

HM County Commissioner Meeting Minutes June 3, 2025

Meeting Place – Commissioner Room
Hamilton County Courthouse
June 3, 2025
8:30 a.m.

Michael W. Lewis, Chairman
Andy Coleman, Vice-Chairman
Brian Grilliot, Commissioner
Aaron Plunkett, Commissioner
Nikki Schwerdfeger, Commissioner

Robert Gale, Jr., Attorney
Angie Moser, County Clerk

Chairman Lewis called the Meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with all Commissioners present.

AGENDA: Commissioner Schwerdfeger moved to adopt the Agenda as presented. Commissioner Coleman seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved.

PRIOR MINUTES: Commissioner Lewis moved to approve the May 20, 2025 Commissioners’ Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner Plunkett seconded the Motion and it was approved four “ayes” and one abstention.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

Attorney Gale joined the meeting at 8:32 a.m.

LIBRARY: Amy Brucker, Library Director, presented the Library’s 2026 budget proposal.

FRANK BURNS: Mr. Burns, Superintendent of Rural Operations, gave his monthly report as follows:

- 1) Cesar Pena with S & S Rock Crushing, Inc., advised the Commissioners that his Company will begin moving equipment to the County’s pit next week and will start mining for caliche material after that.
- 2) Presented the Road Department’s 2026 budget.
- 3) The repairs need for the water well was \$4,168.00 and paperwork has been submitted to the State Water Department.
- 4) The crew is working on getting rid of the wind rows on the roads and they are grading in between the rains.
- 5) There was a request for a culvert at County Road 31 and Y. He would like to also replace a culvert at County Road 29 and S. He has one on hand, but will need to order another one.
- 6) Syracuse Dairy is requesting collaboration with the County for some road improvements to County Road 28 and Road A along the state line. This is still in the preliminary planning stage and the Dairy will provide engineering plans for Frank to present to the Commissioners.
- 7) The seasonal mowing has started.
- 8) Scheduling time to rebuild the lift assembly on the trash truck.
- 9) He would like a Solid Waste Committee meeting to discuss funding/financing for a new trash truck.
- 10) Kerstin is spraying when she can.
- 11) He met with Kirkham Michael regarding the bridge on County Road 31 to discuss the Kansas Local Bridge Improvement Program (KLBIP) which is a cost share program.

APPRAISER: Letisha Esquibel-Heydman, County Appraiser, presented the County’s 2025 valuation for the 2026 budget process. Next, Letisha informed that she needs reappointed and presented Resolution No 2025-4 Resolution of the Board of Hamilton County Commissioners Appointing an Appraiser that appoints her for a four year term ending June 30, 2029. Commissioner Lewis moved to approve Resolution 2025-4 as presented. Commissioner Coleman seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved.

POOL BOARD: Elisabeth Eddy, Pool Board Member, informed that the pool is staffed and opened yesterday. There has been some concerns that the steps going into the big pool and the incline into the baby pool is slick. The baby pool drains every night, so some kind of gripping material can be placed. A sign will be placed to please use the hand rail on the steps into the big pool.

STEVE PHILLIPS: Steve provided a ranking sheet to use as a tool when reviewing the proposals submitted by Kirkham Michael and Lochner. Commissioner Lewis moved for a 15-minute executive session for matters pertaining to attorney-

client privilege with the Commissioners, the County Attorney, Steve Phillips, and Frank Burns present. Motion died due to lack of a second. It was decided to have Kirkham Michael and Lochner attend the next Commissioner Meeting to give the Commissioners an opportunity to interview them. Next, Steve had a request to close the east/west road on the south end of the Airport. Commissioner Lewis moved to direct the County Clerk to start the road closure process and to publish the Notice of Hearing. Commissioner Coleman seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved. Next, Steve discussed the age of the tornado sirens. Most of them were installed in 1992. The cost of a new siren would be approximately \$27,000.00.

5-YEAR PLAN: The 5-year plan was reviewed.

OXYGEN CYLINDER LIFT: Discussed the quote for a portable oxygen lift for our EMS. Commissioner Lewis moved to allow Alan Hanson to spend up to \$3,500.00 to purchase a portable oxygen lift to be paid from the County Tax Fund. Commissioner Schwerdfeger seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved.

ROW PERMIT: Reviewed a permit received from Fullmer Calf Ranch LLC dba Fullmer Cattle Company to place a water line across County Road 25. Commissioner Plunkett moved to approve the Right Of Way Permit submitted by Fullmer Calf Ranch LLC dba Fullmer Cattle Company to place a water line across County Road 25 as presented. Commissioner Coleman seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved.

INA PROPOSALS: INA Alert submitted a proposal for a new camera system at the Sheriff’s Office in the amount of \$30,693.31. They also submitted a proposal for the Courthouse cameras in the amount of \$17,776.25. All of the proposals include a five percent (5%) discount and a five (5) year warranty. There is \$31,195.22 available from the Commissary Fund that is no longer used that can be transferred into the Sheriff’s budget to help pay for the Sheriff’s Office cameras. Commissioner Lewis moved to accept INA Alert’s proposal to install a new security camera system at the Sheriff’s Office in the amount of \$30,693.31 to be paid from the transferred Commissary Funds. Commissioner Plunkett seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved. Next, Commissioner Coleman moved to accept INA Alert’s proposal to install a new security camera system at the Courthouse in the amount of \$17,776.25. Commissioner Schwerdfeger seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS: Discussed what it will entail to place gravel on County roads and whether the County needs to hire someone to haul it to the roads. A road project plan will be discussed further with Frank Burns. Commissioner Plunkett had a company contact him about purchasing millings.

WARRANTS: Commissioner Schwerdfeger moved to approve the Warrants in the amount of \$70,720.57. Commissioner Lewis seconded the Motion and it was unanimously approved.

COMMISSIONER REPORT: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURNMENT: As there was no more business to come before the meeting, Commissioner Schwerdfeger moved for adjournment. Commissioner Lewis seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Honor Flight *(cont from Page 1)*



Pictured Left - Van Vesper and Oliver Palmer, Right - Oliver, bottom left, participating in the ceremony of the laying of wreath at the tomb of the Unknowns - courtesy photos

they attended a banquet. Vesper said they announced, “Mail call probably wasn’t too good for you guys, so we are going to have mail call here.”

Vesper said, “I didn’t think much about it and the next thing I know they called my name, and a stack of cards and letters were brought to me which were organized by the emergency contact on my application.”

When he was in Vietnam, he received letters from his mom and sister but remembers one, a Christmas present from a girl in Holly, Colo.

“This girl was head of the FHA and all these girls, that I did not know, wrote me a letter on adding machine paper, it was a pretty nice deal!” said Vesper.

Vesper’s daughter, Emily Leis, accompanied her father on the trip because he was unable to walk the duration of the tour, “Emily pushed me in the wheelchair almost five miles. She enjoyed it and wants to volunteer to help on a future honor flight.”

Emily felt fortunate to go with her dad, “I will cherish this trip forever. I have never felt more proud of my Dad and all the other Veterans who have served our country.”

She remembers tears falling frequently throughout the trip, from the moment they stepped off the plane in Washington, D. C., throughout the memorials and once they returned home.

“Individuals made a point to show their appreciation to all the veterans in the group. My favorite part of the trip was hearing the stories shared between the veterans and seeing the pride they all have for our country,” said Emily.

When they returned to Wichita, they made their way to the Red Roof Inn Conference Center at the airport where they were greeted by a large crowd of people welcoming them back home.

Vesper said, “This guy I know who went on it last year said it will bring tears to your eyes, and it did, it was just wonderful!”

Palmer said, “The big crowd was so welcoming, different than when I came home before, except for people in Syracuse who welcomed us with open arms.”

Palmer graduated SHS in 1964, Vesper 1968, the two were drafted and began their service, both ending up in Vietnam.

Palmer went to college two years, laying out the third semester because he was tired of school and was drafted in November, “My deferment did not last long.”

He was sent to El Paso for basic training, then to Detroit, Michigan for nine months, where there were missile sites.

“Orders came in to go to Vietnam, and I was sure there was a mistake, with my leave, travel time, I had less than a year, but the next morning they told me I was going,” said Palmer.

His tour in Vietnam began March 15th, to November 15th. “At first I did not know what I was going to be doing and was sent to a holding company in Saigon, then transferred to tent city for two more days.”

The lieutenant came by to take him to the airport where they boarded a Beach Bonanza. “I asked where we were going, one of them said, you’ll know when you get there.”

Arriving in Quy Nhon where he was to be stationed, he saw a four or five story radio station that was riddled with bullets,

“I was there just after that attack, I lucked out for sure.”

He worked in the Criminal Investigation Division, typing cases, did some interrogation, but felt fortunate he was not in the jungle, but in the office.

“I will never forget the day when my grumpy warrant officer told me somebody out here wants to see you,” said Palmer, “I walked out there, and it was Tim (Haslett)!”

“Thirteen thousand miles from home and you meet up with someone from your hometown,” said Palmer. “I went back and told my warrant officer, I’m gone!”

Haslett had brought some Red Cross girls and some of his men down to the in-country R & R Center which was a popular beach resort located about 60 miles southeast of Saigon, “I don’t know how he found out I was there, never did ask him!”

He was driving a ¾ ton jeep with the spare tire on the side. Years later, upon returning home, Haslett told him the story about when he was driving back home, he got kind of close to a truck and tore the tire off the side.

Palmer asked him if he stopped to pick it up, to which Haslett replied, heck no!

When Palmer’s time was up, they wanted him to extend his time for six months, but he was ready to come home, maybe due in part after he received a letter from his mom asking him to come home.

“One morning I heard my captain typing and I asked what he was doing to which he replied, typing your extension papers and handed them to me,” Palmer told him what he could do with those papers.

He flew into Seattle, then to Denver where his mom was waiting. “I froze all winter,” said Palmer.

He explained, “It was hot and humid there. I sweated all the time. The first night was the most miserable night, those mosquitoes about ate me alive.”

He had 90 days to reup, “But I was having too much fun,” he said, “Hindsight, I should have stayed, I had a good job.”

Vesper’s service began in Fort Lewis, Washington. “They had a blackboard up there with MOS and I thought, who the heck knew what an MOS was?”

In the military, MOS stands for Military Occupational Specialty. It’s a system used by the U.S. Armed Forces to categorize and classify jobs within each branch, essentially defining a service member’s specific role and skills.

“It said aircraft maintenance, so I thought, should I be here for two years and not learn anything or join for a third year and maybe learn something, so I joined for three,” said Vesper.

Their obligation to him with that number of MOS was two weeks of door gunner school. He then became a crew chief, “I thought all this means is working on the helicopter and then working as a door gunner on the other side of the helicopter!”

The two both agreed the Honor Flight was truly an honor and appreciated the red-carpet treatment they received.

When asked what they would you say to people who have not gone on the Honor Flight, they both agreed, “Sign up and get ready to go, don’t even think about it!”

HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF’S REPORT

Released Inmates:

- **Guadalupe Ivan, Prieto Chacon** age 38, 109 N Walnut St., Coolidge, KS 67836, arrested on 6/11/2025 for aggravated domestic battery, and three counts of battery. (Released to Federal Authorities)
- **Christopher C Hoover** age 63, 311 N Johnson St., Syracuse, KS 67878, arrested on 6/14/2025 for bench warrant failure to appear to court. (Out on bond)

Total Inmates: 4