

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors  
Monday, March 31, 2025

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

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

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kirchner, the Board approved claims dated March 31, 2025 in the amount of \$296,823.05. Ayes: All.

Lindsey Phillips, from the Muscatine Community Partnerships for Protecting Children presented Proclamation #03-31-25-01 Child Abuse Awareness Month – April 2025. On a motion by Chick, second by Sorensen, the Board approved Proclamation #03-31-25-01 Child Abuse Awareness Month – April 2025. Ayes: All.

**PROCLAMATION #03-31-25-01**  
**CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH – APRIL 2025**

Whereas, children are vital to our state’s future success, prosperity and quality of life as well as being our most vulnerable assets; and  
Whereas, all children deserve to have the safe, stable, nurturing homes and communities they need to foster their healthy growth and development; and

Whereas, child abuse and neglect are a community responsibility affecting both the current and future quality of life of a community; and

Whereas, communities that provide parents with the social support, knowledge of parenting and child development and concrete resources they need to cope with stress and nurture their children ensure all children grow to their full potential; and

Whereas, effective child abuse prevention strategies succeed because of partnerships created among citizens, human service agencies, schools, faith communities, health care providers, civic organizations, law enforcement agencies, and the business community; and

Now, therefore, the Muscatine County Board of Supervisors do hereby proclaim the month of **April 2025 as Child Abuse Awareness Month**, and call upon all citizens, community agencies, faith groups, medical facilities, elected leaders, and businesses to increase their partners in our efforts to support families, thereby preventing child abuse and strengthening the communities in which we live.

ATTEST:

/s/Tibe Vander Linden  
Muscatine County Auditor

/s/Nathan Mather, Chairperson  
Muscatine County Board of Supervisors

Steve Morris, Associate Renewable Development with Invenergy, presented information on the proposed Olympus Solar Project. The Board held discussion with Morris regarding the number of property owners who have signed agreements, battery storage and fire risk, road set back, how solar projects affect local energy costs, potential PFAS concern, questions on public acceptance of projects, permits, length of leases, wind vs. solar energy, possible storm damaged solar fields, soil cover and decommissioning. Attorney Samantha Norris of BrownWinick Law Firm, Melvin Bantz and David Vollmer of Invenergy presented information and held discussion with the Board regarding solar energy costs, ordinances/moratoriums, beneficial habitats and vegetative screening for landowners. Mather thanked the presenters for their information. Sorensen stated his appreciation to the representatives of Invenergy for their time and presentation. Mather stated there will be time for public comment later in the meeting.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved to order dispositional costs totaling \$1,958.34 assessed against Jeffrey and Eva Boling to be placed on the tax book against real property at 120 West Fulliam Avenue, Muscatine, Iowa. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kirchner, the Board approved the Contract, Bond and Certificate of Insurance for microsurfacing project L-(M24-6)—73-70, along portions of North Mulberry Road X54, 155<sup>th</sup> Street X54/F70, and 120<sup>th</sup> Street F65. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Chick, the Board authorized the Chair to sign a contract with Wolfe Contracting, Inc. for exterior masonry and stucco repairs on the Administration Building in the amount of \$114,700.00. Ayes: All.

County Development Director Eric Furnas updated the Board on the Deep Lakes Campground project and reviewed the special permit process for renewable energy projects which are filed with the Board of Adjustment.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the minutes of the March 24, 2025 regular meeting and March 24, 2025 special meeting. Ayes: All.

#### Correspondence:

All Supervisors received several emails from citizens on solar power projects.

Sauer received an email from a citizen inquiring about school district boundaries and the process for boundary changes. Sauer directed the citizen to contact the school district administration.

Chick was contacted by Mindy Strong of Montpelier regarding a culvert.

#### Committee Report:

Kirchner and Sorensen attended a Farm Bureau Board meeting on March 25, 2025.

Kirchner attended a West Liberty Economic Area Development (WELEAD) meeting on March 27, 2025.

Chick attended a Mississippi Valley Workforce Development meeting on March 25, 2025.

Chick attended a Bi-State Regional Planning Commission meeting on March 26, 2025.

Mather attended a Community Action of Eastern Iowa Board meeting on March 27, 2025.

Sauer attended a Region 9 Transportation meeting on March 26, 2025.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the March 2025 payroll claims. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kirchner, the Board approved the proposed FY25/26 Muscatine County budget for publication. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Sorensen, the Board set a public hearing on the proposed FY25/26 Muscatine County budget for Monday, April 14, 2025. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Chick, second by Sorensen, the Board authorized the Chair to sign a memo giving Budget and Administrative Services Director Kala Naber and Human Resources Director Beth Keith signatory authority to execute any and all documents necessary for administration of Muscatine County human resource functions. Ayes: All.

Mark Patton, 1611 Cedar-Muscatine Road, Wilton, Iowa, stated he owns a small farm outside of Wilton with his wife. Patton stated he is a board member of the Muscatine County Clean Energy Board and an Energy Coach for the USDA REAP program which assists farmers and small businesses to secure grants for energy efficiency and solar projects. Patton stated landowners in Muscatine County can apply for 25-60% payment toward solar panels, they can contact him to write the grant for no charge. Patton stated he is not here today as an advocate for the proposed solar project of their neighbors but to lay out the facts as he sees them for solar farms. Patton stated there are farmers who sign up for the CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) for up to 15 years and the land is taken out of production and rests while not producing anything of value for the market. Patton stated solar farms do the following things: 1.) Pay three to five times the market rate for cash rent allowing the farmer a reliable income flow for many years. 2.) By having a dependable cash rent, the farmer is less likely to have to sell their farm. 3.) Solar farms produce significantly higher taxes for county governments and school districts while not adding a strain on the roads or bridges the county has to maintain. Patton stated the benefits once the solar farms are erected and operational, include no pollution, farmers do not rely on USDA subsidies, no smell, no large bank loans by farmers, no noise, no bird flu, no core bores, no drought, no research has been found that solar fields cause cancer, no need for pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers. Patton stated solar energy makes Iowa more energy independent, increases local tax base and provide a clean, quiet neighbor which has been shown to increase property values.

