

# Board of Crawford County Commissioners

## Commissioners' Journal

2026, SEVENTH MEETING

CRAWFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, COMMISSIONERS' BOARD ROOM  
Girard, KS. **Friday, January 23, 2026 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 Bruce Blair served as the presiding officer.

Commissioners Carl Wood and Tom Moody 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 (26-035)** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Wood that the consent agenda be approved including:

1. Approval of the **January 20, 2026** minutes of the Board of County Commissioners, and
2. Authorizing the Chairman to sign the previous week's vouchers.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Wood, and Blair

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 26	32	That the consent agenda be approved including: Approval of the January 16, 2026 minutes
Motion 26	33	To approve payment to Track Star International, Inc. for GSP tracking in the total amount of \$14,252.40 and authorizing the Chairman to sign
Motion 26	34	To approve the quote with Cook, Flatt & Strobel Engineers, PA for the 2026 bridge inspections in the amount of \$30,444.00 and authorizing the Chairman to sign

# Board of Crawford County Commissioners

## 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

### MESSAGES FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

### MESSAGES FROM APPOINTED OFFICIALS

**Item One:** Emergency Manager Quinton Parsons addressed the Commissioners. He stated he wants to provide the Commissioners with a quick update on the winter weather coming in. He explained the two phases of the storm that are supposed to hit. Mr. Parsons mentioned this will go in to Monday morning and that forecast is calling for 8 to 13 inches of snow at this time. Commissioner Blair mentioned in the past with weather like this there has been warming centers and asked if Mr. Parsons knew of any that would be open and Mr. Parsons explained. He mentioned there is currently no warming centers in the city of Pittsburg or Frontenac.

### MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC

**Item One:** Mr. Roger Lomshek addressed the Commissioners. He thanked the Commissioners, County Counselor Jim Emerson, and County Clerk Lisa Lusker for doing a meeting with City of Pittsburg last night. Mr. Lomshek mentioned he put a graph together for the Commissioners to visualize how property taxes have climbed in Crawford County over the last few years. He gave the details of the graph. Mr. Lomshek mentioned that nobody questioned why there was an 11% increase in revenue. Commissioner Blair asked if this information is based off of the amount of property taxes paid per residents of Crawford County and Mr. Lomshek explained. Commissioner Blair asked if he has looked at numbers of new houses, new commercial buildings, or anything new that has happened from those years as well and Mr. Lomshek stated he has not and that he understands those things would have a little impact. Commissioner Blair mentioned those are just things that would be added to the tax roll that were not present on it before. Commissioner Blair mentioned there is a lot of building going on in Crawford County. Commissioner Blair stated he feels like Mr. Lomshek is stating they have increased the taxes by this much but that there has also been an increase in valuation along with new properties. Mr. Lomshek stated they know this money did not come from an increase in properties being added to the tax roll. Ms. Lusker stated these charts and graphs can confuse people and that yes it has already been admitted that the hospital was left on the tax rolls but that Commissioner Blair is correct about there being new business, increase in valuation, and new houses in Crawford County. She mentioned they are currently working on fixing the mistake but that what is being done is inciting anger and hostility which is counter intuitive to what is happening. Commissioner Wood stated he was not aware until 2 or 3 weeks ago that the budget increased by 1.7 million and asked if this 11% is from the increase in assessed appraised value and Mr. Lomshek stated it is not. Commissioner Wood stated if things go how they were talking last night where should the threshold be and Mr. Lomshek answered. Ms. Lusker explained that they are not discussing the mill levy but are discussing what the Commissioners budgeted to run the county. Commissioner Blair mentioned that they have tried to lower mill levy every year and Commissioner Moody stated that can be proven. Commissioner Blair

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

mentioned even if they would have cut more from the budgets he does not believe they ever would have gotten down as far as Mr. Lomshek is asking. Commissioner Blair stated they even brought the Sheriff's Department in before passing the budgets and asked if there was any way at all they could cut down more on their budget and the Sheriff answered it would not be possible without laying people off. Commissioner Moody stated he does not want to beat up the EMS Department either but that they did the same with them and Commissioner Blair explained they had to fund the EMS department more to avoid not having services be available. Commissioner Blair stated they can look into Road and Bridge again and possibly cut back on some things but that he does not believe they ever would have gotten down to the budget that is being asked of them. Mr. Lomshek stated his point in doing this is to make sure they all understand where they are versus where they could have been had the mill not had to be raised due to those errors. Commissioner Moody mentioned they have an 8% increase in their insurance and when the EMS department was losing employees because they could go other places and make more money when you have 68 transfers from hospitals a month with not enough crew members to do so it is a problem. He mentioned when you have to take a call from a loved one whose family is dying but there is not enough ambulances to get them where they need to go you would do anything to make that happen. Commissioner Wood stated he is still trying to figure out if the assessed appraised value went up 7% and they left the mill levy where it was they would have increased the budget by 1 million dollars and Mr. Lomshek confirmed that is a ballpark estimate. Commissioner Wood stated if they drop the mill levy back down there would still be an increase because of assessed appraised value and Mr. Lomshek confirmed. Mr. Lomshek explained the graph again. Commissioner Wood asked if Mr. Lomshek knows what came off the tax roll for nonprofits or people that don't pay taxes. Commissioner Wood listed what came off the tax roll and asked if Mr. Lomshek has any idea what they did not collect this year and Mr. Lomshek stated it would be the roughly \$780,000.00. Commissioner Wood asked about a 10 million dollar facility being built and if they still collect the taxes that were previously collected at the location and Mr. Emerson stated it depends on the program. Mr. Emerson explained different programs regarding property tax exemption. Mr. Lomshek explained the graph again. He stated they cannot just cut the mill levy down to what it should have been but would need to cut it lower to actually return the money to the tax payers. Commissioner Wood stated to go back down to where they need it they would have to find out what the assessed appraised value is and drop the mill levy lower. Mr. Lomshek discussed the revenue neutral rate and how the whole calculation was based off of an inflated number. Ms. Lusker stated that is not necessarily true and explained. She reiterated how much the Commissioners go through each department and cut down on what they can on the budgets. Commissioner Moody stated when they are trying to cut it down and they have to look at what each department needs it has to come from somewhere and thank goodness the assessed value when up because that makes it to where the mill levy can be kept and Mr. Lomshek stated the assessed value did not go up enough. Ms. Lusker stated that Commissioner Blair explained they could not come down to a certain mill levy anyways because they need the money. Mr. Lomshek asked if it was absolutely impossible to do anything but increase the spend by 11%. Commissioner Moody stated he thought about this himself and has looked at the mill levy and what it has done the last several years but it is lower now than in 2018 and that Ms. Lusker is right that they meet weeks on end to try and only give what departments need to sustain their offices. Ms. Lusker stated they are doing the best with what they have and that they

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

all pay taxes as well. Commissioner Moody stated he does not want to have to pay higher taxes but he does it. Commissioner Moody stated he has talked to people several times and has asked would you rather have a \$10 refund check or know that an ambulance can pick you up if you need it and has yet to hear anyone say they do not want the ambulance. Commissioner Moody mentioned to sustain EMS it costs a lot of money. Ms. Lusker stated nobody is picking on EMS, Sheriff's Department, or Road and Bridge but those just happen to be the largest budgets. Ms. Lusker stated she did see the post about the miscellaneous funds and that Mr. Emerson has explained several times what comes out of this fund. Commissioner Blair mentioned there is about \$100,000 in miscellaneous for public safety. Ms. Lusker mentioned insurance rates also come from miscellaneous funds. Commissioner Blair mentioned other costs that were not planned for. Ms. Lusker also mentioned the county audit every year and that they pass every year. Mr. Lomshek asked what kind of audit they do and Ms. Lusker explained it is a complete audit. Commissioner Wood stated he has asked several times why people put things under miscellaneous when they have a budget and if he had their way they would cut it down quite a bit. He stated he could show many times on bills where they use miscellaneous. Ms. Lusker stated the commission credit cards and their mileage is also paid out of miscellaneous funds. Mr. Lomshek asked if it is a compliance audit or an efficiency audit as a compliance audit is very important legally to make sure things are spent and allocated appropriately where as an efficiency audit is just finding ways to reduce unnecessary expenditures. Mr. Emerson stated the county's audit is the municipal audit by state statute and explained what this means. Commissioner Moody stated last night it was said that they are all elected and that if the constituents did not trust their decisions then they would not be elected and that they always try to do what is best for their county. Mr. Lomshek stated he understands that it is a thankless job. He stated the perception is that he is throwing bricks all over the place trying to bust windows and that is not it but there has to be some means of relieving the pressure off of people and we are driving people away from this county. Commissioner Moody stated he is in the insurance business and that it is hard to tell an individual who does not have the money that their rates have gone up and you do everything you can to help but can only do so much. Mr. Lomshek stated maybe it is time for an efficiency audit to find errors or money that can be more efficiently utilized. Commissioner Moody stated he thinks the faith is in them to utilize the funds efficiently and that he believes they do. He stated there are a few things that could probably be fixed. Commissioner Blair discussed miscellaneous fund and explained why it is utilized. Commissioner Blair stated they have done a great job not allowing departments to have wants but only needs and sometimes they even have to go without needs. Commissioner Blair discussed KPNF with the Sheriff's Department and how it has increased and Mr. Lomshek asked what percentage that is and Mr. Emerson explained. Commissioner Blair stated tier 3 for KPERS and that it is embarrassing and that it needs fixed in Topeka. Commissioner Wood stated when they started this budget he had a personal goal to have the same mill levy that it was previously and at the time he did not know what the assessed appraised value was. He explained they cut on budgets. Ms. Lusker explained the number was the same when they started, worked on the budget, and when they ended the budget but that it had changed after when the error was found. Mr. Lomshek stated Ms. Lusker explained this very well last night. Mr. Lomshek stated the state is looking to change assessed values and appraisals and explained this is not the issue. Commissioner Wood asked how they can return assessed values to 2022 values with the cost of building at this time and Mr. Lomshek explained. Commissioner Wood

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

mentioned the rumor of personal property taxes being eliminated this session or next session and Mr. Lomshek stated it will not be this session but that it is coming sometime. Commissioner Blair stated he feels he is being scrutinized when discussing cutting Sheriff's Department but that if individuals wanted them to get down to that mill they would have to cut the biggest budgets with the most increase. Mr. Lomshek stated if the Sheriff's budget increased 6% and the revenue increased 11% where else was the revenue put and Commissioner Blair stated he looked at numbers not percentages because percentages skew numbers and confuse people but that they have increase in EMS as well and county attorney. He explained if they have certain increases for their needs that are statute driven they cannot deny it. Commissioner Blair stated this also do not include budgets that were over and that they tell people no every year. He explained they were going to cut Sheriff and EMS budget because they cannot fund their entire ask until they pulled them in for discussion and after telling them what they could approve asking if they could cut any more. Commissioner Moody discussed the county attorney and them having trouble hiring attorneys and how this affects the county. Commissioner Blair stated if it gets to a certain point it will come to eliminating positions and cutting employee benefits and that he does not want to have to fire someone who is doing their job over a budget issue but if that is what has to happen then it has to be looked at. He stated it is not fair to be fired when you are doing your job. Commissioner Blair mentioned they have tried to do this in round about way by not replacing certain positions when they retire and absorbing the tasks. Commissioner Blair mentioned he does not agree with valuation going up due to out of state people over paying for properties and that he would like to see a change in that process. Commissioner Blair stated when they take heat for raising valuations people need to understand they have to do what the state wants to stay in compliance because the last thing Crawford County wants is for the State of Kansas to come in and set valuations. Ms. Lusker stated the ad valorem tax is one of the largest revenue streams. Mr. Lomshek stated he believes the revenue neutral rate is based off of the previous year so that they need to keep this in mind next year when they get an impression of working on a false baseline. Commissioner Wood asked Mr. Lomshek if he is projecting 17 million dollar budget with the revenue neutral rate and Mr. Lomshek explained. Commissioner Wood asked if Mr. Lomshek knows what the 2026 budget will be and Mr. Lomshek answered 37 million and Commissioner Wood asked if he is saying they will have to cut 20 million dollars and Mr. Lomshek declined and explained. Mr. Lomshek stated on new sources of revenue he recommends that if it is not in writing it does not exist.

