

NEWS

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Jason Jump at (620) 896-7311 or email jjump@theharperadvocate.com

HARPER COUNTY COMMISSION MINUTES *June 9 Meeting*

The Harper County Board of County Commissioners met in regular session. Chairman Waldschmidt called the meeting to order with Commissioners McCurley and Struble. Shonda Larson, Board Assistant, and Ami DeLacerda, County Clerk were also present.

Commissioner Struble moved to approve accounts payable in the amount of \$214,137.52; the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Struble moved to approve accounts payable for the 6/6/2025 payroll in the amount of \$159,385.52; the motion passed unanimously.

Mike Bennett and Janet Slankard, Public Works, met with the Board and discussed minimum maintenance roads and the responsibilities of the county to maintain them after designating them "minimum maintenance". Also considered the purchase of additional cement boxes for bridge repair to keep in stock in case there is an emergency. Commissioner Struble moved to approve an Inordinate Spending Request to Railroad Yard in the amount of \$24,600.00 for 2 half tanks; the motion passed unanimously. There was an update on the fuel tank project, and a contract from Haviland Telephone Company was presented. Commissioner McCurley moved to waive the permit fees for Haviland; the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Struble moved to award King Construction of Hesston, KS the Newberry Bridge replacement project, for their bid of \$592,152.00; the motion passed unanimously.

The group reviewed the Public Works, Special Bridge, Noxious Weed, and Solid Waste 2026 budget requests.

Joe Pennycuff, County Appraiser, met

with the Board. At 9:42 a.m., Commissioner Struble moved to enter Executive Session. The justification for closing the meeting is to discuss personnel matters of nonelected personnel. The open meeting will resume at 10:00 a.m. in this room. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Pennycuff and Ms. DeLacerda remained in the meeting. The regular meeting resumed at 9:59 a.m. with no binding action taken.

At 9:59 a.m., Commissioner Struble moved for a five-minute recess; the motion passed unanimously. The meeting resumed at 10:04 a.m.

Rachel Denton, Clerk of the District Court, presented the 2026 District Court budget request.

Tracy Chance, County Sheriff, and Don Gebers, Jail Administrator, presented their 2026 budget requests. There was discussion on offering the Sheriff's Office old 800 radios to other County departments.

Christina Cintron, Dispatch & Emergency Mgmt, presented her 2026 budget requests. Also discussed the potential for fires due to power lines around unmaintained oil field property. Commissioner McCurley moved to approve an Inordinate Spending Request to Foley in the amount of \$1,892.97 for annual generator maintenance (courthouse); the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Struble moved to approve an Inordinate

Spending Request to Foley in the amount of \$1,175.33 for annual generator maintenance (tower); the motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Wolff, Dept on Aging/Public Transportation, gave a department update. She notified of Board of a

\$1,000.00 grant received from Wheatland Electric, and discussed recent programming. Ms. Wolff provided an update on the Commodities program and advised that 94 households, 169 individuals had benefited from the program in May. The group continued discussion on the Anthony Friendship Meals program, and Ms. Wolff updated them with information from the special board meeting she attended. It is anticipated that Everful will be released from their contract with the program, AAA is involved, and working on a solution. Ms. Wolff has reached out to our current food vendor about increasing the number of meals each month, and is considering staffing needs in the event the county would absorb the program.

The group reviewed the 2026 budget requests for the Department on Aging (which included an option to add staff and increase expenses necessary to take over the Friendship Meal program) and Public Transportation.

Christina Cintron met with the Board to present Resolution 2025-07, a Disaster Declaration covering storm damage incurred between May 1 and June 7th. Commissioner McCurley moved to approve the Resolution; the motion passed unanimously.

Claudine Willett, Mirror, Inc., met with the Board to discuss a 2026 request for funding. The Board requested an audited financial statement to further review.

Brooke Mantey, County Appraiser, met with the Board to discuss the 6/2/2025 Zoning meeting, and presented the Board with documentation for

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NEWS BRIEFS

COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE

The Public Transportation Service assists all Harper County residents of any age to stay independent with transportation to work, medical appointments, shopping, errands, Patterson Health Center and locations less than 70 miles. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Every county resident can ride with public transit regardless of age or mobility. Equal access is provided to the public. Although out of county trips are available, rides need to be scheduled 24 hours in advance, and the bus returns for Harper County by 3 p.m. Call (620) 842-5104 for reservations and rates. First come, first served. Advance reservations are recommended.