David Shield, 1136 North Elm Street, West Liberty, Iowa, stated his father and brother are also present today. David stated his family was involved with the local extension office many years ago to promote no till farming. Shield stated a green renewable energy source is not just for a year but for decades to come. Shield stated his work history was working for a seed corn company for 43 years, which developed hybrid seeds that increased yields and production of

crops. Shield stated the world is not going to starve with the continuing increase in yields however seed prices remain stable.

Diane Glenney, 2891 150<sup>th</sup> Street, Muscatine, Iowa, stated she submitted notes to the Board last week. Glenney expressed her personal concerns as she and her husband are farmers between Wilton and Muscatine. Glenney stated in 2013 they worked with 10 other families to stop a nuclear power plant from being built within two miles of Glenney's home. Glenney stated her concerns with how solar farms have a proposed 40-year lease period, the noise disturbance to the landowners and neighboring farms, potential invertors at the edge of fields, ground water run off issues, decommissioning the solar fields with only the top three feet of the ground, possible solar energy company bankruptcy and tornado/wind damage that can scatter material and affects neighbor's fields. Glenney quoted an article that stated solar fields belong on roof tops and to leave the farm fields alone.

Rhonda Meredith, 1174 Bay Circle, Nichols, Iowa, stated her concerns with the current Muscatine County ordinances for solar farms and wind turbine lease agreements, as the agreements have been accelerating. Meredith stated the current solar ordinance was amended in 2021 but it does not adequately define requirements and safe guards to the county and non-participating landowners. Meredith stated neighboring Cedar County ordinance includes a cap of 640 total acres per project however the proposed Invenegy project is for 1100 acres but Muscatine County ordinance has no cap on acres per project. Meredith stated the county solar ordinance has no definition for the CSR2 rating and no precise regulations for the proposed site. Meredith stated Cedar County has specific definitions for ratings in reference to solar farms. Meredith stated the current county ordinance does not have specific set back in linear feet per mile of solar structures which Meredith believes it should be defined, especially for adjacent non-participating landowners. Meredith stated there are no specific regulations for the transfer of the lease property if the property is sold, as Cedar County ordinance does have specific regulations. Meredith stated the county ordinance decommissioning and site reclamation plan is very vague. Meredith stated she has been waiting 15 months, when there was a moratorium on wind turbines, to get the updated county comprehensive plan to then have public input meetings and to update the ordinances, as she feels they are outdated.

Dane Meredith, 1174 Bay Circle, Nichols, Iowa, stated one of the things the solar farm companies do not talk about is what the solar panels are made of. Meredith stated the panels are made up of gallium arsenic (carcinogen), lead soldering and precious silver, which the world is running out of silver. Meredith asked Invenegy what the true cost per megawatt to decommission the solar fields would be and they stated they have no answer since it would be 40 years from now. Meredith quoted information from an online article that stated the decommissioning cost estimate as of today would be \$368,000 per megawatt. Meredith reviewed a geothermal project that Germany has installed which will produce 100 times the energy per acre than solar produces. Meredith stated the cost to install geothermal is expensive but it is more efficient, as it is 40% less energy cost than solar. Meredith questioned what happens if hypothetically in 10 years it is decided to go with geothermal, what will happen to the solar panels? Will they be stranded? Will the consuming public have to continue to pay the higher rate for solar panel energy until it is decommissioned? Meredith stated the Board may want to

review the Ferbo project (geothermal) in Utah as it will be online in two years. Meredith stated a possible downside to the Ferbo project is that a well is dug and fracking occurs.

Tom Dalsing, 1354 160<sup>th</sup> Street, West Liberty, Iowa, thanked the Board for the opportunity to present. Dalsing stated Mather asked Invenergy (earlier in the meeting) what is the solar energy cost savings per resident. Dalsing stated the Invenergy Representative could not answer and the attorney who spoke talked in circles. Dalsing stated he believes there is no cost savings as the power company will take what you pay and then they pay less, but they will have higher profits. Dalsing said to live across the road from a solar farm is not his idea of living and believes his property value will tank. Dalsing stated his concern with the decommissioning process and that the solar company will only remove material from the top three feet of the ground. Dalsing stated he cannot believe solar fields will not hurt the environment over 40 years with all the different materials that are set or buried in the ground. Dalsing stated additional concerns with possible transfer of land and if the new owner will have problems with contracts and concerns with tornado damage and materials thrown into neighboring farm fields. Dalsing stated the only advantage he sees to solar energy is to line the pockets of the solar panel company.

Dan Ruess, West Liberty, Iowa, questioned if all the solar energy produced will be used in our county. Ruess stated if the energy is sold on the grid out of state or out of our county, is there a way to charge them? Ruess stated if so, that would create a continuous income for the county. Ruess asked the Board if the county has considered solar energy for their buildings? Sorensen stated electricity generation is not necessarily as expensive as some believe as the high percentage of the cost is the distribution of the energy. Mather thanked the public for their comments and stated if anyone needs the contact information for Invenergy to reach out to their representatives after the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 AM.

ATTEST:

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Tibe Vander Linden  
County Auditor

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Nathan Mather, Chairperson  
Board of Supervisors