



USD #481 Rural Vista BOE Meeting Notes

The USD #481 Board of Education met Monday, August 10, at White City Schools with all members, three administrators, board clerk, five visitors and a reporter present.

Board president, Jaren Nittler called the meeting to order followed by the pledge of allegiance and approval of the consent agenda.

The district received a Mental Health Intervention Grant of \$67,272.00 and a donation of \$491.85 from Live Well Morris County.

Substitutes approved for the 2026-2027 school year included: Amy Schwarz (Hope); Vernetta Hammer-smith (White City); Cheyene Tracy (White City and Hope); Conner LaRosa (sub para); Rachel Barnes (Hope sub para) and Freya Schroeder (Hope sub para).

New hires approved were Stanley Sanford (White City bus route sub and activity driver) and Miguel Caludio (White City assistant cook).

Supplementals approved were: Asst. JH Football Coach - Conner LaRosa; Asst. JH Volleyball Coach - Maddy Morgan; Asst. JH Basketball Coach - Steve Morgan and Darel Anderson; Hope Head Teacher - Nancy Brockmeier; White City Head Teacher - Tanna Kasten; Hope Yearbook Advisor - Adam Sobba; White City Yearbook Advisor - Brian Killmon; WC Senior Class Sponsor - Denny Crable; Hope Senior Class Sponsor - Cody Riedy; WC Junior Class Sponsor - Kim Sanford; Hope Junior Class Sponsor - Morganne Sobba; WC Sophomore Class Sponsor - Makenzie Boltwood; Hope Sophomore Class Sponsor - Erika Cook; Hope Freshman Class sponsor - Maddy Morgan; WC 8th Grade Class Sponsor - Lorri Kasten; Hope 8th Grade Class Sponsor - Shaston Challans; FCCLA Advisor - Morganne Sobba; FFA Advisor-District - Madison Hinkle; WC HS Student Council Sponsors - Hanna Brown and Lorri Kasten; Hope Student Council Sponsors - Erika Cook and Kendra Mein; WC NHS Sponsor - Lorri Kasten; Hope NHS Sponsor - Erika Cook; Teacher Induction Trainer - Kari Hinkle; Mentor Teachers - Kristen Oleen and Tanna Kasten; WC Bldg. Technology Assistant - Kim Sanford; Hope Bldg. Technology Assistant - Kendra Mein; PDC Chair - Crystal Johnson; Food Service Director - Christina Allenbaugh; Daycare - Christina Allenbaugh, Dawn Johnson; Board Meetings - Patricia Rhodes; Travel Teachers - Kevin Hiskett, Bernard Schierling, Madison Hinkle, Kristopher Daggett, Morganne Sobba, Daryl Finch and Bruce Major.

Apollo Insurance gave a zoom presentation on health insurance options with the board approving the base option with participants able to chose other options.

Ryan Young of the Morris County Sheriff's Department visited with the board about the various programs the department conducted at White City Schools and stated the department plans to continue with those programs including the D.A.R.E. program and other programs as needed. The board thanks Mr. Young and the department for the support, cooperation and being visible at the school and its events.

The board approved the premiums for health, dental and vision insurance as presented.

The board also approved the KASB policies as presented.

Regina Polok, representing the Little Lions Learning Center in Hope, addressed the board about the need for a gas line to the center so that a gas hot water heater may be installed. Board member Nick Morgan spoke about the need to support the local child care centers in both locations as they are instrumental in children attending school in the district attendance centers. After discussion, the board approved the gas line at no cost to the district.

Ms. Polok stated there were 8 children in their summer program and told of various activities and field trips they enjoyed.

Ms. Polok also addressed the board about the need for them to purchase lunches from the Hope School. She said their cook was leaving and they had no one to take her place. The Little Lions has 19 enrolled for the 2026-2027 term but that three of those are infants so the meals would be for the older 16. The board approved a contract to supply lunch at a cost of \$4.05 per meal with the contract running until May 19, 2027.

The board took a break and conducted a tour of the White City Schools. All members were im-

pressed with the buildings and what had been accomplished over the summer.

Discussion was held on the proposed budget with some questions about amounts not matching. The superintendent will find out and let the board members know the corrections.

Nine out of district students were approved to attend White City Schools.

The changes in the student handbook were reviewed and approved.

The board then met in a 5 minute executive session to discuss negotiations.

Hope principal Adam Sobba school was set to begin the next day with Hope having an enrollment of 96 students.

White City principal Kane Hensley reported there were 211 students enrolled at White City Schools with everything ready for starting the next day.

The district activities directors, Sobba and Hensley, reported that Bennington and Ell Saline had requested to join the Wheat State League with all board members in favor.

Darlene Griffiths, district superintendent, reported visiting some families who live in the district but their students attend other schools. She also sent letters to some she did not find at home. She also reported that the offer to live stream home sporting event would not happen due to not finding volunteers who would do the live streaming for TCT.

The activities directors said the cost for sporting events would increase this year due to increase in pay for referees. They encouraged the communities to support those events so that the cost could be covered.

During board member comments, Nick Morgan stated he thought the school building at White City looked great, enrollments were up in both attendance center and added his appreciation to all.

Chase Brown stated he was excited with the enrollment figures and said it was a great time to be part of USD #481.

Jaren Nittler talked about the need to make some repairs to the memorial area at the White City football field and offered to visit with the city council about utilizing some of the bricks from their main street project to make some of those improvements.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 pm with the next meeting of the board to be September 14 at 7 pm at the Hope School Library.

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**A picture is worth a thousand words but the memories are priceless."**

— Unknown

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The older I grow the more earnestly I feel that the few joys of childhood are the best that life has to give.

Ellen Glasgow

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**Childhood is the most beautiful of all life's seasons.**

Jerry Smith

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"Life is a journey and memories are souvenirs we take along the way."

– Unknown



USD #417 Morris County BOE Meeting Notes

The USD #417 Board of Education meeting for August was held Monday, August 10, at the board office.

Open forum included Joe Fricilone who spoke in favor of ABA Therapy for individuals with Autism.

The board approved paying the bills totaling \$580,472.76; donations and gifts; disposal of some district equipment; approval of social media list for Facebook pages; KARE membership renewal; Schools for Fair Funding membership; classified, licensed & substitute handbooks; mental health school liaison job description and the acceptance of the Safe and Secure Grant in the amount of \$4,958.

There were a total of three executive session taken during the meeting with action taken.

Discussion was held on policies. Valerie Gehrler, director of Teaching and Learning, presented on chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of school and using "How's the School Going?" as the data source.

The board reviewed the building needs assessment and state assessments for 2026-2027.

The board approved the Building Blocks lease and appointed Travis Schweger as the 2026 voting delegate for the 2026 delegate assembly.

Hirings approved were: Amanda McDonald as the CGJSHS Behavior/Concessions Aide; Jaedyn Miller as a substitute teacher; Andrea Messer as the mental health school liaison; Ryan Ng as a substitute teacher; Jacy True as the JH Assistant girls basketball coach; Karla McNeese as CGES cook; Nate Watts as a substitute teacher; David Kinley as a substitute teacher; Leanne Williams as a CGES teacher aide; Kierra Elstun as CGES

teacher aide; Sheila Hill as a regular route bus driver; Taylor Johnson, assistant high school volleyball coach.

Transfers approved were Benjamin Jarchow to head JH girls basketball coach and Samantha Davis to the head musical position.

Resignations approved were Jaedyn Miller as the CGJSHS Behavior/concessions aide and Dallas Burton as the assistant high school volleyball coach.

Board members good news: Travis Schweger - CGES PTO doing fantastic work and that Ashley Rivers has done an amazing job and that there was great attendance at the recent PTO meeting. He also noted the circus is coming back to town.

Terry Powell mentioned the community buzz about the start of school, the excitement of the students and the Hype Team for creating the positive energy.

Jessica Rohloff expressed appreciation to the school partnership with Flint Hills tech.

Kelsey Hartman thanked the Apothecary for providing elementary students with school supplies.

Patty Talley thanked the thrift store for their donation to the after school program and Alkegen's donation.

James Blue recognized the hard work completed over the summer to prepare the new school year with special thanks to Tom's crew for working through weekends to finish mowing.

TinaRae Scott thanked the district office staff and administrators for their extensive preparations and hard work over the summer months.

Next meeting of the board will be September 14, at 6 pm at the district office in Council Grove.

White City City Council News

The White City city council met August 12 with four members present (Kolissa Tate was absent), along with the mayor, city clerk, assistant city clerk, maintenance supervisor, two patrons and a reporter present.

First order of business was the budget hearing. Following a brief discussion, the council unanimously approved the budget of \$824.923 with a proposed tax levy of 46.605 (down from 47.501 for the present year).

The regular monthly meeting followed the adjournment of the budget hearing.

The city clerk reported \$4500 in the park fund and all other funds looking great. She announced the final water project payment will be in February. She stated the fire budget also looked good. The council then approved the appropriation ordinance.

During new business, discussion was held on the possibility of placing speed bumps on Harris Street, especially near the school and daycare. After discussion the council approved replacing some safety and speed signs near the school.

During old business, the council discussed the rides for next year's Independence Day Celebration. The council directed the city clerk to further check on ride availability and voted to spend up to \$4,000 a ride/rides.

The city clerk announced the poles for the lights at the ballpark were in

and they would probably be set either this fall or early spring. They hope to meet with some local volunteers for planning and equipment needs, etc.

Discussion was held on replacing the security cameras at the city office. After discussion and comparing leasing or purchasing the cameras, the council approved the purchase of new cameras.

Sam Baseley, city maintenance supervisor, reported someone had vandalized the flashing school signs, they were trying to stay up with the mowing and repairing pot holes.

The council discussed the side-by-side sounding a need for work; mowing at full speed and worried about the wear and tear on the equipment; grass on the sidewalks, especially on election day (which led to a discussion about the need for a leaf blower and the council approved purchasing a leaf blower with a price of up to \$200), asked why the city was mowing some businesses and not others and the need for blight/projects sheet so that those listed on the blight sheet could be taken care of in order (council member Ronnie Ryker offered to help make a spread sheet of blights, etc.).

Jaren Nittler addressed the council about using some of the bricks to repair and redo the memorial at the school football field. The council thought that was a wonderful idea of utilizing the bricks to continue to be a part of the community and approved donating the bricks for the project.

Barb Herpich asked the council if the tree stumps in the medium on South Grand Street between Mackenzie and Stover could be removed as people were putting trash in them and debris and they were very unsightly.

Richard Guimond addressed the board about a blind corner at Stockholm and Walnut Street and also an issue with dogs running in the neighborhood. He also asked if the city still owned the building with the fitness center (the city does own the building) and that it is in need of paint and some repairs. He also stated the sign that Don Ross had Terra Coons paint that was above his business buildings (the buildings no longer belong to the Ross family) was in bad condition and should be taken care of.

It was announced there would be a ball tournament at the end of August and a question was asked about the American flag which is no longer at Katy Park.

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm. Next scheduled meeting of the council will be September 9 at 6 pm at the community building.

Wabaunsee County Welcome!

As the old western saying goes, "There's a new sheriff in town." Well, there's a new Extension agent in town too—and I'd love to take a moment to introduce myself.

Hello! My name is Lindsay Shorter, and I'm truly excited to begin serving the producers of Wabaunsee County. Agriculture is my passion, and helping folks find answers, solutions, and support is the heart of my work. I currently serve as the Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent in Riley County, based out of Manhattan, and beginning in August, I'll also be hosting weekly office hours right here in Wabaunsee County. You'll be able to catch me in the office—or schedule a home or site visit—every Wednesday.



Lindsay Shorter

The Extension office is a bridge between K-State Extension and our local communities. We bring research-based education, practical tools, and hands-on support directly to landowners, farmers, and ranchers. I'm eager to continue that mission in Wabaunsee County and to offer programming and guidance focused on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Agriculture has shaped my life from the very beginning. Growing up in Riley County, I found my footing through 4-H and FFA—experiences that sparked my love for livestock and set me on the path toward a career in agriculture. I earned degrees in Agribusiness from Seward County Community College, where I competed on the livestock judging team, and from Kansas State University. After college, I worked as a grain trader with Gavilon Grain in Wichita, buying and selling grain from producers across Kansas and marketing corn into feedlots, feed mills, and ethanol plants throughout the region.

Life took my husband, Morgan, and me to Beaumont, KS, where he served as Ranch Foreman for the 4L Ranch, a 7,000-acre operation focused on regenerative grazing. In 2018, I stepped into my first Extension role in Greenwood County, serving as their Ag & Natural Resources Agent, County Director, and 4-H Agent. Those five years were filled with incredible people, strong community ties, and experiences I'll always treasure.

In 2022, we moved to Northwest Oklahoma to work on the Hodges Ranch—12,000 acres of continuous rotational grazing with a single herd of more than 2,000 head. Building grazing infrastructure and water systems with our team was both challenging and rewarding. But eventually, we knew it was time to come home. When I was offered the Riley County Ag Extension Agent position, I was thrilled to return to the Flint Hills. I officially began in June of 2025, and it has been wonderful to be back.

Now, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve Wabaunsee County as well. Whether you have agriculture questions, need support with a project, or simply want to stop in and say hello, my door is open. I'll be in the Wabaunsee County Extension Office every Wednesday, and any other time you can reach me by phone at 913-585-0542 or by email at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu.

I look forward to meeting new faces, reconnecting with familiar ones, and working alongside the producers who make this county such a special place.

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**"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away."**

– Maya Angelou

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"Life is a collection of moments; some remembered, some forgotten, some treasured forever."

– Unknown

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