

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Tuesday, January 14, 2025

The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors met in special session at 9:00 A.M. with Chick, Kirchner, Mather and Sauer present. Sorensen was absent. Chairperson Mather presiding.

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

Unity Public Health Director Jen Craft reviewed the FY25/26 budget request presenting a slide show of the past year's services the department provided. Craft stated a dental clinic was opened in 2024 to provide patient care to Medicaid clients. Craft stated being a hospital-based public health department which subcontracts for services, which is an asset and keeps overall costs down. Craft provided a budget request justification report showing a county cost per citizen for essential of \$7.13. The current budget per citizen cost is \$6.82 which is considerably less than counties of similar size.

Medical Examiner, Tom Summitt reviewed the FY25/26 budget requests stating no significant changes. Summitt stated there were 341 deaths last year with 38 autopsies. Summitt stated in the past year, the department had to use Ankeny for six autopsies as the University of Iowa was short staffed but is back to servicing autopsies for the county. Summitt stated the Medical Examiner line is increased from \$6,000 to \$12,000 as Dr. Weis has requested a salary request for his on-call 24/7 services. Summitt stated a state grant of \$8,500-\$8,600 for training is received each year with the possibility of additional grant funds if other county's do not apply.

County Conservation Director Katie Hammond reviewed the FY25/26 budget requests stating there is a request for a staffing change for a seasonal environmental intern as a 16-week summer position at \$15.00 per hour. Hammond requested a cost-of-living increase for the returning seasonal employees. Hammond stated an increase in the conservation board line item which is typically for cabin rental refunds. Other increases include office supplies, summer help salaries (returning help), road rock, water conditioning, equipment repair, sanitation disposal services, feed/animal care, recreation services salaries and collection/displays. Hammond reviewed the Capital Expenditure requests to replace equipment, Conservation Reserve (Acquisition) account and REAP budget with a proposed request for a large shelter with electricity at Deep Lakes Park. Hammond stated the GEO thermal has been completed in their department building and the culverts at Discovery Park that are caving. Hammond stated the Salisbury lodge needs renovation with wall paint and flooring. Hammond stated under Capital Projects, \$225,000 has been allotted for renovations on the maintenance building at 2570 Pettibone. Hammond stated program fees are increasing but keep the programs affordable and donations have increased. Hammond stated a request to EMA has been submitted for laptop computers for the law enforcement department employees. Hammond stated the 1st Annual Muscatine Triathlon is scheduled for Saturday, August 2, 2025 at Deep Lake Park. City of Muscatine Mayor Brad Bark has challenged the Board of Supervisors to compete in the triathlon. Hammond presented a flier with the full information - www.muscatinetriathlon.com

The Board recess at 9:38 A.M. and reconvened at 9:40 A.M.

Budget Administrator Kala Naber reviewed the Court Services FY25/26 budget requests stating a decrease of 5% for the DHS budget and an increase in revenue of 1%.

