

LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2023 9:00 A.M.

The Board met in session at the Linn County Jean Oxley Public Service Center. Present: Chairperson Zumbach, Vice Chairperson Rogers and Supervisor Running-Marquardt. Board members voting "AYE" unless otherwise noted.

Chairperson Zumbach called the meeting to order.

Motion by Zumbach, seconded by Rogers to approve minutes of February 1, 2022 as printed.

The Board heard updates from the following Elected Officials:

Nick Maybanks, Attorney - caseload statistics; prosecutor workloads and implications due to the high caseloads with no personnel offers approved; 1 on 1 meetings with staff; upcoming Expungement Clinics; going to start tracking harassment against officers; prosecution costs and possibly some revenue; went to Capitol for some legislation; seeing challenges already with firearms and felons; zero movement in the Courthouse with their office space needs; concerns about retaining staff.

Supervisor Rogers noted that Maybank's predecessor did not grow his staff or office and they are now at a compression point. He asked Maybanks at what number of staff could he maintain his standards and Maybanks responded that every single position he asked for (8) is needed to maintain moral and retain the quality prosecutors they have.

Carolyn Siebrecht, Recorder -increased passport fees from \$10 to \$15 which increased their revenue last month; COTT real estate system vendor had cyberattack back in December and her office is now back to full capacity; Linn County needs a COTT backup so they are working to be able to temporarily use a Linn County server; Teresa Sackett is working with Iowa Land Records to create an online payment system for renewals for ATV's, boats, etc.; promotion of staff member to Deputy and a retirement leaves them with two clerical staff vacancies.

Supervisor Rogers commended Siebrecht on her leadership skills with the challenges she has faced. He asked if there are any legislation issues and Siebrecht responded that she has been contacted by surveyor's regarding a bill relating to plat of surveys and groundwater hazard statement forms will be updated and take effect February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Supervisor Running-Marquardt also commended Siebrecht on her leadership and ability to keep things together with the challenges she has faced.

Brent Oleson, Treasurer - Senate Study Bill 1053 is a Treasurer's bill that could generate \$1.1 million of additional revenue to the county; participated in UCC call Friday to let partners know of the bills importance; discussed his education and travel budget line item; explained the process of full time employees in his office (extended probation for one employee and prefers to hire two employees at one time for training purposes); himself and Deputy Geater enrolled in Core Values; working on the culture change to improve morale in his office; all staff meeting tomorrow.

Discussion continued regarding the benefits of a new bilingual position and the benefits to Oleson's office.

The Board recessed at 9:57 a.m. and reconvened at 5:00 p.m. for a joint meeting with the Linn County Farm Bureau, 1323 Boyson Rd., Hiawatha, Iowa.

The following Linn County staff answered prepared questions submitted by the Farm Bureau in advance:

Charlie Nichols, Planning & Development Dir., presented an update on the status of the two approved industrial solar farms in Linn County. The Clenera/Coggon lawsuit has been decided in Linn County's favor (there is a 30-day appeal process). Clenera has the green light to start construction. Nichols explained conditions that are to be met. The Duane Arnold Phases I & II are in litigation, and they intend to start construction even with litigation. Currently there is a moratorium in place which can be extended in three-month increments. There are citizen led committees that are looking at the existing ordinance. Duane Arnold wants to apply for Phase III very soon.

Josh Henik, Farm Bureau Board of Dir., stated that Farm Bureau has never taken a stand for or against industrial solar, however, he hopes that the committees are looking at intended and unintended consequences of the projects. Farm Bureau has sponsored webinars to help members put solar on their properties, but when looking at large scale projects, they want everyone to think through the consequences of them. It would be good to have a representative from the Farm Bureau be a part of the conversations. Regarding the proposed legislation for a 1200 ft. setback, Farm Bureau does not have a stance on a specific number, however, they support state guidance on projects.

Nichols gave an update on the status of the proposed CO2 pipeline project and what positions the county has taken on the issue. He presented letters that the county

submitted to the Iowa Utilities Board opposed to the use of eminent domain and the concern about loss of economic value of properties. There is one pipeline proposed in Linn County (Wolf Carbon Pipelines). The Board paused an ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances establishing setbacks for further research. He anticipates bringing it back to the Board in March.

Henik stated that this is a Farm Bureau priority and they support SF 104 which would require 90% voluntary easement before any consideration of eminent domain.

Supervisor Running-Marquardt stated that the pause allows EMA to meet with Wolf to include long term needs. Now is the time to submit their input to Charlie Nichols so they can have an ordinance that protects people in the long run including smaller lines that come off the trunk.

Nichols gave an update on Agri-tourism noting that the intent was for farmers to have another revenue source (pumpkin patch, winery, brewery, wedding venue) and explained the two tiers.

Dan Gibbons, Conservation Deputy Dir., gave an update on Dows/Palo Farms; Land, Water, and Legacy Bond & what projects are currently being proposed or funded. He also explained what work the County Conservation Board is doing toward the issues of water quality and sustainability.

Brad Ketels, County Engineer, gave an update on the condition of county bridges, and rural infrastructure. Statistics and a handout were provided. He also explained the current policy on expansion of right of way when properties are sold.

Discussion continued regarding the status of the Jordan's Grove Road improvements including a double seal coat this year. All-systems permit information was provided and the County's Dust Control program will only provide chip seal or seal coat. Calcium chloride and oil will no longer be an option. Ketels stated that optional motor grader training is offered to employees and noted that one county employee will now be a trainer.

Dawn Jindrich, Finance Dir. gave an update on the FY 24 budget. The plan was that the county had a \$1.9 million increase and with the growth in valuation, they were looking at an 11-cent levy increase to break even. The goal was to find \$750,000 in cuts to bring the increase down to 5-5.5 cents. Then Senate Study Bill 1056 (now SF 181) popped up about a week ago, and if passed, it will completely change valuations. If retroactive, the County will lose \$1.7 million in tax revenue. The bill is expected to be signed by the Governor on Thursday. The plan now is to meet with the Board on Friday to discuss what to do. They must wait for the County Auditor to receive the order to recalculate the valuations. They will go through the list of potential cuts. At this point there is just a lot of ideas floating around and no final decisions have been made yet. Right now, it is wait and see.

The consensus of the Farm Bureau membership present at tonight's meeting is that the County Engineer and Secondary Roads are doing a stellar job.

Adjournment at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOEL D. MILLER, Linn County Auditor  
By: Rebecca Shoop, Deputy Auditor  
and Amanda Hoy, Executive Assistant

APPROVED BY:

LOUIS J. ZUMBACH  
Chairperson