

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2023**

At 9:00 a.m. Chairperson Bob Yoder called to order in regular session a meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors which took place in the Washington County Courthouse. Items on the agenda included approval of agenda; public comment related to agenda items; petition regarding relocation of various Washington County offices; appointment of Dave Greiner to fill unexpired term as Marion Township Trustee; personnel change request – Communications; personnel change request – Sheriff; personnel change request – County Attorney; personnel change request – Ambulance Services; a mendment to Ambulance Services fee schedule; proposed engagement letter with Ahlers & Cooney, P.C.; letter of cancellation regarding current jail food vendor; approval of contract with new jail food vendor; approval of Addendum #1 to Right of Way Services Agreement with JCG Land Services, Inc.; renewal of Awe Winery LLC dba Revasser Winery Class C Retail Alcohol License including Living Quarters and Outdoor Services; amendment to Kalona Golf Course Liquor License; department head comment; adjourn. Supervisors Jack Seward, Jr., Stan Stoops, Marcus Fedler, and Richard Young were also present.

Other individuals present at the meeting included Jennifer Wilkerson with KCII Radio, Kalen McCain with the SE Iowa Union, Public Health Administrator Emily Tokheim, County Engineer Jacob Thorius, Katrina Altenhofen, Elizabeth Duncan and Jamie Brahme of Ambulance Services, Interim County Attorney Anthony Janney, Sheriff Jared Schneider, Communications Director Cara Sorrells, Millie Youngquist and Deanne McCusker of City of Washington, Main Street Washington Executive Director Samantha Meyer, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Michelle Redlinger, City of Washington downtown business owners Isabella Santoro and Karen Bates Chabal, and citizens Dale Torpey, Mike Murphy, Loree Stogdill, Joe Miller, Abe Miller, Jim Cuddeback, Rosemary Luers, Lorraine Williams, Heather Marek, Gary Mellinger, Richard D. Anderson, Jim Gorham, and Ann Gorham. Various other individuals listened and/or watched remotely by way of electronic means.

All motions were passed unanimously by those supervisors in attendance unless noted otherwise.

On motion by Fedler, seconded by Young, the Board voted to approve the agenda after it was amended to include the following: Update on March 31, 2023 tornado activity in Washington County.

Emergency Management Coordinator Marissa Reisen provided a summary of the damage that occurred as a result of multiple tornados that swept through the Washington County area on March 31, 2023. After the completion of preliminary damage assessments Reisen reported that five homes and two agricultural facilities were destroyed, one home suffered major damage, one home suffered damage, and two homes were adversely affected. She also reported that the Wellman Telephone Company tower was destroyed along with the Washington County Public Safety radio equipment mounted on the tower. Fortunately, according to Reisen, the redundancy features of the Washington County Radio System prevented an interruption in county radio service. An issue with the Wellman warning siren was also discovered as a result of the storm and the issue is being corrected. Reisen also encouraged individuals to sign up for “Alert Iowa” which warns citizens of approaching severe weather. Reisen also provided information regarding steps she is taking to apply for Presidential Disaster Declaration funding assistance. The Board took no formal action.

During the public comment portion of the meeting citizen Mike Murphy encouraged the Board to pursue remodeling county-owned facilities at the Orchard Hill complex located on Lexington Boulevard. Citizens Richard Gilmore and Richard Anderson voiced support for purchasing and remodeling the Federation Bank building located at 102 E. Main, Washington.

Citizen Karen Bates Chabal presented a petition containing 218 signatures from citizens in support of Washington County services remaining in the downtown section of the City of Washington rather than being moved to space on the edge of the City of Washington at the Orchard Hill complex. The petition urged the Board to reconsider the primary architectural plans as developed to date and also stated that businesses would likely lose customers as a result of such a major relocation. Finally, wording contained in the petition stated that signers of the petition are not in support of such a move and instead support the acquisition of the Federation Bank building, located at 102 East Main, Washington, for County office space. Isabella Santoro, who assists her family in operating Café Dodici Restaurant which is located on the Washington square, addressed the Board in support of the Federation Bank Building as a future location for various County offices. She shared that moving such offices to Orchard Hill would remove the opportunity for County employees to conveniently go for a short walk, shop, and enjoy lunch or a quick snack. Moreover, according to Santoro, by moving County offices to Orchard Hill individuals would not have sufficient time to conduct business during their lunch break and still return to work on time. Finally, Santoro voiced that many individuals have worked many hours to successfully energize and revitalize the downtown area but she also warned that such momentum can be very fleeting. Washington Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Michelle Redlinger provided a brief history of efforts that have taken place that have resulted in a downtown area that presently is actively diverse, economically vibrant, and sustainable. Redlinger also spoke of the increasing online competition that local merchants face and highlighted the benefits of shopping locally, which include superior customer service, locally owned businesses, the availability of a wide array of products and services, and finally

convenience. In closing Redlinger requested that the Board, in order to solve the existing space issues, consider not only the Orchard Hill option but give thought to other options as well. City of Washington Mayor Pro-tem Millie Youngquist encouraged the Board to reevaluate and strongly consider the question of keeping County offices located in downtown Washington. She encouraged the Board to hold a public meeting to gain input and described the information that citizens are receiving as piecemeal, confusing, and lacking the “big picture” element of what is being considered, and also void of information regarding the proposed funding source. Youngquist also offered that the City of Washington is willing to partner with the County to explore alternate solutions in a collaborative manner. Citizen Abe Miller encouraged the Board to listen to the citizens of Washington County and urged the Board to hold a public hearing to obtain input. Seward replied that the requirements for holding a public hearing are stringent and instead recommended the public select a date, time, and location for a public meeting where conversation can in turn take place with regard to the question of remodeling the Orchard Hill complex and/or purchasing and remodeling the Federation Bank building. He added that if a majority of the supervisors choose to attend such a meeting it would in turn become an official meeting of the Board of Supervisors. Seward also offered to meet individually with any citizen that would like to talk with him. Young took umbrage to comments made earlier that the Board had not been open about its plans to remodel. Stoops offered that the Federation Bank would be good for the City of Washington and reminded the audience of the dangerous intersection at Highway 1 and 5th Street in Washington. The Board took no formal action.

On motion by Fedler, seconded by Seward, the Board voted appoint Dave Greiner to fill an unexpired term as Marion Township Trustee that ends December 31, 2024.

On motion by Fedler, seconded by Young, the Board voted to acknowledge, and authorize the Chairperson to sign on behalf of the Board, a personnel change request from Communications for Dispatcher Unity Stevens whose final day of employment occurred March 26, 2023.

On motion by Seward, seconded by Fedler, the Board voted to acknowledge, and authorize the Chairperson to sign on behalf of the Board, a personnel change request from the Sheriff for Jayse Horning who will assume the duties of Investigator effective April 6, 2023, and whose new salary will be \$35.17 per hour effective April 6, 2023.

On motion by Fedler, seconded by Stoops, the Board voted to acknowledge, and authorize the Chairperson to sign on behalf of the Board, a personnel change request from the County Attorney’s office for Nathan Repp who will assume the duties of full-time exempt Washington County Attorney, effective April 24, 2023, at the annual rate of \$149,207.00. The County Auditor is hereby authorized to issue pay warrants upon proper certification from the Department Head.

On motion by Seward, seconded by Young, the Board voted to acknowledge, and authorize the Chairperson to sign on behalf of the Board, a personnel change request from Ambulance Services EMT Trevor Viohl whose final day of employment occurred March 23, 2023.

Interim Washington County Ambulance Service (WCAS) Director Katrina Altenhofen addressed the Board and requested approval of revisions to current ambulance service rates which would, for the most part, reduce present rates. Altenhofen explained the requested changes would not however reduce WCAS revenue due to the fact that insurance providers generally reimburse WCAS based upon Medicare and Medicaid guidelines which would theoretically only leave uninsured patients to pay the higher rates. However, in reality such uninsured patients in general are unable to afford such rates. During review of the proposed rates Young noted the proposed decrease in the fee for lift charges from \$275.00 to \$0.00. Lift service fees result when ambulance staff is called to assist an individual who has fallen and is unable to get up. In such instances no other care is provided. Young opined that care facilities and individuals will take advantage of WCAS if lift services are provided at no cost. A somewhat lengthy discussion followed. On motion by Young, seconded by Seward, the Board voted to accept the proposed Washington County Ambulance Service fee schedule as proposed with the exception of the rate for Basic Life Support Treatment which shall be \$250.00.

At 10:15 a.m. the Board recessed.

At 10:20 a.m. the Board returned to open session.

On motion by Young, seconded by Seward, the Board voted to approve an engagement letter with the law firm of Ahlers & Cooney, P.C., Des Moines, Iowa, pertaining to land acquisition necessary for a highway upgrade and to authorize the Chairperson to sign the letter on behalf of the Board.

On motion by Seward, seconded by Stoops, the Board voted to approve, and authorize the Chairperson to sign, a notice of cancellation to be sent to the current jail food service vendor.

On motion by Young, seconded by Stoops, the Board voted to approve, and authorize the Sheriff to sign, a contract agreement with Consolidated Management Company, Des Moines, Iowa, to prepare and provide meals for incarcerated individuals at the Washington County Jail.

On motion by Fedler, seconded by Stoops, the Board voted to approve, and authorize the Chairperson to sign, Addendum #1 to a Right of Way Services Agreement with JCG Land Services, Inc. This matter is related to a planned road construction project.

On motion by Fedler, seconded by Young, the Board voted to approve an application from AWE Winery, LLC, dba Revasser Winery, 1749 Yucca Avenue, Ainsworth, Iowa, for a Class C Retail Alcohol License, including living quarters and outdoor services, for the period of May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024. Washington County Sheriff Jared Schneider expressed no issues with the application.

On motion by Yoder, seconded by Fedler, the Board voted to approve an application from Kalona Golf Club, 1376 Highway 1 South, Kalona, Iowa, for an amended Special Class C Retail Alcohol License for the period of April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. Washington County Sheriff Jared Schneider expressed no issues with the application.

Interim County Attorney Anthony Janney informed the Board that Iowa State Attorney General Brenna Bird paid a visit to the Washington County Attorney's office on March 31, 2023. Janney shared concerns with Bird and learned that such concerns are common in all, or nearly all, of the 99 counties in Iowa.

At 10:38 a.m. on motion by Fedler, seconded by Young, the Board voted to adjourn.

ATTEST:
April 4, 2023

ROBERT C. YODER
Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

DANIEL L. WIDMER
County Auditor