

February 17, 2026

Official Minutes

Russell County Commission Meeting

At 9:00 a.m., Duke Strobel called the meeting to order and made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2026, meeting. Dean Haselhorst seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Others present at the meeting were County Administrator Stephanie Grisham and County Clerk Kristi Whitman.

The Commissioners had their review. Steve Reinhardt stated there have been road complaints. Duke Strobel asked Dustin Madden to inform the commission about Senator Elaine Bowers' Local Government, Transparency and Ethics Committee discussion on shifting the tax burden when the state allows exemptions. Stephanie Grisham, County Administrator, asked to have budget working sessions with the Commissioners the week of April 13th. Steve Reinhardt discussed a meeting he attended about foreign landownership and eminent domain.

Justin Mermis, Public Works Director, stated the Annual Township meeting will be on Tuesday, March 24th at the Russell Elk's Lodge with registration from 5:00 pm to 5:30 pm. The meeting starts at 5:30 pm and dinner following. RSVP to Kristi Morrill at County Shop by March 9th. Penco submitted paperwork for a grant for the I-70 Bridge OS84. Justin reviewed the equipment that needs repairs. There are four pickups that fire departments would like to purchase from Road and Bridge. Duke Strobel stated that the fire departments need to come to a commission meeting per the Procurement Policy. Justin stated he will attend a Public Works Director meeting in Hays next week. Discussion was held on the railroad closing roads, and Road and Bridge patching asphalt roads this spring.

Kristi Whitman, County Clerk and Election Officer, stated the Special Election for the USD 407 Bond Question is on March 3rd. Early Voting started today, February 17th, and will be available during regular business days from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm until noon on Monday, March 2nd. Canvass will be on Monday, March 16th at 10:00 am. The filing deadline for this year's primary and general election will be Monday, June 1st at noon. Along with national and state offices, Russell County

will have two positions for Hospital Board, County Commissioners in Districts 1, 4, and 5, Township Clerks, and Precinct Committee Men and Women. There will also be Lucas City Council positions and Russell City Council positions.

Marissa Woodmansee, Juvenile Services Director, and Ryan Lichter, Juvenile Services Assistant Director, presented the Juvenile Services Department's request for the 2027 fiscal budget of \$839,854.94 and gave an update on Prevention, Juvenile Intake & Assessment, Immediate Intervention Program, Juvenile Intensive Supervised Probation, and Community Case Management. The 20th Judicial District Juvenile Services is funded by a grant from the Kansas Department of Correction Juvenile Services. These funds come to the county to be able to align programming that is unique to our community's needs. Marissa reviewed in-kind donations like having an office space for meetings. Marissa Woodmansee, Juvenile Services Director, requested approval of the 2027 fiscal budget. The budget has been prepared based on figures provided by the Kansas Department of Corrections Juvenile Services. Duke Strobel made a motion to approve the 2027 Budget as presented and authorize its submission to the Kansas Department of Corrections Juvenile Services. Dean Haselhorst seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Steve Reinhardt welcomed Caroline Ruto, a graduate student at K-State University, to discuss county policy and regulations concerning fire bans and regulations for prescribed burning. Caroline has visited several other counties conducting interviews for her research on prescribed burn policies and community norms in agricultural landscapes.

Checks were approved and signed to be deducted from the following funds:

100	GENERAL	\$ 77,255.84	290	GORHAM FIRE #1	\$ 156.73
110	ROAD & BRIDGE	\$ 39,383.34	310	WAL-PAR-NAT FIRE #3	\$ 4,606.84
130	NOXIOUS WEED	\$ 1,109.33	320	DORRANCE FIRE #4	\$ 740.56
140	4-H	\$ 413.99	328	RUSSELL CO FIRE #5	\$ 3,667.33
150	CVB	\$ 582.92	330	APPRAISER	\$ 6,935.51
155	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	\$ 1,552.08	340	SPECIAL R&B	\$ 1,133.17
180	ELECTION	\$ 3,853.98	360	SOLID WASTE	\$ 3,059.54
190	AMBULANCE	\$ 7,529.45	370	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$ 9,399.00
210	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$ 282.00	380	EMERGENCY TELEPHONE	\$ 357.66
260	COUNTY HEALTH	\$ 1,862.71	718	CITIZEN'S REVIEW BOARD	\$ 2,208.00

Tax corrections 2026000022 to 2026000029 and 2026000032 to 2026000041 were signed with a tax decrease of \$10,885.08.

At 10:12 am, Duke Strobel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dean Haselhorst seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The next regular meeting for the Russell County Commissioners will be on Monday, March 2, 2026, beginning at 9:00 am in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF RUSSELL COUNTY, KANSAS

DUKE STROBEL, CHAIRMAN

STEVE REINHARDT, VICE CHAIRMAN

JASON KRUG, MEMBER

DEAN HASELHORST, MEMBER

ALAN KUNTZSCH, MEMBER

ATTEST:

KRISTI A. WHITMAN
COUNTY CLERK

