
OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

MARCH 16, 2026

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 Morris led the group in opening prayer followed by Commissioner Mortimer with the flag salute.

2. Public Forum

Brandon Cople discussed K.S.A. 19-503c that allows the treasurer to allow her staff do the payroll. He also discussed adding an additional sales tax and stated it takes a year or two to prepare. Cople stated we should have town hall meetings to see why people think and allow people to put their opinions forward.

3. Junior Class Parents of the Minneapolis Junior/Senior High School Request

Amber Anderson, Minneapolis Junior/Senior High School Junior Class Parents representative, presented a request for \$1,500.00 for After Prom. The mission is to provide a secure, supervised, and substance-free environment for Minneapolis students on Prom night, reducing the risk of alcohol and drug-related incidents through a proactive community safety partnership. Anderson stated the funds will be used for venue rental, snacks & refreshments, and door prizes. Commissioner Mortimer asked if students stay for after prom. Anderson stated gift cards are used to incentivize students to stay. They also provide a breakfast bar.

MOTION – To give the Junior Class parents \$1,500.00 for After Prom.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

4. Budget Calendar

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, discussed the budget calendar. She stated the Department Head training with Scot Loyd will be April 3rd, Department Head presentations will be May 26th, and the first draft budget review will be June 12th. She discussed some items to start thinking about including upcoming projects, appropriations, COLA, budget concerns, and CIP. She asked the Commission if lunch would be provided

for the three all-day meetings. It was the consensus of the Commission to provide lunch for those meetings. Commissioner Grund stated wages are approximately \$3 million dollars of the budget. She asked about the projected healthcare costs and stated the Commission should give direction prior to the April 3rd meeting on what their desires are to the department heads. The Commission will discuss budget direction next week.

5. 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 non-elected personnel for 30 minutes to return at 9:07 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

6. 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 non-elected personnel for 30 minutes to return at 9:39 a.m. to the Commissioner’s Room with Jeff Ebel, County Attorney and Tammi Cox, County Clerk.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

No action taken

7. Recess

The Commission took a 15-minute recess to resume at 9:53 a.m.

8. 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 non-elected personnel for 5 minutes to return at 10:00 a.m. to the Commissioner’s Room with Jeff Ebel, County Attorney; Jason Gipson, Emergency Management Director; Sheriff Russ Thornton; Joe Pruitt, HR Coordinator and Tammi Cox, County Clerk.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

9. Sales Tax Update

Jeff Ebel, County Attorney, updated the Commission on the sales tax discussion. He stated the maximum sales tax is 2% unless we build a new building.

10. Approval of Accounts Payable and Commission Minutes

MOTION – To approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$63,923.60

MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the minutes for March 09, 2026, as presented

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

11. Clerk Comments

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, reminded the Commission there is no meeting on March 30th.

12. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Grund discussed railroad tracks. She stated a Buckeye Township constituent emailed a railroad about a crossing that was bad and got it fixed. She asked the Commission if she could reach out to BNSF Railway to fix a road at Windmill and 290th. It was the consensus of the Commission to have her email BNSF Railway. Commissioner Grund stated the Commission meetings online are being viewed, with one video that has 139 views. She stated she attended the Ottawa County Agency on Aging meeting where K-State Extension Office gave a report about a balance class. Commissioner Grund stated Darrell Rickenberg, Silver Haired Legislators Representative, presented a letter requesting support from the County Commissioners. She stated she had discussed this with Sara Hodges, Health Department Director, who was in favor of making a donation from the Aging Fund. Commissioner Grund would recommend a \$500.00 donation.

MOTION – To move to make a donation to the Silver Haired Legislature for \$500.00

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

Commissioner Grund stated Linda Semple from the Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging was also there and talked about substitute cooks and wanted to get the word out if there is someone willing to become a substitute cook, noting it was a paid position. Commissioner Grund stated USD 239 is going to start foster grandparents in the school. She reviewed the qualifications and pay to become a foster grandparent. She also stated she stopped by the museum, noting Beth has made lots of improvements to the museum. Commissioner Grund discussed the list of Road and Bridge Projects that was provided by

Chris Smith, Public Works Director, last week. She stated two of the projects are in Commissioner Morris' district; 3 plus the Sheriff's shooting range project are in Commissioner Mortimer's district; and there are 10 in her district. She stated she has a page and a half of other road and bridge improvements needed in her district and gave a copy to each Commissioner. Commissioner Mortimer stated working on roads is like farming, if something happens in one area you have to move. The phone can ring at any time then they have to go somewhere else. He stated they are doing as good as they can. Commissioner Grund stated she also attended the GOP meeting and Tammi Cox, County Clerk, did an excellent job presenting. She also stated she requested payroll information from JoDee Copple, County Treasurer. Commissioner Grund also discussed data centers and federal regulations that may require them to provide their own power. Commissioner Morris stated he has been in contact with people and doing research on regulations. Commissioner Grund stated she attended Bennington Fire Department meeting last Thursday and talked to them about a potential sales tax for EMS. She stated she has looked at seven other counties' EMS budgets and reviewed what she found. She asked the Commission if they want an analysis of EMS. Commissioner Mortimer stated it can be hard to compare because of the industry and income. Commissioner Grund stated she will try to bring something next week in regard to EMS. Commissioner Mortimer stated he attended the Health Department breakfast and stated Delphos is working on reorganization of the park and splash pad. Commissioner Morris asked about burn permits and discussed changing speed limit sign on Limestone Road. Smith stated he will check into it.

13. 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 non-elected personnel for 5 minutes to return at 11:08 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

14. Adjournment

MOTION – To adjourn the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

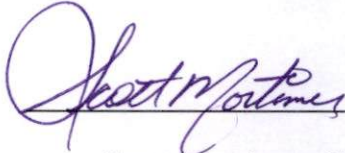
MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

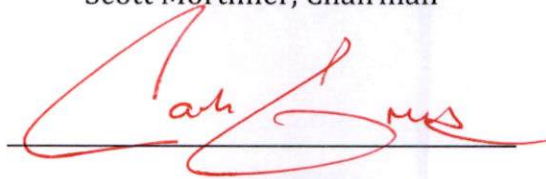
MOTION PASSED 3-0

ADOPTED this 6th day of April 2026.

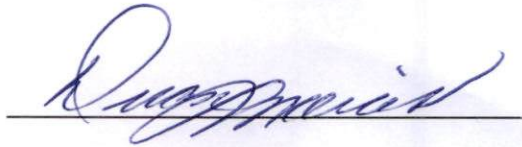
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS



Scott Mortimer, Chairman



Carla Grund, Member



Duane Morris, Member

ATTEST:



Tammi Cox, County Clerk

