
OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 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. Richard Shupe led the group in opening prayer followed by Commissioner Mortimer with the flag salute.

2. Public Forum

Richard Shupe asked about the recording of the meeting. Cox stated they are hoping to have this meeting be up on the internet, but meetings will not be live. Brandon Copple discussed the starting pay for road and bridge and getting a grant writer or someone in economic development for the county.

3. Annual County Reorganization

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Commissioner Grund stated she would be willing to be Chair. Commissioner Morris stated Commissioner Mortimer has been doing a good job. Commissioner Grund stated she believes it should be rotated each year.

MOTION – To have Commissioner Mortimer be Chair

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Mortimer

MOTION PASSED 2-1

(Aye – Commissioners Morris and Mortimer; Nay – Commissioner Grund)

MOTION – To have Commissioner Morris as Vice Chair

MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

- Appointment of Depositories

MOTION – To have Citizen’s State Bank & Trust, Bennington State Bank, and the Bank of Tescott by depositories for 2026.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

- District Lines

Commissioner Mortimer discussed district lines and the area they are in. He stated a previous Commissioner had reviewed the lines and it was equal based on population. Commissioner Grund stated the cost is pretty significant to redraw the district lines. She stated her district includes 50% of the county townships and 53% of the appraised valuation. All of the Commissioners stated they are available to anyone regardless of district.

MOTION – To approve the district lines as they are now

MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

MOTION PASSED 3-0

- Official County Newspaper

MOTION – To appoint the Minneapolis Messenger as the official county newspaper for 2026

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

- Appointment of Department Heads

MOTION – To appoint Chris Smith, Public Works Director; Truette McQueen, County Appraiser; Keith Coleman, Facilities Director; and Jason Gipson, Emergency Management Director for 2026

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

- GAAP Waiver Resolution 2026-01

MOTION – To approve Resolution 2026-01 GAAP Waiver for 2026

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

4. Solid Waste Fee Exemption

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, presented a solid waste fee exemption for Auto-Tek LLC on Sheridan. Commissioner Mortimer stated in the last meeting Truette McQueen, County Appraiser, was going to check with other counties and see how they handle it. McQueen did not get a chance to speak with other counties. Commissioner Mortimer also asked about how property taxes are handled after a fire. McQueen stated the taxpayer has the option to file for disaster relief. It was the consensus of the Commission to table the solid waste fee exemption until next week.

5. Resolution 2026-02 Appointing Emergency Management Director

Jason Gipson, Emergency Management Director, presented Resolution 2026-02 appointing Jason Gipson as Emergency Management Director.

MOTION – To adopt Resolution 2026-02; moving the effective date to January 12, 2026

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

MOTION PASSED 3-0

6. Clerk Comments

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, stated today the newly elected city and school officials take office and discussed the hospital bond. Commissioner Grund discussed the Commission closet, and it was the consensus of the Commission to have her go through and organize it. Cox also discussed the letter the Commission received from the Saline County 4-H Development Fund. She stated the Commission gave \$200.00 last year.

MOTION – To donate \$200.00 to the 4-H Development Fund.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

MOTION PASSED 3-0

7. Proclamation – Human Trafficking Awareness Month January 2026

Tanya Paul, DVACK Outreach Specialist, presented the Human Trafficking Awareness Month January 2026 Proclamation. She stated January 11th was Wear Blue Day. Human Trafficking is a pervasive and devastating crime that affects individuals, families, and communities across the United States. In the most recently completed year, 2024, an estimated 17,000 potential victims of human trafficking were identified nationwide, representing only a fraction of those who suffer in silence. Human trafficking takes many forms, with employers accounting for 43% of traffickers, family members representing 26%, and intimate partners representing 22%, demonstrating the complex relationships and power dynamics that often trap victims in cycles of exploitation. The Domestic Violence Association of Central

Kansas (DVACK) provided direct services to six human trafficking survivors in 2024. DVACK remains committed to offering crisis intervention, advocacy, safety planning, housing support, and trauma-informed services to survivors of human trafficking, while also partnering with local, state, and national organizations to raise awareness and strengthen community response. All community members play a vital role in preventing trafficking, supporting survivors, and creating a safer environment where exploitation is not tolerated. Ottawa County hereby recognizes January 2026 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month and encourages residents, service providers, and community partners to increase awareness, support survivors, and join DVACK in taking action to end human trafficking in all its forms.