County Sheriff Quinn Riess reviewed the FY25/26 budget request reviewing the patrol budget with a decrease for fuel. The request shows \$32,000 for bullet proof vests, which are replaced every five years. The vests are funded by a BPV Grant which reimburses half the cost. Riess stated the AED Maintenance (defibrillators) has an increase as half of them has been re-certified on an every other year schedule. Riess stated the waste disposal services has a decrease as a new vendor, Oveson Refuse & Recycling LLC, who is more reliable and lower costs. Riess stated three cars are proposed to be replaced with lower cost Dodge Durango's, as in the past year the budget was not fully spent on vehicle replacement. Riess reviewed the jail budget with a significant increase for the medical contract. Riess stated over the past six to seven months a contract has been reviewed with ACH who would manage and staff the medical staff at the jail. Riess stated at this time the county employs one nurse and other staff has been with traveling nurses which is at a high cost. ACH has proposed a contract of \$1.3 million which will have ACH managing the full medical staff. Riess stated they have looked at and met with CHC services but since the meetings there has been no response from CHC. Mather asked if the department is currently contracted with ACH. Riess responded yes with a current cost of \$340,000. Jail Administrator Matt McCleary stated the budget request is for \$350,000, however current nursing is costing more. Chick asked what the proposed ACH contract of \$1.3 entails for services. McCleary stated 208 hours of nursing services (five nurses), nursing supervisor, qualified mental health professional at master's level for 20 hours per week and a prescriber overseen by a doctor for five hours. Chick if Riess has looked at other options. Riess stated they have tried but unfortunately there are not a lot of options. McCleary stated two years ago, a company called MEND, quoted a \$850,000 offer, but the company has gone out of business. McCleary stated we have reached out to CHC with meetings with two directors and managers to determine if they could handle the patient load, however no decision by the directors and managers was made. Chick asked if the county were to hire the positions on their own if the costs could be less. McCleary stated if we hire on our own, then a market adjustment to increase wages is necessary in order to hire the staff in addition to hiring a doctor and figure out the 24-hour service (without this coverage, we are dependent on the correctional officer's medical decision to continue treatment). ACH will provide the ability to look up medical codes for billing. Kirchner asked if the county provides this on our own, are we opening ourselves up to liability. Riess stated yes as filed lawsuits nearly always include a medical component and end up in summary judgment. McCleary stated with ACH they hold \$100,000 in escrow so the contract is being reviewed as to who holds the escrow money in the event of bankruptcy. McCleary stated ACH has a component in the contract that tracks the average daily jail population to charge additions or issue credits based on population. Mather asked if Riess is in favor of ACH as the vendor. Riess stated yes, however he is not in favor of the cost. but the time required for correctional staff to handle medical tasks which takes them away from other duties. McCleary stated he is always researching other vendors and it is probable that new vendors may come along with services that can be quoted and considered in the future. Riess stated the ACH contract will be for one year. Riess stated what they are currently doing with medical staff is not working. Riess stated the budget item for utilities and food/provisions is an increase, as is typical each year. Riess stated the jail commissary shows a building purchase for a proposed city/county training facility of \$500,000 and dropped the vehicle purchase request to \$300,000.

Riess stated the proposed training facility is still waiting on FAA approval. Riess stated jail revenue for federal prisoners is decreased with declining numbers across the country. Riess reviewed the Capital Expenditure requests which is three Dodge Durango SUV's and funding of 50% County/50% Commissary funds for the proposed City/County Training Facility. Riess stated future projects are listed as 10-license plate readers (LPR) and the annual LPR camera costs.

Budget Administrator Kala Naber reviewed the General Services FY25/26 budget requests stating document recycle/shredding as a new bin has been added. Naber stated HVAC contract budget item has been removed and added to the jail budget. Naber stated courthouse building maintenance is increased \$5,000 for an electrical project.

Budget Administrator Kala Naber reviewed the Non-Departmental FY25/26 budget requests increases for professional fees with the state audit requiring a single audit due to grants, new postage meter lease and liability insurance. Naber stated the opioid settlement item of \$550,000 is shown as no decisions have been made on how to spend

Budget Administrator Kala Naber reviewed the Capital Projects/ARPA - FY25/26 budget requests reviewed the Capital Project plan and ARPA project report with the Board.

The Board reviewed the General Fund summaries, General Supplemental Fund report and levy rate options presented by Naber. Naber stated she has contacted the bond attorney to inquire what the county can legally do with the funds left over from the levee project.

Naber asked the Board if the Administration Building remodel project or the new County Engineer's Office Building is a priority for FY25/26. Mather stated it has been discussed to have the Administration Building remodel project completed by the 2026 elections. Discussion was held with the Board regarding possible relocation of offices if the Administration Building remodel is done. Naber stated the Engineer's office building has more pressing issues and more work has been done on the project/design compared to the Administration Building remodel project.

Chick requested a report to show each department employee salary increase to understand the increases due to the salary study, step increases and proposed cost of living increase. Naber stated she is working on a report to show a three-year schedule starting with FY23/24 (before the salary study), FY24/25 when some of the salary study was implemented and also show individual wages proposed for FY25/26.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 A.M.

ATTEST:

Tibe Vander Linden
County Auditor

Nathan Mather, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors