

Russell County Commission meet

(From the Unofficial and Unapproved minutes of the Russell County Commission Meeting held on April 21 2025.)

At 9:00 am, Duke Strobel made a motion to open the meeting. Alan Kuntzsch seconded. Jason Krug voted yes. Steve Reinhardt voted yes. Dean Haselhorst voted yes. Motion passed. Others present at the meeting were: Administrator Stephanie Grisham, County Attorney Dan Krug, GIS director Chris Brown, Deputy County Clerk Ronnie Gideon, Jeremy Nessler, and Phillip Pennington.

Duke Strobel made the motion to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2025, meeting. Alan Kuntzsch seconded. Jason Krug voted yes. Steve Reinhardt voted yes. Dean Haselhorst voted yes. Motion passed.

The Commissioners had their review. Jason Krug said he received a lot of phone calls regarding the landfill. A discussion was held about having a Jake Brake ordinance on K-18. Steve Reinhardt mentioned some concerns from business taxpayers on Main Street in downtown Russell, stating their property taxes are as high as businesses in Wichita. No action was taken.

Jeremy Nessler and Phillip Pennington suggested the official closing of Balta Road from 191st to 192nd. They stated that it has never been open, but shows as open on the county maps. A discussion was held regarding the official closing. There will need to be an order to vacate initiated to close the road. County Attorney Dan Krug will start the process and send notices. GIS Director Chris Brown will check on utilities.

Gerald Brandenburg asked if, at 189th and Pioneer Road, there could be speed limit signs set up. It was also mentioned by Brandenburg that residents may start a petition to have the speed limit lowered. No action was taken.

Justin Mermis, Public Works Director, gave an update on the Road and Bridge Department. The cold mix is a little behind, but will start on April 28, 2025, and will make 6000 tons. Justin stated he will be going to a public hearing on April 23, 2025, at 7:00 about a plat application from Charlotte David for housing on the county line. Russell County maintains that line of road South of Fairport, and there will most likely need to be an entrance. Justin stated he will also be attending the Kansas Association of Counties for Public Works class from May 5-7, 2025. He stated they are currently working on and replacing culverts. The concrete culvert in Dorrance has a hole in it on the blacktop North of town. There will be a Hell Creek Bridge Zoom meeting on May 14, 2025, at 2:00.

A resident expressed concern regarding an increase in illegal dumping of trash since the landfill began closing every other Saturday. The resident questioned who is responsible for cleaning up illegally dumped trash. It was suggested that the Sheriff's Office increase patrols in affected areas and issue fines or enforcement actions against individuals found to be dumping illegally. Additionally, the resident recommended clearer signage or public postings indicating the landfill's open and closed days to help avoid confusion. Steve Reinhardt made the motion to open every Saturday from 9:00 to NOON starting May 1st, 2025. Duke Strobel seconded. Alan Kuntzsch voted no. Jason Krug voted yes. Dean Haselhorst voted yes. Motion passed.

At 9:36 am, Duke Strobel made the motion to enter into a 5-minute executive session for non-elected personnel with Justin Mermis, Public Works Director, and Administrator Stephanie Grisham in attendance. Alan Kuntzsch seconded. Jason Krug voted yes. Steve Reinhardt voted yes. Dean Haselhorst voted yes. At 9:41 am, the meeting resumed with no action taken.

District Court Administrator Lundy Settle, Chief Court Service Officer Heather Schlochtermeyer, Honorable Chief Judge Carey L. Hipp, and Russell County District Court Clerk Carla Miller presented the 2026 Russell County District Court budget. They are requesting a 10% increase, or approximately \$9500 more than the 2025 budget. They stated the costs for interpreters, computers, legal defense, and fees for county cases have increased. The budget is also affected by attorney fees and juror fees. It was discussed by Carla Miller that the copy machine for the District Court office needs to be replaced, which will come out of this budget as well. No action was taken.

Don Rivera presented the 2026 budget for Western KS Child Advocacy. Western KS Child Advocacy serves 34 Counties and works with children who are victims of child abuse and provides them with therapy and medical exams. He stated that they receive about 40% of their funding from State grants, and the rest of their funding comes from Counties and Fundraisers. He stated that the Government grants are paused, and the future of direct funding from Government grants is questionable currently, so they may need to restructure. They are requesting \$7,000 from Russell County. No action was taken.

The Russell County Conservation District committee presented its budget. They are requesting \$31,500.00. This is the same amount in budget dollars for

2026 as in 2025. Alan Kuntzsch motioned to approve. Duke Strobel seconded. Jason Krug voted yes. Steve Reinhardt voted yes. Dean Haselhorst voted yes. The budget was approved.

LaDana Seirer gave an update on the Luray Senior Center. A discussion was held about the food that the Senior Center receives from the Homestead Nutrition Project. The Senior Center used to serve 12 meals, and now only 2 people come to eat. The Senior Center now works with the Kansas Food Bank. LaDana stated the Luray Senior Center supports Santa's workshop, the library and the log cabin. They also host birthday parties, alumni parties and rent out the building to businesses and individuals.

At 10:45 am, Duke Strobel made the motion to enter into a 15-minute executive session for non-elected personnel with Administrator Stephanie Grisham and County Attorney Dan Krug in attendance. Dean Haselhorst seconded. Jason Krug voted yes. Alan Kuntzsch voted yes. Steve Reinhardt voted yes. At 10:59 am, the meeting resumed no action was taken.

High Plains Mental Health representatives, Executive Director Craig Poe and Manager of Education Outreach Kaylie Conner, presented their 2026 Budget. Manager of Education Outreach Kaylie Conner spoke about what High Plains does. She stated that they are a certified mental health clinic that serves 20 counties and provides on-site and telehealth services. They come to the Russell Regional Hospital Specialty Clinic 2x a month and offer some services at the Russell County Health Dept. Executive Director Craig Poe provided an update on recent onsite services and projects. He highlighted the development of a 22-bed Crisis Intervention Center (CIC), which will serve individuals in need of immediate mental health care that local hospitals are unable to accommodate. The facility is designed to provide patients with prompt access to therapeutic and psychiatric services, eliminating the need for waitlists and ensuring urgent care is available when needed. High Plains presented their 2026 budget request totaling \$39,236.20. In addition, they are requesting \$12,965.96 in supplemental funding to support the new Crisis Intervention Center, which is expected to open in November 2026. High Plains also announced the introduction of a new, medication-free treatment for major depressive disorder known as Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS). No action was taken.

Sheriff Andrew Van Der Wege reported that the fingerprint machine currently used at the jail is reaching end-of-life in 2025. He proposed using funds from the Offender Registration and Concealed Carry accounts to purchase a replacement machine. The cost of the new fingerprint machine, which includes a one-year warranty, is \$18,727. The equipment has an estimated life expectancy of five years. Additionally, there will be an annual maintenance fee of \$2,520. No action was taken.

Nex-Tech conducted an analysis of the Sheriff's Office computer systems in preparation for the phase-out of Windows 10 in October. The assessment revealed that most of the existing computers are not compatible with Windows 11. Nex-Tech provided a lease agreement option for replacement computers at a cost of \$2,165.00 per month. Additional services such as IT support and security were also discussed, though these would incur additional costs. An outright purchase of the necessary computers, without ongoing technical support, was quoted at \$77,994.10. No action was taken.

Discussion was held regarding an Inmate with medical issues who will most likely need to go to Wichita for major surgery, which will take weeks. Medicaid can be billed to help with some of the medical costs. No action was taken.

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

100 GENERAL	\$19,198.44
110 ROAD & BRIDGE	\$27,103.68
130 NOXIOUS WEED	\$84,469.83
140 4-H	\$50.18
150 CVB	\$4,137.51
155 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	\$339.52
190 AMBULANCE	\$5,631.84
210 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	\$2,400.44
260 COUNTY HEALTH	\$2,647.85
290 GORHAM FIRE #1	\$825.83
295 GORHAM FIRE #1 SP EQUIP	\$92.08
300 LUCAS FIRE #2	\$201.63
310 WAL-PAR-NAT FIRE #3	\$5,520.40
320 DORRANCE FIRE #4	\$106.13
328 RUSSELL CO FIRE #5	\$898.76
330 APPRAISER	\$90.00
340 SPECIAL R&B	\$364.40
360 SOLID WASTE	\$7,749.81
718 CITIZEN'S REVIEW BOARD	\$982.13

At 11:55 am, Duke Strobel made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Alan Kuntzsch seconded. Jason Krug voted yes. Steve Reinhardt voted yes. Dean Haselhorst voted yes. Motion Passed.

The next meeting for the Russell County Commissioners will be Monday, May 5th, 2025, beginning at 9:00 am in the Commission Chambers, Courthouse.

PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in *The Lucas-Sylvan News*, Thursday, May 1, 2025)1t

**SCHOOL BOARD
ELECTION NOTICE
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS
#407 AND #399
RUSSELL COUNTY,
STATE OF KANSAS**

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to K.S.A. 25-2018(b), a General School Election will be conducted to elect three (3) Board Members in Unified School District #407, Russell County, State of Kansas and to elect three (3) Board Members in Unified School District #399, Russell County, State of Kansas, on the 4th day of November 2025.

USD #407 uses the at-large election plan with the three (3) electors receiving the most votes filling the three (3) board member positions. Each of these board members shall be a qualified elector of Unified School District #407. The above-mentioned board positions shall be elected to a term of four (4) years, beginning on the 12th day of January 2026.

Notice is further given that if more than nine (9) candidates file, there will be a primary election on Tuesday, August 5, 2025. The names of the nine (9) candidates receiving the highest number votes at the primary election, if one is held, shall be placed on the ballot in the regular school election on November 4, 2025.

USD #399 uses the at-large election plan with the three (3) electors receiving the most votes filling the three (3) board member positions. Each of these board members shall be a qualified elector of Unified School District #399. The above-mentioned board members shall be elected to a term of four (4) years, beginning the 12th day of January 2026.

Notice is further given that if more than nine (9) candidates file there will be a primary election on Tuesday, August 5, 2025. The names of the nine (9) candidates receiving the highest number of votes at the primary election, if one is held, shall be placed on the ballot in the regular school election on November 4, 2025.

Candidates shall file for such offices with the County Election Officer of Russell County, Kansas. Each such filing shall be made before 12 o'clock noon on Monday, June 2, 2025. Every such filing shall be accompanied by a filing fee of twenty dollars (\$20.00) or by a petition for such candidacy signed by fifty (50) qualified electors or not less than 10% of the electors residing in such member district. No candidate shall be permitted to withdraw his/her candidacy after the last date provided by law for filing such candidacy.

Signed this 1st day of May, 2025 in Russell, Kansas.

s/Kristi A. Whitman
Russell County
Election Officer
(SEAL)

PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in *The Lucas-Sylvan News*, Thursday, May 1, 2025)1t

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF RUSSELL
COUNTY, KANSAS**

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED
ROAD VACATION**

TO ALL CONCERNED PERSONS:

All concerned persons are hereby placed upon notice that the Board of County Commissioners of Russell County, Kansas has placed upon their agenda the vacation of the following portion of roadway located and situated in Russell County, Kansas, to-wit:

That portion of Balta Road lying between 191st Street and 192nd Street in Russell County, Kansas

That said petition shall come before the board for hearing at the meeting of the Board of County Commissioners on May 19, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the commission meeting room at the Russell County Courthouse, 4th and Main Streets, Russell, Kansas.

Kristi Whitman
Russell County Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in *The Lucas-Sylvan News*, Thursday, May 1, 2025)1t

**MIDWAY EXTENSION
DISTRICT #15
ELECTION NOTICE
RUSSELL COUNTY
STATE OF KANSAS**

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to K.S.A. 2-624 through 2-628, a General Election will be conducted to elect two (2) Board Members in Midway Extension District #15, Russell County, Kansas on the 4th day of November 2025.

Midway Extension District #15 uses the at-large positions with the two (2) electors receiving the most votes filling the two (2) board member positions. Each of these board members shall be a qualified elector of the Midway Extension District #15 and Russell County. The above-mentioned board positions shall be elected to a term of four (4) years. Such term of office shall commence on the 12th day of January 2026. Candidates shall file for such offices with the County Election Officer of Russell County, Kansas. Each filing shall be made before 12 o'clock noon on Monday, June 2, 2025. Every such filing shall be accompanied by a filing fee of twenty dollars (\$20.00).

Signed this 1st day of May 2025 in Russell, Kansas.

s/Kristi A. Whitman
Russell County
Election Officer
(SEAL)

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