

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Monday, April 21, 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.

A Public Hearing was called to order by Chairperson Mather at 9:01 A.M. on the proposed ordinance for regulation of burning in Muscatine County, the first of three readings.

Emergency Manager Chris Jasper gave a brief overview of the ordinance. Jasper stated the only change is if the National Weather Service issues a red flag warning, then it would be an automatic burn ban in the county, and this would allow enforcement during the red flag warning. There are multiple places to check on the red flag burn bans and they are: The National Weather Service website, Muscatine County Facebook page, or the State Fire Marshall website. Dale Maxson, Eastern Iowa Land Steward of The Nature Conservancy in Iowa at 1620 231st Letts, Iowa, explained that they use prescribed fire as a tool to manage their fire adopted lands. Maxson expressed the importance of safety with this process. Maxson thanked Jasper for the work he and the fire departments do. Maxson stated that having the process to allow a clearly defined timeline enables them to get their work done safely, within the small timeframe they have each year.

On a motion by Chick, second by Kirchner, the public hearing was closed at 9:05 A.M. Roll call vote. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved an Ordinance for the Regulation of Burning in Muscatine County on the first of three readings. Roll Call vote. Ayes: All. Sorensen stated that there will be two more readings on this subject if anyone from the public would like to comment.

Lori Elam, CEO of the Eastern Iowa Mental Health/Disability Services Region (MHDS) discussed the upcoming Close-Out Plan. Elam stated House File 2673 passed and was signed in May 2024, which created a new behavior health service system. Elam stated the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requires the MHDS Regions to have a closeout plan ending on June 30, 2025. The Eastern Iowa MHDS Region's Close-Out Plan addresses the following requirements: Budget, the discussion of the 28E Agreement, mental health advocate assets, the final audit record retention and a timeline. This plan shows a deficit of \$246,173.00 and HHS has stated they will help the regions that show a deficit in their closeout plan. The closeout plan runs from July 1 to December 31, 2025. Elam stated by December 31, 2025, the region will officially be closed and no longer exist. A meeting with the governing boards, and each county, is also required to review the proposed resolution to dissolve the 28E agreement. The governing board will meet December 15, 2025, to approve the final audit for FY25, final reconciliation and officially dissolve the 28E agreement. Any future inquiries after 12/31/2025, will be handled by the Scott County Budget Director or the Scott County Director of Community Services.

Bill Koeller, Muscatine County Historic Preservation Commissioner, stated that a consulting contract was signed with Price Preservation of Iowa City for a survey of North Calhoun Street, West Liberty, Iowa. The contract will be funded by the State of Iowa and the City of West Liberty. Price Consulting will be paid at a rate of \$80.00 per hour, with services and expense reimbursements, under this contract, are not to exceed \$26,096.00.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Chick, the Board authorized the contract with Price Preservation for the survey of North Calhoun Street, West Liberty, Iowa. Ayes: All.

County Development Director Eric Furnas reviewed the request for a change to the Fee Schedule for the Muscatine County Building, Zoning & Environmental Office related to private or small-scale solar installations. Furnas explained that when the Fee Schedule was initially set up the \$200 flat fee was sufficient for most residential or small-scale projects. Furnas is now proposing a change to the Fee Schedule to reflect \$200 fee for up to the first half megawatt for non-utility projects, then \$250 fee for every half megawatt thereon. This will make the fees consistent between both the non-utility and the utilities schedules. This change is mainly to cover the costs of added staff time for larger commercial businesses that put in solar panels for private use.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the change to the Fee Schedule for the Muscatine County Building, Zoning & Environmental Office related to private or small-scale solar installations. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Sorensen, the Board approved three utility permits with Eastern Iowa Light and Power, Wilton, Iowa. The first utility permit is to extend 7,200V overhead power lines and six new poles along the back slope on 155th Street, beginning at house 2505 going east to house 2529 in Moscow Township Section 34 T78N-R2W. The second utility permit is in Seventy-Six Township, T76N, R3W, to bore underneath Jasper Avenue for a new house service at 2172 Jasper Avenue. The third utility permit is also in Seventy-Six Township, T76N, R3W, to bore underneath Jasper Avenue for a new house service at 2430 Jasper Avenue. Ayes: All.

