

September 8, 2025

Monday, 5:30 p.m.

The Board of Bourbon County Commissioners met in open session with Commissioners Beerbower, Tran, and Milburn, County Counselor Bob Johnson, and County Clerk Susan Walker present.

Gregg Motley, Joseph Smith, Teri Hulseley, Marlon Merida, Jason Silvers, Clint and Rachel Walker, Jennifer Wiggans, Haylea Evans, John Lowry, Kyle Parks, Mike Wunderly, Dale Griffiths, Anne Dare, and Lora Holdridge were present for some or all of the meeting.

David opened the meeting with the flag salute and led the prayer.

David suggested setting time limits to the meetings. Meetings will start at 5:30, as already established and will run to 7:30, at which time the Commissioners will evaluate and table topics as needed to future meetings. Susan asked that the Commissioners let her know by Thursday each week which topics they want on the agenda so that she can try and streamline her process to send the agenda out only once, instead of having to send out multiple revised agendas. Sam commented that he thinks they should have all the information on a topic in front of them prior to putting it on the agenda.

David moved to adopt the following meeting procedures: Start meetings at 5:30 PM and follow the agenda to 7:30, moving anybody that travels to the top of the agenda. Setting the agendas before adjourning for the next week's meeting and otherwise will adjourn at 7:30 PM. Sam seconded and all approved.

Mika asked that the Salary Resolution be moved up underneath consent agenda. David moved to approve the agenda as corrected. Sam seconded and all approved.

David moved to approve the minutes from 8-25-25 and 8-29-25 as corrected. Sam seconded and all approved.

Susan discussed concerns with the Salary Resolution.

David moved to approve the consent agenda: Accounts Payable for 9-5-25 totaling \$308,641.44, Payroll for 9-5-25 totaling \$326,473.16, Approval of Resolution 31-25 Salary Resolution for Elected and Appointed Officials voted and approved on 8-11-25. Mika seconded and all approved.

Lora Holdridge, Register of Deeds, discussed concerns she has about her budget being cut, and that one of her employees would be cut to part-time. She asked the Commissioners if 20-hours of that employees pay came from the general fund and she paid the other 20-hours from her tech fund, if the county would still pay her benefits and holiday pay. It was decided to table this topic until next week's meeting as the Commissioners believe an executive session is needed to discuss it further.

Lora then discussed 95<sup>th</sup> and Unique Rd. She said, in July of 2021, Eric said that they would maintain 1,057 feet of the driveway. Lora said the landowner used to drive a bus so the county used to do his whole entire driveway. The landowner to the north has access, he is not landlocked, but Security 1<sup>st</sup> needs to have a resolution to be in Lora's books so they can do title insurance. They cannot go off the minutes. They need a resolution. County Counselor, Bob Johnson, questioned why the county needed to do this. Mika helped explain more details. The Commissioners, with advice from Bob, decided against doing a resolution to have the county maintain the driveway. They feel that it is not in the best interest of the county or the taxpayers.

David moved to go into executive session pursuant to KSA 75-4319(b)(1) to discuss personnel matters of individual non-elected personnel to protect their privacy for job performance. The session will include the three Commissioners and County Counselor Bob Johnson and they will return at 6:45 PM. Mika seconded and all approved.

David said "Return to session with action" at 6:45 PM. Mika seconded and all approved.

Sam made a motion for the Commission to allow him to engage Dr. Cohen on an issue for administrative action. Mika seconded and all approved.

David moved pursuant to KSA 75-4319(b)(2) for consultation with an attorney for the public body of the agency which would be deemed privileged in the attorney client relationship for 10-minutes with the three Commissioners and the County Counselor to return at 7:00 PM. Sam seconded and all approved. David moved to return back to session at 7:01 PM. Sam seconded and all approved.

#### Public Comments:

Mike Wunderly wanted to thank the gentleman that mowed 135<sup>th</sup> and Poplar Road.

The Commissioners discussed Union Street from 125<sup>th</sup> to Highway 31. For the county to take maintenance responsibility back from the City of Mapleton, it will cost 700 tons which is roughly \$36,729 to pave. Clint Walker spoke and said it is a very traveled road and is a school bus route.

