



# Ottawa County Commission Agenda

**February 03, 2025**

307 N Concord St  
Minneapolis, KS 67467

1. Call To Order 8:00 a.m.
  - Flag Salute
  - Prayer
  
2. Public Forum 8:05 a.m.
  - This is reserved for public comment for any items not on the agenda
  
3. Miltonvale EMS – Carl Leech 8:10 a.m.
  
4. Sanitarian Contract – Phillip Murrow 8:15 a.m.
  
5. Transient Tax Percentage – Jeff Ebel, County Attorney 8:20 a.m.
  
6. IT Update – Shelby Walker, Register of Deeds 8:35 a.m.
  
7. High Plains Resources – Chris Smith, Public Works Director 8:45 a.m.
  
8. Uniform Allocation – Sheriff Russell Thornton 9:00 a.m.
  
9. Executive Session for Non-Elected Personnel – Sheriff Russell Thornton 9:15 a.m.
  
10. Proposal for Integrating Noxious Weed and Emergency Management – Brandon Sauer, Noxious Weed Director 9:30 a.m.
  
11. Blue Store and Blue Store 2025 Billing Discussion 10:00 a.m.
  
12. Consent Agenda 10:30 a.m.
  - Approval of Agenda
  - Accounts Payable

- Correction Orders
- Minutes (27th)
- Payroll

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|-----------------------------|------------|
| 13. Clerk Comments          | 11:00 a.m. |
| 14. Commissioner's Comments | 11:05 a.m. |
| 15. Announcements           | 11:10 a.m. |
| 16. Adjournment             | 11:15 a.m. |

Ottawa County, Kansas  
Request for Action Form

Date: 1-28-2024

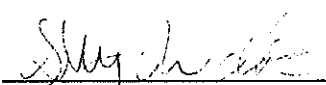
Department: IT

Projected Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for request:

- Need photos of the two newly elected commissioners
- Would like to know what is expected of me in the IT Role
- Lock-it Contract
- What would you like to see on the website

Requestors Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Shelby Walker

Clerk's Use:

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Presented to Commissioners: \_\_\_\_\_

Motion Passed: \_\_\_\_\_

If request Denied, Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Proposal for Integrating Noxious Weed and Emergency Management Department's together**

**To:**

**From:** Brandon Sauers, Noxious Weed Supervisor

**Date**

**Subject:** Proposal to Integrate Current Position with Emergency Management Responsibilities

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### **Introduction:**

I am writing to propose a cost-effective solution to the staffing needs of the Ottawa County Emergency Management Department. Instead of hiring a new employee, I propose integrating my role as Noxious Weed Supervisor with responsibilities in emergency management. This approach would save the county significant financial resources, including salary and benefits costs, while utilizing my existing certifications, experience, and familiarity with county operations.

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### **Qualifications and Certifications:**

#### **1. Emergency Management Training:**

I have completed the following FEMA courses:

- IS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System
- IS-200: Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response
- IS-120: An introduction to exercises
- IS-700: National Incident Management System (NIMS) Introduction
- IS-800: An introduction to national response framework

#### **2. County Knowledge and Experience:**

- Extensive experience managing county operations and collaborating with various departments.
- Familiarity with Ottawa County's geography, infrastructure, and community needs.

#### **3. Skills Relevant to Emergency Management:**

- Strong organizational and problem-solving skills.
- Proven ability to manage resources effectively and coordinate with local agencies.
- Effective communication with county officials and the public.

**Proposal Details:**

- **Cost Savings:**
  - A new emergency management employee would cost the county approximately \$40,000 annually in salary, in addition to the cost of benefits such as health insurance, retirement contributions, and paid leave.
  - By integrating emergency management responsibilities into my existing role and increasing my salary by \$25,000, the county saves 62% of the salary cost and avoids additional expenses associated with employee benefits.
- **Dual Role Benefits:**
  - Combining the roles of Noxious Weed Supervisor and Emergency Management support ensures efficient use of county resources and personnel.
  - This dual responsibility promotes seamless collaboration between departments, enhancing overall county operations.
- **Implementation Plan:**
  - Expand my current job description to include emergency management tasks such as preparedness planning, resource coordination, and public education.
  - Provide additional training opportunities, if necessary, to further enhance my capabilities in emergency management.
  - Establish clear performance goals and metrics for both roles to ensure accountability and success.

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**Conclusion:**

By integrating my role into the Emergency Management Department, Ottawa County can benefit from a skilled, experienced, and cost-effective solution to its staffing needs. This proposal addresses budget concerns, avoids additional benefits costs, and strengthens interdepartmental collaboration. I am confident that my skills, training, and dedication to public service will have a positive impact on the county's emergency preparedness and response efforts.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for considering this opportunity to enhance Ottawa County's emergency management capabilities while maximizing the use of its resources.

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**Sincerely,**

Brandon Sauers  
Noxious Weed Supervisor  
Ottawa County, Kansas

## **Opposition to Combining County Emergency Management and Noxious Weed Department**

Dear Board of County Commissioners,

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed consolidation of the County Emergency Management Department and the Noxious Weed Department. While I understand the intent to streamline operations and reduce costs, I believe this merger would be detrimental to both departments, their operations, and, most importantly, the public we serve.

**1. Divergent Missions and Expertise** The primary roles of these two departments are distinct, with separate and specialized functions that do not overlap. Emergency management focuses on preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters, whether natural or man-made, which requires specialized knowledge in crisis coordination, logistics, and inter-agency collaboration. In contrast, the Noxious Weed Department is responsible for managing invasive plant species, which requires expertise in ecology, land management, and environmental science. Combining these departments would risk diluting the specialized knowledge and focus needed in both areas.

**2. Risk to Public Safety** Emergency management involves critical, time-sensitive decisions that directly impact public safety. The sudden shift in focus that might arise from managing weed control issues could create distractions during a crisis. In times of emergencies such as tornados, floods, wildfires, or pandemics, the response time is critical. Any delays or divided attention caused by a merged department could undermine the county's ability to react effectively to urgent situations, putting lives at risk.

**3. Public Perception and Trust** Public trust in emergency management agencies is vital, especially when responding to disasters or critical situations. The perception that the agency is spreading its resources too thin or focusing on less urgent matters could erode public confidence. The same holds true for the Noxious Weed Department. Residents expect both departments to be expert-driven and fully dedicated to their respective missions.

By merging the two departments, the public may perceive a reduction in the urgency and focus of each department's role. This could result in a loss of public confidence and potentially jeopardize community cooperation in emergency preparedness and weed management programs.

**4. Resource Allocation and Efficiency** Although combining departments is often framed as a cost-saving measure, the potential inefficiencies of this merger may outweigh the expected savings. Emergency management requires fast-moving decisions and access to resources like first responders, shelter facilities, and disaster recovery teams, while the Noxious Weed Department is involved with long-term ecological and agricultural management. The needs of both departments are fundamentally different, and the merger may lead to misallocated resources, insufficient focus on either area, or delays in addressing important tasks in both realms.

**5. Employee Morale and Expertise** Both departments employ individuals who possess highly specialized knowledge and skills. Emergency management professionals are trained to handle disasters, manage complex logistical challenges, and interact with various emergency

responders. Similarly, those in the Noxious Weed Department possess the expertise necessary to combat invasive species and mitigate their effects on local ecosystems and agriculture. Combining these departments could cause confusion regarding job roles, reduce employee morale, and create unnecessary friction between staff with different skill sets and responsibilities.

**6. Long-Term Consequences** In the long run, consolidating these departments may create a structural burden that is difficult to undo. The unintended consequences could include a less effective response to both emergency situations and environmental challenges. A more fragmented and less specialized approach could end up costing more in both human resources and funding to correct the issues created by the merger.

**Conclusion** In conclusion, while the intention to improve efficiency is understandable, combining County Emergency Management with the Noxious Weed Department may ultimately undermine the effectiveness and specialization of both departments. It is crucial that each department be allowed to continue focusing on its specific mission with the necessary resources and expertise it requires.

I urge the Board of County Commissioners to reconsider this merger and explore alternative means of enhancing efficiency that do not compromise the critical work each department performs.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,  
Marie Ballou  
Ottawa County Emergency Management Director