

LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA  
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2022 9:00 A.M.

The Board met in session at the Linn County Jean Oxley Public Service Center. Present: Chairperson Rogers and Supervisor Walker. Vice Chairperson Zumbach was not present for the morning session due to personal business but attended the 4:00 p.m. session. Board members voting "AYE" unless otherwise noted.

Chairperson Rogers called the meeting to order.

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Walker to approve minutes of March 7, 2022 as printed.

The Board received updates from the following Department Heads:

Brad Ketels, County Eng. - All equipment has AVL (shows location/time/and what it's doing); Year in Review has been posted; department spring meeting will be held this year (March 25); LOST revenues are up; increase in material costs; vacancies and seasonal hires; first embargo placed last month; operations data; and follow-up on yesterday's questions from the Board regarding the Waubeek road vacation and access agreement. Legal stated that an email confirmation that they will obtain the access agreement is adequate but that Linn County cannot require it but it is highly recommended. (Board will approve on tomorrow's Consent Agenda).

Tom Hardecopf, LIFTS Dir. - FY22/23 bus replacements - One bus remains to be delivered from the previous order. Ordering 3 more buses approved for funding from the state DOT. Budget - Expenses are being closely monitored (increase in gas, diesel and repairs). Staffing - Currently three vacancies. The Mobility Coordinator position is also vacant. COVID - Federal TSA mask mandates are still in place (currently until March 18 2022). Alternative Fuel Buses - The Electric Bus Work group continues to monitor any progress from the state level (the state DOT is working on the procurement and specifications). Marion micro-transit - Coordinating with a variety of entities, and discussing what direction Marion wishes to pursue for any changes to their transit.  
Working with HR concerning the timing of his retirement.

Dawn Jindrich, Finance Dir. - Budget on target with the exception of comp. time payout; grant administration policy to come to the Board within a month; staff member getting CDBG certified (Linn County will be eligible for CDBG programs); GovSense software renewal coming due and will be talking to the president of GovSense today; purchasing policy update; and with regard to grants, there were no single audit findings (no mistakes made by Linn County departments).

Discussion continued regarding an update on the status of ARPA funds.

Darrin Gage, Dir. of Policy & Admin., stated that in addition to ARPA funds, there are two CDBG programs (funding) that could be available, however, timing seems to be an issue.

Supervisor Walker addressed two projects that he advocated for ARPA funds. 1) Help individuals continue post-secondary education to get retraining or to access post-secondary education through Kirkwood. 2) Pursue a Chief Resiliency Officer.

Gage stated that he has met with Kirkwood administration to discuss the first project. \$2.5 million would give \$3,000 tuition grants to students in Linn County (outside the city of Cedar Rapids) for either High School graduates or non-traditional students (those pursuing degree, etc. due to business shut down due to COVID). With regard to the Resiliency Officer, since there is no ARPA funding beyond 2026, they would need to find a way to fund the position.

Chairperson Rogers stated that given the weather conditions on Saturday, he is thankful and proud that they maintained the outdoor siren system.

Darrin Gage, Dir. of Policy & Admin.- Produced a public bidding manual; Secondary Road Dept. asked him to look at a Sign Management Policy; he is serving on an ECICOG committee to review and rewrite articles and agreements; budget is on target; upcoming retirement of an Admin. Asst. and an existing Clerk Typist will fill that position April 18 (will hold off posting the Clerk Typist position to help absorb costs); legislation re: freezing property taxes for ages over 65 is a standalone bill; legislation allowing electronic submission of bids for public improvement has passed; Derecho projects (Priority #1 and #2); Design Dynamics submitted proposal for Courthouse space needs study (state

will help pay); CRANDIC building purchased for a homeless shelter (working to have it ready for upcoming winter); and ARPA applications \$5.5 million for social services and \$5.5 for infrastructure. Hope to make awards the middle to the end of March.

The Board recessed at 10:24 a.m. and reconvened at 4:00 p.m. for a joint meeting with the Linn County Farm Bureau at 1323 Boyson Road, Hiawatha.

Dennis Goemaat, Conservation Dir., gave an update on County Conservation and Conservation Bond regarding the following:

- Palo ground (282 acres) - hiring a private consultant to do a full conservation plan. Did not hire the NRCS because government clients are not their priority. It will not be a part of the solar project.
- Future projects - bridge was destroyed by a garbage truck and priority is to get that trail back open; Morgan Creek Park and associated wetlands is in process; Pinicon Ridge & Wanatee best management practices to stabilize erosion; Pinicon Ridge dam modification; looking into campground expansions at three parks; looking at solar installations on shop and other buildings; and a number of trail developments.

Dawn Jindrich, Finance Dir., gave an update on the FY 23 budget. Public hearing is scheduled for March 23. She stated that 40 cents of the levy is gone because the Mental Health fund levy has been taken over by the state. Most residential homes will have a 10% decrease in tax bills and Ag. Land will possibly be 1% higher. A lot of ARPA money will be awarded as well as some CDBG money for disaster recovery and COVID. The ending fund balance is at 25% of the General Fund and the countywide growth in valuation is 2.5%.

A robust discussion continued regarding the following:

- Farm Bureau's stand on industrial solar (as stated in previous Coggon solar meetings).
- Linn County's plans for future projects moving forward (NextEra solar project expands into Benton County).
- Coggon solar project and lessons learned.
- The request for a moratorium by county staff.
- Property rights and property value protection.
- Proposed legislation addressing setbacks
- Local control

Charlie Nichols, Planning & Development Dir., gave an update on the Ag. exemption process. He stated that they are working on an Agra Tourism ordinance and explained.

Discussion continued regarding the Dows ground and management of the Agra-Community (Linn County will retain ownership and lease. NRCS will oversee the easement).

Farm Bureau commended the Linn County Secondary Roads Dept. They did voice concern with the Monarch Project noting that noxious weeds and erosion (from spraying) is occurring in those project areas. They also voiced concern regarding parking on gravel roads near bike trails.

Brad Ketels, County Engineer, explained that the Monarch Project is a pilot project. They spray and seed and Linn County mows. He will notify them of the circumstances,

Ketels continued to explain road embargoes, rock management, conditions of bridges, goals, future projects and responsiveness to winter storms.

Morgan Hibbs and Paige McGovern (attending virtually), introduced themselves and explained their involvement in the Linn County Farm Bureau Outreach Program. Hibbs explained in detail the program and her experiences in Linn County schools with students in grades PreK-12.

Adjournment at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Approved by:

BEN ROGERS, Chairperson  
Board of Supervisors

