

**March 2, 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 17, 2026, meeting. Steve Reinhardt seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Alan Kuntzsch was absent. Others present at the meeting were County Administrator Stephanie Grisham and County Clerk Kristi Whitman.

Duke Strobel made a motion to approve the Cereal Malt Beverage license applications for on and off-premises sales for Paige Kraus/ Del Rey LLC DBA Lake Wilson Marina. Dean Haselhorst seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners had their review. Dean Haselhorst gave an update on the Kansas Association of Counties meeting. Dean discussed data centers in Kansas, several legislative bills on property taxes, and bills on tax exemptions. The Kansas County Commissioner Association Convention is from March 22 to 24, 2026, in Hutchinson. County Administrator Stephanie Grisham is looking into a potential county noise resolution and following up with Wiseman Farms. Mark Wann voiced concerns about a culvert that was removed at 187<sup>th</sup> Street and Shoreline Road, causing water to pool when it rains.

At 9:15 a.m., the bids for two used day cab tractors were opened. Bids include three from GTG Peterbilt in Great Bend and five from Mac Kenworth in Salina. Dean Haselhorst stated he would like to get bids for new tractors. Steve Reinhardt agreed with Dean. Duke Strobel doesn't feel we can spend the money on new. Jason Krug agreed with Duke. Duke Strobel made a motion to table the bids until they get bids for new tractors. Steve Reinhardt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Justin Mermis, Public Works Director, updated the Commission on cold mix cost of \$136,500 for 6,000 tons, equipment breakdowns and repairs, and road projects getting started. Justin stated

Russell City will start working on Highway 281 north of the railroad tracks in April of 2027. The annual township meeting will be on March 24, 2026.

High Plains Mental Health representatives, Executive Director Craig Poe and Manager of Education Outreach Kaylie Conner, presented their 2025 Annual Report covering patient care provided with 4,783 hours for a cost of \$1,647,795.00. The Crisis Intervention Center is planning to open on May 4, 2026. Craig stated Sheriff Andrew Van Der Wege is very supportive of the new Crisis Intervention Center program. Twenty-three client rooms will be available. They are starting the “Be There” campaign, encouraging people to talk about mental health needs.

Tracey Kuntzsch, Russell County Fire District #5 Chief, asked to purchase a used pickup truck from the Russell County Highway Department in the amount of \$14,000.00. The Commissioners agreed to let him purchase the ¾ ton pickup. Tracey also asked for approval to purchase a tanker truck with a maximum cost of \$50,000.00 when one is found. Duke Strobel made a motion to approve the purchase of a used pickup truck from the Russell County Highway Department in the amount of \$14,000.00 and to purchase a tanker truck with a maximum cost of \$50,000.00. Dean Haselhorst seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kenny Cain, Lucas Fire District #2 Chief, asked to purchase two used pickup trucks from the Russell County Highway Department in the amount of \$14,000.00 for each pickup. Duke Strobel made a motion to approve the purchase of two used pickup trucks from the Russell County Highway Department in the amount of \$14,000.00 for each pickup. Dean Haselhorst seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Justin Mermis, Public Works Director, stated the Luray Fire Department is also interested in purchasing a pickup from the Russell County Highway Department. They will need approval from the Osborne County Commissioners.

Jennifer Buzzell, Noxious Weed Director, presented the Annual Noxious Weed Eradication Progress Report for 2025 and the 2026 Management Plan. Duke Strobel made a motion to approve and sign the Annual Noxious Weed Eradication Progress Report for 2025 and the 2026

Management Plan. Steve Reinhardt seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Jennifer stated she will start to advertise for part-time summer help.

Tracy Axtell, County Health Administrator, stated she is starting to apply for various grants, the site visit went well, she is still trying to give away lab equipment, and may get a refund for the unused flu vaccinations.

Andrew Van Der Wege, Sheriff, asked to declare patrol vehicle and computer equipment as surplus property. Duke Strobel made a motion to declare vehicles 2017 Ford Utility VIN#6449, 2022 Dodge Durango VIN#3050, and 2021 Dodge Durango VIN#3478 as surplus property to sell on Purple Wave. Dean Haselhorst seconded. The motion passed unanimously. He requested transferring four laptops that are not being used to the county fire departments. The Commissioners had no objection.

Chris Brown, Mapping and Zoning Director, updated the Commissioners on the Flood Risk Project meeting. There was a significant increase in the flood plain area in Russell County. In the next thirty days, there is an opportunity to review the flood plain map to make comments for potential changes. Chris will do a review of county areas and would like other community members to participate in the review. Dean Haselhorst suggested letting each Russell County City review the map to make comments. Chris will reach out to each City on how to review the map.

Commissioner Jason Krug led a discussion on compensation for damage to roads. He said there has been an ongoing problem with continued damage to county roads and would like to pursue compensation for damages. County Administrator Stephanie Grisham will discuss this with County Attorney Dan Krug. County Clerk Kristi Whitman will check to see if there are any resolutions passed concerning road damage compensation.

Stephanie Grisham, County Administrator, discussed a new grant approval process policy. She will have County Attorney Dan Krug review the policy and seek for approval later.

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

<b>100</b>	<b>GENERAL</b>	\$ 134,140.44	<b>290</b>	<b>GORHAM FIRE #1</b>	\$ 2,128.16
<b>110</b>	<b>ROAD &amp; BRIDGE</b>	\$ 44,697.45	<b>295</b>	<b>GORHAM FIRE #1 SP EQUIP</b>	\$ 45,295.82
<b>130</b>	<b>NOXIOUS WEED</b>	\$ 948.72	<b>300</b>	<b>LUCAS FIRE #2</b>	\$ 910.79
<b>140</b>	<b>4-H</b>	\$ 1,168.45	<b>310</b>	<b>WAL-PAR-NAT FIRE #3</b>	\$ 566.00
<b>150</b>	<b>CVB</b>	\$ 1,412.50	<b>320</b>	<b>DORRANCE FIRE #4</b>	\$ 536.00
<b>155</b>	<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	\$ 654.36	<b>328</b>	<b>RUSSELL CO FIRE #5</b>	\$ 3,671.90
<b>190</b>	<b>AMBULANCE</b>	\$ 1,240.97	<b>330</b>	<b>APPRAISER</b>	\$ 64.63
<b>210</b>	<b>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT</b>	\$ 9,132.00	<b>340</b>	<b>SPECIAL R&amp;B</b>	\$ 1,551.75
<b>260</b>	<b>COUNTY HEALTH</b>	\$ 882.59	<b>360</b>	<b>SOLID WASTE</b>	\$ 11,529.20

Tax corrections 2026000029, 2026000042 through 2026000049 were signed with a tax decrease of \$5,477.24.

At 11:16 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 16, 2026, beginning at 9:00 am in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF RUSSELL COUNTY, KANSAS

\_\_\_\_\_  
DUKE STROBEL, CHAIRMAN

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STEVE REINHARDT, VICE CHAIRMAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
JASON KRUG, MEMBER

\_\_\_\_\_  
DEAN HASELHORST, MEMBER

\_\_\_\_\_  
ALAN KUNTZSCH, MEMBER

ATTEST:

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KRISTI A. WHITMAN  
COUNTY CLERK

