

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Monday, June 16, 2025

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

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

Muscatine Power & Water (MPW) Communications Department Manager Tom Lewis presented a post completion report on the ARPA funded MPW Rural Fiber project. Lewis stated the rural fiber communication expansion project has been completed with installation/activation from Isett Avenue to Saulsbury Road and also Lucas Road to Highway 22 to 170th Street which provides service to 77 customers with approximately 40% penetration. The fiber project offers 10g service of internet, cable television and phone service.

William Cowell de Gruchy of Liferaft presented information on a proposed biochar facility to lease five acres on Highway 6, four miles outside Atalissa, Iowa. Cowell de Gruchy held discussion with the Board stating the proposed biochar company would be the first facility in the United States. Liferaft converts local crop and wood waste into a charcoal-like soil additive that stores carbon and boosts soil health. Cowell de Gruchy stated the company is focused on creating local jobs, improving the land, and producing high-quality biochar. The company would create 50 local jobs once the facility is fully functioning. Liferaft is planning to submit an application to request to rezone the proposed site from agricultural (A-1) to industrial (I-2) to install a fully enclosed, low-impact biochar plant. The community can submit their questions to Liferaft's company email: hello@liferaft.cc

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board affirmed a Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust grant agreement for Muscatine County Drug Task Force protective equipment in the amount of \$22,670.00. Ayes: All.

Vic Amoroso of A&J Associates updated the Board on the proposed Jail HVAC Balancing project. Amoroso and General Services Supervisor Oscar Alvarez reviewed the HVAC system issues that have occurred primarily during the cooling periods. Amoroso stated it is necessary to determine what causes the cooling issues, the required repairs and the static pressure issues with a qualified maintenance contractor. Amoroso recommended hiring Winona Controls as a maintenance mechanical contractor with trouble shooting expertise and Systems Management Company as a good testing and balance company. Alvarez stated the HVAC system is 13 years old and Amoroso stated the expected life expectancy is 20 years, so there is still good life to the system. County Development Director Eric Furnas stated the system is in an emergency state and recommended the Board consider the Jail HVAC Balancing project with Amoroso's recommendations and to also consider a technical service agreement with Amoroso. Sorensen questioned if the geothermal system has budgeted dollars under capital service projects. Budget and Administrative Service Director Kala Naber stated there are no budgeted amounts however once the Courthouse Roofing Project is completed there may be available left-over funds that could be utilized.

Furnas recommended the proposed Change Authorization Request #1 for the Administration Building Exterior Repairs Phase 2 project. Furnas stated the request is to install Sikaflex sealant around perimeter of the interior courtyard, walkway between the two buildings and around the back of the building in the loading dock area with the area to be cleaned and prepared before installing the new sealant. The total bid is from Wolfe Contracting Inc. in the amount of \$3,795.00.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Chick, the Board approved Change Authorization Request #1 in the amount of \$3,795.00 for the Administration Building Exterior Repairs Phase 2 project. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kirchner, the Board approved Resolution #06-16-25-01 Approval of the Combined Preliminary and Final Plat of Proctor's Ridge Subdivision. Roll call vote: Ayes: All.

**RESOLUTION #06-16-25-01
APPROVAL OF THE COMBINED PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PLAT OF
PROCTOR'S RIDGE SUBDIVISION**

WHEREAS, there has been presented before the Board of Supervisors of Muscatine County, Iowa, a dedication and plat of the proposed subdivision "Proctor's Ridge Subdivision"; and

WHEREAS, said plat has heretofore been approved by the Zoning Commission of Muscatine County, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, said dedication and plat fully conform with all laws of the State of Iowa and all ordinances of Muscatine County, Iowa, applicable thereto; and

WHEREAS, the platting of said subdivision is conducive to orderly development within Muscatine County, Iowa, is not in conflict with any extensions of the established road systems of Muscatine County, Iowa, and is in harmony with the comprehensive plan of zoning now in effect within Muscatine County, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, the subdivision of said real estate and the plat thereof were accepted and approved by the Muscatine County Board of Supervisors following a public meeting on June 16, 2025.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Supervisors of Muscatine County, Iowa, as follows:

- Section 1. The said subdivision is hereby designated as "Proctor's Ridge", a subdivision in Muscatine County, Iowa, and that the descriptions of lots and parcels of land located therein shall be according to the number and designation thereof as set forth on said plat.
- Section 2. The Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors and the Auditor of Muscatine County, Iowa, are hereby authorized and directed to certify this Resolution in order that the

same and all other matters material to said subdivision may be recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Muscatine County, Iowa.

PASSED and APPROVED this 16th day of June, 2025.

