissioners to support any grant opportunities for downtown buildings and would gladly sign the letters of support. He said he had also seen others improving their properties who did not apply for the Façade Improvement Grants, a ripple effect occurred.

Commissioner Esfeld said the insides were also being renovated. Commissioner Esfeld said a lot of people did not realize that we were only paying rent for the JCPenney's building, about \$180,000.00. We did not pay for the renovations, the owner did. It will be exciting to see what it becomes after the county moved out.

Commissioner Schlessiger said we all get behind housing and daycare in the communities so adding apartments would be great.

Commissioner Reif said he was in support also and it was a cheaper way to add a lot of housing.

Commissioner Schlessiger moved to approve the Letter of Support for the Submission of the Application to the Kansas Housing Investor Tax Credit (KHITC) Program for the Development of Certain Housing within Barton County, Kansas. Specifically, the project includes The Lofts at the Zarah Project.

Commissioner Hutchinson seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

E. LETTER OF SUPPORT: High Noon – Letter of Support for the Loft Grant provided by Great Bend Economic Development:

-Mr. Patzner will present details. The Great Bend Economic Development uses loft grant monies to help property owners close the gap on useable space, developing livable downtown space, expanded business space and more opportunities for an active downtown corridor. The Commission will consider approval of a Letter of Support for the High Noon Loft Grant for the property at 1500 Kansas, Great Bend. The County and High Noon were able to partner in 2023 when the building was rehabilitated for short-term lease during the Courthouse HVAC renovation project. Long-term, more funding is needed as High Noon renovations and reconditions the building for future use.

Matt Patzner, County Administrator, presented details.

Commissioner Schlessiger said it would be a great improvement to the downtown area.

Commissioner Reif moved to approve a Letter of Support for the Loft Grant provided by Great Bend Economic Development on behalf of High Noon.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

F. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: Judges – Wireless Door and Alarm System:

-Dereck Hollingshead, Information Technology Director, will present details. Since July of 2018, Barton County has used Access Controlled Doors throughout most of the County facilities. Judge Carey Hipp has requested that Salto doors be installed for the Judges to improve security on the Third and Fourth Floors of the Courthouse. Results of the request for proposal will be presented.

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Dereck Hollingshead, Information Technology Director, said he went out for bids to secure seven doors. Two bids were received, one from Nex-Tech and one from American Digital Security. Nex-Tech was the low bid as well as being a local company. Asked for approval of one of the bids.

Commissioner Schlessiger said security was paramount for the judges.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved to approve the \$6,330.38 cost with equipment purchased from Nex-Tech Security for the Judges – Wireless Door and Alarm System project. That amount is to be paid from the Equipment Replacement Fund, Equipment Replacement – General Line, 072-00-6380.

Commissioner Reif seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

No Executive Session Held

G. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

-Chairman Barb Esfeld 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 – attended meeting for Engineers, Road & Bridge supervisors and commissioners. Good meeting, Barry McManaman and Darren Williams well respected. Next year's meeting will be in Great Bend.

VII. ADJOURN:


Commissioner Reif moved to adjourn at 9:51 A.M.

Commissioner Schlessiger seconded the motion.

All voted aye. Motion passed.

ATTEST:


Bev Schmeidler
Barton County Clerk


Barb Esfeld, Chairman