

**THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF MIAMI COUNTY, KANSAS**

The Board of Miami County Commissioners met in regular session, in the Commission Chambers, Miami County Administration Building, Paola, Kansas, on February 12, 2025. Those present were:

George Pretz, Chairman	Shane Krull, County Administrator
Tyler Vaughan, Pro-Tem	Laura Epp, County Clerk
Keith Diediker, Commissioner	Cari Foster, Operations Support Specialist
Paul Scruggs, Commissioner	Staci Wilson, Operations Support Specialist
W. Jene Vickrey, Commissioner	

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pretz called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Vaughan moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as follows:

- Approval of minutes of the County Commission Meeting on February 5, 2025
- Approval of AP payment vouchers and payroll
- Grant of Easement for Lot Split No. 24026 (Pretz) **(A25-02-001)**

Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was 4-0, with Chairman Pretz abstaining from the vote; due to the land being owned by Pretz family – even though it is not owned by Chairman Pretz himself.

NEW BUSINESS

Matthew Oehlert, Road & Bridge Engineering Project Manager requested the commissioner's authorization to solicit price proposals for Biannual Bridge Inspections for 2025 and 2026, Project #25-01-SB-703. Mr. Oehlert stated there is an Alternate Price Proposal for inventory inspection services for culverts that pertain to 5 ft to 20 ft, these are short spanning culvert structures. This will be an alternate item that if the cost outweighs the benefit the commission can reject the alternate bid and continue with authorization of the Biannual Bridge Inspections. Commissioner Vaughan asked if the proposals are independent of each other, and is it clear in the proposal so there is not bundled pricing? Mr. Oehlert responded yes, it is. Chairman Pretz stated the last time we did this over five years ago we found 28 smaller bridges or culverts under 20 feet, and all have been fixed or replaced. Commissioner Diediker moved to solicit price proposal for the bi-annual bridge inspections for 2025 and 2026 with an additional proposal as mentioned, Commissioner Vaughan seconded; the vote was unanimous.

Amy Willard, Financial Officer for Community of Corrections requested the commission to approve the Chairman to sign KDOC FY26 Adult Comprehensive Plan Grant Signatory Page. Ms. Willard stated the amount of the grant request is \$640,286.01 with \$151,411.63 for Behavioral Health Fund. This grant is the same amount as the current grant. Commissioner Vaughan moved to approve as presented, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous. **(A25-02-002)**

Amy Willard, Financial Officer for Community of Corrections, requested the commission to approve the Chairman to sign KDOC FY26 Juvenile Comprehensive Plan Grant Signatory Page. Ms. Willard stated the amount of the grant request is \$571,491, which is the same amount as the current grant. Commissioner Vaughan moved to approve as presented, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous. **(A25-02-003)**

Amy Willard, Financial Officer for Community of Corrections, requested the commission to approve the Chairman to sign KDOC FY26-27 Reinvestment Grant Signatory Page. Ms. Willard stated the amount of the grant request is \$180,304, which is a two-year application. This amount is the same as the current grant for FY24-25. Commissioner Diediker moved to approve as presented, Commissioner Vaughan seconded; the

vote was unanimous. (A25-02-004)

APPLICATIONS

Laura Epp, County Clerk, presented the 2025 Inventory for county departments to the commissioners. Chairman Pretz asked how long do the commissioners have to complete the approval & signature process? Laura Epp stated that the Clerk's Office will need the 2025 Inventory returned in one month.

STAFF COMMENTS

Lucas Mellinger, Assistant County Administrator/Finance Director announced the Auditor from Agler & Gaeddert will be on site Tuesday 2/18/2025 through Friday 2/21/2025, and Commissioners might receive request via inner office mailboxes or e-mail that will need to be responded to. He stated external county sites will be evaluated in April.

Tricia Lee, County Treasurer, stated she had brought up the safety concerns about her offices (Motor Vehicle/Tax Department) in person and email and that she had warned that she would stop investing (taxpayer money) if her concerns were not addressed. Ms. Lee stated it is going on three years now that she requested her two offices safety concerns be addressed and that she did not completely stop investing as there is 10-million dollars in a nine-month CD at 4.34 percent and she is prepared to go out to bid as soon as the commissioners address her safety concerns, and something will be done in the next three months. Commissioner Vaughan said that Ms. Lee was up front with the commissioners in November and December, and he would be supportive of going out for a Request for Proposal (RFP). He stated one option discussed was consolidating her offices and moving around other departments and he would like to understand what the cost would be to address her safety concerns and have pricing in front of the commission in the next three months.

Shane Krull, County Administrator, responded that it had been discussed several times and that he thinks the rearrangements of the offices, in light of the election processes that occurs periodically here, makes this idea problematic. Commissioner Vaughan asked if he thought it would be fair to get a price so that the Commission knew the cost structure. Mr. Krull asked if we were looking at it as an architectural standpoint or buying more property? Commissioner Vaughan stated he is not a fan of buying more property and to evaluate current facilities with the focus on the Treasurer/Tax departments being consolidated on the bottom floor due to this department's direct in person services to the public and this would help alleviate confusion for when they come in for services and ensure safety/security.

Commissioner Scruggs asks Ms. Lee to explain her safety concerns. Ms. Lee explained that we deal with irate customers all the time. The office gets verbally abused by customers when they are taking payments, having to turn people away. They have been threatened several times and have had multiple calls to the Sheriff's Office to do a walkthrough. Chairman Pretz says it is worth exploring all possibilities and attempt to budget for it. Chairman Pretz asks Ms. Lee to give three examples of how safety could be made better. Ms. Lee states that she would like glass between the customer and the staff, both offices be combined, with the ideal location being downstairs on the first floor. Chairman Pretz asked Ms. Lee what her peak employment is? Ms. Lee stated staffing of the Treasurer's office is currently five tax clerks in the tax department (2nd Floor) including the part-time staff, Motor Vehicle License and Tax (1st Floor) is seven clerks, and Driver's License (2nd Floor) includes one employee.

Chairman Pretz supported to explore all possibilities in this pursuit of safety and attempt to budget for it. Ms. Lee states that she has made the county a lot of money last year. Chairman Pretz added that it is the people's money. Commissioner Vickrey stated, "it is the taxpayer's investment, our county made money and thank you for doing your job last year." Commissioner Vickrey asks Ms. Lee when she will invest the taxpayer's money? Ms. Lee, responded with she is investing part of it and as soon as her request is approved, she will go out for bid this afternoon if they respond in the next three months. Commissioner Vickrey asked her so if

you don't get your way you won't invest all of the taxpayer's money? Ms. Lee state she has plans for around 20 million dollars in CDs for the safety improvements if the commission supports her request in the next three months. Ms. Lee stated the previous treasurer did not invest any of the taxpayer's money. Ms. Lee reemphasized her safety concerns be addressed and to be fixed. Commissioner Vaughan says that Ms. Lee is exercising her elected right and urges the commission to take action on these safety concerns. Commissioner Diediker agrees that this topic has been discussed several times and it is time to address it by making a plan and getting pricing.

Mr. Krull, and the commissioners discussed the time frame, professional needs, and general requirements that could be needed for this request. Commissioner Vaughan asks Mr. Krull if a three-month time frame is a fair timeline to accomplish that? Mr. Krull suggests rather than an RFP, they should do a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) since they are engaging a professional service. Commissioner Vaughan asked for clarification from Ms. Lee that she would be investing the rest of the taxpayer's money that afternoon. Ms. Lee agrees to work on investing today, if the commissioners agree to complete a plan for her safety concerns within three months. Mr. Krull stated that this was a project considered in the 2025 budget process but due to budget constraints, it was not funded. Commissioner Scruggs states that he wants to see the offices regarding Ms. Lee's safety concerns. Commissioner Vaughan moves to approve to start the process for a RFQ and evaluate in the next three months as discussed, seconded by Commissioner Vickrey; the vote was unanimous.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Vickrey asks that we do not get to this point to where we harm the taxpayer's ability to get returns on their investments. He says he feels the Commissioners were blindsided regarding Tricia Lee, County Treasurer's actions. Commissioner Vickrey says he feels we should have better communication, and that this is at the cost of the taxpayer.

Commissioner Scruggs states that he agrees with Commissioner Vickrey and states, that leveraging something like this – what is keeping other departments from doing it?

Commissioner Vickrey clarified that we have got to get a handle on this, only because we need our taxpayer money invested, and there are safety concerns. He thought they were moving ahead on some of these proposals and did not know they have reached this critical juncture at this point and didn't have any communication otherwise.

Commissioner Vaughan does state "We were addressed with it and there was communication on it, and we haven't made action." "I agree with all the statements, but the taxpayer money should not be held hostage. I also agree there is a time period, as an elected, you have to step up and be elected." He continued "I'm glad we are moving forward and hopefully we never come to this point again."

Chairman Pretz states that they did not get this project in the budget for the last 2 years. Future discovery and action for safety moving forward. He announced the Economic Development Committee meeting next Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 3:00 pm, at the Administration Building, there could be two or more Commissioners there.

Chairman Pretz asked Shane Krull, Administrator, and Laura Epp, County Clerk if they had any additional comments?

Laura Epp, County Clerk, stated regarding the conversation about security concerns, the Secretary of State's Office and the State of Kansas contributed quite a bit of money in grant funds to secure the current Clerk's Office and the commission needs to be mindful of that when talking to contractors.

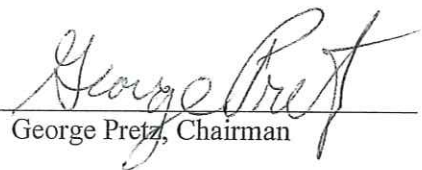
EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Vaughan moved to have Attorney-Client Privilege Exception Executive Session to discuss a consultation with an attorney for 15 minutes beginning at 1:27 p.m. to include the Commissioners, County Administrator and County Counselor, Andrew Holder via phone. Commissioner Vickrey seconded; the vote was unanimous. No action will be taken at this time. Chairman Pretz reconvened the regular meeting at 1:43 p.m.

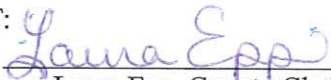
ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:44 p.m.




George Pretz, Chairman

ATTEST:


Laura Epp, County Clerk