**On motion (26-036)** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Wood to recess the open meeting for a period of 5 minutes.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Wood, and Blair

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

**Item Two:** Mr. John Copyak addressed the Commissioners. He explained he is one of the owners of Shasta Power. He mentioned they have been developing a project in Crawford County for several years starting before the moratorium. Mr. Copyak explained they are wanting to invest approximately 500 million dollars in a project in Crawford County. He

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

stated this project would pay approximately 77 million in standard property taxes over its lifetime which is 30 years. He explained 15 million of the 77 million would be paid in years 1 through 5. Mr. Copyak stated they would hope to have this project complete by 2029 but that they are being held up by the moratorium on solar. He stated they are proposing a bonus fund of 20 million dollars that would be paid in addition to the 77 million dollars in standard property tax and that part of the 20 million would go to the City of Mulberry, the fire department, and that they could pay the county an additional 12 million dollars in which they could spend any way that they would like. Mr. Copyak provided the Commissioners with a handout that explains the schedule of taxes and discussed this handout. Mr. Copyak stated solar is quiet and safe as well as the battery systems. Commissioner Moody asked if the battery structure has changed since the last time they talked because it seemed like this was one of the biggest concerns previously. Mr. Copyak stated there is a number of different battery technologies that can be used but the most prominent one at this time is lithium ion batteries which are some what flammable and they would have every fire protection recommended on site. He stated they would also consider another form of less flammable battery but that it is impossible to know what the best battery option will be 3 years from now. Commissioner Moody mentioned another concern was the location of the battery storage and asked if they had discussed relocating the batteries and Mr. Copyak stated they are willing to locate them at the guidance of the Commissioners as well as willing to discuss setbacks regarding the entire project and specifically certain areas of the project. Mr. Copyak stated the issue they are facing right now is time and that they have already placed about 1.2 million dollars with Evergy and SBP to begin the interconnection process and that they have to double down with another 1.2 million dollars next month in addition to land payments and legal costs. He stated they are not willing to keep pushing money out the doors under the current moratorium. Mr. Copyak stated he would like to discuss all the extra money they are offering and discussed what he previously stated regarding extra funds. He mentioned this project is on the Commissioners shoulders and is their decision. Mr. Copyak mentioned the pushback this project has received is from the direct neighbors and he is now proposing that the Commissioners take the 12 million dollars for the county and use it for their budgets or they could take the 12 million dollars and pay the direct neighbors of the project site. He stated they have identified 59 neighbors around the project site that will be affected the most and divided the 12 million dollars which comes out to about \$200,000 per neighbor. Mr. Copyak stated they are willing to work with neighbors on their concerns such as noise but stated that solar projects do not produce noise. Commissioner Moody mentioned one of the complaints he heard is the humming of the generators. Mr. Copyak confirmed that does happen but that generators will be at least 200 feet away from any house but also that the biggest hum will come from the substation which already exists. He did state the batteries hum a little as well. Mr. Copyak listed out all the choices for the Commissioners and stated he is hoping they will look at the choices and choose to lift the moratorium in February under the basic guidelines of code. Commissioner Moody stated he spoke with Mr. Steve Kuplen and a lot of the problems were with the landowners around the area and that Mr. Rick Elnicki was looking at selling property around this area to build homes on. Commissioner Moody asked if he had spoken to land owners yet and Mr. Copyak stated they have not and that his letter stated if they choose to lift the moratorium they will pay the county 12 million dollars or if they prefer Shasta to handle the money they will pay the neighbors. He stated he imagines some neighbors will love it but some will not. He mentioned he will go to

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

the neighbors if the county wants them to and that if some neighbors do not want to support they will just pay the other neighbors more. Commissioner Moody asked the other Commissioners what their thoughts are. Commissioner Blair stated if Mr. Copyak wants to make that presentation to the neighbors then that is within his reason. He also discussed wind and solar and that most of the issues with this project was the neighbors around it although he knows other people were involved as well. Commissioner Blair gave details regarding Hepler's wind farm. He stated if they get the 60 neighbors come in to the meeting stating they are for the project it could change things a little but that they have stated they wanted to wait until the Comprehensive Plan was complete before making these decisions. Mr. Copyak stated if the county wants the 12 million dollars to spend how they want they need to lift the moratorium and tell him now and if they do not he will do all the door knocking and approach the neighbors to see how it goes. He asked if they would lift the moratorium if at least half of the neighbors agreed to the project and Commissioner Blair stated they could have a conversation but that it goes back to what he said before with all the conversations regarding the Comprehensive Plan. He stated he cannot give any type of commitment today. Mr. Copyak stated he is here today to find out if the county itself wants the 12 million dollars or if they should spread it amongst the neighbors and that he will approach all the neighbors. Commissioner Blair stated if it was about the money to them they would have already approved all of these projects. Commissioner Wood stated he listens to the people and he does not know why Shasta Power is just now offering to go talk to the neighbors. He also stated they are throwing these numbers around but that lip service is cheap. Commissioner Wood stated he would like to see 90-95% of the neighbors agree and asked if they will have the neighbors sign something stating they will not complain about the project after and Mr. Copyak answered. Commissioner Moody stated they should include setbacks in the information as well. Mr. Copyak asked Mr. Emerson how he makes this guarantee permanent and Mr. Emerson answered but stated he should also discuss with his own counsel as well. Commissioner Wood stated he wants nothing to do with the money and Mr. Emerson stated he agreed but explained the option he was providing. Commissioner Wood discussed the project going through zoning as well. Commissioner Moody stated he recommends talking to the neighbors first. Mr. Copyak asked if he could get 51% of the neighbors to agree would they lift the moratorium. Commissioner Moody and Commissioner Wood stated they would like more to agree than that but that they would like to see what number they come up with. Mr. Copyak thanked the Commissioners for considering. Commissioner Wood asked if there is any kind of proof of the neighbors agreeing to support the project and Mr. Emerson stated he imagines there will be something in writing. Commissioner Moody stated he is sure they will receive calls. Commissioner Wood asked if they are going to go along with a 10 year tax abatement and Mr. Copyak answered they are going to use that money to spread to the City of Mulberry and fire department.

**Item Three:** Mr. Rick Elnicki addressed the Commissioners. He stated he has land leased to Shasta Power and that they are wanting to invest half a billion dollars in Crawford County which would be the largest investment ever here. He mentioned they have been very good to work with and have always done what they say they are going to do. Mr. Elnicki stated he hopes the County Commission takes advantage of this opportunity which comes with no cost to the county. He gave information regarding the financial pieces of this project. Mr. Elnicki provided the Commissioners with a map of

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

his property. Commissioner Wood asked the price range on the homes he will put on his property and Mr. Elnicki explained. Mr. Steve Kuplen stated he is the real estate agent and property owner in this project. He stated he did sell everyone the property near the project. Mr. Kuplen explained the homes in his development and that he knows Mr. Elnicki will not put bad homes on his. Mr. Kuplen stated he is not having a difficult time selling lots in this area and the people are aware of the solar project. He discussed giving the money to the neighbors in the area and that they are a lot of single women getting around \$800 in social security a month and if they come to them with that amount of money they will faint. He stated it will be a big thing for some of the people in the area. Commissioner Moody stated he appreciates them coming to speak to the Commissioners.

**Item Four:** Mr. Daniel Zywietz addressed the Commissioners. He stated he has no financial stake in this project and that he runs SEK Solar out of Chanute. He gave details on his work experience. Mr. Zywietz addressed some of the questions asked earlier regarding the batteries and discussed them. Commissioner Wood asked if they own the Greenbush solar and Mr. Zywietz answered that it is owned by Heartland. Commissioner Wood stated he heard they have three projects and that the company that owned it no longer exists and Mr. Zywietz explained. Commissioner Wood asked if he knows what the hum is on the transformer and Mr. Zywietz explained and discussed how it can be fixed. Mr. Zywietz discussed increase in energy usage and reasoning behind it.

**Item Five:** Mr. Kuplen addressed the Commissioners and stated he offered Shasta Power to move the batteries away from the houses in to the middle of one of his sections. He stated they mentioned they could probably do this and that they do not have to put them up by the houses.

**Item Six:** Mr. Copyak addressed the Commissioners. Commissioner Wood asked him if their company still do not want to take responsibility for maintaining the county roads they use during this project and Mr. Copyak stated they will be spending 77 million in tax dollars and a chunk of that is for county roads. He mentioned if they want an additional money for county roads they will need to sit down and discuss this and that they are right off the highway so they are not a lot of roads that will be affected. Commissioner Moody asked if a road is damaged are they willing to fix it and Mr. Copyak confirmed. Mr. Copyak stated after construction there will be very little traffic and that solar is light so it is not similar to wind turbines but they will be happy to fix roads if they damage them. Commissioner Blair stated they have had previous agreements with companies regarding the roads and certain projects taking place. Commissioner Blair asked if they do get landowners to cooperate would they be willing to come back to give more information and Mr. Zywietz confirmed.

**Item Seven:** Mr. Matthew Harris addressed the Commissioners. He stated he is a resident of Mulberry and is a business owner. He explained he has a resale certificate so he does not pay sales tax on something he sells to an individual so he asked will the sales tax off of the energy go to Crawford County. Mr. Harris explained if they do not sell this energy to Crawford County then they will not see any of this sales tax. Mr. Harris asked if solar farms pay property taxes and Commissioner Wood discussed a 10 year tax abatement. Commissioner Blair read the paperwork given to them but that there is nothing in there that talks about the sales tax portion but does discuss to property tax on battery storage

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

and fencing which Mr. Emerson confirmed is taxable. Mr. Copyak answered there is no sales tax generated from this project. Mr. Harris asked if the solar farm itself pays property tax and Mr. Copyak answered the owners pay the property tax and Shasta pays the tax on the equipment. Commissioner Blair asked if the property switches to commercial once the solar project takes place. Mr. Harris asked about the 20 million dollars. He discussed the \$200,000 they will pay the neighbors over 30 to 35 years of the project and explained that is not a lot of money. Mr. Copyak stated they will get \$100,000 in the first 5 years of the project. Mr. Harris asked how the batteries will be taxed and Mr. Copyak answered. Mr. Zywitz addressed some of Mr. Harris' questions. Mr. Harris discussed materials coming from overseas. He also mentioned the grass being dead at the Greenbush project and it being a fire hazard.

### MESSAGES FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS NEW BUSINESS

**Item One:** Mr. Emerson discussed the ARPA work session from this morning. He stated the total ARPA drawdown for January 2026 is \$118,804.27. He stated he is pleased to report progress with city projects and that they are almost finished. Mr. Emerson discussed the different requests from this month and stated that they were all discussed in the work session. Commissioner Wood asked if the \$15,000.00 to Greenbush is paid in advance or behind a year and Mr. Emerson explained. Commissioner Blair asked about the year end report for ARPA and asked if there is an audit done for this process and Mr. Emerson explained the process.

**On motion (26-037)** of Commissioner Blair and the second of Commissioner Moody to approve the ARPA drawdown request for January 2026.

**On a Roll Call vote.**

Yeas: Commissioners Blair, Moody, and Wood

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

**Item Two:** Mr. Emerson presented a Notice of Intent to Vacate a portion of second street located in the Original Twon of Ringo, Crawford County, Kansas. Mr. Emerson explained the location and details of the vacate. He mentioned this is a landowner request. Mr. Emerson stated the public hearing is set for Friday, February 20, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

**On motion (26-038)** of Commissioner Moody and the second of Commissioner Wood to approve the publication of the Notice of Intent to Vacate a Platted Street located in the Original Town of Ringo, Crawford County, Kansas with a public hearing scheduled for Friday, February 20, 2026 at 10:00 AM.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Wood, and Blair

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

**Item Three:** Mr. Emerson mention the work session they had this meeting to discuss an infant policy with the county. He stated the Commissioners have asked him to set another work session with the department heads and elected officials so he will get an email sent out. Mr. Emerson asked if anyone will have any scheduling issues coming up because he is considering February 10th if he can get that set this quickly. Commissioner Wood asked if they can also discuss the per diem policy at the work session with everyone attending as well and Mr. Emerson confirmed that they can. Mr. Emerson stated February 10th at 9:00 AM for this work session is what he will try for and if someone cannot make it they can send someone else from their office.

**Item Four:** Commissioner Blair discussed the meeting with City of Pittsburg last night and discussed different department budgets. He discussed the equipment amount in Road and Bridge and that Shop Foreman Josh Peak is confident they can get another year out of the equipment they have so Commissioner Blair mentioned he thinks they should avoid spending that amount for now. He stated he has heard a few elected officials mention they would prefer to see their employees receive a cost of living raise than themselves and he is personally one of them who believes this and does not know how the other Commissioners feel. Commissioner Moody stated he agrees and that he would rather see his employees get a raise as well instead of himself. Commissioner Wood stated he does not need the cost of living raise either. Commissioner Wood mentioned he was approached on Wednesday about the cost of living raises and that he stated they are working on it. Commissioner Wood stated he has heard people are going to quit and that he hopes their employees see that this is just a tough time and will bear with them. Commissioner Blair mentioned they do have good benefits but that he feels like cost of living raise is adequate and not out of the normal of what most companies do. Commissioner Blair stated he wanted to get this out before they are asked what they are going to do and that his suggestion is to save the \$120,000 on equipment at Road and Bridge and talk to the department heads and elected officials on February 10th about looking at ways to save in the budget. Commissioner Wood stated something he would like to see is carryover in each department after all the 2025 bills are finished up in the beginning of February. Mr. Emerson stated they can do that. Commissioner Blair stated in transparency they also need to look at the departments that went over budget and for those numbers to get shared around. Commissioner Wood stated they need to stay on those departments and that they need to help the taxpayers. He mentioned he believes the taxpayers will see that they are trying. Commissioner Moody agreed. Commissioner Blair mentioned spending more time on the clerk's report when they see a larger than normal spending. Ms. Lusker mentioned she wonders if they can even break down the general fund in the clerk's report further and Mr. Emerson suggested they could but that he would put more emphasis on the budget detail that is printed out with the clerk's report. Commissioner Wood mentioned the departments need to help for the next few years and that hopefully it will get better.

