

LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2015 8:30 A.M.

The Board met in session at the Linn County Jean Oxley Public Service Center.  
Present: Chairperson Langston, Vice Chairperson Rogers, Supervisors Oleson, Harris and Houser. Board members voting "AYE" unless otherwise noted.

Motion by Oleson, seconded by Harris to approve minutes of February 10 & 11, 2015 as printed.

Britt Hutchins, Purchasing Dir., met with the Board to discuss results of the Deceased Transportation Services RFP received on February 11, 2015. He stated that the Medical Examiner's office has a need for deceased body transportation and one of the potential bidders was Weber Specialty Transport Company which is owned by two employees of the Medical Examiner's Office (Alisha Weber and Kevin Weber). A formal bid procedure was conducted pursuant to Iowa Code 331.341 and two vendors' submitted bids as follows: Area Ambulance - \$150 (base) with an additional per loaded mile of \$6.50 and Weber Specialty Transport Co. - \$100 (base) with an additional per loaded mile of \$3.50.

Hutchins stated that both vendors appear to be responsible bidders so it came down to price. The low bid is from Weber Specialty Transport Co. The Board will approve tomorrow. Supervisor Harris stated that he will be abstaining from that vote.

The Board met with Sheriff Gardner to discuss sending a letter to Mt. Vernon, Lisbon, Robins, and Hiawatha regarding dispatch costs and charges. They discussed at what point they will want the cities to be involved in paying for their portion. The consensus of the Board was to wait two years and continue to remind them periodically. Langston will work with Darrin Gage to get a letter written and put back on the agenda.

Supervisor Oleson suggested a possible funding source by placing red light cameras or speed cameras in select locations in the County that are problematic, noting that he is looking at other alternatives.

The Sheriff stated that Linn County has very few red lights.

Lisa Powell, HR Dir., stated that there is an employee that meets the eligibility requirements for the additional insurance allowance. The Board will approve tomorrow.

Phil Lowder, I.T. Dir., met with the Board to request a Desktop Technician to replace a vacancy in the Helpdesk/Desktop group. The group was 50/50 but is now 100% desktop. The change is budget neutral. The Board will approve tomorrow.

Treasurer Sharon Gonzalez met with the Board to discuss a proposal from McGladrey to provide assessment services to perform a scope of work within the Linn County Treasurer's Office in the amount of \$44,200 - \$54,600. She stated that her office is asking the Board for funding to have the scope of work performed. She is in a unique situation right now whereby she has two vacant deputy positions. They also have a new real estate software system and are cross training current staff for tax and motor vehicle duties.

Supervisor Rogers asked Gonzalez what she hoped to gain from this and she responded that McGladrey has a lot of professionals that she is lacking. She needs to replace a Deputy to handle accounting, financing and investments for Linn County. She also has another vacancy in the motor vehicle department. Gonzalez stated that McGladrey also has experts in technology and processes. She has tried several things over the years. She and the deputies have been doing a lot of the work and are not being effective managers. They need to step back. She wants to fill the positions with the best people possible because she wants the office to be the best.

Dawn Jindrich, Budget Dir., stated that Gonzalez is asking for a May budget amendment if she doesn't have enough money in her budget that is available due to the vacancies. She stated that she sat in on the first meeting with McGladrey and she can see the potential for efficiencies. This would be a one-time cost that could have a long range benefit.

Supervisor Rogers asked why that was not presented as a budget offer and Jindrich responded that Gonzalez did not have the time to get the numbers.

Supervisor Houser asked if Budget & Finance would be involved as well and Gonzalez assured him that they have offered their assistance to help her find the person she needs for investments and accounting.

Gonzalez stated that McGladrey will start with management first (which will take 30 days), see what issues they have, fill the vacant positions and then look at processes.

Discussion continued regarding the AFSCME contract and job duties. Steve Tucker stated that McGladrey is well aware of the union.

Supervisor Rogers asked Gonzalez what benchmarks she will be looking at, noting that he wants this investment to pay off.

Gonzalez stated that McGladrey indicated that they will be looking 20 years down the road.

Tucker stated that it is a strategic multi-year plan; a one-time cost for implementation.

Chairperson Langston stated that Tucker spent time looking at different firms with expertise and knowledge of counties. McGladrey does audits for several counties across the state.

Supervisor Oleson asked Gonzalez to do more than the normal type of communication with the Board. He doesn't want to set a precedent.

Chairperson Langston suggested that Gonzalez give a report once a month. Supervisors Langston and Harris will stay in close contact with Gonzalez on the progress.

The Board discussed finalizing the FY16 budget for publication. The public hearing will be held on Monday, March 9, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.

Chairperson Langston stated that the grant funding for the Indian Creek Watershed will expire but going forward there is a great desire to continue to work on it. It is a multi-jurisdiction effort that looks at watershed activities and management that prevents flooding.

Supervisor Oleson asked if it would make sense to add a penny to the levy noting that there are items that they probably should be participating in such as Main Ridge Rd. leading to Pinicon Ridge Park and road work leading to the Indian Creek Nature Center Building. He stated that they could go to an even \$6.15, noting that the levy is lower than when he came on the Board. He would feel more comfortable raising it to \$6.15 as next year and a couple years after that will be very difficult years given tax cuts, the rollback and other things. The remainder of the Board members did not agree with the increase.

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Houser to approve proposed FY 16 budget and budget offers for publication.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Kevin Kula, 5862 Nugents Rd., stated that he is a concerned citizen and taxpayer. He stated that he and others are concerned about what they read in the paper and one of those concerns is the wages that the Board thinks they are entitled to. He stated that he has not been too active in government but that will change because he is concerned about where the money is being spent and where it is going. The Board's salary was at 80% and then went to 100% full-time. That was a \$20,000/yr. raise. That was \$20,000 x 5 which is \$100,000. If they are that busy maybe they could have added one person for \$80,000 and saved \$20,000. Another concern is the Compensation Board which is basically people that they appoint(2 of the 7) that recommends their pay raises (required by law). He reads this in the paper and came to this meeting to find out. He's confused about what is going on. His granddad always said "If you've got a question, go to the horse". Kula stated that there are a lot of people that are upset. The average person in Linn County makes between \$30,000 - \$40,000/yr. and work 50 - 60 hours a week. How does the Board recommend their own pay raise? Chairperson Langston stated that any one of the board members would be happy to call him or talk to him after the meeting. He stated that he "googled" all of the board members and looked at their background and education. Kula stated that the Board's Mission Statement is "to be leaders of goodwill, working and governing for the common good of the people in Linn County". He stated that sometimes he questions that when they make some of the comments that they do between themselves and the Auditor. One Supervisor went to a party at the library for a \$100 ticket which included alcohol. Taxpayers look at this. Why should the taxpayers even pay for the \$100 ticket? Why should they have to pay for that. Another Supervisor was trying to get paid for baggage and other claims that he didn't even check. Kula stated that he questions if that Supervisor is doing that, what else is he doing? There is squabbling between the guy that pays the bills and watches everything. People are wondering what's going on. He stated that he sat and listened during the meeting today. The Board is here for an hour or two. What are they going to do when they leave the meeting, go jogging, work, what? He's curious. He hopes to see a lot more of the Board.

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Harris to approve Employment Change Roster (Payroll Authorizations) as follows:

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Special Deputy                      Blanchett, Johnie; Bragg, Daniel; Bushman, Dan; Ehlert, Mike; Exline, Douglas; Fann, Bobby; Fisher, James; Glowacki, Bart; Godwin, Ben; Grabau, Gordon; Haeder, Michael; Joens, Larry; Kelchen, Trenton; Kempin, Mike; Lauderdale, Chris; Mast, Steve; Miller, Mark; Mrstik, Michael; Ulrich, Nicklaus; Waddilove, Tim; Ward, Andrew; Maythaler, Mitch; Smaby, Christopher; Houser, James; Gahring, John; Cassell, Osumana  
Eff Dte: 02/18/15 \$1.00/year

IT DEPARTMENT

Help Desk Tech/Desktop Michael, Chris Termination/Resignation 02/06/15

COMMUNITY SERVICES

CEO – East Central Region Dhondt, Mechelle Promotion 01/02/15 \$91,252.96/annual  
Facility Coordinator Clayton, Wayne Temporary pay increase 02/02/15 \$2,069.54 - \$2,173.01  
Facility Coordinator Walovich Monk, Judy Temporary pay increase 02/02/15 \$2,237.42 - \$2,349.29

ENGINEERING

Light Equipment Oper Harger, Jeffrey End of Probation 02/20/15 17A \$19.05-17B \$19.76

VOTE: Langston, Oleson, Rogers, Harris - Aye Houser - Abstain

The Board received and placed on file a letter from Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources re: 2014 Hazardous Waste Disposal Site Registry Annual Report.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - Chairperson Langston and Supervisor Houser attended the ISAC Supervisors meeting. The Governor and legislators were in attendance. The Governor was fairly forward with his support of the gas tax and that was good to hear. He was not supportive of issues raised on Mental Health levy rate and he was not terribly open to any of the discussion related to property taxes.

Supervisor Rogers attended Regional Mental Health board meeting and there was a lengthy discussion on the pros and cons of regions levying less than the equalization rate.

Supervisor Oleson met with Sen. Mathis and conveyed transition from Vision Iowa, Great Places Program and other programs to be consolidated as proposed by the Governor. Sen. Mathis and lobby team are working on those and other potential issues.

The Board received updates from the following Elected Officials:

Brian Gardner, Sheriff - He is moving forward with interviews with new deputy sheriff candidates. Discussion followed regarding the Sheriff's policy as it relates to high speed chases. Sheriff Gardner stated that there is a policy and deputies followed that policy with the recent incident. The chase was initiated on a four lane divided highway with speeds reaching 100 mph. As they came into town, deputies backed away from it and continued at a safe distance. He is not sure if they were even within eye sight of him when the crash occurred. Some of the reporting was accurate and some was not.

Sharon Gonzalez, Treasurer - Working with Karen Heiderscheit and Charles Struck to identify parcels that have an issue on the delinquent tax list (600). She received directions on how to fix this error caused by the software company but she wants to make sure it does not affect the general ledger. Struck is out of the office this week. She is going to Polk County tomorrow and working with them to check on differences with the software company.

Supervisor Rogers asked if there was some way to make it clearer when paying for motor vehicle tags that the total due has \$1.00 included for postage.

Joel Miller, Auditor - Special election in April (College Community) and more coming. Exit Poll results from the Alburnett and North Linn special school elections (were postcards effective?). Aumentum issues in the Auditor's Office - Gordon Thompson, Deputy Auditor, discussed issues from the standpoint of preparing the Valuation Report and reflected upon why it was late. The software was customized for Iowa. TIFS are complicated. They realized half way through how bad it was. The product was being developed as they worked on it. This slowed them down substantially. They worked through trouble shooting and it didn't balance. The biggest problem was that numbers were not agreeing. Reality was that there was a glitch in the program. The data base was not updated; it wasn't updated into the overall valuation data base. There was corrective programming going on at the time. It broke the processes in real estate which is less visible.

Auditor Miller stated that this is something that has never worked. The system is highly interconnected. The problem that he has is just because they got the last valuation report to work, does not mean it will work this year. It isn't just a matter of producing a report, the question is, are the reports accurate. They need human intervention to verify that the reports are active and don't lose sight of it.

Supervisor Rogers asked if there is an acceptable error rate. Are they always supposed to match or is there a margin of error?

Thompson stated that they have a \$10 billion value. He thinks it has to match to the dollar. There were places where they were off \$1,000 which is considered immaterial and that is very rare. Thompson stated that he wants to balance.

Stacey Law, Auditor's Office staff, stated that up until January 18<sup>th</sup>, Thomson Reuters (software company) was working hard to resolve her issues. Then Finance noticed that the interest amounts in their data were altered and she was having problems with real estate transfers. These are not issues that they can easily find. She stated that she can be in the middle of a process and if a mistake is made, she can't make any kind of a correction now. Law gave another example of a parcel that came up missing and they don't know if that parcel showed up on the valuation report. Thomson Reuters will do something to band aide that issue but not fix the process. It has been that way the whole process. She stated that the real estate area has been seen as not a big deal but it's a big part of the pie. The software was not developed well for Iowa. Linn County was promised that it would work but it doesn't. The Treasurer has been trying to collect taxes on a particular parcel since September and can't.

Supervisor Houser asked if there is a performance clause in the contract.

Miller stated that he does not think that there are any performance measurements or benchmarks. They either manage a vendor or the vendor manages them. Right now, it feels like the vendor is managing Linn County. What incentive do they have? The Board should consider paying them more money to come in and finish what they started. Fix it to a point where they have distribution, interest and everything else that the Treasurer needs. They need to inform the public, people that he reports to. They have issues and they need it fixed. Linn County continues to consume resources and he does not take any pleasure complaining about something that should have been fixed by now.

Chairperson Langston stated that they did some sign off last spring and probably signed off too early. Linn County still owes them money.

Phil Lowder, IT Dir., stated that Linn County needed to get off of the mainframe and that was realized in 2006. They went live with Thomson Reuters (TR) in July 2014. Iowa was new for TR. He agrees with a lot of the points that have been covered, noting that they uncover issues as they go. He clarified that they took Linn County's data that was 30 years old and put it into a highly complex data base system. A lot of the issues were data conversion and they are still encountering that. They have not been through a full tax cycle. Lowder stated that this is a complex software package. A lot of the time they get a patch as quick as possible and there are side effects. TR has been more responsive than they were in the past. Going forward next year with the valuation report, he anticipates fewer issues. They will use their liaison with TR (Liz) as a conduit.

Chairperson Langston asked at what point is it worthwhile to elevate the issue. She sent an email last fall that she was with some high level TR folks and she wanted to bring this up. She didn't hear back from anybody so she didn't say anything. She would have appreciated some feedback. Is it time to move up to a different level?

Lowder stated that they have been working with Liz about getting her manager involved. This is a long term relationship. It's appropriate any time to elevate.

Chairperson Langston stated that she and Lowder will work to construct a letter that the Board continues to hear these issues and problems that remain unsolved and one fix triggers another. That is not acceptable. They are requesting a higher level manager beyond Liz's manager. Langston also stated that they will request a meeting and pull together two board members, the Treasurer, Auditor and staff to sit down and say, hey it's not working for us.

Miller agreed noting that he has brought this up at how many meetings? He stated that they need to get to the point where they can brag about it instead of complaining about it. That's why he keeps raising this issue and he wants everyone to equally complain.

Discussion continued regarding the Auditor and members of the Board to be involved in the weekly conference calls with TR. The Treasurer has been involved every week as well as Auditor staff. It was agreed that Auditor Miller, Supervisors Rogers and Harris will be involved in the weekly conference call meetings.

Stacey Law also suggested that a board member be involved in the Wednesday Steering Committee meetings and they said they would try.

Miller continued with his update. He stated that he has asked Asst. County Attorney Lisa Epp to review the laws to see if there are any limitations on his ability to audit. He'll see what he gets for a legal opinion as to his limitations.

The Board recessed at 10:38 a.m. and reconvened at 10:46 a.m.

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Houser to go into closed session to discuss International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) contract negotiations pursuant to Chapter 20, Code of Iowa.

VOTE: Langston - Aye Oleson - Aye Rogers - Aye Harris - Aye Houser - Aye

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Harris to go out of closed session.

VOTE: Langston - Aye Oleson - Aye Rogers - Aye Harris - Aye Houser - Aye

Adjournment at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOEL D. MILLER, Linn County Auditor  
BY: Rebecca Shoop, Deputy Auditor

Approved by:

LINDA LANGSTON, Chairperson  
Board of Supervisors