MOTION – To declare January 2026 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

8. Proclamation – Stalking Awareness Month January 2026

Tanya Paul, DVACK Outreach Specialist, presented the Stalking Awareness Month January 2026 Proclamation. She stated January 18th was Wear Anything Sparkly Day. Stalking is a serious and often hidden crime that affects an estimated 13.5 million people in the United States each year. Stalking is commonly perpetrated by someone the victim knows, with 42% of victims stalked by an acquaintance and 40% by a current or former intimate partner. Stalking behaviors frequently involve both digital and physical methods, with 80% of victims stalked using technology and 67% stalked in person. In 2024, the Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK) served 40 stalking victims, including survivors from Cloud, Dickinson, Saline, and McPherson counties, as well as out-of-state clients. These victims resided across the region, including Concordia, Herington, Abilene, Salina, New Cambria, and Moundridge, illustrating that stalking impacts both rural and urban communities. DVACK remains dedicated to providing safety planning, advocacy, and trauma-informed services, while working with community partners to raise awareness and prevent stalking in all its forms. Ottawa County hereby recognizes January 2026 as Stalking Awareness Month and encourages all residents to learn the signs of stalking, support survivors, and work together to create a safer community.

MOTION – To proclaim January 2026 as Stalking Awareness Month in Ottawa County

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

9. Road and Bridge Update

Chris Smith, Public Works Director, gave a Road & Bridge update. He stated he is meeting with the gas company to finish up a ditch project on Oxbow Road, putting up bridge railings on Frontier Road and tried to put asphalt down on Granite Road. The asphalt did not work, and they did have to scrape it back up. They also continue to spread gravel. Smith also gave an update on the bridge in Minneapolis and

stated it looks they are about to pour railings. Commissioner Grund asked about the potential mitigation for 230th Road south of Highway 18 as part of the last FEMA application as discussed at a meeting last week. Smith explained the process and what has to happen before mitigation.

10. Executive Session –Confidential Data

MOTION – To move to executive session under the confidential data exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss rock for 20 minutes to return at 9:32 a.m. to the Commissioner’s Room with Tammi Cox, County Clerk.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To move to extend the executive session under the confidential data exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss rock for 10 minutes to return at 9:42 a.m. to the Commissioner’s Room with Tammi Cox, County Clerk.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Mortimer

MOTION PASSED 3-0

No action taken

11. Road and Bridge Update

Commissioner Morris stated he has been in correspondence with the Kansas Department of Commerce and has letters of interest for small modular nuclear reactors to Evergy, Oklo Inc, and Terra Power. He stated they are safer now with all the safety protocols, plus new protocols have a feature that it will shut down completely in the event of a malfunction even if an operator is not present. Commissioner Mortimer discussed the battery storage that is currently being discussed in Saline County.

Commissioner Morris stated there is a meeting about the small modular nuclear reactors in April. He stated he thinks this is a great idea and would personally like to see Ottawa County pursue it.

Commissioner Mortimer stated this doesn’t tie us to anything, it shows we are expressing interest. It was the consensus of the Commission to sign the three letters.

12. Policy Review

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, presented Policy 20.09 Sexual, Racial, Religious, and Age-Related Unlawful Harassment; 20.11 Employee Classifications; 20.13 Minimum Employment Age; 30.01 Payroll Policy; 50.06 Ottawa County Workplace Violence Prevention Policy; and 20.06(a) Sheriff’s Officers Ottawa County Resident

MOTION – To approve Policy 20.09; 20.11, 20.13; 30.01; 50.06; 20.06(a)

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

13. Approval of Accounts Payable and Commission Minutes

MOTION – To approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$474,141.21

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the December 15th minutes

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Mortimer

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the December 22nd minutes as revised

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the December 29th minutes as presented

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the January 5th minutes as amended

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

14. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Grund stated she will be attending the Fire Chief's meeting and the Conservation District meeting. She also discussed the FEMA meeting she attended and how FEMA money is disbursed and reimbursement of mileage for boards. Commissioner Grund discussed the Rural Champion grant. It has to be filed by February 20th. The Commission discussed the Blue Store and possible uses for it including childcare using the grant and letting the school use it. Commissioner Grund discussed using the Rural Champion grant for the wing walls at the courthouse and tying it into the sidewalk and memorial wall. She stated we already have an estimate and have put in the in-kind match. The grant also requires a

25% match. Commissioner Mortimer stated the wing walls will be quickest, he stated he doesn't think the childcare thing can be put together this quickly. Commissioner Grund also discussed a Public Arts and Murals grant that is a 100% match and possibly use that for the mural. It was the consensus of the Commission to have Commissioner Grund pursue looking at the Rural Champion grant for childcare.

15. Adjournment

MOTION - To adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

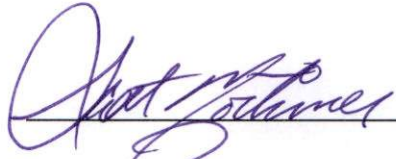
MOTION BY- Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY - Commissioner Morris

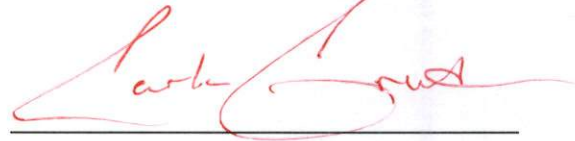
MOTION PASSED 3-0

ADOPTED this 21st day of January 2021.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS



Scott Mortimer, Chairman



Carla Grund, Member

Duane Morris, Member

ATTEST:



Tammi Cox, County Clerk

