

Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Monday, July 27, 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.

Historic Preservation Commissioners Lynn Pruitt and Chris Brase presented discussion regarding its next preservation initiative, a proposed nomination of the historic Mississippi Courts property, located along Highway 22 near the Mississippi River, to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Pruitt stated the project stems from the County's comprehensive transportation survey, which identified significant historic resources related to the development of roads, bridges, railroads and river crossings. Pruitt stated that Mississippi Courts is a rare surviving example of an early roadside motor court consisting of eight cabins and a central roadhouse building that historically served travelers as automobile tourism expanded. Over the years, the property evolved from a lodging, dining and fuel stop into a nightclub and roadhouse with a unique local history worthy of preservation. Pruitt stated the property owner is supportive of the nomination and understands the designation would make the property eligible for preservation grants while allowing her to retain ownership and control of the property. Any federally funded restoration work would be required to meet National Park Service preservation standards. Pruitt reported that the Commission had previously received authorization to apply for a Historical Resource Development Program grant and had been notified of a \$4,500 award to support consultant services associated with the nomination. The remaining required local match of \$2,290 will be funded through the Historic Preservation Commission budget previously approved by the Board.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Mather, the Board approved the Chair to sign a Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP) grant award for the nomination of the Mississippi Courts Cabins and Supper Club to NRHP in the amount of \$4,500, with a local match of \$2,290, with Historic Preservation Commissioners Lynn Pruitt and Chris Brase. Ayes: All.

Conservation Director Katie Hammond held discussion with the Board regarding the Chair to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the placement and operation of MOTUS bird tracking equipment on County property. Hammond explained that the equipment would be installed at the Environmental Learning Center as part of a statewide network of MOTUS tracking antennas designed to monitor the movement of tagged birds, bats and insects. The antenna is expected to detect tagged wildlife passing within approximately nine miles of the Environmental Learning Center, providing opportunities for wildlife research and educational programming. Hammond noted that the project represents a collaborative effort with Muscatine Power and Water donating labor for installation of the pole, Eastern Iowa REC donating the pole and the DNR providing and installing the tracking antenna. The County's responsibility would be limited to providing internet connectivity and electricity for operation of the equipment. The proposed antenna would be located on the east side of the Environmental Learning Center near an existing flower bed, where available conduit and building access are expected to simplify installation.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the Chair to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for the placement and operation of MOTUS bird tracking equipment on County property. Ayes: All.

County Development Director Eric Furnas held discussion with the Board to authorize the Chair to sign a \$40,000 agreement with Winona Controls for annual maintenance of the County's Building Automation System (BAS). Furnas explained that Winona Controls has provided BAS maintenance services for the past several years, including quarterly maintenance, remote system monitoring, adjustments and technical support for several County buildings in the downtown area. The agreement maintains the same pricing as the previous year and will expand coverage to include the Conservation Department's automated system associated with its geothermal system. Recent software upgrades will allow authorized staff to access, monitor and adjust multiple County building systems through a common software platform. Furnas noted that finalization of the agreement was delayed while control system upgrades were completed and the scope of maintenance services was reviewed and adjusted. Furnas indicated that the County has been satisfied with Winona Controls and the progress made in coordinating building automation services with the County's HVAC contractors.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Kirchner, the Board approved the Chair to sign an agreement with Winona Controls in the amount of \$40,000 for Building Automation System Maintenance. Ayes: All.

Furnas also commented on the previously discussed MOTUS wildlife tracking project at the Environmental Learning Center, recognizing the collaborative efforts of Hammond, Information Services Director Bill Riley, Muscatine Power and Water and Eastern Iowa REC to develop an installation plan that utilizes existing infrastructure and avoids unnecessary penetration of the building. Furnas noted that the cooperative approach resulted in a more appropriate installation with minimal cost to the County.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved nine utility permits: 1.) Eastern Iowa Light & Power REC, Wilton, Iowa, to bore 2-inch duct on the west side of Holy Avenue at the right-of-way and retire out 2 spans of overhead. Section 19, T78N-R03W. 2.) Eastern Iowa Light & Power REC, Wilton, Iowa, to bore three 2-inch duct on the east side of Atwood Avenue at the right-of-way and retire out two spans of overhead. Section 19, T78N-R04W. 3.) Eastern Iowa Light & Power REC, Wilton, Iowa, to bore 2-inch duct on the east side of Clark Avenue at the right-of-way and retire out 2 spans of overhead. Section 21, T78N-R04W. 4.) Eastern Iowa Light & Power REC, Wilton, Iowa, to bore three 2-inch duct on the east side of Elliason Avenue at the right-of-way and retire out 2 spans of overhead. Section 23, T78N-R04W. 5.) Eastern Iowa Light & Power REC, Wilton, Iowa, to bore three 2-inch duct on the east side of Elder Avenue at the right-of-way and retire out 2 spans of overhead. Section 14, T78N-R04W. 6.) Eastern Iowa Light & Power REC, Wilton, Iowa, to place a pole and an anchor in the right-of-way. The proposed location is staked with a lath and white flag. Location is west of 2282 Mittman Road, Muscatine. Section 7, T78N-R02W. 7.) Interstate Power & Light (Alliant Energy), Cedar Rapids, Iowa, install new 3PH UG electric along 200th Street South right-of-way west of West Walcott Road. Section 1, T78N-R01E. 8.) Interstate Power & Light (Alliant Energy), Cedar Rapids, Iowa, install new

