

Board of Crawford County Commissioners

Commissioners' Journal

2025, [SEVENTY-FIFTH](#) MEETING

CRAWFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ROOM
Girard, KS. **Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 10:00 AM**

The Crawford County Board of Commissioners met pursuant to Kansas Statutes.

Annotated Chapter 19, Article 2, Section 18 in due and regular session with open doors.

Commissioner Tom Moody served as the presiding officer.

Commissioners Bruce Blair and Carl Wood were in attendance.

County Clerk Lisa Lusker and County Counselor Jim Emerson were seated with the Board.

Chairman Moody led the Pledge of Allegiance.

UNDER THE HEADING BUSINESS FROM A PREVIOUS MEETING CONSENT AGENDA

On motion (25-426) of Commissioner Wood and the second of Commissioner Blair that the consent agenda be approved including:

1. Approval of the **October 17, 2025** minutes of the Board of County Commissioners.

Yeas: Commissioners Wood, Blair, and Moody

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

The motion prevailed and the consent agenda was approved.

SIGNING OF MOTIONS

The County Clerk presented the following motions for Commissioners' signatures:

Motion 25	421	That the consent agenda be approved including: Approval of the October 14, 2025 minutes, and Approval of the accounts payable warrant numbers 640849 to 641100 dated October 15, 2025 in the total amount of \$406,474.07, and Authorizing the Chairman to sign the previous week's vouchers
Motion 25	422	To recess the open meeting for a period of 5 minutes
Motion 25	423	To approve the payment of the ROZ Partnership payment in the amount of \$5,626.40
Motion 25	424	To recess this open meeting and to go into a closed executive session for 15 minutes to discuss legal advice regarding a representation contract which would be deemed privileged in the attorney-client

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		relationship pursuant to the consultation with attorney exception, K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(2), with the County Commissioners and County Counselor Jim Emerson present. The open meeting will resume at 12:05 P.M. The motion passed 3-0
Motion 25	425	To approve the agreement between Crawford County and Adams Jones Law Firm authorizing the Chairman to sign

UNDER THE HEADING NEW BUSINESS

PROCLAMATION AND ORDERS OF THE BOARD

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND OPENING OF ANNOUNCED BIDS

MESSAGES FROM CRAWFORD CO LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Item One: County Counselor Jim Emerson requested an executive session for 15 minutes to discuss items that would be deemed privileged in the Attorney-Client Relationship.

On motion (25-427) of Commissioner Moody and second of Commissioner Wood to recess this open meeting and to go into a closed executive session for 15 minutes to discuss legal advice regarding insurance which would be deemed privileged in the attorney-client relationship pursuant to the consultation with attorney exception, K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(2), with the County Commissioners, County Counselor Jim Emerson, Sheriff Billy Tomasi, Undersheriff Jason VanBecelaere, and Human Resources/Finance Officer Adam Harrison present. The open meeting will resume at 10:19 A.M. The motion passed 3-0.

Yeas: Commissioners Wood, Blair, and Moody

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

The motion prevailed.

The Commissioners went into Executive Session at 10:04 AM and reconvened the Open Session at 10:17 AM with no action taken except to go back into open session.

MESSAGES FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

Item One: Sheriff Billy Tomasi addressed the Commissioners. He discussed a saturation patrol done on October 9th for registered offenders. He provided some information regarding this patrol. Mr. Tomasi gave some statistics for the month of October. Commissioner Wood asked if the Sheriff's Department has one or two dogs and Mr. Tomasi stated they only have one. Commissioner Wood asked if they will be getting another and Mr. Tomasi confirmed. Commissioner Blair discussed the semi traffic on 200th. Mr. Tomasi stated a lot of the truck traffic on 200th is going to Martinous Produce and APEX Stages. Commissioner Blair also mentioned the golf course road and Mr. Tomasi stated the trucks they have been stopping on this road have stated their GPS has taken them that way but they are getting citations. Mr. Tomasi mentioned they have also been patrolling 260th for truck traffic as well.

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MESSAGES FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

Item One: Mr. Pat Walden, Mayor of the City of Mulberry, addressed the Commissioners. He thanked the Commissioners for allowing him to come speak. Mr. Walden asked the Commissioners for their support and cooperation with the annexation for the City of Mulberry. He gave history about himself, how he is tied to Mulberry, and some information about the city and their needs. Mr. Walden stated getting this annexation would allow Mulberry the access to programs through the Department of Commerce as well as funding to fix certain problems within the city. Mr. Walden stated he believes this is the last opportunity for Mulberry to survive.

MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC

Item One: Mr. Rick Elnicki addressed the Commissioners. He explained he is one of the landowners in the annexation and would like to voice his support for the annexation. Mr. Elnicki stated he would like to help City of Mulberry however he can.

Item Two: Mr. Russell Smith addressed the Commissioners. He stated he does not understand how this is helping Mulberry as the land is nowhere close to Mulberry. He asked where the money is coming from, if they are being paid off by Shasta Power, and how it will make the city any different. Mr. Smith asked more questions regarding the potential solar farm placed on the land. Mr. Smith stated he encourages the Commission to please not do this to them.

Item Three: Ms. Melesia Rhodes addressed the Commissioners. She stated Shasta Power pays her every month and that nobody has been bought off by Shasta. Ms. Rhodes mentioned legally they cannot talk about probable or potential development when considering the annexation. She explained once the annexation is complete it will be up to City of Mulberry what is done with the property and if someone has complaints or wants particular setbacks that will come from City of Mulberry. Ms. Rhodes stated a small group has expressed their opinions against solar. Ms. Rhodes mentioned nearly 35,000 people in Crawford County did not fill out the Comprehensive Plan Survey and that the Commissioners should look at their relationship with their constituents. She asked where this group of individuals against solar were when Girard was putting their solar farm in and that nobody complained about Greenbush. Ms. Rhodes asked where all the environmentalists are when they discuss the Southeast Kansas Recycling Center going broke. She asked where they were when they were cleaning trash up off the side of 69 Highway. Ms. Rhodes stated she would like to discuss the public hearing and that as a woman she is always looking at double standards and would like to ask if they know that during the public hearing, they cannot discuss any potential development for the annexation. Ms. Rhodes asked if a public hearing took place when the City of Pittsburg annexed land for Kansas Crossing Casino. Mr. Emerson stated there was no public hearing but that there will be a public hearing for this land annexation. Ms. Rhodes stated they cannot speak about potential development and Mr. Emerson reminded Ms. Rhodes that all she has discussed is Shasta Power. Mr. Emerson stated there will be a public hearing and the public will be allowed to say whatever they like for or against the annexation. Commissioner Moody asked what she would say to Mr. Smith about having a solar project on two sides of his home and she stated she would tell him that they are

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here to discuss the annexation and once the land is annexed the regulations will be up to the City of Mulberry. She stated if she lived there she would take the concerns to the City of Mulberry. Mr. Smith asked what do the concerned residents get to say about it and Ms. Rhodes stated things he could ask the city. Ms. Rhodes mentioned there are a lot of hoops to jump through for this project. Ms. Rhodes stated she refuses to live her life on the “what ifs” and Mr. Smith stated she is asking them to live on “what ifs”. Commissioner Wood asked if this annexation goes through and nothing materializes with the land will it just be part of Mulberry city limits and Mr. Rhodes confirmed. Commissioner Wood asked if they will run power and sewer out to this area and Ms. Rhodes stated it would depend on who approaches the city regarding the land and that Kansas is currently looking for places to put small nuclear plants. Commissioner Wood stated he is concerned about the land being annexed with nothing developed and if it will be annexed as agriculture or commercial when it comes to taxes. Ms. Rhodes stated it would not go to commercial until a building was on that land. Commissioner Wood brought up de-annexation. Commissioner Moody asked County Clerk Lisa Lusker about the comparison between the percentage of residents who filled out the survey compared to voter turnout on a nonpresidential election and Ms. Lusker stated it is similar and that usually it is a low turnout less than 20%. Ms. Lusker asked what the percentage for the Comprehensive Plan was and it was stated that it was low.

Item Four: Ms. Ann Sanders addressed the Commissioners. She stated it is hard to talk about annexation and ignore the potential solar project when it is believed to be the reason for the annexation. Ms. Sanders stated the overwhelmingly negative response is coming from residents who will have to live by these solar farms while someone who has a positive view of solar projects may not have to live near them. Ms. Sanders stated Shasta Power has only been around since 2020 or 2021 and that they have never even began construction on a project. She stated she believes this company to be more a land flipper by buying rights to the land, getting permits completed, and then selling to another company. Ms. Sanders stated she commends the Mayor of Mulberry for being passionate, having his town’s best interest at heart, and that his motives are good but that she believes he does not know all the details of what this will bring in to the county. Ms. Sanders asked some questions regarding the potential solar project.

Item Five: Ms. Giovanna Brackett addressed the Commissioners. She mentioned they have been hearing a lot of what ifs and that she is here to inform the Commissioners of promises made to other counties that were not fulfilled. She explained how she has gotten this information. Ms. Brackett discussed the information from other counties. She discussed a resident of Bourbon County fighting the Commissioners because a company placed a bitcoin generator next to their house. She explained these generators are very loud and that they were promised a barrier which ended up only being made up of a tarp. She mentioned his child is being treated for mental illness due to the high-pitched noise being produced causing trouble with his preexisting special needs.

Item Six: Ms. Judy Prince addressed the Commissioners. She stated she would like to reiterate what Ms. Brackett has stated about the predatory practices going on with these companies. She stated she would like to know how they are going to dispose of the equipment after it has been used. Ms. Prince stated she was present the night that Ms. Rhodes told Mulberry City Commission that she had already approached City of Arma

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regarding this solar opportunity and that they had not gotten back with her so she was approaching City of Mulberry.

Item Seven: Ms. Rhodes stated she did not approach City of Mulberry but that Mulberry approached Shasta Power. She discussed Mulberry not being able to match funds for grants. She mentioned the water meter trouble they are having as well. Ms. Rhodes stated if they could come up with something else that can help Mulberry that would be great. Ms. Rhodes stated Shasta Power is a private company so they do not have to make investors public. Ms. Rhodes stated if they have voter apathy and government apathy in the county that is something they need to address.

Item Eight: Ms. Desiree Humble addressed the Commissioners. She stated she is not anywhere near the proposed solar project and commends the Mulberry Mayor for his passion, but that her biggest concern is that they thought they were safe from this for the time being due to the moratorium. She also mentioned a big concern is the way that this was handled and done through the back door. She stated that makes them not trust the company.

Item Nine: Ms. Phyllis Polnack addressed the Commissioners. She stated she is a resident of Mulberry and that her concern is the amount of land being annexed. Ms. Polnack stated the extra revenue sounds great and is appealing but will it be available. She stated she does not want this in her backyard and does not wish it on the people who will be living by it. Ms. Polnack stated there is not enough personnel to man the volunteer fire department Mulberry has and questioned whether they have enough personnel if the solar project catches fire.

Item Ten: Ms. Janet Vanleeuwen addressed the Commissioners. She stated it sounds like if this annexation goes through it seems like Mulberry will be in the position of God and that it does not sound right.

Item Eleven: Ms. Becky Willard addressed the Commissioners. She stated she has never desired for her address to ever be in Mulberry and that she does not see what would stop them from attempting to annex the entire rural area. She mentioned she cannot believe they would attempt to take tax dollars away from the county. Commissioner Moody stated it is his understanding they would not annex the roads and Ms. Willard stated that is correct and the county would still be responsible for maintaining the roads with less tax dollars. Ms. Willard mentioned she believes Shasta Power will not build the solar project and that they are just the middle man who will pass it off to another company. Ms. Willard mentioned it is not just Mulberry but what is stopping any other city from annexing property just to get more tax dollars and how will that hurt the county.

Item Twelve: Ms. Ann Sanders addressed the Commissioners. She stated she looked up some studies regarding property value and gave some information regarding this.

Item Thirteen: Mr. Russell Smith addressed the Commissioners. He stated he spoke to a realtor that works for Cobb Realty. He asked what the impact would be if he had solar panels near his house and she told him that his property value would decrease. He stated she mentioned the closer the houses are, the bigger the impact. Commissioner Wood

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asked Mr. Emerson what will happen to Washington Township if it is annexed in to the City of Mulberry and Mr. Emerson stated he will need to look into this.

NEW BUSINESS

Item One: Mr. Emerson stated the county did receive the official copy from the City of Mulberry yesterday. He mentioned this begins the 30 day timeline and puts them in to the November 18th or 19th to make a final decision and he will verify this date. Mr. Emerson stated they will need to schedule a public hearing quite a bit before so they can hear all opinions. Commissioner Moody stated on page 2 there are three questions pertaining to annexation and asked if these are the three questions that Commission can ask and Mr. Emerson explained. Mr. Emerson stated he believes City of Arma and City of Frontenac need to be allowed to voice their opinions due to the proposed annexed land being close to their city limits. Commissioner Moody asked if he will notify the cities and Mr. Emerson confirmed. Commissioner Wood asked when the information was received and Mr. Emerson stated yesterday. Mr. Emerson stated the plans will be announced to the public so that everyone has the opportunity to be present and participate.

MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC CONTINUED

Item Fourteen: Ms. Becky Willard addressed the Commissioners. She stated the Crawford County Coalition Against Wind and Solar would like to ask for an extension of the moratorium and would like another year to give planning and zoning a chance to get their portion done. She mentioned they would like to add three more things to the moratorium; Data Centers, Bitcoin, and Cryptocurrency. Commissioner Wood asked about adding something regarding the abandoned gas wells and Ms. Willard answered. Mr. Emerson stated that if the Commission decided to extend the moratorium he would just need to update the Resolution and add the language.

NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

Item Two: Mr. Emerson stated the county is still receiving emails regarding the annexation and that while he may not respond to all of them, they are being presented to the Commissioners. Commissioner Blair asked where these are being submitted and Mr. Emerson explained.

Item Three: Commissioner Wood asked Mr. Emerson what the hold up is regarding the storage building contract for the Clerk's Office. Mr. Emerson answered that with everything that has been going on with this annexation and the calls and emails he has been receiving, his time has been limited but that he is hoping to work on it today. Mr. Emerson explained the contract was in the bill packet so it just needs be signed and sent in.

OLD BUSINESS

Item One: Mr. Emerson stated that Aaron Crozier with Courthouse Maintenance was wanting to present the Commissioners with a recommendation after receiving additional information regarding the boilers at the Judicial Center.

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Item Two: Mr. Emerson stated he received a request for a work session on October 31, 2025 at 9:00 AM with the SEK Recycling Center. The Commissioners agreed.

Item Three: Commissioner Wood stated he is going to get with Road and Bridge Coordinator Alyssa Edwards regarding the difference in price for chip and seal and asphaltting.

MESSAGES FROM APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Item One: Aaron Crozier, Courthouse Maintenance addressed the Commissioners. He presented them with some information regarding the boilers at the Judicial Center. Mr. Crozier stated the Commissioners asked him to request additional information from CDL and James River Mechanical and he was able to make contact with them. Mr. Crozier explained what they were looking for with the bid proposal and that he still did not receive what was asked for even after he asked for additional information. Mr. Crozier explained they have one company that did provide all information and that is Design Mechanical, which also turned out to be the highest bid. He stated he did reach out to Design Mechanical to ask if they could quote the smaller boilers and that he received that information yesterday and presented it to the Commissioners. He mentioned this brought their bid total down about \$12,000.00. Mr. Crozier stated he and Maintenance Supervisor Robert Gorentz do recommend the chemical sock filters. He explained that the smaller boiler will run at 12% less capacity below zero degrees and that the building won't freeze but will just be uncomfortable until it gets back up to temperature. Commissioner Wood asked if each one of these boilers are the same brand and Mr. Crozier confirmed they are all the same. Mr. Crozier stated he and Mr. Gorentz's recommendation is still for Design Mechanical and that he would prefer to see the larger boilers. Commissioner Wood asked if they are all the same as far as when they could start the job and Mr. Crozier stated he does not know about CDL or James River Mechanical but that Design Mechanical is prepared to start immediately. Commissioner Blair asked what other emergencies do they have coming up and Mr. Crozier answered he would imagine before this year is done they will be spending between \$20,000 and \$35,000 on the boiler in the courthouse. Mr. Crozier stated there are just several things going on at this moment. Commissioner Wood asked about keeping the boilers from the Judicial Center as back ups for the jail and Mr. Crozier explained. Mr. Crozier mentioned Design Mechanical provided 6 or 7 references as well. Commissioner Moody stated he sees Mr. Crozier reached out on October 15th and asked if he ever received a call back from CDL. Mr. Crozier confirmed that he did receive a call back on October 15th but wanted to make sure he followed up with an email. Commissioner Blair asked Mr. Emerson if he has this figured out financially and Mr. Emerson explained. Commissioner Blair asked if government shut down will be an issue and Mr. Emerson denied that it would be a problem. Commissioner Wood asked what the shut down would have to do with EMS and Mr. Emerson explained. Commissioner Blair stated he is just worried with the financial side of this decision and wants to be 100% sure they are not in a bad position at the end of the year and asked if it would make much of a difference if they made a decision on Friday. Mr. Crozier stated it probably would not make much of a difference but the sooner the better with a decision. Commissioner Wood made a motion to accept the high bid but the motion died for lack of a second. Commissioner Blair asked Commissioner Wood if he was not okay with Mr. Emerson making sure the financial aspect was clear before making a decision on Friday

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and Commissioner Wood stated they do not know where they will be and that from what he can see there will be a government shut down and if they have to, there will be people laid off temporarily to make budget. He said he believes this project is more important than people working. Commissioner Blair stated he believes someone's job is worth an additional three days to look into financials. Commissioner Blair stated he does not want to have to lay people off at the end of the year because they made a decision without looking at the financials and Commissioner Wood stated it may happen anyways with a certain department because they are run by federal grants and asked Mr. Emerson if that is correct. Mr. Emerson asked for clarification on which department and Commissioner Wood answered the Health Department. Mr. Crozier stated the lesser option of Design Mechanical could be made and Commissioner Blair stated he does not believe that difference would be the deciding factor. Commissioner Wood asked if Mr. Emerson will have all the financial information by Friday and Mr. Emerson stated he will go through everything they have and show them where the funding is. Commissioner Moody stated he is having a hard time with this decision because they took the low bid for the Storage Building even though all the information was not included but now they are taking a high bid on the boilers because the two lower bids did not have all the information. Commissioner Moody stated he believes they need to look at their bid process because they are all over the board. Commissioner Wood stated Design Mechanical did what Mr. Crozier asked for and the others did not. Mr. Crozier stated this situation in his opinion is a little different because the building specs were sent out exactly for the storage building. Mr. Crozier explained the difference between the two processes. Commissioner Moody stated he does not think that three days will make too much of a difference.

MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC CONTINUED

Item Fifteen: Mr. Eddie Weber addressed the Commissioners and discussed boilers.

UNDER THE HEADING FUTURE BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

FUTURE BUSINESS:

Item One: October 24, 2025- 8:30 AM Work Session with Ryan Insurance and Sheriff's Department to discuss insurance.

Item Two: October 31, 2025- 9:00 AM Work Session with SEK Recycling Center.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

UNDER THE HEADING MOTION TO ADJOURN MOTION TO ADJOURN

Item One: Adjournment

On the motion of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Wood to adjourn the [October 21, 2025](#) meeting of the Board of Crawford County Commissioners at 11:53 AM and to reconvene at the next regularly scheduled time with open doors.

Yeas: Commissioners Wood, Blair, and Moody

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Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

The motion prevailed.

In Testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed my official seal and submitted these minutes for the approval of the Board of Crawford County Commissioners.

Lisa Lusker
County Clerk

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This submission completed at the Crawford County Courthouse in Girard.

[Taken RJA 10/23/25 3:25 PM](#)