

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 27, 2025. Those present were:

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

Visitors: Therese Seward, Joe Redford, Tammy Dowd, Patricia Nelson, Polly Inscore, Shelly Thomas, Lynn and Ira Salvini, Randy Mathia, Ron Kalcic, Wally Brabec, Michael McCoy, Cathy Christofferson, Debra Diddie, Jennifer Funnan, Lester Jaccard, Lyndie Tanner, Judith Rauber, Jackie Oharah, Ed Christoffersen, Jeffrey Butler, Pat and Karen Petelin, Mary Beth Guy, Ted Beauchamp, Rob Henning, Oliver Tanner, Kristin Graue, Daryl Marmon, Vernon Fannan, Brandy Fannan, Steve and Diana Didier, Renee Slinkard, Stephan Graue, Courtney Crawford, Paul Howe, Bill Osborn, Julie McWilliams, Mary Batter, Lisa Stephen

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 20, 2025
- Approval of AP payment vouchers and payroll
- Permanent ROW Purchase- Rustin and Breanna Dowd Joint Revocable Trust. **A25-08-042**
- Permanent ROW and Temporary Construction Easement Purchase-Karen S. Weigel and Derrick C. Weigel. **A25-08-043**

Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Renee Slinkard, 5630 W 2200 Road, Parker, KS, has been seeking chip and seal for Devlin Road that connects to Indianapolis Road in Miami County with access to 169 Highway. Ms. Slinkard stated there is not a hospital in Linn County, so Miami County Hospital is the closest hospital connected by 169 Highway. Ms. Slinkard said there is a cost share program the counties can apply for, and it ends on September 17, 2025. Chairman Pretz said the Commission is working with the Road and Bridge Department to file for a grant in conjunction with Linn County to complete the missing part on Indianapolis Road. Ms. Slinkard said thank you.

PRESENTATIONS AND AWARDS AND PROCLAMATION

Proclamation - presented by Renee Slinkard: Constitution Week. Commissioner Vickrey moved to approve as presented, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

Lucas Mellinger, Assistant County Administrator/Finance Director gave a brief overview on Miami County's budget and highlighted the big changes to the budget. Chairman Pretz mentioned the equipment budget was low. Mr. Mellinger said the budget was low and we are playing catch up on what we have had to cut back on some of the other budgets.

Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to exceed revenue neutral for Miami County Kansas 2026 Budget at 1:14 pm.

Walley Brabec, 4421 Hilltop Circle, talked about cuts he had to make to keep his house after his wife took a lower paying job. Mr. Brabec expressed concerns about the county spending and suggested budget cuts should be considered instead of increases. Mr. Brabec talked about chip and sealing roads that are already paved and feels that is a waste. Chairman Pretz responded that the County uses chip and seal to preserve asphalt. Mr. Brabec said he and his neighbors have paid approximately \$340,000.00 in taxes over the last five years and as a taxpayer he wants rock on his street. Chairman Pretz clarified that the increases include all taxing entities. He said he has been talking about the road by his house for the last five years and how he lives in a gully. He stated he would vote against any raise in taxes because of that.

Polly Inscore, 20925 W. 287th Street, said she has lived in Miami County since 2006 and is the sole bread winner. My property taxes have gone up over the years and no one has come for an assessment or appraisal on her home. She feels the money Miami County has been given belongs to the elderly and widows. If we start pulling KORA reports, we can find the bloat and waste. She asked the Commission to take care of our money.

Courtney Crawford, 30842 Indianapolis Road, asked why did some of the commissioners say in the budget meetings this is the year to not go revenue and next year is? Is it because this year is not an election year? Ms. Crawford talked about the departments coming to the budget meetings with their wants, not true needs. She talked about the pay raises and insurance over three years. She addressed concerns about involvement in Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), lack of consideration for family economics, and county resilience. She also talked about how small businesses are welcome in Miami County, but with the ridiculous codes and zoning make it near impossible to start a new business not to mention the high taxes.