TEFAP FOOD COMMODITIES AVAILABLE JULY 10

TEFAP Food Commodities will be available to pick up Thursday, July 10 from 8:30 am to noon at 201 N. Jennings. Park on the west side of the courthouse. Food is first come, first served and new income guidelines apply. Proxy forms are available if you have someone else picking up a box for your household. Single household maximum gross income = \$2413. Commodities are available for all Harper County households who meet income guideline regardless of age. This institution is an equal opportunity program. For seniors specifically, additional food commodities are available thru Wichita's United Methodist Open Door and picked up at Anthony United Methodist Church. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program is the monthly food-box program for items provided by the USDA and distributed to income-eligible people 60 years of age and older. Open Door's program is available in 11 Kansas counties: Butler, Chautauqua, Cowley, Harper, Harvey, Kingman, Pratt, Reno, Sedgwick, Stafford and Sumner. This is a monthly food-box program for income-eligible elders age 60 and older. This program's food is provided by the USDA through the State of Kansas and may include such items as canned juice, fruit, vegetables, milk and meat, peanut butter or dry beans, cereal, macaroni or rice and two pounds of cheese for each family member who qualifies by age and income. Applications are available in the Aging Office (1st floor of Harper Co Courthouse) or online www.umopendoor.org. Contact the Aging Office 620-842-5104 for more information.

COURT

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for relief from or reconsideration of the court's order.

• Conceded it did not appear for a hearing on May 7, 2025.

• Conceded it had not challenged any journal entry assessing delays to the state. A child in need of care

(CINC) file was originated in Harper County and then transferred to Montgomery County in October, 2024, but the file was requested prior to that. The state requested on continuance of the jury trial on Dec. 30, 2024. The state requested "more time" to obtain the CINC file on four separate occasions beginning on

Jan. 22. The state finally "announced receipt of (the) CINC file" on April 21. The court was unable to set a reschedule jury trial on May 7 due to the state's representative missing the hearing. A new date was set on May 19, but a hearing to dismiss the case was also filed on that date with the dismissal occurring on June 6.

With the ruling of dismissal with prejudice it means the Randleman can not be charged and tried again with the same crimes alleged in this specific case.

The county attorney's office has been under scrutiny from law enforcement officials, the county commission and concerned citizens for several months.

MEALS

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food and delivery costs and ensure no interruption in service for seniors.

"We are incredibly grateful to KDADS for stepping in with this emergency support," said SCKAAA Executive Director Jodi Whitmore in the KDADS news release. "Our top priority is the seniors we serve and

this funding ensures they will continue to receive the meals they count on every day."

According to a KWCH-TV story, Everfull Executive Director Charles Johnston said the decision was surprising. He told KWCH-TV that Everfull noticed in March it was going beyond its budget and reached out to SCKAAA about the possibility of

a contract negotiation to bridge the income gap.

Per a story in the *Eureka Herald*, Everfull had distributed a letter to its employees back in May about funding shortfalls that could disrupt service as of July 1.

In a letter dated June 4, which Whitmore emailed to *The Harper Advocate*, SCKAAA stated it was aware of those financial issues.

"We deeply value the

essential role Everfull plays in delivering meals and support to seniors in our region," the letter stated. "These services are a critical lifeline for many, and disruption in these services can have serious consequences. SCKAAA remains committed to doing everything within our capacity to help ensure that these important services continue without interruption."

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of **RELIGION**, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of **SPEECH**, or of the **PRESS**, or the right of the people peaceably to **ASSEMBLE** and to **PETITION** the Government; for a redress of grievances.

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HARPER SENIOR MEALS

June 23: Sweet and sour chicken, brown rice, ramen salad, fresh fruit and milk.

June 24: Swiss steak, baked potato, hot roll, fruit and milk.

June 25: Pork enchiladas, spanish rice, refried beans, strawberries and bananas and milk.

June 26: Lasagna, breadstick, broccoli salad, watermelon, sherbert and milk.

June 27: Pork cutlet, new potatoes, cooked spinach, bread, fruit and milk.

Please order/cancel by 1 p.m. the day prior. Call (620) 896-2063 for reservations.



Opinions come in all different colors, shapes & sizes!

What's Yours?

Email letters to the editor to: jjump@theharperadvocate.com

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