

January 7, 2025

The Benton County Board of Supervisors met in regular session with Supervisors Seeman, Tippet and Volz present. Supervisor Seeman called the meeting to order at 9:30 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.bentoncountya.gov*

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve agenda with a few changes noted from the Auditor. Seeman abstained. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve the minutes of January 2, 2025. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To approve the Auditor's Quarterly Report ending December 31, 2024. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To accept resignation from Dylan Ryder, jailer at the Sheriff's Office effective January 10, 2025. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To set land use hearing date of Tuesday February 4, 2025 at 9:15 a.m. for Paige and Brandon Dullia for part of the NE ¼ NW ¼ of Sectio 32-83-9. All members voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To approve the claims Payroll checks numbered 143658 through 143662, ACH Deposits 59631 through 59785, vendor checks 252382 through 252387, and claims numbered 252388 through 252504. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve three ARPA Claims, all to Hawkeye Communications for IT/Wiring in a total amount of \$7,398.00. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To appoint Lynn Schoenmann to the Belle Plaine Regional Zoning Board. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Seeman moved/Volz seconded: To approve Sheriff's Quarterly Report, ending December 31, 2024. Seeman and Volz voting aye, Tippet abstained. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To re-appoint Dr. Brian Meeker as Benton County Medical Examiner, Elana Janss-Johnson, Tyler Henkle, Braxton Morrison, Kimberly Koehler-Rayman, Katie Stetzel, Amanda Seiler, Mindy Icenbice and David Eilander as Medical Examiner Investigators for a two-year term. Tippett, Seeman and Volz all voting aye. Motion carried.

Tracey Achenbach with the East Central Iowa Housing Trust Fund presented the FY26 budget request. She explained how the trust fund started in the late 1990s. Since the program started, they have spent over \$1.2 million. The request of \$5,986 is an increase from \$5,387 last year. The supervisors agreed that the county gets a good return on this investment. \$183,080.00 was paid out in Benton County alone last year from the Eastern Iowa Housing Trust Fund.

Ryan Bervin with Assured Partners met with the board regarding employee benefits and the various renewal options through ISAC (Iowa State Association of Counties). He said 28 counties participate in this partial self-funded health plan. The overall pool had a very good year. He explained the wellness, dental, life, vision and other benefits. He said the county's reserves are in a good spot. Bervin also touched on how an HRA works for sick leave conversion. It would be a great benefit to employees, but costlee for the County. At this time, there was nothing set up for this. He can prepare more information about this and other things the board inquired on such as long-term disability.

Joe Kaiser, representing Stoney Arch Estates Association. He would like to see the easement removed between lots 10 and 11. He had concern about heavy farm equipment on that easement. Barb Fetzer of the land use department explained to Kaiser that the Supervisors can't do that, there would need to be a re-plat of lots 10 and 11 and that the City of Vinton would have the right to review. Kaiser thanked the Board for their time and will pursue further action.

Mark Erickson, Transportation Director, asked for clarification on the Transportation handbook regarding the Christmas Eve Holiday. His handbook still reflected a half day and his department worked a half day. Erickson was going to allow those employees 4 hours of comp time to reflect this and the Board agreed it was acceptable. This led to conversation to simplify the handbook(s) so that it is all one version with noting specific things to this department such as the Transportation's Drug and Alcohol Policy.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To authorize Mark Erickson to order both of the transportation bus(s) and commit funds accordingly over the FY 26 and FY 27 budgets. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Legislation in July changed and dissolved the compensation board, explained Auditor Hayley Rippel explained how legislation in July changed and dissolved the Compensation Boards. Reinstating the compensation board is up to the counties. In the past the Compensation Board sets the percentage recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The Board then could not go above, they could cut, but would have to cut evenly across all officials. If they don't reinstate the Board, then the Supervisors would have to act as such, and do the work to show and justify where they got the amounts.

Assistant County Attorney Derek Marsh said Lough wanted the board to know he didn't think the county needs a compensation board, adding, "He feels like we're perfectly capable to advocate for ourselves and our own people."

Supervisor Volz asked some questions how this affects all employees and Rippel explained the comp board is only acting for elected officials, which then trickles down to their respective deputy positions in their office and those wages can not go above 85% of their elected official's salary.

Supervisor Tippett observed the compensation board doesn't streamline the process, but it gives elected officials time to allow for a representative to advocate for the elected officials. Volz commented how nobody likes to see themselves asking for their own raise. Supervisor Seeman is on the fence, and said it would be another meeting to attend. Supervisor Tippett spoke on behalf of a previous meeting held by the elected officials and all but one were in favor of having it re-instated.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve Resolution #25-3, Re-Establishing a County Compensation Board. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #25-3 RE-ESTABLISHING A COUNTY COMPENSATION BOARD

WHEREAS, pursuant to Iowa Code Section 331.905, as amended in 2024 by Senate File 2442, the county board of supervisors may vote to establish a county compensation board.

WHEREAS, pursuant to this same Code Section, when the board of supervisors establishes a county compensation board, the compensation board shall be comprised of seven members who are residents of the county. Two members shall be appointed by the board of supervisors, one member each by the county auditor, county attorney, county recorder, county treasurer, and county sheriff. The members of the county compensation board shall not be officers or employees of the state or a political subdivision of the state and shall serve staggered terms.

WHEREAS, the duration for the initial staggered terms for members of the County Compensation Board to run based on the election years of the County Auditor, County Attorney, County Recorder, County Treasurer, and County Sheriff. The two Board of Supervisor members will serve staggered alternating terms from each other.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Benton County hereby establishes a county compensation board for the county.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Benton County directs each of the elected officials to submit their respective appointments to the board of supervisors by January 14, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the representatives of the County Supervisors (1 of 2), County Auditor and County Sheriff shall serve an initial term of four years and the representatives of County Supervisors (2 of 2), County Treasurer, County Recorder and County Attorney shall serve an initial term of two years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this resolution shall apply retroactively to July 1, 2024.

HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors for Benton County on this 7th day of January, 2025.

Tracy Seeman, Chairman

Ronald J. Tippett

ATTEST:

Bruce Volz

Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To approve and authorize chairman to sign purchase agreement and permanent easement for RCB culvert extension on 61st St. Ln. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve 75 hours of vacation to be carried over for Myron Parizek to be used by May 31, 2025. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Parizek also inquired when the new version of the handbook would go into effect as he has employees with anniversaries that fall this week, and that would affect their vacation days.

Further discussion regarding the handbook but mainly discussing the sick leave conversion portion in Section 4.3. The Board would like to remove this section, and really get educated more on this and the cost it would be to the budget. Supervisor Tippett pointed out that the FY25 Budget had only began a short time when this was presented and approved by the previous Board. This is something that should be addressed with negotiating union contracts and setting budgets. Now would be the proper time for this to be discussed for proper future budget planning. Further discussion that this needs to be looked at and parameters set. We can't discriminate as we were explained earlier. Employees were told the new changes would go into effect January 1, minus the sick leave conversion in section 4.3.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve Resolution #25-4, Adopting a new and revised Benton County Employee Handbook. Seeman, Tippett and Volz all voting aye. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #25-4

ADOPTING BENTON COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors desires to adopt a new revised and improved county employee handbook; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors would like to rescind action regarding the Sick Leave Conversion in Section 4.3 that was included in Resolution #24-80;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Benton County Board of Supervisors that Resolution #25-4, replaces any current employee handbook(s) prior to this newly adopted version. The Auditor's Office or Human Resources Office is directed to provide all employees copies of the new handbook and have a signed employee acknowledgement form back by January 24, 2025 to be put in their personnel files. This new handbook will be retro and go into effect January 1, 2025.

Signed this 7th day of January, 2025.

Tracy Seeman, Chairman

Ron Tippett

Bruce Volz

ATTEST:

Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor

Continued discussion on insurance renewal rates were bounced around before deciding on plans and amounts.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To approve the same Vision plan and splitting the premiums 50/50 for both employee and employer as such: \$3.09 for single and \$7.58 family per month. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To change the dental plan from Plan 3 to Plan 4 that allows an additional \$500 benefit of coverage. To continue splitting the monthly premiums 50/50 with employees as this: employee and employer share is \$22.92 for a single, \$44.41 for family plans. Tippett, Seeman and Volz all voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To stay with the same healthcare plan 17, but go with option 3 for the partial self-funding buy down difference. The employee share will continue as is currently with single paying \$99.44 a month and family plan is \$389.55. The employer needs to budget \$842.97 for single plans and \$1715.45 for family plans monthly. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried. No action taken for the Monroe Township Clerk.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To recess at 11:38 a.m. and reconvene at 1:00 p.m. All members voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To enter closed session at 1:01 p.m. pursuant to Iowa Code 21.5(j); to discuss the purchase sale of particular real estate only where premature disclosure could be reasonably expected to increase the price the governmental body would have to pay for that property or reduce the price the governmental body would receive for that property. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Seeman moved/Volz seconded: To exit closed session at 2:04 p.m. Seeman, Tippett and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippet moved/Volz seconded: To proceed with the County Attorney to pursue quiet title action to ensure clear title to the future owner of the old dog pound property. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To adjourn at 2:08 p.m. All members voting aye. Motion carried.

Tracy Seeman, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor