

April 7, 2026

The Benton County Board of Supervisors met in regular session with Supervisors Volz and Tippett present, Tippett called in. Chairman 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>. *Full Resolutions will be available in the Auditor's office and at: www.bentoncountya.gov*

Volz moved/Seeman seconded: To approve the agenda. Volz and Seeman voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Seeman seconded: To approve the minutes for March 31, 2026. Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Supervisor Volz asked about the medical claims in the jail, and First Deputy Karsten explained the new process of getting reimbursed where they can for both medical and prescriptions as part of them taking on some of the collections within their department.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve the following claims numbered 256963 through 257099, 4/09/2026 payroll checks numbered 144059 through 144066, ACH Deposits 64889 through 65043 and vendor checks 257100 through 257107. Tippett, Seeman and Volz all voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To approve hiring of Martha Fey, part-time seasonal employment in the land use and health department at an hourly rate of \$20.00 effective April 13, 2026 through September, 30, 2026. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve the Veterans Affairs Quarterly Report effective March 31, 2026. All members voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve the General Assistance Quarterly Report effective March 31 2026. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To approve Resolution #26-22, Acknowledging the statutory maximum age for peace officers and the separation of Jeffrey Harnish from employment. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION #26-22

ACKNOWLEDGING THE STATUTORY MAXIMUM AGE FOR PEACE OFFICERS AND THE SEPARATION OF JEFFREY HARNISH FROM EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, Jeffrey Harnish is a peace officer and currently employed full-time with the Benton County Sheriff's Office; and

WHEREAS, Jeffrey Harnish is presently on paid administrative leave through April 11, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Jeffrey Harnish will attain the age of sixty-six (66) on April 11, 2026; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Iowa Code § 321.477(5), the maximum age for a person employed as a full-time peace officer pursuant to this section is sixty-five years of age; and

WHEREAS, upon reaching the statutory maximum age on April 11, 2026, Jeffrey Harnish will no longer be eligible for full-time employment as a peace officer under Iowa law; and

WHEREAS, Benton County will not be retaining Jeffrey Harnish in part-time employment following April 11, 2026;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Benton County Board of Supervisors that:

1. Jeffrey Harnish shall remain on paid administrative leave through April 10, 2026.
2. His employment as a full-time peace officer with Benton County shall conclude effective April 11, 2026, due to reaching the statutory maximum age pursuant to Iowa Code § 321.477(5).
3. Benton County shall not retain Jeffrey Harnish in part-time employment following that date.

- The Board expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to Jeffrey Harnish for his years of dedicated service to Benton County and its citizens.

Signed this 7th day of April, 2026.

Tracy Seeman, Chairman

Ronald J. Tippet

Bruce Volz

ATTEST:

Hayley Rippel, Benton County Auditor

Volz moved/Tippett seconded: To acknowledge the resignation of Whitney Amos, part-time correctional officer in the jail effective April 1, 2026. Seeman and Volz all voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve the Special Class "C" Retail Alcohol License or Watkins Community Athletic Association effective May 29, 2026 through May 29, 2027. All members voting aye. Motion carried.

Tippett moved/Volz seconded: To approve the Auditor's Quarterly Report effective March 31, 2026. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Committee Report from Supervisor Volz was heard regarding the County's Wellness Program and explaining the program and mentioned the payroll staffer going out this week. Employees still have until October 31, 2026 to get their wellness assessments done and physicals to qualify. Volz also had a recent Iowa Workforce Development CEO Board meeting. Still discussing the CEO's vacancy and what they will do moving forward with the reduction in budget funds.

Supervisor Tippett excused himself from the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

County Engineer Myron Parizek presented his Iowa Department of Transportation's 5 years construction plan effective FY 27-FY31. Parizek explained all the different years and projects that are mapped out. When this is final and approved he will be back for more formal action.

Jane Scheer, Benton County resident was present to follow up to last week's meeting in regards to the Morgan Valley Energy Center's proposal. Scheer wanted to know what the Board has done as a follow up to that. Supervisor Volz explained who all he had emailed and one response so far was in opposition and agreed to their concerns. Assistant Attorney Marsh explained the different approaches he had been researching in regards, and played with the idea of a similar ordinance. Jane Scheer also read a letter aloud from Jeffrey Howington with a list of suggested follow-up actions he would like to see Benton County residents have a voice on. Howington wanted them to submit a formal resolution expressing concerns, advocate for a joint public hearing that includes Benton County residents along with requesting studies and cooperating with review process in Linn County.

Terry Hertle, former supervisor and concerned tax payer wanted to follow up with the board of supervisors and present his comparison he has done on his own time. Hertle obtained budgets from Tama, Iowa and Buchanan County from their current FY26 budget to the FY 27 asking. Hertle wanted it pointed out that Benton County's Auditor, Treasurer and Recorder were all in line, although the Sheriff and Attorney were all way higher than most. He also referred to an article from Iowans for Tax Relief from a few years back, and said how the Board of Supervisors Budget was spiraling out of control.

Chairman Seeman had to cut Herte's public comments for our timed item.

The time of 10:00 a.m. having been the date and time set for public bids were received as follows for the county owned property referred to as the "Chervey Wildlife Area":

Benton Land Company, Kerry Less-\$2,500 (present)

Randy Patten-\$3,000 (present)

Darren Rinderknecht-\$2,650 (absent)

Those who were present were able to increase their bids. The bids quickly jumped to \$16,000 from Patten, then \$20,000 from Kerry Less, and then Patten with an increase to \$20,500 as the highest bid,

Less passed on her increase, explaining they were just wanting the ground to clean it up since it adjoins Tara Hills Country Club.

Volz moved/Seeman seconded: To accept the highest bid of \$20,500 from Randy Patten for the county owned ground known as the Cherveney Wildlife Area in Section 16-83-11. Volz and Seeman voting aye. Motion carried.

Terry Hertle proceeded with his comments in regards to the Sheriff and Attorney's budget comparisons. Hertle asked assistant attorney Derek Marsh about the outside legal costs due to conflict of interest. Marsh explained the regulations in regards to ethics on the matter. Hertle stressed that there is nothing wrong with freezing budgets or splitting the allocations up over the fiscal year to help control spending better. Sheriff Upah and First Deputy Karsten were present to give some feedback and explain the expenses along with added revenue the department is bringing in. Auditor Rippel reminded everyone this was not an agenda item, and public comments should be limited in time. Conversations back and forth continued, along with a phone call received pointing out ways for the Sheriff to cut spending. Sheriff Upah offered to meet with Hertle in private and go through the budget. Hertle agreed to a meeting but wanted it noted of his budget concerns today, although stressing he was not protesting.

Volz moved/Seeman seconded: To acknowledge the Proposed IDOT Secondary Roads 5 year construction plan for FY 27-FY 31. Volz and Seeman voting aye. Motion carried.

Volz moved/Seeman seconded: To adjourn meeting at 10:37 a.m. Tippett, Seeman and Volz voting aye. Motion carried.

Tracy Seeman, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Hayley Rippel Benton County Auditor