Ron Kalcic, 24309 Mission Belleview Road, said he had two friends that wanted to move to Miami County, and he told them not too. That we pay more taxes in Miami County than in Johnson County. Mr. Kalcic said there are no options for stores in Louisburg due to the zoning laws and Miami County's taxes.

Kristin Graue, 4353 W. 351st Street, said according to the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) notice, Miami County's taxes increased 11.97 percent. You have to live within your means. I live on a fixed income and living here is becoming unattainable. Hard decisions have to be made. I love our county, I have lived here for 30 years, and I want to stay, but with this escalation rate it will be unattainable. Chairman Pretz clarified that Miami County taxes increased five percent. Ms. Graue said every effort should be made to stay revenue neutral.

Oliver Tanner, 1119 Brown Ave, said he has lived in Osawatomie for two years now, that he is 95 percent disabled from the military and cannot get a normal job, he does the best he can. The land he owns has no house, no sewer, and part of the property is in a flood zone. Over four years the value has gone from \$7,000 to \$17,400. He asked how does the land more than double in value with nothing on it? Mr. Tanner said his families hopes and dreams is not Miami County's piggy bank.

Lester Jaccard, 27460 Mission Belleview Rd, said Louisburg tried to get a new library, we voted no. Miami County Courthouse was voted down. That should have sent a message that residents are tired of paying higher taxes. He questioned where tax revenue has gone, property values have increased even in years when the county remained revenue neutral.

Stephen Graue, 4353 W. 351st St, asked if the administrators held accountable for what is being spent? Is what is being requested really needed?

Michael McCoy, 612 Leroy, his property valued at \$18,000-\$19,000 in 2019 and now it is valued at \$61,000. It tripled in value. Mr. McCoy asked Miami County to stop raising taxes. It is killing us.

Commissioner Vaughan moved to authorize the Commission to sign the Resolution to Exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate for the Miami County Budget, Commissioner Diediker seconded; Roll Call Vote: Ayes (5) – Commissioners Vickrey, Scruggs, Pretz, Vaughan, Diediker. Nays (0). Motion Passed (5-0) (R25-08-027)

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Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 1:47 pm.

Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to adopt the budget for Miami County Kansas 2026 Budget at 1:48 pm.

Julie McWilliams, land here- home in Osage City, said Miami County ran her out. She has to have her small business somewhere else but would love to have it here in Miami County. She asked the Commission to do something; we do not have any more money.

Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 1:50 pm.

Commissioner Vickrey said Miami County Health Department does not have \$200,000.00 in grant funding this year and we are having to backfill their budget. He asked if we could consider taking the \$200,000.00 off the budget from the Health Department. Commissioner Diediker agreed with Commissioner Vickrey. He said that in past conversations it was discussed that if the Health Department ever did not get the grant funding it would be hard to take care of the additional services the money paid for. Unless the services are extra that the health insurance does not cover it is double covering the same thing. I agree to trim \$200,000.00 off the budget to help. Commissioner Vaughan asked Shane Krull, County Administrator what a mill is worth? Mr. Krull answered \$749,000.00. Commissioner Vaughan said he would like to reduce the asphalt budget for Road and Bridge from \$750,000.00 to \$500,000.00. Commissioner Diediker and Commissioner Vickrey said they agreed with Commissioner Vaughan. Commissioner Diediker mentioned to the public that it is going to make our asphalt budget behind so we will not be able to replace as many miles of new asphalt. Commissioner Scruggs said he pushed for the asphalt increase to stay in line with the outlined maintenance program for roads. He said anything that cost this county more money down the road he is not in favor of. Commissioner Vaughan responded with his reasoning for dropping the budget this year is due to recent projects this year that put the county ahead of the current schedule and stated we pay the same taxes as everyone else; we are not the enemy. Commissioner Pretz said he wants everything to work, all citizens get response when they need emergency services, law enforcement, county services and he will not stonewall the budget for it to go down some. Commissioner Pretz clarified that the county is an agent of the State of Kansas, and the budget is centered around following state statute. The county is responsible to follow the rules that are guided by the state, and he wants to work with his fellow Commissioners and the citizens of Miami County. Commissioner Vaughan said to answer the question going revenue neutral on an election year is a misunderstanding, Miami County has exceeded revenue neutral on election years in the past when they have had to. He said he is part of Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), and he puts Miami County first. As for the Cadillac insurance, we do have really good insurance. We would not be able to keep some of our employees without it because we pay about fifteen percent less than agencies around us. We are going self-insured and over the last five years we have kept our rates and costs flat when the industry trend is an increase of twelve percent per year. Commissioners discussed circumstances that deem the need for reserves and times when they will dip into the reserves to avoid taxing the people more when it can be done at times. Polly Inscore spoke about the school board contacting her asking for her vote for more money. She said she appreciates everything the Commission is doing. She will be pulling KORA reports and said if the Commission cannot find the bloat and waist she will. Commissioner Vickrey said we can lower the raise to three percent. Commissioner Diediker said we lost another two employees in the Road and Bridge Department due to the amount of money they are making. Commissioner Scruggs said he is in favor of dropping the raise to three percent. Commissioner Vaughan said his motion stands, he is not changing his motion to lower the raise increase to three percent. Commissioner Vaughan moved to adopt the 2026 Miami County Budget with two changes: a decrease of \$200,000.00 from the Health Department and reducing the asphalt Road and Bridge budget from \$750,000.00 to \$500,000.00, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote 4 -1 Nay (Scruggs). Motion approved.

Sitting as the Fire District #1 Board

Lucas Mellinger, Assistant County Administrator/ Finance Director, gave a brief overview of the Rural Fire District #1 with explanation on increased cost primarily due to personnel from increased calls and equipment needs.

Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to exceed revenue neutral for the 2026 Miami County Rural Fire District #1 Budget at 2:20 pm.

Commissioner Vaughan moved to authorize the Commission to sign the Resolution to Exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate for the Miami County Rural Fire District #1 Budget, Commissioner Diediker seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes (5) – Commissioners Vickrey, Scruggs, Pretz, Vaughan, Diediker. Nays (0). Motion Passed (5-0) (R25-08-028)

Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 2:22 pm.**Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to adopt the budget for the 2026 Miami County Rural Fire District #1 Budget at 2:22 pm. Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 2:23 pm.**

Commissioner Vaughan moved to adopt the 2026 Miami County Rural Fire District #1 Budget, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Closed sitting as the Fire District #1 Board**Sitting as the Fire District #2 Board**

Lucas Mellinger, Assistant County Administrator/Finance Director, gave a brief overview of Rural Fire District #2. Fire District #2 contracts with Johnson County, a 5% increase is being incurred in this contract to support Fire District #2.

Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to exceed revenue neutral for the 2026 Miami County Rural Fire District #2 Budget at 2:24 pm.

Ted Beauchamp, 23205 Moonlight Road, said he appreciates the public services.

Commissioner Vaughan moved to authorize the Commission to sign the Resolution to Exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate for the Miami County Rural Fire District #2 Budget, Commissioner Diediker seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes (5) – Commissioners Vickrey, Scruggs, Pretz, Vaughan, Diediker. Nays (0). Motion Passed (5-0) (R25-08-029)

Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 2:27 pm.**Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to adopt the budget for the 2026 Miami County Rural Fire District #2 Budget at 2:27 pm.**

Julie McWilliams, said looking at the big picture, she was not going to contest but feels all should be one budget and work better together. Chairman Pretz clarified it cannot be all one budget because state statute will not allow it, they are their own entity. Ms. McWilliams said she feels all budgets should remain revenue neutral.

Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 2:29 pm.

Commissioner Vaughan moved to adopt the 2026 Miami County Rural Fire District #2 Budget, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Closed sitting as the Fire District #2 Board

Lucas Mellinger, Assistant County Administrator/ Finance Director, gave a brief overview of the Bucyrus Lights & Sirens budget.

Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to adopt the budget for the 2026 Bucyrus Lights & Sirens Budget at 2:31pm. Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 2:32 pm.

Commissioner Vaughan moved to adopt the 2026 Bucyrus Lights & Sirens Budget, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Lucas Mellinger, Assistant County Administrator/ Finance Director, gave a brief overview of the Hillsdale Lights & Sirens budget.

Chairman Pretz opened the public hearing to adopt the budget for the 2026 Hillsdale Lights & Sirens Budget at 2:33 pm. Chairman Pretz closed the public hearing at 2:33 pm.

Commissioner Vaughan moved to adopt the 2026 Hillsdale Lights & Sirens Budget, Commissioner Diediker seconded; the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Chairman Pretz said that concludes our budget hearings and approval of budgets. I want to thank the staff and especially thank the citizens of Miami County. He appreciates the interest and concern toward all the budgets. Chairman Pretz also thanked his fellow Commissioners.

Eric Sandberg, Road and Bridge Director, requested the Commission to consider the Road & Bridge department to enter into an agreement with ALMI Enterprises to complete repairs to the salt bunker at 23765 W 327th Street. Mr. Sandberg said Road and Bridge went out for quotes for the repairs. We received three quotes and ALMI came in at \$43,237.00. The current salt bunker is 25 years old, and the repairs are budgeted for this year. Commissioner Vickrey moved to enter into an agreement with ALMI Enterprises for a total of \$43,237.00, Commissioner Diediker seconded; motion approved, and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

(A25-08-046)

Lucas Mellinger, Assistant County Administrator/Finance Director, requested that the commission table the Arctic Wolf contract renewal for one week. Commissioner Vaughan moved to table for one week, Commissioner Diediker seconded; motion approved, and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Laura Epp, County Clerk, requested the Commission to approve the Special Event Permit for Lighthouse Presbyterian Church. This is for a men's event. The Lighthouse Presbyterian Church is asking the Commission to waive the \$250.00 fee as they are a non-profit. Commissioner Vickrey moved to approve the special event permit and waiving the \$250.00 fee, Commissioner Scruggs seconded; motion approved, and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Sara Denney, Human Resources Director, recommended the Board of County Commissioners authorize the County Administrator to approve the Miami County Vehicle Usage Policy. Ms. Denney said the Miami County Vehicle Usage administrative policy establishes the guidelines and the basic safety and authorization framework governing the use of county-owned vehicles/equipment, and the operation of privately owned vehicles for county use. The original policy was adopted in 2003. The proposed policy re-write clarifies the authorization and assignments of county vehicles/equipment, or the use of privately-owned vehicles for county use and sets safety and compliance expectations while operating any vehicle/equipment while on county time. The proposed policy also prohibits the use of privately-owned motorcycles for county use, in alignment with the recommendation from KWORCC. Commissioner Pretz moved to approve as presented, Commissioner Vaughan seconded; motion approved, and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Sara Denney, Human Resources Director, recommended that the Board of County Commissioners authorize the County Administrator to sign the Autopsy Policy. Ms. Denney said the proposed Autopsy Policy establishes practices to be followed in the event of the death of an employee that occurs on the job or during the discharge of an employee's job responsibilities. The proposed policy states the county will follow state statute requirements for reporting any death to the district coroner, and the county's compliance with state workers' compensation laws for reporting to our work comp provider. Commissioner Diediker moved to approve as presented, Commissioner Vaughan seconded; motion was approved, and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Kenneth Cook, Planning Director, requested the Commission to approve the Display Fireworks Permit for project number 25015-TP: Wald Fireworks-Dancefestopia. Mr. Cook said Daryl Marmon, Wald Fireworks, is asking the display fireworks to be displayed until midnight Thursday night. Friday night into Saturday

morning (1:30 am) and Saturday night into Sunday morning (1:30 am) the fireworks be displayed. Then Sunday night into Monday Morning (12:45 am) the fireworks be displayed. These fireworks are display fireworks for the stage with limited noise. Commissioner Diediker said he feels midnight is late enough. Commissioner Vaughan asked Mr. Cook if regulation is 11:00 pm? Mr. Cook answered yes. Commissioner Vaughan said let us stick with the regulation and pull it back to 11:00 pm. Commissioner Pretz said he has no problem, going until midnight. Commissioner Scruggs agreed with 11:00 pm. Mr. Marmon said the concert will go on regardless of the fireworks. We use close proximate which are indoor fireworks. Mr. Ward said staff cannot hear the display fireworks and have performed decimal hearing test; the noise you hear is from the music. The display fireworks are lights in the sky and fire. Commissioner Diediker moved to approve the display fireworks until 11:00 pm, Commissioner Vaughan seconded; motion carried, and the vote was 4-1 nay (Pretz)

Kenneth Cook, Planning Director, Resolution 25004-CUP: Fontana Christian Church Expansion. Mr. Cook said the original CUP was a 20-year return and they are coming back to us for another 20-year term. This is a consideration of an application to amend the existing Conditional Use Permit for the operation of a church facility. The changes are: (1) expansion of the parking lot to the North; and (2) construction of 60' x 70' (4,200 square feet) addition on the South end of the current building. Mr., Cook said we needed additional plans to make sure storm water was addressed. We have a storm water plan now. Staff has amended a previous condition that was approved. That change is the condition that they would need to come back to us and go through the process to build the future additions that was already on their plans has been removed now that we have a storm water plan in place. Commissioner Vaughan asked Mr. Cook if the applicant understands they will need to come back and go through the approval process for future additions that is not on the original plans? Mr. Cook said yes, they aware they will have to submit building plans. The Planning Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve. Commissioner Diediker moved to approve the CUP for the Fontana Christian Church expansion, Commissioner Vaughan seconded; the motion carried, and the vote was unanimous (5-0). (R25-08-030)

Kenneth Cook, Planning Director, Resolution 25001-Z: Wildlife Ridge 2nd. Mr. Cook said the application is to rezone approximately 115.89-acres from Countryside (CS) to Rural Residential (R-1). The subject property is located North of K-68 Highway and West of Lookout Road. Mr. Cook said the rezoning would allow one dwelling to every five acres, which would be 23 lots to be developed. Mr. Cook said the current Lookout Road is not up to standards to handle the traffic. If the rezoning is not approved the developer would still be able to build but it would be a total of eleven lots. We did have a fair number of neighbors that attended the public hearing. Mr. Cook said the largest concern is the condition of the road and the safety at the intersection of 68 Highway and Lookout Road. Other concerns is the storm water impact and the change in character of the landscape. Mr. Cook said we did receive a valid protest petition. Chairman Pretz asked what the percentage was? Mr. Cook answered he calculated 38.9 percent. To be a valid petition a minimum of 20 percent was required. When there is a valid petition, it requires a super majority vote of three quarters of the Commission which is four out of five in favor. Mr. Cook said, the Planning Commission voted four in favor and one opposed (4-1), to recommend DENIAL of the request to rezone the property from Countryside District (CS) to Rural Residential (R-1). Brandi Fannon, Realtor, said the applicant would like to at least put the 11 to 15 houses and she believes they could widen the road to the 24 feet that the county requires. The taxes here are crazy, she feels the reason is there is no growth in Miami County which is causing taxes to increase. Commissioner Vaughan said he drove through the area, and he agrees with the Planning Commission. Commissioner Diediker said there is two big steep hills that are dangerous. He is not in favor of rezoning. Commissioner Vaughan asked Mr. Cook if the developer can still do conservation development. Mr. Cook answered yes. Commissioner Scruggs said he disagrees due to lack of development and taxes. Commissioner Pretz said he maybe in favor. He would like to see the cost estimate to make it a safe road. I feel it is going to be a multi-million-dollar project. Commissioner Vaughan moved to agree with the Planning Commission and deny the rezoning the property form CS to R-1, Commissioner Scruggs seconded;

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the motion was carried, and the vote was unanimous (5-0). (R25-08-031)

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Pretz said thank God it is still America. It was great to see a good crowd. We do not always agree. I want to thank the taxpayers of Miami County especially today.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.




George Pretz, Chairman

ATTEST:


Laura Epp, County Clerk