

January 16, 2024

The Benton County Board of Supervisors met in special session with Supervisors Primmer, Seeman and Bierschenk present. The meeting was called 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>. *Unless otherwise noted, all actions were approved unanimously. Summarized Resolutions will be available in the Auditor's office and at: www.bentoncountyiowa.gov*

Bierschenk moved/Seeman seconded: To approve the Agenda as listed. Motion carried.

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To approve the minutes of Tuesday January 9, 2024 and January 11, 2024. Motion carried.

Roxanne Fuller, Benton County Volunteer Program started out by explaining as of July 1st, they are now known as the Benton County Volunteer Center with the United Way of East Central Iowa. They house volunteer centers in Belle Plaine and Vinton. Their asking request of \$20,000 is the same as last fiscal year. They provide medical transportation, Safety net programs with food, backpack programs for school kids, visit nursing homes, make homebound calls and also make pillows and blankets for those with health conditions.

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To set Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 9:15 a.m. as a land use hearing date for Steve and Lexa Speidel in a part NE ¼ NE ¼ of Section 5-84-10. Motion carried.

Cara Martin, Veterans Affairs Director, Mona Onken, MHDS of the East Central Region Utilization Review Coordinator along with Sarah Wagner, Benton County General Assistance Director met with the board. Onken explained the growing needs for social workers and as a group they are asking to merge the positions of general assistance with veterans affairs. Cara Martin would like to take over the General Assistance work along with her part-time VA work and make that a full-time position. Sarah Wagner would then transition to full-time MHDS Social worker and give up the general assistance portion she has been doing. The Region has already approved these changes along with a FY 24 Budget amendment necessary if they move forward with this merger making it in effect February 1, 2024.

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To approve Resolution #24-7, Veterans Affairs and General Assistance Employee position Merge effective February 1, 2024. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #24-7

WHEREAS, Cara Martin has been employed by Benton County as the Veterans Affairs Director since May 24, 2021;

WHEREAS, Sarah Wagner has been employed by Benton County as the General Assistance Director since 2019;

WHEREAS, the General Assistance Director is also currently employed by Benton County as a Mental Health & Disability Services of East Central Region Social Worker and operates under two budgets/functions with a percentage of her employment/salary operating under County General Assistance and the remaining percentage operating under MHDS-ECR;

WHEREAS, in order to more efficiently accommodate the duties, responsibilities and needs of the offices of Benton County General Assistance and Benton County Veterans Affairs, the two offices shall combine, with one full-time Director overseeing the County Veterans Affairs and General Assistance offices, assigned budgets, and all other duties and responsibilities of each office.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. Benton County shall employ one full-time Director for the offices of Benton County Veterans Affairs and Benton County General Assistance.
2. The Benton County Veterans Affairs Director shall assume the responsibilities of both offices effective February 1, 2024 and henceforth.
3. Each fiscal year, the Director shall determine the operating budgets for each office, and said budgets shall reflect the percentage of VA office salary, duties and responsibilities, and GA office salary, duties and responsibilities.
4. The legal precedent for the above falls under Iowa Code Section 331.323, which provides the authority for the County to combine the offices of General Assistance and Veterans Affairs.

Dated this 16th day of January, 2024.

Richard Primmer, Chairman

Gary Bierschenk, Vice-Chairman

Tracy Seeman

ATTEST:

Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To approve the amended Exhibit A to reflect the 100% appropriation for Sarah Wagner's wages and benefits. Motion carried.

The Mental Health, General Assistance and Veterans Affairs FY 24 Budgets were also presented along with the Rural Access Hub which is also fully reimbursed by the MHDS East Central Region.

Mindy Druschel, Department of Human Services presented their FY 25 Budget Request. Basically the same amounts as last year. Melinda Schoettmer presented the FY 25 Treasurer Budget.

Hayley Rippel, presented the FY 25 Auditor Budget along with Elections. Rippel explained how the June Primary is budgeted in current year, but there has to be some overlapping for bills that might come in after July. The upcoming General Election in November is a big part of her budget, with increasing absentee voting, that is added postage. Also noting that Ben Turnis will include the software cost for the Time and Attendance software in his budget.

Ben Turnis explained the FY 25 Budget for both IT services and the GIS department. Most of these increases are for updates to both hardware and software.

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To approve Class B Liquor license for Kimm's Mini Mart. Motion carried

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To approve Class C Liquor License for Topsy Travelers for April 26, 2024 through April 30, 2024. Motion carried.

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To approve the General Assistance Quarterly Report ending December 31, 2023. Motion carried.

Shelby Williams, Conservation Director along with Cecilia Dirks presented the FY25 Budget. Williams explained the plan to hire more people including an office managerial position which Cecilia has been helping out with. They would also like another conservation technician along with adding law enforcement coordinator duties to an existing deputy. These changes along with other necessary increases was roughly \$130,000. Williams also noted that the amount for land acquisition, and that they have raised over ½ of that Wildcat project costs.

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To authorize the Auditor to submit a bid notice for the Cedar Valley Ranch farm ground lease. The deadline for the Auditor to receive them will be by 9:45 a.m. on February 27, 2024 and the Board will open them on February 27, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Motion carried.

Under Old Business: Primmer has spoken with both Beverly Winkie and Jim Wheeler in regards to the Historic Preservation Commission. He thought Winkie did not want re-appointed, but when indeed she did. With them having an upcoming meeting on the 18th, he wanted to make that correction.

Primmer moved/Seeman seconded: To remove Jim Wheeler, and re-appoint Beverly Winkie to the Historic Preservation Commission. Motion carried.

No action on items for appointments to the ECICOG RTAC Board, Belle Plaine Airport and Pioneer Cemetery Commission.

In comments, Doug Cook asked questions about the previous meeting regarding a new bridge and maintenance of a road near Keystone. He also asked about the board of health. Supervisor Chairman Richard Primmer said he couldn't comment on this.

Supervisor Tracy Seeman recognized the county workers who have been clearing roads during the blizzard. He said, "Secondary Roads has been out there busting their butts. At 24 inches of snow in five days with 40 mph winds. I think they're doing an outstanding job. Now just for the people out there so they can read this and understand it, there's 975 miles of gravel road in Benton County alone." He said in making a second pass, that makes 1,950 miles. On Friday and Saturday they were limited to only asphalt roads, with no gravel because of the blowing and drifting snow. The trucks could not handle the snow banks, and that's why the maintainers were pull off of the gravel roads. So the total doesn't even include the blacktop roads.

He added, "There were some problems that we had with some of residents moving snow and not getting it far enough off the road that tore up a couple machines here over the weekend." He continued, "I understand that people got to move snow, but at least don't dump it on somebody else's problem, like us — the county. Because we've been tearing off the pins on the wings of the maintainers when they hit the snow that's piled up there."

Seeman stressed, "They're doing their best."

Seeman moved/Bierschenk seconded: To adjourn. Motion carried.

Richard Primmer, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor