
OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

FEBRUARY 09, 2026

Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Carla Grund, First District

Commissioner Scott Mortimer, Second District – arrived at 9:10 a.m.

Commissioner Duane Morris, Third District

1. Call To Order

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

2. Public Forum

Brian Kindall asked about repairs to the road on 2nd Street where the new bridge is going in west of the elevator. Brandon Cople asked if the issue with Commissioner Grund and the recapped published minutes had been resolved.

3. Golden Wheel Discussion

Doug Plummer and Sheila Reed, Golden Wheel, discussed the difficulty of getting someone hired to provide meals for Meals on Wheels. Commissioner Grund stated meals have not been available for four weeks. The employee is an employee of the Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging. Commissioner Morris asked what the Commission can do to help. Reed stated to call and reach out to the Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (FHAAA). She stated they have reached out and have not had any return phone calls or texts from the person who hires employees. She stated the job is posted on Kansas Works. Reed stated they have received one application but that applicant does not have any cook experience. FHAAA stated the application came from Indeed. Commissioner Morris asked if it is feasible to train someone who is willing to learn. Reed stated it is up to FHAAA since it is their employee, and they said no. Tammi Cox, County Clerk, stated she has reached out to the Executive Director to invite them to a Commission meeting, but has not heard back. Reed discussed working with Saline County's Senior Center to get meals. Plummer stated if we cut out FHAAA, they will cut us out. Commissioner Grund stated this effects all of Ottawa County. Reed shared the conversation she had with FHAAA regarding utilizing Saline County and stated it would be temporary until a cook was found. The Commission called FHAAA and spoke with Linda Semple. The Commission discussed using Saline County in the interim, advertising for a new cook, and how subsidizing meals work. Semple stated she will look into what they can do and will contact the Commissioners back. Plummer stated we have food, we don't have anyone in the kitchen and stated they would like a secondary cook in the wings.

4. Recess

The Commission recessed the meeting to attend the swearing in of deputies and the undersheriff.

5. Reconvene

The Commission reconvened at 9:12 a.m. Commissioner Mortimer joined the meeting at this time.

6. Data Center Discussion

7. Paul Hughes, Kansas Department of Commerce, presented information regarding data centers via Zoom. Commissioner Grund asked about the drain of electricity, increase in utility bills, concerns about water usage and noise. Commissioner Mortimer asked about insurance rates. Hughes stated data centers growth is due to images and videos that are being backed up in the cloud. He stated there are all sorts of sizes of data centers, but the most common are the smaller data centers. Data centers measures its size in megawatts to power the data center. The first step a data center does is check with the power company to ensure they can handle the load. Commissioner Mortimer asked about acreage. Hughes stated it can be a 10-50 acre site. The larger the center, the more land and they try to be good neighbors. Hughes stated Kansas law requires data centers to pay their own power infrastructure. He stated when a data center wants to come, they will first reach out to the power company, then try to identify location and visit with locals that might have an interest in selling land. The next piece is finding if they can get water. Hughes stated Kansas Commerce can be a resource for some information if a company becomes interested. Commissioner Grund asked about zoning. Hughes stated rather than going straight to the zoning piece, come up with a county masterplan. Commissioner Morris stated it was his understanding companies wouldn't begin construction until 2030 and be up and running by 2032. Hughes stated yes, these projects are looking over the horizons, they are going where the power is available. Commissioner Morris asked if this would entice small modular nuclear reactors. Hughes stated this is happening more and more. Commissioner Grund asked about benefits the county would need to give to entice a data center. Hughes stated data centers sometimes use industrial revenue bonds.

8. Solid Waste Discussion

Chris Smith, Public Works Director, stated he has turned everything into the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for solid waste and they have approved it. He stated he let them know we will have a meeting this week. The only change they asked for was to have the annual meeting in December so that everything can be turned in in January, other than that, there were no changes.

9. Road and Bridge Discussion

Chris Smith, Public Works Director, discussed the shared bridge with Cloud County. Cloud County is wanting to submit a grant and split the cost with Ottawa County. Cloud County is the home county for the bridge. He stated there is a statute that addresses bridges shared by two counties. He stated there is another bridge east of this bridge where the roles are reversed. It was the consensus of the Commission to move forward with the grant. Smith also discussed a situation about a township road where the landowner is wanting to build a cabin/lodge and a road would need to be built. He stated he is working with the landowner and township.

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 non-elected personnel for 10 minutes to return at 10:41 a.m. to the Commissioner’s Room with Chris Smith, Public Works Director; Joe Mullen, Road Supervisor and 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 non-elected personnel exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to discuss non-elected personnel for 10 minutes to return at 10:53 a.m. to the Commissioner’s Room with Chris Smith, Public Works Director; Joe Mullen, Road Supervisor and Tammi Cox, County Clerk.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Mortimer

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

No action taken

Commissioner Grund asked Smith what he worked on last week. Smith stated mainly clearing trees.

