

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Monday, August 25, 2014

The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors met in regular session at 7:00 P.M. with Furlong, Sorensen, Howard, Sauer and Kelly present. Chairperson Howard presiding.

On a motion by Kelly, second by Furlong, the agenda was approved as written. Ayes: All.

Steve and Julie Ehrecke, 2254 Funks Hill Road, expressed concern regarding garbage being dumped even after "No Dumping Allowed" signs were posted, lack of speed limit signs, the need for a new guardrail at the corner, water eroding the shoulder and the culvert in his driveway, diversion of traffic for the Burlington Road bridge project and whether any federal money could repair Funks Hill Road. Steve Ehrecke also expressed concern that there was no mention of his emails to any Board members in any meeting after July 2013 or a walk-thru performed by Robert Howard. Ehrecke stated he has an opportunity to get several loads of fill and wondered if he could start building up the shoulder for the County. Howard stated Steve and Julie have tried everything to work this out and even offered to help back in 2013. County Engineer Keith White stated that the signs have not stopped the dumping. White stated the signs advertise the area to those that don't know it is a dumping spot. White stated he does not view it as an enforcement issue for the highway department, but rather a law enforcement issue. White stated the County needs to cut the edges of the road off to try to get the water back in the ditch to keep it off the road. White stated there is a box culvert under the road. Julie Ehrecke stated that the water does not get to that culvert and goes over the road. White stated they have occasionally allowed property owners to do things on their right-of-way in the past and could possibly work something out with Steve and Julie Ehrecke. The Board suggested Steve and Julie Ehrecke get together with the County Engineer to work out a plan. Sorensen stated the Board should probably talk to the Sheriff about the enforcement issue with the dumping.

Discussion was held with County Attorney Alan Ostergren regarding his request to add one additional Assistant County Attorney position. Ostergren stated the City of Muscatine agreed to pay the County \$40,000 to prosecute criminal violations and other offenses for the City. Ostergren stated the position would also attempt to divert mental health commitments by seeking outside treatment when appropriate, rather than being fully committed. Ostergren stated he has also had an inquiry from another community asking for the same services. Howard stated he wanted to make it clear that if the cash flow was not positive, the Board could eliminate the position. Ostergren stated he would track the diversion of mental health commitment cases and the inflow of funding from other municipalities and he is optimistic that it will be financially successful. In response to a question from Kelly, Ostergren stated the cost of the position is approximately \$72,000 of which the City of Muscatine would fund \$40,000 plus he would reallocate the \$10,000 budgeted for an intern to this position. Ostergren stated the balance of \$22,000 would be made up through cost saving efficiencies with the commitment diversion

process. On a motion by Furlong, second by Sorensen, County Attorney Alan Ostergren was authorized to add an Assistant County Attorney position. Ayes: All.

Kelly asked Ostergren about the car he bought for the County Attorney's Office. Ostergren stated that no tax money was used to purchase the vehicle as it was bought by the Muscatine County Sheriff with Muscatine County Drug Task Force forfeiture funds. Ostergren stated the maintenance and fuel will be paid out of the same fund. Ostergren stated that it saves the County money in not having to reimburse him for mileage. Ostergren stated he takes the vehicle home in case he is called out for an emergency. Ostergren stated he did not come before the Board because he does not need to ask their permission to spend his line items. Furlong stated he feels for the sake of transparency, the Board should have known about the vehicle. Ostergren stated it is not uncommon amongst County Attorneys to have a County vehicle. County Auditor Leslie Soule confirmed that the personal usage portion for commuting to and from work in the vehicle is added as a taxable benefit to Ostergren's W-2 to satisfy IRS regulations.

Muscatine County Joint Communication Commission (MCJCC) members Tom Furlong and Scott Sauer updated the Board on activities of the Commission. Furlong stated the MUSCOM equipment is reaching the end of its life and they are considering getting new equipment and possibly moving their facility due to lack of space. Furlong stated MCJCC hired an outside consultant to look at other alternatives, the cost of moving and issues with performance of the some of the current radios. Furlong stated the consultant looked at the lower level of the Public Safety Building and the DHS Building. Furlong stated that neither the basement, nor the third floor, of DHS had the desired 11 foot ceiling, but that the Public Safety Building meets the requirements. Furlong stated it would cost approximately \$200,000 to move MUSCOM to the basement of the Public Safety Building plus approximately \$100,000 for wiring. Sauer stated he believes the stations would run \$200,000 a piece and they need four stations which he felt was quite costly. Administrative Services Director Nancy Schreiber stated there has been discussion about changing the structure of the Commission. Schreiber stated a portion of E911 funds was intended to pay for the communication center's cost, but that is not how that has been used in the past. Furlong stated E911 funds are decreasing because of fewer land lines. Furlong stated the County needs to consider all options and may have to go to the voters for approval, but in the short term they need to try to fix what they have. Sorensen stated there was no system design done when the current system was installed. Sorensen stated he would rather have someone who was not selling something design the system. Furlong would like to have a meeting with the City of Muscatine and other users to discuss all of the options. Kelly stated she does not agree with keeping MUSCOM at the Public Safety Building due to lack of enough space and will not support keeping MUSCOM in that facility. Sauer stated this is a complex situation and will take a long time to work through all of the information to get something that will work for everyone. Schreiber stated that is why they are trying to work with the structure first to get the right players to the table. Furlong asked everyone to be open-minded when looking at all of the options.

On a motion by Kelly, second by Sorensen, minutes of the Monday, August 18, 2014 regular meeting were approved as written. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:

The Board received a letter of resignation from Jeff Benton from the Veterans Affairs Commission.

The Board received an invitation to the Limestone Bluff's RC&D Board of Directors Annual Picnic on September 24th.

Furlong received a call regarding a zoning issue.

Furlong received a call regarding the Funks Hill Road issues.

Howard received a call regarding a disallowed homestead exemption.

Howard received a call regarding the bid process for the Sheriff's new storage building.

Committee Reports:

Furlong attended a West Liberty Economic Area Development meeting August 21st.

Furlong attended a Muscatine County Veterans Affairs Commission meeting August 19th.

Sorensen attended a Wilton Development Corporation Board meeting August 20th.

Sauer attended a Muscatine County Fair Board meeting August 21st.

Sauer attended a Muscatine County Conservation Board meeting August 18th.

Sauer and Furlong attended a Muscatine County Joint Communications Commission meeting August 21st.

Kelly attended a Mental Health Regional meeting August 18th.

All Supervisors attended the Farm Bureau Annual Steak Fry August 20th. Sorensen, Howard, Sauer and Kelly attended the Wilton Founder's Day Parade August 23rd. Sauer attended a Nature Conservancy informational meeting August 21st regarding ground owned by the Conservancy in the Cedar River bottoms.

On a motion by Kelly, second by Sorensen, the Board approved Resolution #08-25-14-01 Transferring \$200,000 from the General Basic Fund to the Building Maintenance and Repair Fund. Roll call vote: Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kelly, the Board approved Resolution #08-25-14-02 Transferring \$550,000 from the General Basic Fund to the Debt Repayment Fund. Roll call vote: Ayes: All.

On a motion by Kelly, second by Sorensen, the Board authorized the issuance of a Request For Proposal for an evaluation of the current Salary Administration Program. Ayes: All.

Discussion was held regarding proposed adjustments to sick and vacation accrual rates to coincide with current payroll and timekeeping software. Administrative Services

Director Nancy Schreiber stated that one adjustment effective immediately would be to reduce sick and vacation accruals to two decimal places from three decimal places. Schreiber stated the current payroll system only allows for two decimal places. Schreiber stated new timekeeping software requires changes in accrual rates to occur the first day of the pay period that includes the employee's anniversary. Schreiber stated prior County policy was to change the accrual rate on the first day of the pay period following the employee's anniversary. Schreiber stated the changes have an approximate cost to the County of \$935 per year. On a motion by Kelly, second by Sorensen, the Board approved an adjustment to sick and vacation accrual rates to coincide with current payroll and timekeeping software. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Furlong, the Board accepted August 2014 payroll claims. Ayes: All.

Furlong stated that the Board directed Zoning Administrator Jodee Stepleton to setup an informational meeting regarding hog confinement operations. Furlong stated Stepleton scheduled the meeting for September 16th to educate the public regarding rules and regulations to setup up confined animal feeding operations. Howard stated the meeting may be cancelled and he is unsure the Zoning department understands what they are doing with that issue. Kelly stated she is in support of this as an informational meeting. Howard stated he is not sure the County can adequately facilitate this meeting. Sorensen stated he is agreeable to the meeting as long as the Board is involved in the creation of the agenda and facilitating the meeting. Sorensen stated the meeting is not for public input and needs a facilitator who will keep the meeting on track. Sauer would support the meeting if it is handled in the fashion described by Sorensen, but not if it is handled in the freestyle method like the last meeting. Board consensus was that if the meeting has not already been cancelled, then they will proceed with Kelly as the facilitator of the meeting and Sorensen will begin creating an agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

ATTEST:

Leslie A. Soule, County Auditor

Robert E. Howard, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors