



Kathe Hamman/NEWS

THE JUST STAY 5K, held Saturday, Sept. 12, at Jack’d Wellness Gym, brought together 65 participants and raised more than \$3,000 for the Yates Center High School Mental Health Club, Wildcat Connect. Sponsors Lane and Taylor Huffman participated in the race along with club members Khloey Kirkpatrick and Jayda Rice.

Just Stay 5K raises awareness, compassion

By Kathe Hamman

The first annual “Just Stay 5K” was held Saturday, Sept. 12. The event headed out from Jack’d Wellness Gym early in the morning and brought together 65 participants.

One of the event coordinators, Kendra Shaw, commented about the event. “The event was created to bring the community together around mental health awareness and to

remind people that sometimes simply showing up can make a difference. Beyond the funds raised, the morning opened the door for meaningful conversations about mental health, connection, and the importance of reaching out”.

“One of the biggest messages to share from the event: Making a difference doesn’t always happen in the big moments. Most of

the time, it happens in the ordinary ones,” she added.

“A conversation. A check-in. Showing up. Taking the time to remind someone they aren’t alone. The hope is that the Just Stay 5K is only the beginning of continuing those conversations and building a community where people feel supported, connected, and reminded to just stay,” Shaw said.

Commissioners schedule KOMA training

By Cliff Ralstin

Woodson County Commissioners Kevin Stuber and Justin Clark met Tuesday, Sept. 15 for the regular commission meeting. Commissioner Jerry Sedlacek was absent.

Newly appointed Woodson County Counselor Roberta Wilkes began the meeting by stating she has joined the Kansas Association of County Counselors.

Wilkes then covered how she would be billing the county for her time noting that she would not be billing for time she is using to educate herself.

She then addressed public concerns about the commission making proper motions during meetings. After a discussion, Stuber and Clark agreed to hold Kansas Open Meetings Act training surrounding requirements concerning proper motions. The training will be held after the November election to give the incoming commissioner a chance to attend the training.

Wilkes then reported on her research concerning employee handbook changes that were discussed last week. No action was taken.

Revisiting indigent defense for Woodson County, Wilkes said the county is required to provide defense for both felonies and misdemeanors. The county currently has three applicants to fill the upcoming opening.

Cook, Flatt & Strobel

Engineers has approached the county about installing a plaque on the bridge being built on 65th Road. The commission agreed to pay half.

Road and bridge supervisor Gary Ward approached the commission about changing fuel and lubricant vendors for the county. Ward suggested the county move to Security Oil, of El Dorado. Ward said the company would supply fuel at a competitive cost with current grease and diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) prices being much lower. Ward also said the company would provide fuel tanks and filters free of charge as well as not adding additional expense to fill the tanks.

Commissioners expressed concern about taking business away from local vendors and asked Ward to check with the current vendors about price matching. Ward will report back next week.

Transfer station supervisor David Waddell presented a wage sheet for Micah Taylor after Taylor successfully achieved a CDL driver’s license. Waddell also presented a resolution for commission approval concerning the annual review of the five year solid waste plan.

Waddell stated a truck was in for repairs and he is looking at installing a card-board station in Toronto.

Treasurer Michelle Zimmerman spoke to the commission about several line items in the budget

that are operating above spending authority. A couple departments are slightly over and she encouraged them to keep an eye on spending.

But the thing that concerned her the most was line items surrounding employee benefits and special liability (where insurance premiums come from). She told commissioners that those two would probably require a budget hearing in November to rectify the issue as costs have exceeded expectations and budget authority.

Clerk Amanda DeWitt presented the commission with a couple routine matters. The first was the approval and signing of the 2027 31st Judicial District Budget and the signing of the community corrections 4th quarter budget adjustment report. With that, the commission signed vouchers for \$60,407.43 and adjourned the meeting.

The Woodson County Commission will hold their next meeting Tuesday, Sept. 22 at 9 a.m. in the commission room.



Kathe Hamman/NEWS

DURING FIRST FRIDAY Art Trinn Trahan and the rest of the Yates Center students learned about history of art and completing projects following the timeline of art. They began with prehistoric cave art

and discussed how they were able to do the cave paintings in the dark caves. They also learned the difference between a pictograph and a petroglyph style of creating their images in the stones.

BOE covers light agenda

The board of education of Woodson School District #366 met Monday, Sept.14, at 6:30 p.m. for dinner at the board of education Office for a public meeting. The Revenue Neutral Rate Hearing was at 7 p.m. and the 2026-27 Budget Hearing was at 7:05 p.m. President Chuck Bishop called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Members present were Chuck Bishop, Luke Rogers, Wes Smith, Michelle McVey, and Craig Stockebrand. Shannon Culver and Amber Morrison were absent.

Guests present were Stephanie Splechter, PK-6 principal/superintendent, Glenda Howard, board clerk, Eric Busteed, seventh through 12th grade principal, Gary Morris, teacher, and Blake Lasley, FFA sponsor.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Revenue Neutral Rate Hearing (7 p.m.) no one opposed. Reviewed the Revenue Neutral Rate process. Move that we exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate for the 2026-27 Budget. Wes Smith motioned, Michelle McVey seconded, carried 5-0.

Move to adjourn the Revenue Neutral Rate Hearing at 7:04 p.m. Luke Rogers motioned, Craig

Stockebrand seconded, carried 5-0.

District Budget Hearing (7:05 p.m.) no one opposed.

The needs assessment was evaluated at the July 13 BOE meeting. Reviewed Code 99.

Move after reviewing the building and district needs assessments, motion made that we adopt the proposed budget using the LOB rate of 33%. Wes Smith motioned, Craig Stockebrand seconded, carried 5-0.

Move to adjourn the 2026-27 Budget Hearing at 7:07 p.m. Craig Stockebrand motioned, Michelle McVey seconded, carried 5-0.

Call to order (7:08 p.m.)

Approve the agenda: Move to approve the agenda adding 7. Employment of Personnel-7.1 Jennifer Jones and Cherokee Heffern – freshman class sponsors as presented. Luke Rogers motioned, Craig Stockebrand seconded, carried 5-0.

Public/departement communication: Thank you note – Dan and Cheryl Edwards.

FFA Nationals – Blake Lasley – Food science team qualified for nationals. Loren Schultz and Wiley Shaffer last year seniors qualified to attend. Move to approve the FFA travel to the National FFA

Convention in Indianapolis as presented. District pays for travel and Air B&B. Luke Rogers motioned, Wes Smith seconded, carried 5-0. Blake Lasley left at 7:12 p.m.

Title parent involvement policy – Stephanie Splechter.

8.0 Reduction in force - none.

9.0 District/building reports. Junior/senior high school principal report – Eric Busteed. Homecoming – Sept. 18.

ANW report – Michelle McVey/Chuck Bishop.

Greenbush report – Wes Smith/Stephanie Splechter. Finance lens (Greenbush) – Stephanie Splechter.

Elementary school principal and superintendent report – Stephanie Splechter. 911 Freedom Walk – Wednesday, Sept. 9.

Site council – Gary Morris.

KESA – Greenbush 10.13.26. Project 366.

8.0 Items from the past for reconsideration

Capital outlay plan – Stephanie Splechter.

608 N. Prairie – Eric Busteed.

9.0 New items for discussion and consideration - none.

Move to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Luke Rogers motioned, Michelle McVey seconded, carried 5-0.

Obituary

James Collins

James Bernard Collins of Thayer, died Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026. He was 88.

He was born Jan. 20, 1938 in Gas City, to Leo and Agnes (Massoth) Collins. Growing up on a farm was a great deal of hard work, he worked the farm with his family and graduated from Yates Center High School with the class of 1956. After graduation he entered the United States Navy. He proudly served 20 years before retiring as a Petty Officer First Class.

In 1960, he married Christie Ross and

from this union they welcomed four children, Jaime, Jimmie, Heidi, and John. The two later divorced and he married Sonya Sayler Oct. 19, 2017. With this marriage he and Sonya blended their families and he welcomed three more children, Aaron, Ethan, and Amanda.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister, Carol Omans; and son-in-law, Carl Brittain.

Survivors include his wife, Sonya Collins; children, Jaime (Jeff) Travnicke, Jimmie Collins, Heidi Brittain, John Glen (Francesca) Collins, Aaron (Amy) Sayler, Ethan (Christi) Sayler, and Amanda (Jeremy) Miller; siblings, Tom Collins, Marilyn Seward, Marlene Laird, John Collins, George Collins, and Pat Collins; 20 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Graveside services will take place at Thayer Cemetery Thursday, Sept. 17, at 10 a.m. Memorial contributions can be made in his name to the Thayer Fire Department or the Thayer Senior Center. Arrangements have been entrusted to Countryside Funeral Home.

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