Sam motioned for himself to be allowed to talk to public works and if we have the asset, manpower and material to do it, that we be allowed to do it. David added that Sam also talk to the Mapleton Mayor. David seconded the motion. Mika wanted further discussion and said that she believes we got the bridge grant, but we need to come up with \$100,000 to match it. She said she thinks Sam should see what the City of Mapleton can put towards the cost of fixing the road before he makes a motion. Sam pulled his motion and the topic was tabled until next week's meeting.

David spoke of an email he had received on August 27<sup>th</sup> from Nick Dobenmeyer, account executive with SLED Zoom video communications, which stands for State, Local, and Education, refers to Zoom's focus on providing its video and communication platform to government and educational institutions in the United States. The platform offered by this company includes video conferencing, team chat, and phone services. David had referred this representative to the IT liaison, Commissioner Milburn: and asked her if there had been any follow-up. She said she had received the emails but that it's not on her list of priorities right now and that if David wanted to take it, he was welcome to. He said no, that he just wanted to see if there had been any follow-up because we'd already had two other phone companies come in. Mika said she had no follow-up. David asked if they want these gentlemen to present. Mika said he was welcome to put them on the agenda so they can come present their services.

David also discussed a software company called Diligent that had contacted him by email. They streamline governments for public sector boards. Sam thinks we should hold off until Stronghold fixes our network and then reassess.

David gave an update on the Hospital Equipment sale. There are 3 lots that did not sell, and David asked if they should run it for another week. After discussion, the Commissioners decided to run the auction another week and lower the opening bids to see if the remaining lots will sell.

David asked to scratch the FSACF Grant topic.

David announced that they were now at 7:39 PM and asked if they wanted to continue. They decided to go until 8:00 PM.

The Commissioners had a brief discussion on Security Cameras and then tabled the topic for two weeks.

The Commissioners discussed Craw-Kan and Bob was going to look at the contract, so they will reach out to him to ask his thoughts.

Sam wanted to know if we were moving forward with clearing the overburden at Elm Creek Lake per two previous commissioners' direction. David expressed his concerns on moving forward. Joseph Smith said the decision should be left up to the county engineer which we do not have. Sam said he trusts Mr. Smith's advice.

Sam decided to table the Elm Creek topic until he has more information. Clint Walker spoke as a citizen that lives next to a rock quarry. He said he thinks that people over-blow what the noise that rock quarries make and over-blow the traffic in it. He said he doesn't have a problem with that because it's progress for our county.

David said they were closing in on 8:00 PM so he was going to move that anything with his name on it except for the Freeman agreement be tabled until a future meeting.

David moved to adopt the second amendment to the emergency department funding agreement. Mika seconded and all approved.

Mika discussed admin access to the county webpage, Craw-Kan, Verizon, and Facebook. Mika moved to add Chairman Beerbower as full admin access to Facebook, Verizon, Craw-Kan, and the web page for Bourbon County. David seconded and all approved.

Mika spoke about Freeman taking on EMS. She said "although I've brought it up several times and several times before there was a liaison, so not to step on Mr. Beerbower's toes, but Mercy used to run the EMS. When they left, the county took it because it's important to have. Now Freeman's back and I'd been told several times in the past that they wouldn't hear a discussion about managing that again. But I did go ahead and reach out to them and thought I'd take a shot in the dark and they are open to conversation to doing that with Bourbon County. I went a little further and looked into some agreements that we have and spoke to City Manager Brad, and the Fire Chief, and we have an agreement with the city. They can go out on six calls a month before charging us more when our bus is out on a call. And they had that agreement when Mercy was here and they would talk about carrying that over if Freeman were to take EMS for us as well. At the beginning of the year when I sat down with Susan, the numbers that we weren't collecting in EMS is about 300,000, but that was what we budgeted for minus what we billed for and got reimbursed for. The number was 300,000. But our benefits are not included in that budget for some reason. The benefits for all departments are not included in their budgets. So those numbers are greater than that. I would estimate around 700,000 and I believe Mercy used to carry us. We used to contribute under 300,000 to Mercy." She asked the other Commissioners if they would be open to discussions with Freeman. Sam asked Mika "what is ultimately your goal of having EMS moved over to Freeman?" Mika responded "it would take a financial burden from the county and I think that's what we're trying to do here is, if services can be provided elsewhere and our residents of our county would not suffer otherwise and we could save the county money at the same time, isn't that our goal here at this table?" Sam asked "What happens if Freeman goes belly up?" Mika said "Well, the same thing that happened when Mercy left, we would take it back." Sam asked "was that a painless endeavor or was it pretty painful to start from scratch?" Mika said "Nothing's painless. I am just asking to continue to have conversations with Freeman and be open to the dialogue. I'm asking you guys to sit down and listen to what they have to say if they can save our county money by taking something." Sam said "Well, Commissioner Milburn, that's an easy answer for me. I will listen to anybody. I may not agree with you, but I will listen to you. If this ask is about a communication, fact finding, I'm all for it." Mika said "There's no use in me pursuing if commissioners aren't on board. And I don't know why commissioners wouldn't be on board if it stands to not lose any services for the residents of our county and save the residents of our county money." David said "Regarding this issue, we already had a discussion regarding the liaison and the stepping over that. So regarding the issue over control of EMS to Freeman, I am not for this and there are several reasons. First, and Commissioner Tran did elaborate on that a little bit, Freeman Fort Scott just opened last week. So to have this discussion is kind of premature. They got a lot on their plate that they're going to have to take care of before they

know that we should even have this discussion. The opening of the hospital is a great achievement for this county and I do remember when Mercy left and I do understand the pains that it took for this community and for when the county took over the EMS has been the one bright and shining star of all this. In the last year, we didn't even have an ER. And they're the ones that stepped up, and I imagine you could fill this room with people that would come in here and say that if it hadn't been for Bourbon County EMS, they wouldn't be sitting here today or wouldn't be able to talk here today. Mika started saying "I know you have more..." David said "Let me finish. Secondly, EMS is not a burden. They're not even a tax levy funded department. They're getting ready to get more income because of the increase in transfers on down streaming from Freeman. I think we hold off and wait and see how the numbers are in another year, rather than jump the gun now and start doing something. We don't know how this is going to pan out, and right now, they're in our corner. And if something bad happens and we don't have the hospital tomorrow, we still got an EMS that can get people to where they need to go. And I think having to start all over again, when we don't have to, is a mistake." Mika said "I believe that you're vilifying what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to save the county money and I'm not trying to take away services from the county." David said "I think we're rushing it, because they've only been here for a week, not even a week, and we're ready to hand over our EMS that's been built up by employees and this county for years since Mercy left." Mika responded with "So, what is bad about Freeman, just like Mercy operating EMS, what would be wrong with Freeman operating EMS?" David said "I'm not saying that it's wrong. I'm saying it's premature. I'm saying that we're rushing into it without Freeman being established here as a hospital." Mika said "Well, discussions take a while. How long until you're satisfied that they're established that we could talk to them?" David said "I would say that this is probably a subject that would be better for five commissioners than three because we're not that far out from that part." Mika said "And I imagine that it'll spill over to five, the discussion would?" David said "I'm just saying that if we're going to look at it, that's four months down the road and when we would have a five-commission board and if then we wanted to breach this subject and..." Mika stopped David saying "So you are asking me to stop. Don't information gather. Don't find out what is cost us. Don't find out anything. Just stop." David said "because you've already crossed the line. It should have been you bringing it to the table and handing it over to me as the liaison and me making these contacts. That's how the liaison system was supposed to work." Mika responded with "Oh, I'm sorry. Did Diligent call, didn't you call and find out stuff to bring to the table." David said "I brought it to you." Mika said "So maybe the liaison does not work because I'm not going to sink in the sand. I'm going to roll. I'm going to keep moving." David said "Even if this board says not to." Mika said "So you don't want to have any discussion about how to save the county money." David said "I just think you're putting an ultimatum on to this board that either we allow you to go forward with this or we..." Mika said "But, you don't want me to do anything." David said "I want the board to make a vote on this." Mika asked "why would you want the board to vote about discussing something, why wouldn't you discuss something? See if it's a viable option and then vote and if it is a viable option, who says it is? Why be offended about talking about something?" David said "I'll start off with in the manner that it was presented to me. I go to EMS to do a tour and the first thing that I hear from employees there that are worried and scared that a commissioner walked in and told them that they were no longer going to be called operational, they were going to be farmed out to somebody else."

Mika responded with "Well, that's not how that was said either, so if that's how it was displayed to you." Teri Hulse spoke from the audience and said "I said exactly what you said, that there's going to be talks with Freeman about you handing EMS over to... Mika said "That's exactly right, talks with Freeman. So what you're saying is not what I said. Also, you were sent an email and I will read it. I sent it to Bob. Bob sent it to everybody. Bob, the commission is aware of Freeman's opening and now I would like to start discussion on the possibility of Freeman taking back EMS. EMS was a function of Mercy Hospital before Mercy left our community. The county of Bourbon took EMS to fill the gap when Mercy left. Now Freeman has filled that gap. Mercy left and Freeman is open to a conversation about the management of EMS in our county." David said "I received a copy of that email after you've already talked to Freeman, after you already talked to the city manager, after you already talked to the fire chief and also made a phone call to the EMS director." Mika said "just talked to them today actually." David said "When did you talk to Freeman? When did you make the phone call to EMS? We could go round and round on this. If we're honoring the liaison process that Dr. Cohen brought into this, then you should have never made the comment to begin with until you came to this board and said 'Hey, I want permission or I want the liaison to make contact with Freeman and move this forward.'" Mika responded with "Do you want me to ask for permission to find ways to save this county money?" David said "I want you not to step on somebody else's toes doing it." Mika said "Well, I'm sorry that I hurt your toes." David said "The point is that you brought it to the table. I voiced my opinion. I'm not for it. I think it's too premature that they've not been here long enough." Mika said "So you don't want in any of the discussion, if we have discussions. Commissioner Tran has agreed to set in discussions; you are going to exclude yourself." David said "I'm saying you shouldn't be continuing the discussion with Freeman on this." Sam said "I think everybody needs to step back from the table for a little bit. Just take a deep breath. I understand what you're trying to do. I also understand you. You guys are very passionate about what you do and I appreciate that. I appreciate being part of this team, but we got to stay a team. You can't go down this road. I think it is premature. I do. But, I also know Commissioner Milburn, I watch you and it's like you are going to do what you think is best for the county and you're going to push ahead and do it. I also know Commissioner Beerbower. I understand where he's coming from. I think right now, with everything that's happening in Freeman, I think they're going to talk to you. I think they're going to do the magnanimous thing which is to talk to a commissioner. They're not going to sit there and say, 'I don't want to talk to you.' I also think that Freeman bit off a lot more than they're letting on in terms of monetary. They bent over backwards to come in here and I think they put a lot of money into the hospital. What I am saying is, let us just take that wait and see attitude. Do I think that you can talk? Sure. Talk is talk is talk. So I understand that point, but I also understand where Commissioner Beerbower is coming across like you just got to give a little bit of time. So, if I may suggest, do what you think you need to do, but don't be in such a hurry to change things just yet." Mika said "I don't think I'm in a hurry. I think I mentioned this, been mentioning this for months actually. So, that's not a rush to me." Sam said "With all due respect, Ma'am, this is first I've heard of it, and I've been here two months. So, I'm not doubting what you said." Mika said "Like I told Dr. Cohen when he asked me if anybody paid attention, I mean you could find it on the videos. I've mentioned it several times. And Susan had mentioned it to me when I had first started."

Anne Dare said she would like to see the liaison responsibilities that were set by the Commissioners be followed again. She thinks that the Commission's goals should also be how they treat and talk to each other.

Greg Motley stated that Freeman is being polite in talking to the Commission but that they are not interested in taking on EMS at this time.

Teri asked where EMS had cost the county money outside of what they subsidize by state statute. Teri saved the county \$165,000 in grants last year, and with Freeman now open, they will have more transfers that will bring in more money to EMS.