3PH UG electric along 200th Street South right-of-way west of West Walcott Road. Section 1, T78N-R01E. 9.) Interstate Power & Light (Alliant Energy), Cedar Rapids, Iowa, install new 1PH and 3PH UG electric and (1) new pole along 200th Street South right-of-way west of West Walcott Road. Section 1, T78N-R01E. 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 July 20, 2026 regular meeting. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:

Sauer had a conversation with a resident regarding the road repair at the top of Sweetland Hill. The resident was pleased with the temporary stop lights that ran on a timer for constant interval lane alternating.

The Board received an email from a resident regarding concerns with plugged culverts and drainage issues on their property. Horesowsky stated that sediment accumulation may be restricting drainage through the existing culverts, potentially due to the age and condition of the culverts and/or sediment runoff from the gravel lot. Horesowsky noted that an unfinished, unpermitted entrance containing a plastic culvert may be contributing to drainage issues due to its elevation. The history of the additional entrance is unclear. Horesowsky clarified that field entrance driveways and associated culverts are the responsibility of the property owner.

Mather received information from the family of former County Attorney Jim Barry and was asked to share with the public that Barry has been diagnosed with leukemia and is currently under treatment. Barry is currently not taking any messages or visitors due to the risk of infection.

Kirchner received a phone call from Mike Walker Farms, located south of Nichols, on 190th Street regarding a hole in their culvert. This was relayed to Horesowsky for review.

Committee Reports:

Kirchner and Sauer attended the Muscatine County Conference Board meeting on July 21, 2026.

Kirchner attended a WELEAD meeting on July 23, 2026.

Mather attended the Muscatine County Veterans Affairs Commission meeting on July 23, 2026.

Chick attended the Bi-State Regional Planning Commission meeting on July 22, 2026.

Sauer attended the Muscatine County Conservation Board meeting on July 20, 2026.

On a motion by Mather, second by Sorensen, the Board approved a Fireworks Permit Application from Lutheran Living Senior Campus. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Mather, second by Sorensen, the Board approved the July 2026 payroll claims. Ayes: All.

Information Services Director Bill Riley held discussion with the Board regarding significant increases in server hardware costs. Riley reported that a replacement backup appliance budgeted at \$50,000 was recently quoted at approximately \$108,000. Riley stated that he attributes the increases in part to growing demand associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and major investments in data centers. Riley stated that the IS Department is reevaluating planned technology purchases and infrastructure needs, which may result in reductions to planned expenditures or future budget amendment requests. Riley also discussed the County's future use of AI, noting that policies will need to address data security, public records requirements, account ownership and access, and whether information entered into AI platforms is retained or used for training purposes.

Conservation Director Katie Hammond reminded the Board and public that the Muscatine Triathlon will be held Saturday, August 1, 2026 at Deep Lakes Park. Hammond stated the park's primary beach, fishing and parking areas will be unavailable for normal recreational use Friday during the event setup and Saturday during the event, with normal public access expected to resume late Saturday afternoon. Hammond stated that due to existing road construction and additional closures required for the triathlon, participants and spectators will need to access the event via 57th Street through Fruitland, Iowa. Portions of Stewart Road, Pettibone Avenue and 41st Street will be closed with 41st Street being utilized for the 5K portion of the event. Hammond noted that uniformed officers will assist at major intersections and that closure and access information has been posted on the County website and social media to increase public awareness and encouraged motorists to observe road closures and use designated routes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 A.M.

ATTEST:

Jane Claussen
1st Deputy Auditor

Danny Chick, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors