

ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE GEARY COUNTY COMMISSION MINUTES
March 2nd, 2026

Commissioners Present: Keith Ascher, Trish Giordano, and Kathy Tremont

Others present: Therese Hoff, Deputy County Clerk, Betsy Edwards County Counselor

Chairman Tremont called the County Commission meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Commission review and update:

Tremont-Attended Pawnee Mental Health board meeting-discussed evaluation of the CEO.

Ascher-Stated the joint meeting with the city/school/county last week went well, lots of information. Attended High Five Fridays at Westwood School.

Tremont-Had a meeting to encourage feedback, and prompt conversations for growth in the community with economic development.

Stated the joint meeting went well and the Public Works Director gave a good report and will continue to attend the joint meetings.

Giordano-Attended the joint city/county/school district meeting. She thinks it is important to get together to discuss things and throw out ideas.

Attended the Kansas Automobile Dealers Association Legislative Conference-a chance to meet with legislators-talked about the 3% cap on appraisals-if it goes over 3%, it will need to go to a vote.

Attended marketing campaign meeting with Terry Butler involved.

Regional economic rural recreation meeting-talked about outdoor recreation assets, what is in the community, what we would like to see in the community-need to work on it.

Chairman Tremont and Commissioner Giordano are attending County Day at the Capitol on Tuesday.

Commissioner Giordano wants to meet prior to the executive session; **Commissioner Giordano moved to amend the agenda to add another executive session before the one at 11:30 a.m. for non-elected personnel; Commissioner Ascher seconded and all voted aye.**

Commissioner Giordano discussed the marketing/PR campaign-she thinks it is a good time to promote the community more than the CVB already does. Alan Bontrager, citizen, thinks the CVB should drive the campaign for the entire county, the city would contribute money to it, Mr. Bontrager will contact other businesses to try to get funding.

Commissioner Giordano stated that the Corps of Engineers shared on Facebook 1.4 million people visited Milford Lake last year.

Crystal Malchose, Human Resource Director gave the weekly update:

- Reported HR had Public Works training-workers comp information and accident reporting-steps to follow in case of injury or accident, had pregnant worker fairness act training at the Sheriff's Office.
- Reported the Kansas County Human Resources Association is doing their annual supervisor training in Salina on Thursday, June 4, 2026.
- Reported she is attending County Day at the Capitol tomorrow.
- Reported next week, Bukaty will be here for a benefits update, and a BC-BS rep might be in attendance.
- Next Wednesday is the employee task force meeting. No commissioners can make it that day, Ms. Malchose is going to see if she can change it to Tuesday.

At 10:28 a.m., Commissioner Giordano moved to go into executive session for non-elected personnel for 10 minutes to include the County Counselor and the HR Director to end at 10:38 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:38 a.m. with no action taken.

Desree and Randy Pettera arrived at the meeting.

Tami Robison, Finance Director, arrived at the meeting.

Garry Berges, Emergency Management Director/Rural Fire Chief, Curt Janke, Assistant Emergency Management Director/Assistant Rural Fire Chief and Jeremy Bramwell, Fire Chief of Grandview Plaza arrived at the meeting to open the bids for the Air Packs through the AFG Grant. The first bids were way over the amount of the grant of \$711,987.00, so Mr. Berges put it out for bids again.

Mr. Janke left on a call.

Feld Fire	Nate Yarnell	\$696,189.73
M.E.S.	Dwayne Chew	\$711,986.98

Mr. Berges and Mr. Bramwell will take the bids back to review and report back to the commission later with his recommendation.

The bids are for: 69 air packs, 22 hard cases, 138 cylinders, 10 small face masks, 66 medium face masks, 10 large face masks, 69 bags to put masks in.

Mr. Berges gave the monthly fire report: Fires year to date: 18, last yr. there were 10. In February there were 2 major calls, assisted the Junction City Fire Department with the Stone Ridge fire and the Bluffs apartment fire. There were 3 agencies and Fort Riley working together.

On Saturday, Grandview Plaza was doing a control burn around the sewer plant, and Mr. Berges assisted with a truck.

Reported the Wildland Fires season will be starting; all equipment is up, running and ready to go.

Stated ISO was here on February 9, he said it looked favorable, he will hear results in a few more weeks.

Reported all jurisdictions have approved their Regional Mitigation plans.

Reported last Tuesday they participated in the 5th grade career day fair.

Stated the Risk Management meeting was held, and the Public Works will be purchasing another household hazardous waste cabinet with the RAG money.

Reported March 16 is the Storm Spotter Severe weather training for about 90 minutes at the Sr. Center.

Mr. Berges and Mr. Bramwell left the meeting.

Jeremie Myers, Public Works Administrator, Kalyn Ross, Administrative Services Manager, Jason Britt, and Noxious Weed Director arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Myers gave the bi-weekly report:

- Presented a request and petition from Cox Communications to construct a 2,925' bore of 2" FIC along Budden Rd and Cedar Rd, adding 5 new vaults, 4 pedestals and 1 cabinet within the Geary County right of way. Mr. Myers recommends approval. **Commissioner Giordano moved to approve the request and petition from Cox Communications; Commissioner Ascher seconded and all voted aye.**
- Presented a request and petition from Morris County Rural Water District #1 to construct a waterline installation for Eric Eickholt for agricultural purposes. Mr. Myers recommends approval.

Commissioner Giordano moved to approve the request and petition from Morris County Rural Water District #1; Commissioner Ascher seconded and all voted aye.

- Mr. Britt stated the 2026 Annual Noxious Weed Eradication Progress report has been completed as required by KSA 2-1316. It lists the total estimated acreage of Noxious Weeds, what they are, and what herbicide has been sold to try to get rid of them. Mr. Britt also discussed the 2026 Noxious Weed Management Plan which lists the goals and priorities of the program for the coming year, and for the next five years. It describes the areas which noxious weed species are known to occur within the county and specific locations of new infestations and areas particularly susceptible to new infestations. The methods planned to encourage compliance, and the enforcement actions are listed in the report. The plans for working with state and/or federal agencies to control the noxious weeds on state and/or federal lands. **Commissioner Ascher moved to approve the 2026 Management Eradication Plan and the 2026 Noxious Weed Management Plan; Commissioner Giordano seconded and all voted aye.**
- Mr. Myers stated the chemical bid opening will be March 16, 2026. The bids will be due March 13 by 4:30 p.m. An addendum will be sent out to specify the opening time of these bids since this is a night meeting. Commissioner Giordano asked Mr. Britt to explain the process of selling chemicals. The public comes in and purchases chemicals, but it is 25% off from purchase price.
- Presented a letter for public notice- Notice of intent to seek funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development agency to update the water and sewer distribution systems by repairing aging pipes and adding new sewer lines to existing platted lots. The estimated project cost will be \$930,963.00. **Commissioner Ascher moved to approve the Letter for Public Notice-Funding for Sewer #4 publication; Commissioner Giordano seconded and all voted aye.**
- Reported quotes for crack sealing materials were due by Friday 2/27/2026 at 4:30 p.m. Quotes were received from: Crafcro and McConnell Associated (Pavement Maintenance Products)
Crafcro: Roadsaver 221, No box \$15,876.00 for 25,200 pounds.
McConnell Associated: Deery 102 No Box \$17,571.00 for 23,400 lbs. Mr. Myers recommends taking the quote from Crafcro, to be taken out of the asphalt line in Public Works budget. **Commissioner Giordano moved to approve the quote from Crafcro for crack sealing material in the amount of \$15,876.00; Commissioner Ascher seconded and all voted aye.** There will be some added cost for daily machine rental and daily heat lance rental, which he will take the cheapest quote. McConnell Associated was \$225.00 for the daily machine rental and \$60.00 for the daily heat lance rental.
- Reported the Assistant Public Works Administrator position has been filled by Lee Anderson, effective 2/28/2026. Mr. Myers asked if the commission would approve Mr. Anderson having an assigned vehicle so he will be able to take care of emergencies outside of regular work hours. The commission has no problem with this. Mr. Myers, Mr. Britt and Ms. Ross left the meeting.

Raquel Cinco, CVB Director arrived at the meeting.

Carolyn Gasten and Alan Bontrager, citizens arrived at the meeting.

At 11:25 a.m.; Commissioner Giordano moved to go into executive session for 20 minutes for Non-Elected Personnel, including the County Counselor, the HR Director and CVB Director, to end at 11:45 a.m.; Commissioner Ascher seconded and all voted aye; At 11:45 a.m.; Commissioner Giordano moved to extend the executive session for 10 minutes to end at 11:55 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:55 a.m. with no action taken. The HR Director and CVB Director left the meeting.

Public Comment: (5 minutes per person): Carolyn Gaston, Geary County taxpayer spoke. She said the topic is tourism-are we maximizing the funding for tourism, are we taking care of the community expectation for tourism, is the booth materials taken to trade shows effective for the event. She got a

phone call about the tourism participation at an International Sports show in Omaha Nebraska, by a former Geary County resident. He talked about the CVB booth at this show, talked about tourism in the county, and whether it is being marketed properly. The current booth lacks good information about Milford Lake, talked about Hildebrand's fall event, the brand-new high school, a growing hospital, Rolling Meadows golf course, talked about pride in the community. The tourism booth needs better information to promote the area she would like a response from the commissioners. Commissioner Giordano said next week they are going to talk about a major marketing campaign, and asked Ms. Gaston to be on the board. She would like to see participants for a sports show. There needs to be more community involvement, and a major marketing campaign is a good way to support the community and activities. Mrs. Gaston left the meeting.

Mr. Bontrager stated he would like to talk about a PR campaign to spread the word about Geary County and what it has to offer. He met with the CVB Director several months ago and he talked about the lake, a close airport, I70 and Highway 77, Mainstreet, there have not been nice restaurants downtown like there is now, these need to be promoted. After meeting with her, he didn't receive much response, he went to the CVB board meeting, but there was no treasurer's report, he said there needed to be one. At the 4th meeting Jordan McCann from Mainstreet, the new marketing person from the CVB and the Communications Director from the City and Commissioner Giordano were all there and willing to work on this marketing/PR campaign. The city manager said the communications director would be able to help with this, but Mr. Bontrager still hasn't heard from CVB about the marketing/PR campaign. In summary- the CVB doesn't think the PR campaign is necessary, he thinks it should be responded to by the director of CVB, he asked about the CVB budget at the meeting, didn't have an answer, asked about the marketing budget and there was no answer. He thanked the commissioners for listening to him. Mr. Bontrager left the meeting. Commissioner Giordano stated she agrees about having a marketing campaign and wants it on the agenda next week to be discussed. Chairman Tremont said everybody that is talking about this and any groups in the community need to work together to promote Geary County. Mr. Bontrager left the meeting.

Desree Pettera, citizen asked the commission about HB 2433, the water bill that went through the House. The commissioners said they had talked to the legislators about it. Ms. Pettera said it went through so fast that she doesn't think some of the legislators know what they voted on. She doesn't want the counties to lose control of their water rights. The commission said they will look into it more.

Garry Berges, Rural Fire Chief, returned to the meeting to give his recommendation on the Air Pack bids opened earlier. He recommended approving the low bid from Feld Fire, in the amount of \$696,189.73. There will be a balance of \$14,000.00, which he will be able to purchase more equipment. **Commissioner Ascher moved to accept the bid from Feld Fire for the Air Packs; Commissioner Giordano seconded and all voted aye.** Mr. Berges left the meeting.

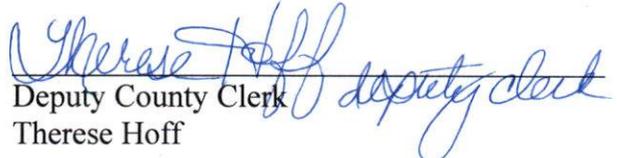
Deputy Clerk Hoff presented tax roll correction change orders for personal property and trucks to correct clerical errors. **Commissioner Giordano moved to approve change order #20026000077-2026000079; Commissioner Ascher seconded and all voted aye.**

Deputy Clerk Hoff presented county commission meeting minutes for approval. **Commissioner Ascher moved to approve the minutes from February 23, 2026; Commissioner Giordano seconded and all voted aye.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.


Chairman-County Commission
Kathy Tremont

03-09-2026


Deputy County Clerk
Therese Hoff