

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

August 10, 2026

Agenda: 8:30 – Budget Hearing
 8:45 – Jonathan Percy – Eco Devo
 9:00 – Kayla Janko – Cimarron Basin
 9:15 – Jayme Rich – Tax Sale
 9:30 – Jeff Cox – Public Works
 9:45 –
 10:00 – Pat Hall – Data Centers Discussion

The Board of Stevens County Commissioners met in a regular session with all members present. County Clerk Amy Jo Tharp was also present. Tron called the meeting to order. Shannon moved to approve minutes from the last meeting. Joe seconded. Motion carried. Joe moved to approve the county vouchers. Shannon seconded. Motion carried. The County Clerk was instructed to draw warrants on the Treasurer chargeable to the various funds of the county for the following amounts:

General	\$	109,848.80
Judicial District	\$	977.07
Road & Bridge	\$	98,085.29
Airport	\$	3,154.89
Noxious Weed	\$	3,925.94
EMS	\$	11,677.80
Fire	\$	3,103.72
Fire Bequest	\$	25.22
Comm Health	\$	16,986.24
Airport Grants	\$	-
Sheriff	\$	43,406.31
911 Wireless	\$	-
TOTAL:	\$	291,191.28

Commissioner Tron Stegman opened the budget hearing meeting. No one had any comments. All commissioners were in favor of the 2027 budget. Joe made a motion to accept the 2027 budget for Stevens County. Shannon seconded. Motion carried. Tron closed the budget hearing.

Jeff Cox, Stacey Wood, Jonathan Percy, Lisa LeNeve, Shelley Cox, Matt Rome, Neal Gillespie, Brad Herron, Autumn Herron, Pat Hall, LaDonna Hall, Lynda Prine, Jennifer Burrows, Jolene Goode, Connie Tennis, Pam Brown, Darin Heger, Mike Hanson, and Maryann Willoughby were in attendance.

Rodney Kelling requested a letter of approval to submit to the bank for Rickey Burrows to be added to the fire department's credit card. The commissioners approved and a letter was presented for a commissioner signature.

Rex Evans discussed the issues of the Memorial Hall and courthouse roof. The commissioners tabled the discussion until later today and will review quotes to see if it needs to be let out for bids.

Jonathan Percy informed the commissioners that Jan Leonard will be resigning from the Eco Devo Director position December 31, 2026. Jonathan said the funding for Eco Devo is very limited and eventually the board may need to be dissolved. Matt Rome expressed that the Eco Devo position brings important development to the county, such as Flora Foods, solar farms, and other revenue generating entities. Matt said the Eco Devo board plans to post the job position in the newspaper and hire a replacement by December. In doing so, the Eco Devo board has requested an extra \$10,000.00 from the county. Lisa LeNeve would like to find a qualified individual to fulfill a combined director position for both the Chamber of Commerce and Eco Devo.

Kayla Janko with Cimarron Basin was next on the agenda and presented the paperwork from the Department of Corrections to continue corrections in the area. The commissioners approved and signed the agreement.

Jayme Rich came in and requested a letter to be reviewed stating that Frazie Title Work would be the company that will handle the title work for the next tax sale.

Jeff Cox will be attending the solid waste conference August 27 - August 30. Currently the landfill employees are working on filling in the old pit with junk soil which has been approved by the state. They will begin the cap which will need to allow for plant growth to keep the wind from blowing away the soil. Chip sealing is going well, and Jeff is in hopes of it being completed within a week or two (2).

Joe shared that he reviewed an email from KWORCC stating they would like a county policy on safety. Joe suggested getting a safety committee together that would inspect county buildings and make sure the policy is up to date. Joe suggested the commissioners do a walk-thru of the county buildings. Jeff added that there is need for an eye-wash station at the landfill, and he is currently looking into finding one.

Jeff would like to put out for bid having 5,500 to 6,000 tons of concrete crushed and to either sell half (1/2) or keep all the crushed concrete.

Cesar Pena with S & S Rock Crushing, Inc., was in attendance and said they could crush the concrete and either leave half (1/2) with the county or keep it all. Cesar stated it is best to have no wire in the crushed concrete once the job is complete.

The commissioners instructed an ad be placed in the newspaper requesting sealed bids for concrete crushing, with one (1) bid for crushing the concrete and the county keeping half (1/2), and the other bid for crushing concrete and the county keeping it all. The sealed bids will need to be either submitted to the county clerk's office no later than bid opening which will be held at the next commissioner meeting August 24, 2026, at 9:30 AM, or brought directly to the meeting.

The commissioners discussed withdrawing the county from WEKANDO and Port Authority memberships as those affiliations are no longer active.

Joe made a motion to dissolve Stevens County from the Port Authority and WEKANDO memberships. Shannon seconded, motion carried.

The meeting was moved to the Memorial Hall so there would be enough seating for the data center discussion.

Pat Hall said he read in the newspaper the commissioners were discussing data centers. Pat's opinion is not to have data centers. Tron said he is aware there are landmen coming in and out of the county and will be contacting landowners to purchase land for possible data centers. Pat asked why there is a need for a data center in every county when the centers are exempt from paying property tax for twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) years, not to mention the use of water and electricity which has been stated is a considerable amount. He expressed his concerns about what that will do to the community.

Joe stated the commissioners have always been and will remain open about data centers and what is happening. The commissioners plan to continue meetings and have no intention of signing any NDA (non-disclosure agreement) so there will be transparency. The commissioners have instructed the planning and zoning board to get ahead of the data centers to have good regulations in place. Shelley Cox asked if the commissioners knew the companies that were coming into the county looking to purchase land. Tron replied he has not heard yet and does not know if the landmen have any representation. LaDonna Hall appreciates the openness from the commissioners and expressed her main concern was there are some counties signing NDAs without informing their citizens and hoped Stevens County would not do the same.

Discussion points over data centers from the citizens were concerns of taking farmland and turning those areas into industrial property which causes values to dip, farmland being gone which will hurt the farming industry and food supply, the aquifer depleting, noise/frequency of noise causing harm to animals and people, and light pollution. The drought in southwest Kansas also causes issues when the state sets mandates on how much water farmers can use for their farmland. Increase in water and electricity bills is another concern of the citizens. The commissioners said the State is strict on water usage and hopes they will be the same with the data centers as well as what can be done to keep Stevens County a place people want to be. Neal Gillespie would like to have all issues and concerns addressed to discern what is fact and fiction concerning the data centers.

The citizens would like meetings over the data centers to be held in the evenings so more residents may attend. The commissioners promise to have open meetings and will have some in the evenings as well so the citizens will have a better opportunity to attend. The data center discussion concluded, and the commissioners moved back to the commissioner meeting room.

Rex came back in to continue the discussion of the courthouse roof. He presented the commissioners with quotes from D.V. Douglass. The commissioners instructed Rex to get a date when the roofing will start and end.

Shannon made a motion to forego the bidding process as the State's statute for county bid requirements changed for building projects if they are over \$100,000.00, a bid will be needed. Shannon approved the quote from D.V. Douglass Roofing, Inc., in the amount of \$61,768.00 to reroof

the Memorial Hall and entry and sheet metal flashing and trim for new TPO. Joe seconded. Motion carried.

Amy requested fifteen (15) minute executive session over non-elected personnel to discuss job duties, with Rex included in the meeting.

Joe made a motion to go into executive session for fifteen (15) minutes over non-elected personnel to discuss job duties. Shannon seconded. Executive session began at 11:08 AM and concluded at 11:23 AM. No action taken.

Jackson Turner was in attendance and asked the commissioners if they discussed data centers yet. The commissioners informed Jackson that they had and relayed the information that was discussed. Jackson stated that he used to be against data centers until they were being built in Finney County. He now realizes the positives of the data centers and shared with the commissioners his reasons based on his own personal witness to several things and his own experiences. He said ground water management for Kansas is failing the farmers.

Attest: Amy Jo Tharp, County Clerk

Tron Stegman, Chairman