11. Sheriff Vehicle Contract

Sheriff Russell Thornton discussed a vehicle contract with Unified Fleet Services. He stated other agencies have worked with them and have had good reviews. Commissioner Grund asked if they have had issues getting the remaining finance balance when vehicle was sold. Sheriff Thornton stated no, in the past Ottawa County used PurpleWave. Commissioner Mortimer asked if this option will be cheaper. Sheriff Thornton stated yes, we are going to sell the five vehicles for them to buy. He stated he is not going to do one Tahoe for corrections because it has a new motor and will be used as a backup vehicle if needed. Commissioner Mortimer asked if they will come look at our vehicles. Sheriff Thornton stated yes, and if the numbers come back low, we can sell them ourselves. Commissioner Grund asked if Sheriff Thornton is okay with taking the risk on the remaining balance due at the end of the lease. Sheriff Thornton stated the vehicles will have less miles when sold and will be fully equipped with exceptions. Sheriff Thornton called Michael Swartz from Unified Fleet Services to answer questions. Commissioner Grund asked about the remaining balance due at the end of the lease for a vehicle. Swartz stated the price value of the vehicle is predicted when the quote is given. He stated they have always been able to sell the vehicle at a price greater than the remaining balance due on a vehicle. He stated there is no obligation to sell the vehicle through them. Commissioner Morris asked if there was a selling fee. Swartz stated no, as long as you’re replacing your fleet with a new leased vehicle.

MOTION – To move to approve this Unified Fleet Service Agreement after County Attorney review for five Tahoe’s.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund
SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris
MOTION PASSED 3-0

12. Enterpol Contract

Sheriff Russell Thornton discussed a contract with Enterpol. He stated they currently use Omnigo and it costs \$28,000.00 a year and that is due to go up. Enterpol will cost \$48,975.00 the first year, which includes replacing a server and moving over records, but significantly less after that. He stated Omnigo costs more due to add-ons that are already included in Enterpol. He stated the Omnigo contract runs out in April.

MOTION – To approve the Enterpol contract as presented by Sheriff Thornton for \$48,975.00

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris
SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund
MOTION PASSED 3-0

13. Resolution 26-03 Appointment of Zoning Board Members

Truette McQueen, County Appraiser, presented Resolution 26-03 Appointment of Zoning Board Members. The members to be appointed are Martha Tasker, Chris Lawson, and Mark Walker.

MOTION – To approve Resolution 26-03 to appoint Zoning Board members

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund
SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris
MOTION PASSED 3-0

14. Disaster Relief Application

Truette McQueen, County Appraiser, presented a disaster relief application. He stated if a house is destroyed during the tax year, the taxes can be abated. The abatement is the appraised value. This application is an abatement of appraised value for 43 days.

MOTION – To approve the disaster relief determination as presented

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund
SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris
MOTION PASSED 3-0

15. Solid Waste Exemptions

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, presented two solid waste exemption applications. Commissioner Mortimer stated if we open this up, it will domino. Commissioner Grund stated we do not want to be the dumpster

police. Commissioner Morris stated this might be part of the job. It was the consensus to review the exemptions in place next meeting.

16. Resolution 26-04 Appointment of 28th Judicial Nominating Committee Non-Lawyer Members

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, presented Resolution 26-04 Appointment of 28th Judicial Nominating Committee Non-Lawyer Members. The members to be appointed are Kathy Luthi and David Stanley.

MOTION – To approve Resolution 26-04 to appoint Kathy Luthi and David Stanley to the 28th Judicial Nominating Committee.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

MOTION PASSED 3-0

17. Approval of Accounts Payable and Commission Minutes

MOTION – To approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$98,257.72

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the minutes for February 2nd as presented

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

18. Clerk Comments

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, stated the courthouse will be closed and there will not be a meeting on February 16th and reminded the Commission about the township meeting on February 19th. Cox also asked about a possible representative for the Central Kansas Library.

19. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Mortimer stated he attended the North Central Kansas LEPC meeting in Smith Center with Tammi Cox, County Clerk and was pleased with the meeting and the people on the board. He stated Ottawa County, by far, does the most business with him. Commissioner Morris discussed old pictures that were found and it was the consensus to trash the duplicates and ask the museum if they want the pictures. Commissioner Grund stated there are a couple of things she would like to review that she requested and hadn't received from the County Treasurer. Commissioner Mortimer suggested getting with her in person and asking for the information.

20. Adjournment

MOTION - To adjourn the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

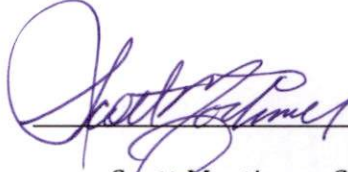
MOTION BY- Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY - Commissioner Mortimer

MOTION PASSED 3-0

ADOPTED this 23rd day of February 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS



Scott Mortimer, Chairman



Carla Grund, Member



Duane Morris, Member

ATTEST:



Tammi Cox, County Clerk