ATTEST:

/s/Tibe Vander Linden
Muscatine County Auditor

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

Furnas reviewed a variance granted by the Muscatine County Board of Adjustment on June 6, 2025. Case #25-06-02, an application filed by Sherry Ditzler or Daniel Franks, Record Owner who requested to issue a variance to allow an accessory structure to be built in the front yard space approximately 57 feet from the front line. The affected property is located in Sweetland Township, in parts of the SW¹/₄ of Section 20-T77N-R1W at 1983 Geneva Hills Road, containing approximately 1.32 acres and is zoned R-1 Residential. The Board of Adjustment determined that a hardship exists due to the property containing steep slopes and the structure would not negatively impact the public or surrounding parcels as it would still exceed the minimum front lot line setback distance.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Sorensen, the Board accepted a Variance for Case #25-06-02 granted by the Muscatine County Board of Adjustment on June 6, 2025. Ayes: All.

Furnas reviewed a Special Use Permit granted by the Muscatine County Board of Adjustment on June 6, 2025. Case #25-06-01, an application filed by Keith or Wendi Koch, Record Owner, requested to issue a Special Use Permit to allow an outdoor event center on the property located in Goshen Township, in part of the SE¹/₄ of Section 3-T78-R3W at 1061 Jefferson Avenue, containing approximately 3.64 acres, and is zoned A-1 Agricultural. The following stipulations were noted: 1.) Permission must be granted by the Board of Supervisors for any events that have over 75 attendees and/or where alcohol may be consumed. 2.) The Atalissa Fire Department and EMS must be notified of all events. 3.) Parking must be on the property and should not be in any County Road rights-of-ways. 4.) All events must utilize the existing buildings. The addition of any buildings for events would require further approval. Furnas stated the Board of Adjustment approved the request with the stipulations.

Furnas stated the Courthouse Roofing Project has been completed and we are waiting on the crew to remove the scaffolding. Furnas stated drone footage will be completed and filed to document the project. Furnas stated he is hopeful the scaffolding will be removed this week so that the grounds and landscaping can be cleaned up prior to July 4, 2025.

On a motion by Sauer, second by Sorensen, the Board approved a utility permit with Eastern Iowa Light & Power, Wilton, Iowa – bore 7,200 cable under 3289 Martz Lane from private property on the north side to private property on the south, staying east of the planned new

culvert. Section 35, T78N-R1W and Section 2, T77N-R1W. Ayes: All.

County Engineer Bryan Horesowsky reminded the Board that Monday, June 23, 2025, will be bid letting for the paving project on Stewart Road (Project LFM-FR6-7X-70).

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Chick, the Board approved the minutes of the June 9, 2025, regular meeting. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:

Sauer, Sorensen and Kirchner received an email from a resident stating they were not in favor of the proposed Liferaft facility.

Mather received an email from an individual interested in asphalt work for the county.

Mather forwarded the email to Horesowsky.

Mather received an email from a non-profit company who performs detox work. Mather forwarded the email to Community Services Director, Jessica Bopes.

Chick received a phone call and an email from Jim Meredith regarding the proposed Liferaft facility.

Kirchner received several calls regarding the proposed Liferaft facility.

Kirchner received a call from a resident on Bayfield Road regarding a neighbor lighting off fireworks. Kirchner referred the information to County Attorney Jim Barry, County Development Director Eric Furnas and Sheriff Quinn Riess.

Committee & Meeting Reports:

Sorensen attended a Ports of Eastern Iowa meeting on June 11, 2025. Colonel Sinkler and the Corn Belt Ports group has established the Iowa Port Association which is a non-profit association to advocate for port issues and funding in Iowa.

On a motion by Chick, second by Sorensen, the Board authorized the Chair to sign a contract with the Mississippi Valley Workforce Development Board to provide Employer of Record services. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the FY25/26 Salary Schedule (3.00% adjustment to scale) and authorize one-time 1% payments to employees at the maximum step for their grade. Ayes: All.

Budget and Administrative Service Director Kala Naber reviewed the recommendations from the MRA Compensation Study in FY25/26 to fully implement the study for 25 county employees with half of their step on July 1, 2025 and the other half on the employee's anniversary date at an additional cost of \$12,321 than budgeted.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved to fully implement recommendations from the MRA Compensation Study in FY25/26. Ayes: All.

Naber reminded the Board of the Joint City, School District and County meeting to be held on

June 17, 2025 at the Muscatine School District Administration Center

Greg Lindle, 1705 Lindle Avenue, addressed the Board with concerns of a property on the northeast corner of a parcel he owns, that has been rezoned and he was not notified as an adjacent owner. Furnas asked what the address of the property is. Lindle stated the property is on Mulberry Avenue and owned by John Kramer. Furnas stated that he is not aware that the property was rezoned. Lindle stated his concerns with a bridge on Lindle Avenue and issues with the culverts on each side being partially plugged.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 A.M.

ATTEST:

Jane Claussen
First Deputy Auditor

Nathan Mather, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors