

January 21, 2025

The Benton County Board of Supervisors met in regular session with Supervisors Seeman, Tippett and Volz present. Supervisor Seeman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Benton County Service Center. Members of the public are invited to join in during open session or watch the livestream at <https://www.youtube.com/bentoncountyiowa>. *Summarized Resolutions will be available in the Auditor's office and at: www.bentoncountyiowa.gov*

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To remove item #14 (Discuss/Approve 28E with Central Iowa Juvenile Detention) from the agenda to allow the County Attorney to look over and do more research. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To approve the agenda with that one removed item. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve the minutes of January 14, 2025. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve Payroll checks numbered 143663 through 143667, ACH Deposits 59786 through 59944, vendor checks 252505 through 252511, and claims numbered 252512 through 252636. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Karen Kurt, the new Executive Director for East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) introduced herself to the Board. ECICOG works through a 28E agreement between Benton, Linn, Johnson, Jones, Washington and Iowa Counties. They leverage state and federal resources for the region and kick into high gear when needed for such things as derecho disasters. Kurt also presented their annual report and Fiscal Budget asking of \$18,260.

Alyssa Comer and Mary Beth Stevenson, also from ECICOG came to educate the Board on the watershed management authority for the Middle Cedar. The authority has been in effect for 10 years. Benton County was the previous fiscal agent, and Tracy Seeman has served on the Middle Cedar Board. They are currently working on getting more entities signed on along with efforts to get a new coordinator hired. They are requesting \$5,000 from Benton County. IN the group are Franklin, Hardin, Butler, Grundy, Marshall, Tama, Black Hawk, Buchanan and Linn Counties along with smaller towns of Vinton, Traer, and Grundy Center and also the City of Cedar Rapids, Waterloo and Cedar Falls.

Melody Kosobucki with Riverview Center gave a quick overview of the services they provide in Benton County. They work to get people on path to healing and moving forward after being impacted by sexual abuse. They work closely with our Sheriff office and local hospitals. Their FY 25 Budget asking is \$1,000. Karey Chase, vice president of community impact for the East-Central United Way talked to the Board about the volunteer center in Benton County. They currently have two part-time staff in their office space in Belle Plaine. Their advisory council would like to see them looking into server smaller communities. Chase explained what services they have provided such as transportation services and errand running, projects of coats, pillows and the tree of sharing and Thanksgiving food packages. Their FY 26 Budget asking is \$20,000.

Rik Handler, representing Pete's Hills Addition and Haley McNulty, representing Southern Exposure Estates came to present a petition of names and to discuss a paving project on 32nd Avenue from HWY 30 to the sub-division. The list of property owners are all willing to partner with Benton County for the cost of getting this done. Engineer Myron Parizek talked about the costs and time process of how soon this could take place. A contractor would have to be hired. The Engineer and Auditor will prepare a petition, contract and waiver to finalize the details of cost for doing this as a special assessment. The time span of how many years to spread this out was also discussed. This will be brought to the board at a later date for official action.

The Benton County Library Association met with the Board on their budget requests. The Association hasn't met with the board for some years and thought this was a great time with two new supervisor members. Kelly Henkle, The Vinton Library Director explained all the services they provide to the member libraries of Belle Plaine, Keystone, Blainstown, Norway, Atkins, Newhall, Shellsburg, Vinton, Van Horne and Garrison. They also provide services to Luzerne and rural residents of the County. They are asking the same amount as the current year. Henkle also talked about the programs put on in the libraries, and subscriptions, circulation and programming provided at each library.

Sheriff Dave Upah and Deputy Josh Karsten presented needs for an amendment to the current budget. It appears they will be short on spending authority in wage area and vehicles. Currently they are short four

people and stressed this isn't for new positions, this was to fill vacancies where they have been short. With that comes the need for the vehicles and full gear to be put into the vehicles including in car camera systems. Auditor Rippel felt that these vehicles could be paid out of Local Option Sales and Service Fund (LOSST). She has included some of these increased spending authority in the upcoming Budget Amendment notice that recently went to the paper. That budget hearing is set for February 4, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. The 3 most recent vehicle purchases will be used for the new hires, and they are going to seek bids for 3 more that will be used to replace high0milease vehicles. Further discussion on amounts and also the need to increase the fees for contract rates. They would like to get something in place and sent out to the cities so that these new rates could go into effect July 1. The current rate is \$32.50 and that doesn't even cover the wages.

Robert Spangler, Phil Borleske and of the Benton County Historical Preservation Commission presented their FY 26 Budget request of \$17,135. \$6,000 is for office space rental and the rest goes towards training and projects they are required to do. The office space is to allow for these things and currently they share with the supervisors conference room and they want space of their own. The Supervisors told them they are still brainstorming for space and might know more by July.

FY 26 Budget conversations continued. Supervisor Tippett proposed sending a letter to the department heads with guidance where their budgets should be. Rippel agreed that would be a good idea. A big factor is most definitely working with the insurance amounts decided last week, and wages. Hopefully that can take place in the upcoming week or two. The individual departments could then get her a more accurate budget by the end of the month so that she can start compiling it as a whole. There are so many unknowns such as the Mental Health Changes that will be taking place, landfill fees and non-departmental costs to factor in as well.

Committee reports: Supervisor Tippett reported on attending the newly elected officials school last week at Prairie Meadows in Altoona. He felt it was great information and networking. Supervisor Seeman attended the landfill meeting and the watershed meeting.

Continuation on the FY 26 budget discussion was had. Auditor Rippel inquired on who will be budgeting for the service agreement for maintenance fees on the communication towers. If it will be the county or emergency management, they affect two different levies. Supervisor Seeman will get back on this and get the final yearly amount needed. Supervisor Tippett said he would like to maintain what we have but would like to see an overall decrease in the county budget. Auditor Rippel shared that with changes that Senate File 2442 made, the growth in the county has forced us to reduce levies again for FY26 General Basic and Rural Basic. The tax reform changes could continue for years to come, so we have to take it a year at a time depending on what legislation does.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To adjourn at 11:46 a.m. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tracy Seeman, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor