

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Monday, May 4, 2026

The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. with Chick, Kirchner, Mather, Sauer and Sorensen 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 9:00 A.M. on declaring Emergency Medical Services (EMS) an essential service in and for Muscatine County. Emergency Management Director Chris Jasper stated the proposed Resolution is to declare emergency medical services as an essential service and then appoint an EMS Advisory Council following an approval. The proposed resolution states on June 9, 2021, Iowa Senate File 615 was signed into law by the Governor, giving Iowa counties the capability to declare EMS an essential service for their respective county, thereby making it possible for counties to propose additional funding sources for EMS to the county's voters at election. Jasper stated he has received several calls with questions regarding EMS as an essential service. The calls he received were six in favor and one against. The Board held discussion in regards to how 17 counties in Iowa have held an election and passed the EMS as an essential service. Under the new designation, the maximum tax levy allows up to 75 cents per \$1,000 of property valuation and discussion was held on how EMS would be included in the General Supplemental Budget with no restrictions. Currently, EMS have been holding monthly meetings (for two years) to discuss the essential service process and evaluate options. Sorensen reviewed the current concern of rural residents with the ambulance and emergency services. Dave Clark, Wilton Police Chief/EMS Director stated the reimbursement from Medicaid and Medicare for ambulance billing is very low which usually doesn't cover the cost of the ambulance run and expressed his concern with being unable to break even on EMS operating expenses. Clark stated he does not see how they can sustain what they are currently offering for EMS without a change. Kurt Sickels, West Liberty Fire Chief stated his ambulance billing is also low with approximately a 48% reimbursement. Becky Brisker, Moscow, Iowa, who works in Wilton, Iowa, stated her support of EMS as an essential service, especially in smaller communities, and stated her experience with a medical life-threatening incident at her work at CDS Global. Brisker stated a life at work was saved with the excellent medical emergency service received from Wilton and West Liberty, but if this would have occurred in a rural area where volunteers are harder to keep active, the outcome may have been different. Brisker stated her hope that as a county we can continue to support EMS in the best way for all citizens going forward. Sauer questioned at the maximum tax levy of 75 cent per \$1,000, what is the approximate amount that could be raised. Jasper stated the approximate amount is \$1.4 million or \$1.7 million, depending on the budgets submitted per district and a certain percentage of the amount can be set aside for capital expenditures. Mather stated his concerns with making a rushed decision on the resolution. Mather questioned the possible liability to the county and his belief that further review of Iowa Code 422D is necessary before he makes his own decision. Clark stated the EMS services have been reviewed over the past two years and having separate EMS districts which would lie outside City of Muscatine, does not seem feasible. Mather asked how the City of Muscatine has been involved and their support or concern. Sorensen stated with recent transition of leadership in the fire department some decisions have been delayed. Jasper stated if the Board requests a quarterly update from the Advisory Council or request a presentation from the current committee,

it can be arranged before this goes to a Board decision. Jasper stated the intent with the resolution is to get an Advisory Council in place with key members. Sandy Heick, retired West Liberty EMT, stated the resolution declaration will enable the process to begin for the exact wording for the county's public measure for the voters at election. Mather stated he has questions and concerns with a major change with a possible 8% property tax increase and the need to learn more of the process of how it will impact taxpayers. Jasper stated the property tax levy would be presented from the Advisory Council however the Board of Supervisors would have the ultimate decision. Jasper stated today's public hearing was posted and published more than 60 days ago. Sauer recommended the data the emergency departments could compile and present could be beneficial to review. Clark stated the data of bill pay, revenues and expenditures can be presented. Sickels stated it may be beneficial to contact other counties who have passed the essential service for the entire county.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board closed the public hearing at 9:44 A.M. Roll call vote: Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approve a resolution declaring Emergency Medical Services (EMS) an essential service in and for Muscatine County on the first of three readings. Roll call vote: Ayes: Sauer, Sorensen, Chick, Kirchner. Abstain: Mather. The motion passed 4-1.

County Assessor Nancy Long reviewed a disabled veteran homestead property tax credit application that was processed incorrectly by her office, in order to issue the credit on the prior tax year. Long stated the error cannot be refunded or corrected for taxes that the owners have paid but the proposed approval will allow for a credit for the future.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved a 2025 Disabled Veteran's Homestead Tax Credit application. Ayes: All.

County Conservation Director Katie Hammond and County Development Director Eric Furnas presented an item to seek support for and the terms of NAWCA (North American Wetland Conservation Act) grant application by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The grant is for funding to do extensive wetland migration on several properties in the Louisa and Muscatine area. As part of this grant application, TNC proposed to transfer two parcels of land to Muscatine County that will be used as part of their match in the grant application.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the terms of a NAWCA grant application by the Nature Conservancy and authorizing the Chair to sign a letter of support. Ayes: All.

County Development Director Eric Furnas and Brad Roeth of Watersmith Engineering reviewed Change Order #01 in the amount of \$42,343.00 for the Downtown Parking Lot and Sidewalks Project, stating the project bid did not have sufficient bid quantity that is now due to Heuer Construction for their completed cement work.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Mather, the Board approved Change Order #01 in the amount of \$42,343.00 for the Downtown Parking Lot and Sidewalks Project. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kirchner, the Board approved the plans and specifications for FM-C070(78)--55-70, a PCC Pavement - Grade and Replace project on 230th Street (G28) from Louisa County Line to Iowa 70. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved a utility permit for Interstate Power & Light (Alliant Energy), Cedar Rapids, Iowa to install new 3PH underground electric and one J-box along 200th Street South right-of-way west of West Walcott Road. Section 1-T78N-01E. Ayes: All.

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

On a motion by Sauer, second by Sorensen, the Board approved the minutes of the April 27, 2026 regular meeting. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:

Sauer received a call from a resident regarding West Liberty ambulance service.
Kirchner received several calls regarding the West Liberty ambulance service.

Committee & Meeting Reports:

Chick and Sorensen attended a Housing Accelerator Committee meeting on April 29, 2026.

Sorensen introduced the Corn Belt Port representatives to the Muscatine Community Foundation Office to discuss possible funding for the Port Development Master Plan on April 29, 2026.

Sorensen stated the Muscatine Community Foundation and Towhead Island have had questions on streambed credits. County Auditor Tibe Vander Linden stated they have contacted her and she sent an email to them explaining the process County Engineer Bryan Horesowsky has had with purchasing credits for his department projects through the Corp. of Engineers website.

County Sheriff Quinn Riess stated May 3 to May 9, 2026 is Correction Officers Appreciation Week. Riess thanked his Correction Officers for their work.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07 A.M.

ATTEST:

Tibe Vander Linden
County Auditor

Danny Chick, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors