

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors  
Monday, December 17, 2018

The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. with Howard, Mather, Sauer, Sorensen and Bonebrake present. Chairperson Sauer presiding.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Mather, the agenda was approved as presented. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Howard, claims dated December 17, 2018 were approved in the amount of \$326,449.51. Ayes: All.

Edward Askew, Askew Scientific, provided a follow-up report regarding the risks of slag vs. crushed limestone. Askew stated he compared an MSDS for limestone from Wendling Quarry to the MSDS for the Harsco Electric Arc Furnace Slag. Askew stated slag is three times more toxic than limestone. Askew stated there is no pH influence on water from limestone, but when slag is unintentionally mixed with water the pH level may result in elevated pH up to 10-12 Standard Units. Askew stated his data has found anything from 7.5 to 8.5 pH levels in Muscatine County. Mather asked for evidence of the effect of slag on Muscatine County's pH level. Askew stated he does not have any. Mather asked for evidence of run off from the use of slag. Askew stated he has not collected the evidence. Mather stated over a decade ago national authorities and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) declared the use of slag on roads to be safe. Askew stated as a local government agency the County should do due diligence in reviewing the documentation provided by the companies that produced the material. Askew stated the MSDS says avoid runoff into storm sewers and ditches. Bonebrake stated unintended mixing with water can result in elevated pH, but it does not say it will result in elevated pH so he would like to know how much concentrate it would take to result in elevated pH because the use of limestone in fish tanks raises the pH level enough to kill fish. Bonebrake stated that tells him limestone does raise pH levels. Mather stated Askew has provided no evidence of any kind of contamination and he needs to see some evidence somewhere of contamination. Howard stated he was involved with this when they started using the product and the County used governmental agencies like the IDNR who declared it as a recommended use for roads. Howard stated the County looked to these agencies to see if it was acceptable because the use of slag was an advantage to its residents. Askew stated he originally came in about flat tires, not the pH level, and that is what he is ultimately concerned about. Askew stated he came back with the comparison between limestone and slag because the Board brought it up the last time slag was discussed. Mather stated the Board has already established that they do not want substandard material on the roads and they are already taking steps to investigate the quality of the product. Mather wants to look at the product delivered to the County to see if there is metal in it that would cause flat tires. Mather stated he researched the number of flat tires before and after the use of slag and there was no correlation between flat tires in Muscatine County and the use of slag. In response to a statement from the audience, Sauer stated there has been a horse pasture on the southeast side of SSAB for many years. Sauer stated the prevailing northwest wind would take the dust into that horse pasture and the horses in that pasture for all those years have always looked fine to him. Mather stated he is all for evidence, but Askew could not provide the evidence. Sorensen stated the County utilizes less than 10% of the product produced by Harsco on the roads, so where is the other 90% going and if truly dangerous, then it should not be going

anywhere. Mather stated all of the studies they have looked at said it was safe for application on gravel roads.

Sorensen in response to a question stated the County is saving approximately \$117,000 per year by using slag which relates to 21 cents per thousand on the rural services levy. Doug Hoag provided a comparison of costs for Class A rock versus slag. Hoag stated road rock costs between \$6-6.50 per ton. Hoag stated 25% more slag is needed to cover the same distance compared with rock and the freight cost is higher for transporting slag to the same area because more is being hauled. Hoag stated slag costs \$4.70 per ton which has to be mixed with road rock at a 50/50 rate resulting in a new cost of \$6.175 per ton so he does not see the savings. Hoag stated the required mixing costs 2 extra trips by the maintainer to properly mix the product. Hoag stated very little slag was used prior to 2014 so he looked at tire and tube repairs on county owned pickups, dump trucks, and road maintainers during the period of 2014 – 2018 which showed that between 2014 and 2016, \$51,740 was spent on tire and tube repairs. Hoag stated between 2016 and 2018, \$70,597 was spent on tire and tube repairs which reflects a 36% increase. Mather stated before slag was used much between 2011 and 2012, \$97,160 was spent by the County on tire and tube repairs and between 2012 and 2013, \$100,208 was spent on the repairs. Sorensen stated he did not see anything in the numbers that would have concerned him based on the amount of equipment the County owns. Hoag stated slag is not saving the County any money and may be actually costing the County. Hoag stated any gravel alternative must be as good as or better than that of crushed limestone and slag is hazardous to the environment and over three times more toxic than limestone. Hoag stated he has provided over 700 signatures from residents to suspend the use of slag. Mather stated various concerns have been brought forth, but he doesn't know what the largest concerns are. Mather stated he has not heard of any environmental evidence to suggest slag is a problem. Mather stated his biggest concern is the quality of the product and the County is taking steps towards a better quality control process. Bonebrake stated the County is only using 10% of Harsco's product with private citizens using the rest on farms and driveways. Sorensen suggested individuals take advantage of the County's free well testing annually. Sauer closed the discussion citing documentation from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Department of Public Health which both state slag is a product that can be used and is recommended for use on roadways.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Bonebrake, the Board approved the following utility permits: CenturyLink – placement of fiber optic cable along Zachary Avenue from Hwy 22 to Stagecoach Lane to service a residence at 1770 Bill Sharp Blvd; and Aureon – placement of conduit with armored fiber cable on 41<sup>st</sup> Street from the Muscatine City limits east to Stewart Road. Ayes: All.

County Engineer Keith White updated the Board on secondary road projects.

On a motion by Howard, second by Sorensen, the Board approved Ordinance #12-17-18-01 Repealing Ordinance #03-26-18-01 and Establishing a Local Option Sales and Services Tax Applicable to Transactions within Certain Incorporated and Unincorporated Areas of Muscatine County for the period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2034 on the third and final reading. Roll call vote: Ayes: All.

On a motion by Bonebrake, second by Sorensen, minutes of the December 10, 2018 regular meeting were approved as written. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:

Bonebrake responded to correspondence from a residence on the status of 152<sup>nd</sup> Street west of Mulberry Avenue and provided the Board with information regarding the cost of maintaining that road versus a similar section of road on 245<sup>th</sup> Street from Blue Heron to Edgewater Drive showing that the stretch of road on 152<sup>nd</sup> Street costs the county \$10,526.41 per year versus the 245<sup>th</sup> Street cost of \$3,345.22 per year. Bonebrake stated the 2017 County 8-year rolling average is \$6,000 per mile while the 2017 State 8-year rolling average is \$4,202 per mile.

Committee Reports:

Howard attended a Milestones Area on Aging meeting December 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mather attended an Eastern Iowa Mental Health Region Strategic Planning Session December 13<sup>th</sup>.

Sorensen attended a West Liberty Economic Area Development meeting December 14<sup>th</sup>.

The Board reviewed the health/dental fund balance as of November 30, 2018.

Chairperson Sauer presented a plaque to Supervisor Robert Howard thanking him for 8 years of dedicated service to Muscatine County. Howard stated this Board has been one of the highest quality boards he has ever served on, specifically their dedication to the residents of this County. Howard stated County staff are excellent. Howard thanked the residents for the honor of serving them.

Chairperson Sauer presented a plaque to Supervisor Bonebrake thanking him for 4 years of dedicated service to Muscatine County. Bonebrake thanked all of the residents for the opportunity and honor of serving stating he is most proud of the fact that he never let politics play a role in his decisions and he always considered the majority of the residents when making a decision.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.

ATTEST:

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Leslie A. Soule, County Auditor

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Nathan Mather, Chairperson  
Board of Supervisors