

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Knox County Board of Supervisors

Report Published Regarding Breaches of Privacy at the Knox County Courthouse,
Board of Supervisors Acts.

Center, Nebraska, August 27, 2025

Today, the Knox County Board of Supervisors published on the Knox County's website the report of the Special Knox County Attorney regarding breaches of privacy at the Knox County Courthouse.

The Board of Supervisors has carefully reviewed the report and considered its findings of fact and recommendations.

In 2024, a new audio and visual system was installed in the Courthouse. Previously, there was a microphone in the Supervisors' meeting room. The old system had a cutoff or toggle switch which was activated when the Board went into closed or confidential sessions as allowed by the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-1407 et seq.

When the new system was installed, a second microphone was placed in the Board's meeting room. The Board of Supervisors were unaware of the installation of a second microphone. Furthermore, no cutoff or toggle switch for the second microphone was installed in the Supervisors' room although one was installed in the courtroom. The Board of Supervisors did not learn that there was no privacy or kill switch for the second microphone in the Board's room until January 2025 and, when it discovered the facts, ordered an independent investigation. Hanna Knox Jensen, then Deputy County Attorney, was in charge of the Courthouse security committee at that time.

For much of 2024, certain Knox County employees had the ability to listen in on closed, emergency, and executive sessions of the Board along with other confidential and private meetings that department heads had with employees that were conducted in the Supervisors' room.

The Board of Supervisors has suspended the County Attorney without pay from her position for one year. Because she was not elected, the Board has the legal authority to suspend her.

John Thomas was retained as Deputy County Attorney, following his resignation as County Attorney, for the express purpose of assisting the County Attorney in prosecuting a double murder case. Now that the case has been resolved via a plea and budgetary reduction, his position has been eliminated.

The Board of Supervisors has directed Sheriff Don Henery to discharge Chief Deputy Sheriff Dan Henery and 911 Coordinator Heather Kienow, but he refused to do so. The Board, therefore, discharged both persons.

The Special Knox County Attorney's report found no evidence of dishonesty or wrongdoing by the Sheriff. The report also found there was no evidence that Mrs. Knox

Jensen, Chief Deputy Dan Henery or 911 Coordinator Heather Kienow used boardroom audio for personal or improper gain.

All action taken by the Knox County Board of Supervisors was immediate.

Voters are encouraged to read the entire report for the details of the investigation. The entire report can be found at the Knox County Website at www.co.knox.ne.us and under the tab "Public Notices".

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