Mika said she does not understand why people are being abrasive to the conversation. Sam asked if he could answer that and said, "Change without a clear vision scares people. And when it comes out of left field, and people are not sure what's happening, they get scared. It's not that they're being defensive. They're scared. There's a lot that has gone on in this room in the last two months. A lot of stuff. And I'm speaking from me. I'm not speaking to you as commissioner. I'm speaking to you as a fellow human being, fellow citizen. You're very good with what you do and keep it up, but they need, we need to slow down a little bit. What I mean is don't slow down what you're doing. Slow down on how we do things. It's like not everything has to be done immediately. We can start a conversation. It should have started with a conversation at the table." Mika said "and it did. Like I said, I've mentioned it at the table for several meetings. I'm sorry that everybody failed to pay attention, but it did start as a conversation at the table, several meetings. I can probably go back and find three time stamps for you where I've mentioned this. So really it shouldn't be surprising. If it's surprising, then somebody wasn't paying attention. So that once Freeman was up and running, I surveyed a lot of people. I survey a lot of people for a lot of things. And so once they were up and running, I just thought, you know what? Actually, I think I've asked Gregg at the table and he said they weren't interested. And then I just thought, well, it's worth a try. Let's just ask them. They're up and running. And so I asked them and they said 'Sure, we'd be open to conversation.' And I know Gregg said they were just being nice, but there's no reason for that. If you are open to talking it, then you say, 'Sure, let's have a conversation.' If you can't sustain it, you say 'No, I don't think we can sustain that'. So, there is no reason to be dishonest, which is, I guess, what Greg is saying that they were doing." Sam said "No, I don't think Greg is saying that. I think Greg was saying that they're being magnanimous. That's what he's trying to say." Mika said "Well I mean if you can't do it, then there's no reason wasting anybody's time. But they didn't say that. So, they're going to have to back that off. This isn't to be vilified, this is not to poke at anybody or anything, but it's just to explore options. And if we didn't have the conversation like this at the table then everything was wrapped up and it was brought to the table to vote on, well then I guess people would say 'well, you're not being transparent.' So pick one, folks. Which way shall we operate?" David said "You said at least three times you've mentioned this at the table. At any of those three times were you approved by the board to speak on our behalf and go have these conversations?" Mika spoke over David and said "On your behalf? Nobody is speaking on behalf of the board. I will not accept that comment. Not even for..." David said

"You're going to let me finish because I let you finish." Mika said "No, you said something that was untrue about me and I will not.. David said "And what I'm saying, is in those three conversations that you said you brought this to the board that at any time did that board say go ahead Commissioner Milburn, go ahead and do the research, go ahead and make contact with..." Mika said "So you want me to ask this board to do any research." David continued with "Did any of those times happen before the liaison? You would have to have done it entirely before the liaison process was done. You would have had to have this conversation with the board." Mika said "I'm sorry, I didn't know that the liaison was going to cut my Achilles to where I couldn't do anything or I wouldn't have agreed to it." David said "What happens if I would have gone to Freeman?" Mika said "Mr. Beerbower, you went to Diligent, you went to Mr. Bryars, you went to several." David said "They contacted me, I didn't contact them. And I brought them to you at this table." Mika said "Well, I'm not going to hang up on anybody." David asked "Did they call you? Did Freeman." Mika said "No, I reached out to Freeman." David said "We're just going to keep going round and round. And the bottom line is that we have a liaison process that you overstepped and you're going to try to justify it that you had brought this up in conversations." Mika said "Well I don't accept that because everybody oversteps on things and I'm not seeing it the same way you are." David said "As far as I'm concerned, we're done."

Mika said a citizen had reached out to her and asked if we could explore the possibility of creating a benefit district for the purpose of redoing and re-servicing a private neighborhood road 190<sup>th</sup> St. The length is approximately 1,156 feet by 10 to 11 feet. There are four houses in the neighborhood. They're willing to pay for the road through a 10-year agreement with the county. Mika has also already talked to Bob about it and he is looking into what it would take to create a benefit district. The topic was tabled until Bob can get more information.

David moved to allow the Clerk to do the necessary computer application to get the opioid settlement. Sam seconded and all approved.

The Commissioners tabled the Planning Commission Selection Process until next week's meeting.

The Commissioners then discussed the items that have been tabled from this meeting and past meetings to have an idea of what will be on the agenda next week.

The Commissioners set a date of September 19<sup>st</sup> at 7:00am for a fence viewing.

Commissioner Comments:

David and Sam had no comments.

Mika believes this commission still has work to do, and felt it necessary to thank David and Sam for what they're doing for our county.

David moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 PM. Sam seconded and all approved.



THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OF BOURBON COUNTY, KANSAS

*C. Oberbauer*, Chairman

*Mika Melburn-Kee*, Commissioner

*[Signature]*, Commissioner

ATTEST:

*Susan Walker*

Susan Walker, Bourbon County Clerk

09/15/25 Approved Date

