

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Monday, March 23, 2026

The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors met in special session at 10:00 A.M. with Chick, Kirchner, Mather, Sorensen and Sauer present. Chairperson Chick 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 Chick at 10:01 A.M. on the FY26/27 Muscatine County Proposed Property Tax Levy.

Administrative & Finance Director Kala Naber presented the Public Hearing Notice with the current year certified property tax of \$16,762,364.00 and the proposed budget for FY26/27 of \$17,052,414.00. Naber reviewed a graph of the services the county provides and reviewed each service area. Naber reviewed the county expenditures for secondary roads and the jail and how each expenditure is funded. Mather stated the federal and other county reimbursements the county receives for housing federal or other county inmates help to defray some of the costs for our jail. Naber presented slides showing a 10% and 5% assumed property value increase comparison, which showed a county urban and rural tax decrease for the 5% example.

Naber reviewed a tool on the county website for citizens to estimate property taxes per tax parcel. Naber stated citizens can input their assessed property value for 2024 and 2025 (found on the MAGIC website) and proposed tax rates for school, county and city to estimate property taxes. Naber stated the rollback (state limitation on growth assessment) is included in the estimator with the FY26/27 rollback having been set by the state at 44,535% and current year is set at 47,432%.

Steven Dierckx, 1711 Vail Avenue, Muscatine, stated he expected a larger public attendance at the meeting. Dierckx asked if budget items are ever turned down and if anything ever changes with the budgets at a public hearing. Mather stated the budget process starts in January with four meetings to evaluate the department and outside agency budget requests. Sorensen reviewed the current 1.9% increase in property valuation with a 12% commercial property valuation, due to the equalization percentage increase ordered by the state. Dierckx asked questions regarding the districts listed on his tax statement and the difference between general basic, general supplemental budgets and debt service. The Board held discussions to review the questions presented. Dierckx recommended a DOGE volunteer committee for the county to screen budget items stating Muscatine has the highest property taxes and it needs to be a median rate. Dierckx asked how the property tax reform bill is going. Sorensen explained the current rollback of taxes and the proposed tax bill. Dierckx stated he feels we need to elect board members who can cut spending.

Charles Lorensen, 1808 Briarwood Lane, Muscatine, stated he thinks he will move out of the county and never come back. Lorensen questioned the current tax rate vs. the effective tax rate on the budget year statement. Naber reviewed the budget year statement. Lorensen stated the tax process is confusing and stated he will be attending the city and school public hearing meetings, where in the past they only give three minutes to speak. Lorensen questioned the updates at Deep Lake Park and asked if the money spent on improvements has been a good

thing. Chick stated the dollars made are hard to capture. Sorensen reviewed the funding that was used for the improvements. Lorensen stated communication from the county and other entities is bad. Sorensen stated the county spends approximately \$38,000 annually with required publishing in the two legal newspapers. The Board held discussion stating the state laws have imposed some costs to the county and all notices are published on the county website and newspapers (Muscatine Journal and Wilton/Durant Advocate). Lorensen stated Muscatine Power & Water local cable station does not post the meeting agenda.

Emergency Management Director Chris Jasper stated the increase for Emergency Management/911 Communications is due to new legislation passed last year which changed for the state to take additional surcharge funding. Jasper stated cell phone service charges previously allowed 60 cents for every dollar charged on a user's bill to be given to emergency management and now the state is sending a bill each quarter for providing 911 services. Therefore, increases in tax dollars are necessary to fund radio dispatch equipment and 911 dispatchers.

Sorensen reviewed the general basic and general supplemental budget and the restrictions and obligations the state has set on what the county can fund. Sorensen stated the reimbursement fees the county receives from the state for required services do not cover the cost of the services. Sorensen stated he has a conversation each year with legislators on how to fix this problem.

Peggy Gordon, 802 Wier Street, Muscatine, stated there is a legislative bill going through the funnel that will charge \$5 per posting for electronic agendas and postings for government entities and first-class mail may increase up to \$1.00.

Mather reviewed the Board has cut funding of \$50,000 to \$60,000 to outside agencies, such as libraries. Mather stated matching funding to the agencies has been presented to some.

Sauer stated Muscatine County is fortunate with the industry, corporations and jobs we have in our community compared to other river towns in Iowa which lack industrialization. Sauer stated citizens should be thankful for what has been built and maintained here.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Mather, the public hearing was closed at 10:57 A.M. Roll call vote: Ayes: All.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 A.M.

ATTEST:

Tibe Vander Linden
County Auditor

Danny Chick, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors