

**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 August 20, 2025. Those present were:

George Pretz, Chairman	Wendy Newton, Deputy Clerk
Tyler Vaughan, Pro-Tem	Darcy Wilson, Operation Support Specialist
Keith Diediker, Commissioner	
Paul Scruggs, Commissioner	
W. Jene Vickrey, Commissioner	

Visitors: Stephen Graue and Kelly Roberts

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 August 13, 2025
- Approval of AP payment vouchers
- Approval of the corrections to July 30, 2025, Minutes
- 25002-SUB: Brad & Tiffani Oliver Subdivision
- Add-On: Action Agenda number 4 – Order of Corrections of Irregularities

Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Stephen Graue, 4353 W. 351st Street, addressed the Commission regarding damage to landscaping on his property caused by county maintenance work. Mr. Graue noted that this was his third appearance before the Commission on the matter. He presented photographs to demonstrate the damage and stated that, since his initial visit, no cleanup had been completed, and he had not received follow-up communication.

He explained that while the drip line of his trees extended slightly into the right-of-way, the trees themselves were planted two and a half feet outside of it. He further observed that similar tree growth exists among other county roads without intervention and questioned why his property was singled out.

Mr. Graue stated his desire to receive relief, through cleanup or monitory means, and indicated that he may pursue legal remedies if necessary. When asked by Commissioner Vaughan to define "relief," Mr. Graue clarified that he wanted his property back up to its value, though he acknowledged that restoration may not be fully possible, as red cedar trees will not regrow once cut. Chairman Pretz asked whether Mr. Graue's concern was primarily the brush remaining on the ground. Mr. Graue confirmed that while brush removal was part of the issue, his greater concern was damage to his property, which he believes constitutes a legal matter. Commissioner Scruggs reported that he had spoken with Eric Sandberg, Road and Bridge Director earlier that day. At this time, staff availability is limited, but a crew could be sent to mulch the brush on the ground. Commissioner Diediker added that if he wants the limbs picked up instead of mulched this could not be performed until after asphalt season, when both crew and equipment are available. He also noted that the county has the right to trim branches within the right-of-way to maintain traffic safety. Chairman Pretz requested that Commissioners Scruggs and Diediker work with Director Sandberg to develop a solution to improve the situation. Both Commissioners agreed, and Mr. Graue indicated that this would be acceptable.

Kelly Roberts, 118 S. 2nd Street, attended the meeting regarding the County Budget. Chairman Pretz clarified that the official budget hearing is scheduled for August 27, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Commissioner Vickrey noted that Mr. Roberts was welcome to share his comments during the current meeting.

Mr. Roberts expressed concern about potential tax increases. He stated that while some residents may be

able to absorb higher taxes, many citizens on fixed incomes would struggle, and some may be unable to remain in their homes. He emphasized that he was speaking on behalf of those residents and urged the Commission to exercise common sense when making budgetary decisions. Mr. Roberts suggested that reducing expenses or considering staff reductions would be preferable to raising taxes. As individuals can seek other employment, whereas elderly residents may not be able to find alternative housing.

Chairman Pretz acknowledged Mr. Roberts' concerns and explained that Miami County is required to provide essential services such as ambulance, sheriff's office operations, and vehicle registration. These services are mandated by state statute, and the Commission must comply with those obligations. He noted that despite rising costs of living, the county must continue to provide these services. Mr. Roberts stated that he understood and had no further comments. Chairman Pretz thanked him for attending and sharing his perspective.

NEW BUSINESS

Jason Leadbetter, Code Services Director, requested the Commissioners to Authorize Solicitation of Onsite Wastewater Proposals and Price Quotes. Mr. Leadbetter said Miami County is requesting proposals for the installation of a new onsite wastewater system for a privately owned property. This project is grant-funded from KDHE. Chairman Pretz stated that this was a system that was not working properly and was going through codes court and the county choose to help this person rather than remove them from their home. Commissioner Vaughan moved to approve as presented. Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Vaughan said he is excited that the work on 223rd is underway and excited to get the project started.

Commissioner Vickrey encouraged citizens to take advantage of the free property alert service offered through the Register of Deeds Office. He explained that by registering, property owners will be notified if someone attempts to place a loan against their property. He advises that residents utilize this service to protect their property.

Chairman George Pretz thanked all the taxpayers of Miami County for all they do.

JOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.



ATTEST:

Laura Epp
Laura Epp, County Clerk

George Pretz
George Pretz, Chairman