

LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2022 11:00 A.M.

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

Chairperson Rogers called the meeting to order.

Public Comment: Jessica Weskus, 242 Green Ridge Rd., Lisbon, sincerely thanked the Board for filing an objection to Navigator's Co2 pipeline and it is now on the Iowa Utilities Board docket. She asked the Board to immediately register their support for both SF 2160 and HF 2320, legislation that stops eminent domain by private industry. She is a landowner in rural Linn County who has been standing shoulder to shoulder with her neighbors opposed to eminent domain for carbon pipeline. Pipelines are coming to Iowa as a part of a national infrastructure plan that will ensure that the oil and gas industry continue to sell fossil fuels for generations to come. They oppose carbon pipelines because granting private industry the power to condemn their land through eminent domain is a violation of their rights and values. A farmer's wealth is in the land and she defined the meaning of land. They will never sign voluntary easements with the pipeline companies. It will require the abuse of eminent domain and unpardonable governmental overreach to take their land from them. She asked them again to immediately and formally register their support for SF 2160 and HF 2320 scheduled for a subcommittee meeting tomorrow afternoon.

Pramod Dwivedi, Public Health Dir., presented the following COVID-19 update:

- Heading into the right direction. Numbers have significantly declined in the past three weeks and the trend is going down.
- Transmission rate is still high and his recommendation is to continue to follow all mitigation strategies and preventative measures.
- The State is not providing data anymore.

Supervisor Walker thanked Dwivedi and his staff noting that they have been invaluable throughout the pandemic, which is an ongoing threat to public health. It seems they are turning in the right direction but what people are most tired of is the inconsistency. He also noted that with the next agenda item (easing mask requirements) that it is harder to re-impose mitigation efforts once they are lifted. He also stated that it seems irresponsible for the State Public Health Agency, at the direction of the Governor, to no longer make public health information available while navigating a global health emergency.

The Board discussed easing mask requirements for Linn County employees and customers within Linn County buildings.

Chairperson Rogers stated that he placed this item on the agenda only because they have not had a discussion over the last several months. As of today, state employees are not required to wear masks.

Supervisor Zumbach stated that his opinion has not changed. He is ready to end the mask mandate as soon as they are.

Supervisor Walker stated that he fully respects and understand how complex this issue is in some buildings where there are non-county employees. He stated that it does not seem unreasonable to him to ask those that are conducting business in a public place where it is impossible to know the vaccination status and health risk to wear a mask. At this point, folks are used to masking and he encouraged his colleagues to be thoughtful of this.

Chairperson Rogers stated that municipalities and the State are looking at changing mask requirements. They are also not required at Hy-Vee or sporting events and everywhere you go outside county building doors, people are not wearing masks. The harder question to answer is what is it they are trying to achieve. The Board will discuss and possibly decide on Wednesday.

Lars Anderson, Chief Judge Sixth Judicial District and Kelley Cortez, Court Administrator gave an update including the number of judges and magistrates in Linn County; number of cases and they are starting to get trials underway that were delayed due to COVID. Could move forward with jury trials due to the space. They thanked the Board, County Attorney and Sheriff as they worked through dealing with COVID. Cares Act funds were used to install technology systems in jury courtrooms and explained. They also modified caseload management practices during the pandemic. Anticipated needs are adding positions to run those systems and supplement court reporters with clerical support. Space needs were discussed and the need for a space study including the entire Courthouse.

Chairperson Rogers committed to them that he will ensure they do a thorough space needs study and include discussions with the Facilities Manager and the Director of Policy & Admin.

County Attorney Nick Maybanks also expressed his commitment to working with them and he will do whatever it takes to share the building.

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Motion by Rogers, seconded by Zumbach to approve minutes of Feb. 9 & 11, 2022 as printed.

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Zumbach to approve payment to Steven & Christine Backen in the amount of \$5,000.

Adjournment at 11:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Approved by:

BEN ROGERS, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors