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# OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

### MAY 04, 2026

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#### **Commissioners Present:**

Commissioner Carla Grund, First District

Commissioner Scott Mortimer, Second District

Commissioner Duane Morris, Third District

#### **1. Call To Order**

Commissioner Mortimer called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Commissioner Grund led the group in opening prayer followed by Commissioner Mortimer with the flag salute.

#### **2. Public Forum**

Dr. Curtis Stevens, USD 239 Superintendent, stated the USD 239 Board of Education approved the Memorandum of Understanding with the County Commission regarding the John Henry Center. Dr. Stevens stated they are going to work on procuring grants to make some improvements. He stated the first big improvement with student projects is getting the door to open outwards and the second big improvement is replacing the plate glass on the windows. Dr. Stevens stated as he is putting together grant applications, he will keep the Commission updated and get support from the Commission to move forward with grants. Dr. Stevens stated he is also working on the new school boundaries with the closure of the Southern Cloud school district. Dr. Stevens also thanked the Commission for their support for After Prom.

#### **3. NCKLEPG Invoice and Contract**

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, presented the North Central Kansas Local Environmental Planning Group annual invoice and contract. The annual cost is \$1,500.00. Commissioner Grund asked if the Commission needed to approve the NCKLEPG's sanitarian code for Ottawa County since they are using the Smith County sanitarian. Commissioner Mortimer stated he will look into it.

MOTION - To approve the interlocal service contract with the NCKLEPG and approve the payment of \$1,500.00 for service beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>.

MOTION BY- Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY - Commissioner Morris

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

#### **4. National Association of Counties Membership**

Commissioner Morris discussed a National Association of Counties Membership (NaCo). He stated he believes it costs \$350.00 per year but will call and verify. They will prorate for the year. Commissioner Morris stated some benefits of joining would be more information on the data center front, nuclear front, and alternative green energy front. He will call and get exact figures. Commissioner Grund stated she looked at emails and it is \$450.00 annually, but the prorated cost is \$300.00.

MOTION – To join the National Association of Counties at the prorated cost of \$300.00

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

#### **5. Museum Memorandum of Understanding**

Commissioner Morris presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ottawa County Museum. He stated the museum requested that the MOU state they will receive all their funds when they become a 501c3. Commissioner Morris stated they were asking about the roof; they are aware of the HVAC system that needs replaced. The Commission discussed the roof and who was responsible. It was the consensus of the Commission to have the attorney review the MOU. Commissioner Mortimer stated the roof on the museum is a 50-year roof.

#### **6. Sales Tax Discussion**

Kevin Cowan, Gilmore & Bell, discussed a special sales tax. He stated Ottawa County currently has a 1% general authority sales tax; there is also the option to add an additional special use sales tax such as for healthcare purposes. Cowan stated there is no requirement to put a sunset on the ballot proposition. Cowan discussed legislation from this past year and possible legislation in the future. He stated a proposition can be drafted for statutory authority for a possible November ballot question. He can provide a ballot proposition to the election officer after the primary election in August and discussed publication requirements. Commissioner Morris asked if the sales tax approved by the voters, will it need to go to the legislature. Cowan stated no and referred to KSA 12-187(b)5. He stated the question in the coming weeks may include how much they would like to see for sales tax, whether there will be a sunset date, and possible language. Commissioner Grund asked about using the sales tax for the Health Department. Cowan stated that it would qualify and stated the special tax could be for healthcare services and list some potential uses. Commissioner Grund asked about cost to utilize Gilmore & Bell to assist with this project. Cowan stated what scope of services he would provide including drafting documents such as Call for Election, publications, and the resolution. He estimated a couple of thousand dollars.

MOTION – To have the County Clerk with Kevin Cowan with Gilmore & Bell to work on getting a sales tax resolution prepared for the ballot

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

## **MOTION PASSED 3-0**

### **7. Recycling Center Discussion**

Ashley Swisher, Minneapolis Recycling Center, discussed the Minneapolis Recycling Center. Swisher provided an overview of the Minneapolis Recycling Center. She stated The Minneapolis Recycling Center site currently serves as a centralized location for the collection and responsible handling of recyclable materials for residents of Minneapolis and the surrounding Ottawa County area. The operations focus on providing a clean, accessible, and community-supported solution for diverting waste from landfills while promoting environmental stewardship. Swisher also provided a financial breakdown of the operations and stated currently the commodity price is low. She stated she spoke with Mitchell County on their recycling operations, and they are under a different system. Swisher stated the county used to receive a Kansas Department of Health and Environment grant and will apply for the grant; she would need a letter of support from the Commission. Tammi Cox, County Clerk, will draft a letter of support for Commission approval.

### **8. KDOT Criteria Selection**

Chris Smith, Public Works Director, collected the grading consultants for the High-Risk Rural Road program. The grading will be sent to KDOT, and they will make the decision on who will inspect the projects. Commissioner Mortimer asked about a saw for the skid steer. Smith stated they are currently looking into it. Commissioner Grund asked about the county having their own landfill.

### **9. Approval of Accounts Payable and Commission Minutes**

MOTION – To approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$39,548.83, the Commission minutes for April 27, 2026, and the April payroll as presented

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

### **10. Executive Session – Non-Elected Personnel**

MOTION – To move to executive session under the non-elected personnel exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss Emergency Management applications for 10 minutes to return at 10:10 a.m. to the Commissioner's Room with Tammi Cox, County Clerk.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

No action taken

Commissioner Grund verified the special meeting to interview candidates will begin at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **11. Clerk Comments**

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, stated the auditors will be here this week. Cox also discussed an open position in the Appraisers office. Commissioner Mortimer reminded everyone of the free dump days this week.

### **12. Commissioner Comments**

Commissioner Grund discussed her voter registration postcard she received. Tammi Cox, County Clerk, stated these cards are used to keep the voter rolls up to date. Commissioner Grund stated she reached out to Senators Marshall and Moran to encourage paying out EMS for calls that are non-transport. Commissioner Grund also discussed assessed valuation in the county, noting she was reaching out to other county commissioners to be proactive to present property tax relief options to the State. Commissioner Morris discussed data centers and stated he had emailed Representative Adam Smith over the ASTRA bill. Commissioner Grund stated she had received a thank you note from the Ottawa County Community Foundation and it listed the grant recipients and loved the variety of grant recipients. The Commission also discussed the MOU with the museum.

### **13. Adjournment**

MOTION – To adjourn the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

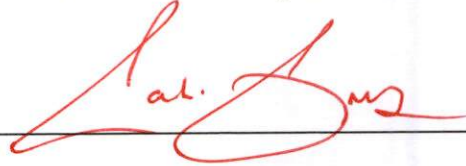
SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

**MOTION PASSED 3-0**

ADOPTED this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Mortimer, Chairman

  
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Carla Grund, Member

  
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Duane Morris, Member

ATTEST:



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Tammi Cox, County Clerk

