

# County approves court space study, zoning timeline update

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING – JUNE 12, 2026

**BY PHILIP STEVENS**  
HOMETOWN GIRARD

► The Crawford County Commission approved a \$38,250 space needs study for county court facilities on Friday, following recent work sessions and discussions with District Court officials about growing demands on the Judicial Center in Pittsburg and court-related offices in Girard.

Commissioners approved the proposal after returning from an executive session for attorney-client privilege regarding a district court contract. County Counselor Jim Emerson said District Court representatives, including District Court Administrator Mac Young and District Judge Kurtis Loy, had shown commissioners some of the space issues facing the Judicial Center.

According to Emerson, Judge Loy said about 40,000 people go through the Judicial Center each year. Emerson said the court system, court services, community corrections, and the county attorney's office are all dealing with growth in caseloads, staffing, and programming, including specialty courts.

"There's no doubt the building is, 25, 26 years old," Emerson said, describing the Judicial Center. "They showed us around and showed us some of the needs that they're having as they continue to grow."

Emerson said the firm identified during the meeting, with offices in Topeka, would conduct the study. He said the work would focus mainly on the Judicial Center in Pittsburg but would also include county court-related space in Girard. The study is expected to provide recommendations for future space needs in both buildings.

Emerson recommended paying for the study from the county's ARPA interest account, which he said had about \$173,000 available. He said the money was outside the county's primary ARPA expenditures and could be used for the study.

Commissioners supported the study, saying there is a need to look at the issue. They also wanted to preserve as much of Girard's courthouse footprint as possible, as the county studies future options.

"They do have a great need for more space," Commissioner Wood said, referring to court operations. "Let's see what happens and get an idea."

The study is expected to be completed around August 21.

Earlier in the meeting, commissioners also received an update on

the timeline for proposed zoning regulations and the recommendation from the Crawford County Planning and Zoning Board.

Emerson said consultant Josh Albin plans to provide a draft version of the updated zoning regulations to commissioners by June 23, possibly before that date. Albin is expected to attend the June 23 meeting by Zoom for a preliminary discussion of the regulations.

Emerson said the official recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Board is expected to be presented either July 7 or July 10, with July 10 appearing more likely. He said Albin and Emerson would present the recommendation, and members of the Planning and Zoning Board, including at least the chair, may also attend.

Emerson said the commission will have options when the recommendations come forward. He said each article of the zoning regulations was approved separately by the Planning and Zoning Board, meaning commissioners may be able to vote on individual articles, send some portions back to Planning and Zoning, send the entire package back, or vote separately on countywide zoning.

"Countywide zoning was also a separate recommendation," Emerson said. "So, you'll be able to vote on separate recommendations."

Wood questioned why the countywide zoning recommendation could not be voted on first, separate from other zoning regulations. He said some regulations may not be useful if countywide zoning does not pass, and he expressed frustration with the items being brought forward together.

"Well, my, like I say, my big concern is get this zoning either to pass or don't pass and then work on the comprehensive plan," Wood said.

Emerson clarified and said the matter before the commissioners will be the zoning regulations, not the comprehensive plan. He said the first opportunity to vote on county-wide zoning would be July 7 or July 10, depending on when the official recommendation is scheduled.

The commission also approved a quitclaim deed to clear up a property issue on 640th Avenue, about four miles west of K-7. Emerson said Crawford County Abstract contacted him about a property tied to a bridge project from the 1970s.

According to Emerson, the county had a temporary easement of about 2.8 acres for the bridge project, but the property record still

showed county ownership. He said the land should have reverted back to the landowners after the temporary need ended.

The county will retain a separate permanent deeded area for future bridge or road needs, but Emerson said the 2.8 acres covered by the quitclaim deed is not needed by the county.

"It's just something that needed cleared up," Emerson said.

Commissioners authorized the chairman to sign the quitclaim deed.

During new business, Commissioner Bruce

*"We just went through, they just fixed a bunch of roads and then they had all that truck traffic going through there," Blair said. "It was not a good picture."*

Blair said he had spoken with Sign Foreman Dale Shireman about upcoming railroad track closures expected June 15 through 17. Blair said one closure is on 126th and another is on Kansas Highway 47. He said the county dealt with major traffic problems in Cherokee last year when another closure sent traffic through local roads.

Blair said Shireman was working on signage and possible detour planning. Blair said additional truck traffic on 590th or through Girard would not be ideal.

"We just went through, they just fixed a bunch of roads and then they had all that truck traffic going through there," Blair said. "It was not a good picture."

Wood also raised concerns about the status of sheriff's sales, saying he had dealt with a property issue Wednesday night that required the sheriff's department to respond. He said the county needs an update from the company it contracts with for sheriff's sales.

"This one Wednesday night was terrible," Wood said. "I don't know who turned it in but it should have been turned in a long time ago, and it's just not right we were not having these sales."

Blair also reported on the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission's annual meeting. He said Executive Director Carrie Spoon presented information showing the commission has assisted with more than \$30 million in projects in Crawford County since the organization began in the early 1990s. Blair said about \$12 million of that total represented grant funds secured for the county and Crawford County

communities, including Arma and Frontenac.

Blair said he has agreed to serve as vice chair of the regional planning commission and would be able to keep commissioners updated on its work. He said he expects new funding opportunities may be coming for local roads, including possible help for smaller communities with limited budgets.

Blair also said Tim Dawsey of Pittsburg State University gave a presentation on an effort to position Southeast Kansas as a potential growth area for polymer materials and related manufacturing. Blair said Dawsey has approached the regional planning commission about securing funding to help promote the region to the governor's office and attract companies.

Blair said he would like commissioners to hear more from Dawsey in a future work session, adding that the county has industrial park space and a need for jobs.

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Commissioners also held an executive session for 15 minutes under the non-elected personnel exception to discuss applicants for the Health Department director position. No action was reported immediately after that session.

At the beginning of the meeting, commissioners approved the consent agenda, including the June 9 meeting minutes and authorizing the chairman to sign the previous week's vouchers. They also signed motions from the previous meeting.

Future business announced during the meeting included a June 16 budget work session with Brenda Sparmer at 9 a.m., a possible Health Department director interview at 9:30 a.m., and a 10 a.m. public hearing on vacating Plymouth Street in the original town of Opolis. The county also has June 23 budget work sessions scheduled with Maintenance Director Aaron Crozier at 9 a.m. and County Attorney Reina Probert at 9:30 a.m., followed by a June 26 work session with Bukaty to discuss insurance.

# USD 248 Board Meeting: June

**BY TUCKER HUDSON**  
HOMETOWN GIRARD

►► The USD 248 Board of Education met for its monthly meeting on Thursday, June 11th, at the Board Office.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Board approved the Agenda and additions to the Agenda.

The Board accepted a \$1,000 donation from Crawford County Community Foundation SEK for GHS volleyball. They also authorized the Superintendent and Board Clerk to make all legal and appropriate transfers from the 2025-26 budget to any special revenue funds.

The Board then approved the 2026-27 GHS and RVH Student Handbooks, Student iPad and Technology Policies, General Facility Use Agreement, Activity Center Use Policy, and Red Wutke Sports Complex User Policy.

Following this, they appointed Superintendent Todd Ferguson as the district's Representative

to the Southeast Kansas Career and Technical County (CTEC) Board of Directors.

Following an executive session for non-elected personnel, the Board accepted the resignations and retirements of Craig Siebert as ESports coach, Cade Simmons as assistant football coach, Tiffany Poyner as assistant GMS wrestling coach, MaCahla Kugler as GHS head softball coach, and Lindsay Schossow and Alex Leonard as GHS assistant softball coaches.

The Board also approved the Staff Supplemental contracts for the 2026-27 school year.

Meghan Tersinar was added as an authorized GN Bank signer for RVH.

They approved the 2026-27 lunch prices. Lunch prices will be raised by 10 cents to account for increased food costs.

Following reports about Greenbush and Southeast 637 Interlocal, the meeting was adjourned.

## Events through June 20



**Summer Reading** continues at Girard Public Library! Check out books from GPL to count for your reading!  
- Children Ages 7 & Under track by minutes read.  
- Children Ages 8-11 track by pages read.  
- Young Adults Ages 11-18 track by pages read.  
- Adults Ages 18 & Older track by pages read.

**Summer Story Time** Ages 7 & Under - Join us on Monday, June 22nd at 10:00 am or Tuesday, June 23rd at 10:00 am; 1:30 pm; or 3:30 pm for fun dinosaur stories and a 3D Pteradactyl craft!

**Summer Program Ages 8-11** - Have fun with Dinosaur Poetry and Fortune Tellers! Come create your own with us on Thursday, June 25th at 10:00 am or 1:30 pm.

**Young Adult Summer Program** Ages 11-18 - Stop by GPL on Wednesday, June 24th at 10:00 am to make dinosaur trinket dishes!

**Adult Summer Program** - Come to GPL on Tuesday, June 23rd at 5:15 pm to make keepsake coasters!

**Evening Children's Program** Ages 11 & Under - Join us for dinosaur stories and a 3D Pteradactyl craft! Held during the adult program so parents and kids both have an activity to enjoy!

**Monthly Game Night** - Have some fun and games on Monday, June 22nd from 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Open to all ages!

**Educational Hour for Adults** - Join us with Crawford County Conservation District and K-State Extension Wildcat District for a program over Soil Health and Gardening on Tuesday, June 23rd at 5:00 pm! James Coover and Kenny Dodson, with K-State Extension Wildcat District, will be here to share their knowledge with us! Mindy Goble, with Crawford County Conservation District, will also be here for the program!

**Library Board Meeting** - The monthly meeting of the Girard Public Library Board will be held on Tuesday, June 23rd at 5:30 pm. Meeting is open to the public.

**Grab and Go Summer Meal Program** - Grab-n-Go Meal Boxes available to kids ages 1-18 at no cost. Every Wednesday in June & July from 11:30am-12:30pm. Children MUST be present or have a pick up approval in place. To receive an approval, bring the children to the library during library hours to fill out the form.

**All Girard Public Library events are open to the public!** You don't have to be signed up for the Summer Reading to attend the events! Most events are free and don't require registration unless noted otherwise on a specific event!

- Monday: 9:30 am - 7:00 pm      Tues-Thurs: 9:30 am - 6:00 pm  
- Friday: 9:30 am - 5:00 pm      Saturday: 9:00 am - 2:30 pm  
- Sunday: Closed



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PUBLISHER / OWNER / EDITOR  
**Philip Stevens** - publisher@hometowngirard.com

REPORTERS / WRITERS  
**Josie Gronau** - (General reporting)  
**Preston Frazier** - (Sports/General reporting)  
**Abigail Stansbury** - (Girard sports)  
**Lainey Prince** - (General reporting)  
**Ava Dent** - (St. Paul area)  
**Maya Burke** - (St. Paul area)  
**Ron Gates** - (Features/Photographer)

LAYOUT & DESIGN / ADVERTISING  
**Corey Estep** - graphics@hometowngirard.com

### CONTACT US

Please direct your questions, corrections, submissions and all news items to:  
Hometown Girard, PO Box 298, Girard, KS 66743  
Email: publisher@hometowngirard.com  
Phone: (620) 704-5882

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