### OLD BUSINESS

**Item One:** Commissioner Moody asked Mr. Emerson about the process of the budget issues going on and Mr. Emerson answered that he believes the Commission made their position known and that they are going to commit to review every item in the budget at

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

budget time and before. Mr. Emerson mentioned he feels good about them having made their position known and that it is going to be a lot of work and that they are going to try to lower the mill levy next year. Commissioner Wood asked if he agrees on what they were talking about last night that when they start this budget it will be at 46.59 as a starting point and both Mr. Emerson and Commissioner Moody stated that is what they agreed to. Mr. Emerson stated there is a way to put this in the system to target for that amount and Ms. Lusker confirmed. He mentioned it will tell them exactly how much they will need to cut. Commissioner Blair mentioned they need to tell the department heads and elected officials up front where they are starting at that they will have to work with that. Mr. Emerson mentioned they are going to handle the situation with next year's budget and that begins in April. Ms. Lusker stated she knows they discussed a little of what happened and what they will do going forward and that her office and the Appraiser's office has already began implementing changes to avoid this issue in the future. She also mentioned she would like to have more meetings with Appraiser Zach Edwards prior to this process to have him look over everything as well. Ms. Lusker mentioned she did agree to meet with the City of Pittsburg midsummer once their budget is going to make sure their valuation looks okay. Commissioner Wood asked if there is a date that non profits can apply to be tax exempt and Ms. Lusker explained non profits can begin at any time. Ms. Lusker stated she will do better to make sure this does not happen again.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

**Item One:** County Counselor Jim Emerson requested an executive session for 10 minutes to discuss items that would be deemed privileged in the Attorney-Client Relationship.

**On motion (26-039)** of Commissioner Blair and second of Commissioner Moody to recess this open meeting and to go into a closed executive session for 10 minutes to discuss property acquisition 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 and County Counselor Jim Emerson, present. The open meeting will resume at 12:56 PM. The motion passed 3-0.

Yeas: Commissioners Blair, Moody, and Wood

Nays:

Present but not voting:

Absent or not voting:

**The motion prevailed.**

**The Commissioners went into Executive Session at 12:46 PM and reconvened the Open Session at 12:53 PM with no action taken except to go back into open session.**

### OLD BUSINESS CONTINUED

**Item Two:** Mr. Emerson mentioned that Emergency Manager Quinton Parsons was present to discuss the winter weather coming in and that they have encouraged all employees to sign up for the alert system. He explained this makes it easier to inform employees if they need to. Ms. Lusker explained she thought she was signed up but it turns out she was only signed up for just weather alerts and not the employee alerts so she

## Board of Crawford County Commissioners

explained that it is two separate things. Commissioner Wood discussed the burn ban alerts.

### **UNDER THE HEADING FUTURE BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FUTURE BUSINESS:**

**Item One: January 27, 2026- 9:00 AM** Work Session to discuss county per diem policy.

**Item Two: January 30, 2026-** Rock bids due by 10:00 AM and will be opened during the regular session.

**Item Three: February 10, 2026- 9:00 AM** Work Session with department heads and elected officials.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Item One: January 28, 2026-** Kansas Association of Counties Local Government Day. All three Commissioners may be in attendance.

### **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 [January 23, 2026](#) meeting of the Board of Crawford County Commissioners at 12:55 PM and to reconvene at the next regularly scheduled time with open doors.

Yeas: Commissioners Moody, Wood, and Blair

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.**

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**Lisa Lusker**  
County Clerk

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**This submission completed at the Crawford County Courthouse in Girard.**

Taken RJA 1/26/2026 10:15 AM/amended 1/26/26 11:15 AM