

OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

MARCH 09, 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

Jamie Rice requested funds for USD 239 **2026** Project Grad to keep kids safe for graduation. The request is for \$1,500.00. The Commission discussed after prom for USD 239.

MOTION – To give USD 239 Project Grad \$1,500.00

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

MOTION PASSED 3-0

Brandon Cople asked what is considered the health system in the county. He discussed using an additional sales tax for the Golden Wheel or doing a general sales tax instead of a health system tax.

3. Fairground Meeting

The following representatives were present for the Fairground Meeting: Fair Board – Brian Kindall and Sheldon Dougherty; Rec Commission – Jamie Rice and Owen Kindall; City of Minneapolis – Dave Sweat; USD 239 – Dr. Curtis Stevens. Dougherty discussed the joint fairground agreement and asked if there were any changes. The group discussed carnival ride insurance. Commissioner Mortimer discussed the City of Minneapolis and the County contributing to the cost of the insurance. Sweat stated he would run it by the council. He discussed the issue with double dipping when it comes to the county fair; it costs the city more because the citizens will pay in the county tax and in the city tax. Commissioner Morris suggested talking to the other cities in the county, too. Commissioner Mortimer stated the insurance cost is \$19,000.00 for the Service Corps carnival rides. Tammi Cox, County Clerk, stated she provided a list of event insurances to the Service Corps to look at different options. The group discussed the different types of insurance for when the rides are being used and when they are not. Cox stated KCAMP will be here to do an appraisal of County property and will reach out to get suggestions. Owen Kindall

suggested using an Ottawa County Community Foundation grant to help offset some of the cost of the insurance. It was decided to meet again at the March 23rd meeting to get more information regarding the Service Corp insurance.

4. Fair Board Update

Brian Kindall, Fair Board, presented the Fair Board budget. Commissioner Morris asked how much they pay for insurance. Kindall stated they pay \$400.00-\$500.00 and it covers the dates of the fair. The Commission complimented the job the Fair Board does. Kindall gave an update on projects they have been working on including: trimming trees around buildings; improvements on buildings and moving the RV dump station. He stated they have purchased a John Deere mower, put up signage, and will be purchasing new portable pens for livestock overflow. Kindall stated they will not have cornhole or the draft horse show this year. He stated the Rec Commission has put up new softball fencing and improved the batting cages and pitching area. Kindall discussed getting the road chip sealed and blading the north side of the parking lot to put more gravel in for parking. It was also discussed to add cameras to the parking lot. Commissioner Mortimer asked Chris Smith, Public Works Director, about base for the road. Smith stated he would see how much they had. Kindall stated it's a community facility and we do the best we can. Commissioner Mortimer stated it's something to be proud of.

5. Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Aid to Local Funding

Sarah Hodges, Health Department Director, presented the grant application signature page for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Aid to Local Funding. The grants run from July 01, 2026 to June 30, 2027. The grants are: Immunization Action Plan SFY2027 by County Population (\$2,252.00); Maternal Child Health SFY2027 Year 1 of 5 (\$9,100.00); Public Health Emergency Preparedness SFY2027 (\$11,120.00); State Formula SFY 2027 (\$12,000.00); Universal Home Visitor ATL2027 (\$2,041.60); Total (\$36,513.60). Commissioner Grund asked what the total amount of the grants were last year. Hodges stated the amount is almost the same as last year. Commissioner Grund asked if there are any legislative changes that will effect health departments. Hodges stated she is not aware of any at this time, but is able to keep up on changes through her association.

MOTION – To approve the grant application for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for grants submitted by Sarah Hodges.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

6. Paying Mileage For Boards Discussion

Sarah Hodges, Health Department Director, discussed boards and why mileage is paid for some boards. She stated they started paying the Silver Hair Legislators and the North Central Kansas Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (NCKFHAAA) because people are hard to find and they require travel. She stated the NCKFHAAA representative meets in 18 different counties. She did state the current representative did not take the mileage pay last year. She stated she also pays mileage for the senior center meetings in the county if they are not being held at their home center. She stated some of them do not take the pay.

Commissioner Morris stated it should be up to the department head or board to decided about mileage. Commissioner Grund stated the Planning / Zoning Board is required by statute. She also stated because of the nature of the board, she feels mileage should be offered to the Planning/Zoning Board members.

MOTION – To reimburse mileage for board members attending meetings of the Ottawa County Agency on Aging and Ottawa County Planning / Zoning Board.

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

MOTION – To reimburse mileage for the NCKFHAAA and the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature representatives

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

7. Choose Ottawa County Update

Katie Vanderhoff and Owen Kindall gave a Choose Ottawa County update. Vanderhoff reviewed the 2026 goals including the opening of an account with the Ottawa County Community Foundation. The Foundation offered \$7,000.00 for non-profits to open an account and allows people to donate through the foundation. She stated the goal for the money is for a long-term investment to help continue on Choose Ottawa County. Vanderhoff stated another goal is to apply for one million dollars in grants. She stated they did receive \$560,000.00 in a housing grant last year that has been awarded and houses are already being built. This grant helps fill the gap in the cost of building the house and there is a down payment assistance option if the buyers qualify. Vanderhoff stated they are working on the Rock City sign and working on an app that would award people for attending events around the county. Commissioner Grund asked about the receipt drop off winners. Vanderhoff stated it is going well and they are adding more boxes in other businesses around the county. She stated they are also looking at working with Engaged Kansas to host a keynote speaker and they are still doing Make My Move that helps recruit three households to the county. Vanderhoff discussed other additional projects including information about sales tax and a Northwest Kansas Today article on housing. Commissioner Morris asked about the red post tour. Vanderhoff stated they have discussed it and are hoping to receive a grant to make it a little more modern.

8. Road & Bridge Update

Chris Smith, Public Works Director and Joe Mullen, Road Supervisor discussed the bridge outside of town and stated they are waiting for seed guys to come in, they are a week out.

9. 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 9:35 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 Grund

SECONDED BY - Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

No action taken

10. Road & Bridge Update Continued

Chris Smith, Public Works Director and Joe Mullen, Road Supervisor continued with the road & bridge update. Smith discussed going to ten hour days starting at the end of the month until October. He stated this would only be for road & bridge and would not include noxious weed. Commissioner Mortimer stated he thought end of October was a little long. Smith stated they try to follow the pay period.

Commissioner Grund discussed weather, stating if it's raining one day, but sunshine on Friday and no one is working. Smith stated they try to watch the weather. Commissioner Mortimer suggested cutting the ten hour days a month short and go to the end of September. Mullen discussed daylight savings time and keeping motor graders from being out too long in the dark. Commissioner Mortimer stated he would like to try to keep it to September. Smith stated he will look at a date for September.

Commissioner Grund stated she went and looked at Oxbow Road bridge and there has been a lot of work done on Oxbow Road and Quartz Road. She stated the Commission wasn't updated on that. Smith stated he gave the update. Commissioner Grund stated there is a lot of work being done in Blaine Township, but stated there is work waiting to be done in six of her townships. Mullen stated every township has requested work to be done. Commissioner Grund stated she knows very little about what they do week to week. Commissioner Morris asked about contracting out for ditches. Smith stated he would have to look into it, but if an underground utility is hit, who would be responsible. Commissioner Mortimer stated road & bridge shouldn't have to give an itemized list every week. Commissioner Grund stated all she knows about is what has been requested in her district and has not been done.

Commissioner Morris stated if it's a traffic hazard it has to be done. Commissioner Grund noted that she has spoken with other county commissioners and their road and bridge departments give weekly reports and what she is requesting is not unreasonable.

11. Resolution 26-06 Central Kansas Library Appointment

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, presented Resolution 26-06 Central Kansas Library Appointment. She stated Kathryn Paige has agreed to take the appointment. Ottawa County hasn't had a representative in four years.

MOTION - To approve Resolution 26-06 to appoint Kathryn Paige to the Central Kansas Library System Board

MOTION BY- Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY - Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

12. Warrant Checks Write-Off Request

Tammi Cox, County Clerk, discussed the warrant checks write-off request. This request is to void checks that were written to settle accounts payable that have not been cashed, and the two-year deadline has passed. This is per statute.

MOTION – To approve the warrant check write-off as requested for \$15,480.86 as presented by the County Treasurer

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

13. Sales Tax Discussion

Jeff Ebel, County Attorney, gave information regarding implementing a special sales tax. Commissioner Grund stated the Commission is asking about information for a special or general sales tax since there is a large appropriation for the hospital and EMS. She asked if there was any way to get it on the November ballot. Commissioner Grund stated she had always been told sales tax was fairer than property tax, in theory, more people would be feeding into the bucket. Commissioner Morris asked which entity with out county do we aim the sales tax at. Ebel read K.S.A. 12-187b5 and defined what constitutes healthcare services. Commissioner Grund asked about the time length on the sales tax and if it could be unending. Ebel stated it can't be longer than ten years. Commissioner Morris stated he liked the idea of it being used for EMS. Ebel stated the statute says the sales tax cannot be over 1%. Commissioner Morris asked if it can be added on each year to give EMS, and then the hospital, and health center funding. Commissioner Grund stated I don't believe you can stack them over the 1% special use sales tax limit and asked if there is a max on total county sales tax. Commissioner Morris stated he likes the idea of using sales tax for EMS since they don't have another revenue stream. He stated the hospital has income and other sources of revenue. Ebel stated McPherson County did a resolution to pass a half percent retailers sales tax and showed how they broke down the funds received from the sales tax. Tammi Cox, County Clerk, suggested starting with community involvement. Ebel stated we need ballot language and just need to publish. He stated the Commission will need to decide who will receive the sales tax fund and what percentage of sales tax. Cox suggested to the Commission to do townhall meetings and get community involvement before deciding. Commissioner Grund stated if we want it to pass, it would need to reduce property taxes. She agreed that there are lots of steps that need to be taken and for community input. Commissioner Morris asked approximately how much will 1% of sales tax generate. Cox stated \$450,000.00. Commissioner Grund stated she sees it rolling out to offset property taxes. Ebel stated usually sales tax is in addition to property tax and does not offset property taxes. Commissioner Morris stated EMS is in trouble, they need more money. Commissioner Grund stated she would want to see the last three years of financials and how EMS is billing before agreeing to more funds for EMS. She stated she would need to analyze their financials. She stated her goal is to offset property tax.

14. Approval of Accounts Payable and Commission Minutes

MOTION – To approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$100,935.48

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the minutes for February 23, 2026 as presented

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Mortimer

MOTION PASSED 3-0

MOTION – To approve the minutes for March 02, 2026 as amended

MOTION BY– Commissioner Grund

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Morris

MOTION PASSED 3-0

15. 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 11:13 a.m. to the Commissioner’s Room with Tammi Cox, County Clerk.

MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Grund

MOTION PASSED 3-0

No action taken

16. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Mortimer stated he received a phone call about a possible fence viewing. He stated he is texting the other two commissioners a copy of fence viewing laws. Commissioner Grund stated she had a visit to the Ottawa County Health Center ER, noting the facility, the staff and care were all wonderful. She stated there is a local work group meeting with the Conservation District on March 30th and stated she would like to attend a North Central Regional Planning Commission meeting if Commissioner Morris is unable to attend in the future.

17. Adjournment

MOTION – To adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

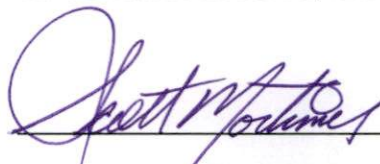
MOTION BY– Commissioner Morris

SECONDED BY – Commissioner Mortimer

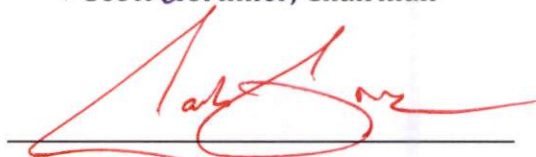
MOTION PASSED 3-0

ADOPTED this 16 day of March 2026.


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OTTAWA COUNTY, KANSAS



Scott Mortimer, Chairman




Carla Grund, Member



Duane Morris, Member

ATTEST:



Tammi Cox, County Clerk

