

Wathena City Meeting minutes

Unofficial Minutes

By Clerk Tammy Bembrick

The Wathena City Council met in regular session Monday, July 20, 2026, at 6:02 p.m. at the Wathena City Hall. Mayor John Hontz and council members Bob Halter, Bob Ryser and Aaron Cluck answered roll call. Council members Adam Booth and Lucas Turner were absent. Prayer was offered by Aaron Cluck. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Also in attendance were City Clerk Tammy Bembrick, City Superintendent Tim Smith, Chief of Police Dennis Thompson, City Attorney Alan Boeh, Melanie Davis, Theresa Rohrer, John Haupt and Russell Danner.

Motion was made by Bob Halter, second by Bob Ryser to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2026, council meeting. Vote – unanimous. Motion carried.

Council reviewed the bills presented for approval by the City Clerk.

Motion was made by Aaron Cluck, second by Bob Halter to approve the bills as listed. Vote – unanimous. Motion carried.

There was one (1) building permit submitted for approval. Daniel Hansen of 706 Swails Drive submitted for a 20' x 20' deck and a 6' privacy fence surrounding the rear yard. Discussion followed.

Motion was made by Bob Ryser, second by Bob Halter to approve the building permit as submitted by Daniel Hansen for a deck and fencing. Vote – unanimous. Motion carried.

Theresa Rohrer discussed the military banner project being completed by the Women's Auxiliary and offered thanks to the council and city crew for their help in getting it done. Mrs. Rohrer also stated that she is making an application for a grant through the Kansas Department of Tourism to help with a portion of the costs of the program. She asked for a letter of support from the City that is needed for the application. Council instructed the City Clerk to prepare the letter as requested. Discussion followed.

John Haupt and Russell Danner approached council concerning the sewer that has backed up into the property located at 311 Sherman. Mr. Haupt explained the history of the sewer installation, stated that the sewer had recently backed up into the home 3 times. Mr. Danner then spoke regarding 2 of the times that the sewer had backed up, as well as how each situation was handled with the city crew or outside vendor. The City Attorney stated the City's responsibility in relation to repairs and costs. It was determined that the City will now try and address any issues within the

main sewer line to which the property service line is connected. The City Superintendent was instructed to have a camera run through the main sewer line to locate any problems that may be present in order to address them properly.

Council discussed the following with the Police Chief: activity report, National Night Out to be held August 4th, several nuisance properties within the city, arrival of the new police vehicle and assisting with the event to be held in Elwood on July 25th. Discussion followed.

Council discussed the following items with the Superintendent: Activity report, update on installation of 3 new fire hydrants and preparation for asphalt and oil/chat resurfacing. Discussion followed.

Council discussed the following items with the City Attorney: Flying drones in relation to airports or military bases, preparing land bank information and draft ordinance. Discussion followed.

Council discussed the following items with the City Clerk: Status of auditor presentation on the financial statements as of December 31, 2025. Discussion followed.

Council discussed the following: promoting the sales tax vote on August 4th, mayor's meeting to be held with the Hospital Associations for clinics, and possible medical clinic in the city, additional parking spots for St. Joseph Street and becoming informed about data centers. Discussion followed.

Mayor named Riverbend Agricultural Services as the "Mayor Business of the Month" for July, 2026.

There being no further business, motion was made by Aaron Cluck, second by Bob Ryser to adjourn the meeting. Vote – unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:59pm.

KU Grads

The names of more than 6,800 graduates at the University of Kansas for summer and fall 2025 and spring 2026 have been announced by the University Registrar. Many graduates and candidates for degree celebrated by participating in KU Commencement, which took place May 17. Local grads include:

Ellen Krenning Miller, Highland, Bachelor of General Studies in English

Isaac Thomas Morris, Troy, Doctor of Medicine

Joseph J. Parks, Troy, Doctor of Pharmacy

Davina Marie Benitz, Wathena, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

County Commissioners meeting

Unofficial minutes

by Clerk Peggy Franken

The Board of County Commissioners met in regular session in the office of the Doniphan County Commission, Troy, Kansas, at 8:30 A.M. with Second District County Commissioner Wayne Grable, Chairman, calling the meeting to order. First District County Commissioner Timothy D. Collins, Third District County Commissioner Bobby Hall, and County Clerk Peggy Franken present. County Attorney Charles D. Baskins was present for a portion of the meeting.

The Kansas Chief Reporter Melanie Davis and Roger Hopkins observed. Presenters and visitors included Health Department/Home Health Administrator Chantal Wilburn, LPN, 63rd District State Representative Dr. Allen Reavis, and Road Office Manager Lindsay Norris.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited at the beginning of the meeting.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to approve the County Commission meeting agenda as presented. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve County Commission minutes of the July 27, 2026 regular meeting as written. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve manual warrant for the period of July 31, 2026 as presented. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Fee report for the month of July 2026 was presented to the Board for review on behalf of the County Clerk.

The Jerry K. Dubach Doniphan County Law Enforcement Center currently houses 13 local inmates.

Health Department/Home Health Administrator Chantal Wilburn, LPN, informed the County Commission the Health Department is terminating their cleaning contract with Maid For More effective immediately. She requested Health Department Manager Rebekah Sharp be allowed to take on additional duties cleaning the Health Department office after hours. Commissioner Grable made a motion to approve Rebekah Sharp taking on supplemental duties cleaning the Health Department office after regular work hours, at the same rate of pay. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

At 8:34 A.M. Commissioner Hall made a motion to recess into executive session under the personnel matters for non-elected personnel exception, with open session to reconvene at 8:39 A.M. in the office of the Doniphan County Commission. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. Health Department/Home Health Administrator Chantal Wilburn, LPN, and County Clerk remained. No action was taken.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to promote Heather Slater to Home Health Office Manager and increase the pay accordingly to \$21.40 per hour effective January 1, 2027. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

63rd District State Representative Dr. Allen Reavis called on the Board of County Commissioners. He discussed recent and upcoming legislative sessions, particularly property tax relief. Chairman Grable asked Representative Reavis to be mindful of local governments when discussing property tax relief and not tie the hands of cities and counties. Also discussed was USDA grants and loans for housing initiatives. Representative Reavis will organize a meeting with Kerri Falletti, Kansas Department of Commerce, to discuss available housing programs. Commissioner Grable voiced concern with the Kansas Department of Transportation bridge funding program, saying changes need to be made to the process.

Road Office Manager Lindsay Norris updated the Board of County Commissioners on the amount of 1" base rock hauled for chip seal, stating all 5,000 ton of approved rock has been hauled, beginning May 29, 2026. The total amount of 1" base rock hauled on Saratoga Road was 1,270.33 ton.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve maintenance on 2020 John Deere motor grader #200 in the First Road District, by Foley Equipment, in the amount of \$1,386.50, using Prestone coolant at \$187.33 per gallon. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to approve oil pan repair on 2012 Freightliner #4 by Redneck Diesel in the amount of \$1,867.52. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

At 9:00 A.M. bid letting was held for three projects on 175th Road, west of Oxide Road, in the Second Road District. Project Site 1 60' x 30" crossroad culvert replacement. Project Site 2 rebuild 175th Road from driveway at 1669 175th Road traveling both east and west of 175th Road, raising and widening 175th Road. Project Site 3 installation of 60-80' x 30" crossroad culvert. Bids were opened and read aloud as follows:

Kent Kiefer Excavating Project Site 1 \$8,900.00; Project Site 2 No Bid; Project Site 3 \$7,400.00;

Urban Construction, Inc Project Site 1 \$12,000.00; Project Site 2 \$42,000.00; Project Site 3 \$16,000.00

Engemann Drainage Co., Inc Project Site 1 \$12,000.00; Project Site 2 \$45,000.00; Project Site 3 \$15,000.00 Alternate bid to do all three project sites \$66,000.00.

Commissioner Grable told the County Commissioners that although Kent Kiefer Excavating has the low bid on both Project Site 1 and Project Site 3, a drop box on Project Site 3 will need to be capped off by the County, costing the County additional labor and material. Commissioner Grable said Engemann Drainage Co., Inc.'s bid includes blocking the drop box and all additional work. Commissioner Hall stated 175th Road is on the 3 year chip seal plan, questioning the rush on completing road work now. Commissioner Grable said the road needs to be fixed now to have time to settle before chip seal. Commissioner Hall then stated the Third Road District would be chip sealing roads in that district in 2027. Commissioner Grable made a motion accept the bid of Engemann Drainage Co., Inc. to do all three project sites at a total bid of \$66,000.00. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. Commissioner Collins cast a no vote. Motion carried 2-1.

Commissioner Hall stated Urban Construction, Inc. needs to complete current contracted road projects before bidding on other projects.

Commissioner Hall made a motion to purchase 30" project marker flags from Jack Horner at a cost of \$640.00. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Grable said he purchased cold patch from Jack Horner to repair pothole on Monument Road, near the intersection of Sheridan Road.

Road Office Manager Lindsay Norris told the County Commissioners on July 28, 2026 bridge T-433-1 located on 190th and Runnymede Roads, Section 19, Township 3, Range 22E, was struck by a truck pulling a trailer causing extensive damage to the structure. Arnie Valdemar, bridge inspector for Schwab-Eaton, PA inspected the structure finding collision damage to the southwest rail with exposed rebar underneath. Partial concrete section loss about 3-4" deep underneath the post at the southwest corner of the bridge. Horizontal post is broken 4' from the end rail. There is ¼" x 12" new crack on the edge of the sidewalk east of post #2 and ½" x 12" new crack as well east of post #3. The channel iron railing is overhanging on the southwest corner. There is 1" x 12" crack at the southwest corner under the sidewalk near the edge of the bridge, next to that there is ¼"x 3' horizontal crack (new) on the outside of the deck. The semi-circle crack that has been there previously is now spalled. The remaining condition of the bridge is still in decent condition. Manager Norris said the person who struck the bridge has been identified and as soon as a police report is received from the Sheriff's Department, a claim will be made against the driver's insurance.

Arnie Valdemar, bridge inspector for Schwab-Eaton, PA, also inspected bridges RS140 on Ash Point Road, north of 270th Road, Section 5-6, Township 2, Range 19E. And T-15-3 on 280th Road, first bridge east of Ash Point Road, Section 5-32, Township 2 Range 19E. Mr. Valdemar recommended placing rip rap at bridge RS140 to keep the water from hitting the west bank, stating if rip rap is placed properly the existing floor would not need to be removed. Bridge T-15-3 Mr. Valdemar recommended driving steel sheeting to protect the east bank. The Board of County Commissioners were in agreement to prepare project scope bid letters to be sent to insured contractors.

Road Office Manager Lindsay Norris gave the Board of County Commissioners the Kansas Department of Transportation project schedule for replacement of LPA Bridge T-831-2, south of US Highway 36 on Oxide and 195th Road, Sec-

tion 14, Township 3, Range 21E, project No. 22 C-5400-01 under the Federal-aid Off-System Bridge Program. Hugh Bogel, Representative of Kansas of Transportation, told Norris the Board of County Commissioners must act on the geology study in order for bridge designer to determine the foundation type; delaying the geology study delays the project design. Commissioner Collins made a motion to accept the proposal of PEC for geology investigation on LPA Bridge T-831-2 in the amount of \$5,800.00. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. Commissioner Grable cast a no vote. Motion carried 2-1.

Commissioner Hall asked the status of rebuilding County Road 234, also known as the Tom Shiver's Road. County Clerk Peggy Franken reminded the County Commission of action taken during the February 23, 2026 meeting where the scope of the project was outlined and agreed upon by both property owners, Robert Robinson II and Jacob Werger. Commissioner Grable said County Attorney Baskins is to contact both Robinson and Werger to set a time to view the proposed road layout. The following is an excerpt from the February 23, 2026 County Commission meeting:

Robert Robinson II met with the Board of County Commissioners to discuss improvements to County Road 234, also known as Tom Shiver's Road, Section 23, Township 2, Range 21E. Adjoining landowner Jacob Werger appeared by telephone. After discussion it was agreed upon by Jacob Werger, Robert Robinson II and the Board of County Commissioners that a minimal maintenance (farm) road will be constructed south of the pond dam, on property currently owned by Jacob and Allison Werger, to allow Robert Robinson II, adjoining landowner, and all future landowners and tenants access to a 46 acre tract (CE174) in the south ½ of the southwest ¼ of Section 23 with the following stipulations:

1. County will construct a minimal maintenance road with a 40' right-of-way.
2. The road will be constructed south of the pond dam going through tracts CE162 and CE172.
3. The current road right-of-way will be swapped with Mr. Werger for right-of-way south of the dam.
4. The road will be surveyed upon completion for permanent road record and closed, with adjoining landowners and tenants having access.
5. Jacob Werger and Robert Robinson II are allowed to put a gate across the county road as long as all adjoining landowners and County have a key to the gate.
6. The County will notify all ad-

joining landowners if the road status changes from closed to open.

County Attorney Charles D. Baskins will write up the terms of the agreement for all parties to sign. Commissioner Grable will meet with Robert Robinson II and Jacob Werger to determine the best course to lay out the road.

Commissioner Grable informed the County Commission that the Second Road District has completed installing road tubes, building up and rocking Oxide Road, near 884 Oxide Road, Section 2, Township 4, Range 21E. The road will need additional rock once it settles.

Commissioner Collins asked if rock has been hauled on Burr Oak Township roads. Commissioner Grable said the Second Road District hauled rock the prior week, he didn't know exactly which roads.

Commissioner Hall asked that the official record reflect any monies owed to Elwood Gladden Drainage District for levee repair be withheld until haul routes are repaired to pre-existing conditions or set aside to be used to repair the designated routes.

County Clerk Peggy Franken presented the County Commission with Sales Tax collections for May 2026 in the amount of \$54,918.60 and EMS Sales Tax collections in the amount of \$89,481.11.

Clerk Franken also gave the County Commission draft copies of the 2025 Doniphan County audit and proposed transfer station operations agreement between Doniphan County, Kansas, and Homestead Recycling Systems, LLC (Republic) for review. No action was taken.

At 9:45 A.M. the Board of County Commissioners recessed for a break with the meeting reconvened at 9:50 A.M. in the office of the Doniphan County Commission.

At 9:50 A.M. Commissioner Grable made a motion to recess into executive session pursuant to attorney-client privilege exception regarding roads and bridges, with open session to reconvene at 10:00 A.M. in the office of the Doniphan County Commission. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. County Attorney and County Clerk remained. No action was taken.

There being no further business before the Board, at 10:03 A.M. Commissioner Grable made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.



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