Muscatine County Engineer Bryan Horesowsky updated the Board on secondary road projects.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the amended minutes of the April 14, 2025 regular meeting. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:

Sauer received an email from a resident inquiring the Board to take a closer look at the number of traffic accidents north on Highway 38. Sauer referred them to the Iowa Department of Transportation as highways are managed by the state.

Sorensen received a couple of calls, one from a family of a client and the other call was concerned with the change in guardianship fees. Sorensen referred both the calls to the CS Director / DIS Coordinator Jessica Bopes.

Mather received a call from Anthony Davis, a producer on the Dennis Quaid public television show called Viewpoint. Davis explained that they do five to six minute

promotional or educational videos on various locations and was interested in Muscatine. Mather says he will gather more information to present at a later date.

Committee Report:

Kirchner attended a Muscatine County Fair Board meeting on April 17, 2025.

Mather attended a Wilton Chamber and Development Alliance meeting on April 16, 2025.

Sorensen had a zoom meeting on April 16, 2025 with Port of Eastern Iowa

County Attorney Jim Barry spoke to the Board about a proposed ordinance for special events in Muscatine County. Barry has drafted a special events ordinance at the request of several citizens in the county stemming from previous discussion with Adam Reisbeck, Muscatine Police Department, about the Triathlon to be held at Deep Lakes Park in Muscatine County. This ordinance will allow people to file an application for use of public roadways, park or any other properties owned by the County. The applications will be reviewed by Secondary Roads (if applicable), Sheriff's office, 911/Muscom and/or the County Development Director. Barry has prepared an indemnity agreement for the Triathlon to sign. Barry stated this also includes an agreement for participants to sign releasing the County of any responsibilities.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board set a Public Hearing for Monday, May 5, 2025 at 9:00 A.M. on a proposed ordinance for special events. Ayes: All.

County Attorney Jim Barry spoke to the Board regarding Muscatine County contracting with Scott County for juvenile detention services. Barry stated that back in 2021 the law changed, no longer allowing us to hold juveniles at our jail facility. Barry stated when a juvenile is arrested and needs to be placed in a detention facility, the County now needs to locate a detention facility. Barry advised there are 10 facilities in the state. Once a facility is contacted, they have to agree to take the juvenile. The County then transports the juvenile back and forth and also pays a peridium for the use of that facility. Barry stated Scott County has been used because it is the closest and lowest cost. Scott County is building or adding onto their facility and are offering an arrangement which allows Muscatine County guaranteed beds. The Board consensus was to have Barry arrange for Scott County to present and discuss the possible arrangement.

County Attorney Jim Barry shared with the Board that he spoke with Bill Schreiber about a desire to place a bench in memory and honor of Administrative Service Director Nancy Schreiber's work and dedication to the County, either in the courthouse lawn or at the riverfront. Sorensen agreed this would be a great idea and mentioned possibly placing this bench at the fairgrounds. The Board agreed to have more discussion on the topic at a later date.

CS Director / DIS Coordinator Jessica Bopes stated on May 13 & 14, 2025, Social Security will be doing an audit of the Trust Department. Social Security has chosen 10 Trust clients, and Bopes expressed she has no concerns and will bring a final report to the Board once the audit is completed.

The Board recessed at 10:18 A.M. and reconvened at 10:23 A.M.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board went into a closed session at 10:23 A.M. pursuant to Chapter 21.5.1(i), Code of Iowa, for performance evaluation. Roll call vote: Ayes: All. On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kirchner, the Board returned to open session at 10:46 A.M. Roll call vote: Ayes: All.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 AM.

ATTEST:

Tibe Vander Linden
County Auditor

Nathan Mather, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors