

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019**

Chairperson Bob Yoder called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in Courthouse chambers in regular session. Items on the agenda included: approval of agenda; Quarterly Report – Recorder; Quarterly Report – Auditor; personnel change request – Outreach; discussion and action regarding the future of ambulance service in Washington County; public comment; adjourn. Supervisors Abe Miller, Stan Stoops, Richard Young, and Jack Seward Jr. were also present.

Others attending were: Sally Hart, KCII Radio; Mary Zielinski, The News; Gretchen Teske, SE Iowa Union; Cyndie Sinn, County IT/Budget Director; John Gish, County Attorney; Danielle Pettit-Majewski, County Public Health Director; Brandon Hamilton, Deputy Sheriff; Zach Rozmus and Megan Jorgensen, County Conservation; Jo Greiner, County Recorder; Marissa Reisen, County Emergency Management Director; Jim Lester, Washington Chief of Police; Amber Williams, Board of Supervisors Administrative Assistant; and citizens Bill Miller, Karyl Miller, Tom Duwa, Charlotte Stalder, Denny Stalder, Pat Curl and Daniel Stigers,.

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

On motion by Miller, seconded by Young, the Board voted to approve the agenda as published.

On motion by Stoops, seconded by Seward, the Board voted to acknowledge receipt of the Recorder's 1st quarter report for FY20 and to authorize the Chairperson to sign the report on behalf of the Board. The report, presented by County Recorder Jo Greiner, reflected revenues for the quarter in the amount of \$125,579.45 with the county retaining \$46,959.95. A total of 1,311 documents were recorded during the quarter and the office handled 32 marriage applications, 74 passport applications, 113 passport photos, and 256 boat, ATV and snowmobile renewals and new registrations. A total of 569 certified copies of birth certificates, death certificates, and marriage licenses were provided to the public. Greiner commented that certified Birth Certificate copies and certified Marriage License copies continue to increase due to the real ID requirements. The complete report is available in the office of the County Recorder.

On motion by Young, seconded by Stoops, the Board voted to acknowledge receipt of the Auditor's report for the 1st quarter of FY20 and to authorize the Chairperson to sign the report on behalf of the Board. The report reflected revenues for the quarter in the amount of \$2,206.00. Of this total, \$2,000.00 resulted from transfer fees, \$190.00 from the sale of plat books, \$10.00 for a fireworks permit, and \$6.00 for the sale of E911 maps. The complete report is available in the office of the County Auditor.

On motion by Miller, seconded by Young, the Board voted to acknowledge, and authorize the Chairperson to sign, a personnel change request from Outreach for the hiring of Brandon Hamilton as full-time non-exempt Outreach Director with an effective date of November 7, 2019 and at the rate of \$26.44 per hour. Seward commented on the position ad which offered \$45,000 to \$55,000 annually. The current director recently received a raise to \$28.00 per hour after added duties which are no longer required and Seward wondered if the offered wage should be dropped to \$26.00 per hour. Miller replied that traffic to the Outreach Office is expected to increase in the near future. Hamilton will transfer directly from his current position of Deputy County Sheriff. The vote on the motion: Aye-Yoder, Young, Miller, Stoops; Nay-Seward.

The Board took up the discussion of the County's current ambulance services. Seward stated the current ambulance contract ends June 30, 2020 and there is little to no chance that the already extended contract will be extended again. An ad hoc group has been striving since July to find a viable option but have failed to do so, resulting in the extension of the current contract. The Iowa Code does not require Cities and the County to provide ambulance services as it does for police and fire protection. Washington County currently budgets \$490,000 annually for ambulance services, which includes a \$20,000 monthly subsidy as well as a fund earmark for providing ambulance replacements. The following options should be considered:

- 1) continue providing ambulance and emergency services to the residents of the County or discontinue the service and save the taxpayers the current associated cost
- 2) contract with an established provider outside of the community
- 3) form a commission or 28E agreement with all the incorporated Cities of the County to share the cost
- 4) have an outside group form a non-profit organization to contract with
- 5) have Washington County Hospital & Clinics operate the service
- 6) establish a County-operated ambulance and QRS (Quick Responders Service)

It is time to eliminate those options which do not appear to be feasible. Additional costs for each option and the method by which to pay them needs to be determined. Seward surmises the following assumptions: 1) the residents of Washington County want to keep the current level of service, 2) the most viable way forward could be a County owned and operated system and 3) if the first and second assumptions are likely true, then it may be necessary to fund those services by raising taxes that could be approved by a voter referendum. The first available election date would be March 3, 2020. But if that vote should fail to pass, then the question of how to proceed from there would continue. Or if it did pass, Iowa Code §422D.5 only allows the funding to continue for five years and then another vote would be required. Miller wanted to know if inquiries had been made into contracting with an outside business. Seward responded they had and after hearing the problems that other Counties have expressed in this regard it did not seem to be a good viable option. Young added that the law change taking away state reimbursement to MCOs (Managed Care Organizations) has created this problem for a lot of ambulance services. As Miller then pointed out, this seems to be forcing the taxpayer to pick up the slack. Seward stated that we now enjoy good service due to the community connection, but many outside providers are concerned mainly with their bottom line dollar amount which can lead to only a bare minimum in service. He added that he believes a sub-committee now needs to be formed to review all six options previously mentioned. Stoops asked how long a contract with an outside provider would have to be and would the County then be stuck with that contract for that period of time if it didn't go well. Young responded "three years"

but stated he believed clauses could be added to allow ending the contract sooner if so desired. Young also expressed the need to expedite plans due to the time it would take a new provider to set up new contracts with Medicare, MCOs, etc. Citizen Tom Duwa wanted to know how this might adversely affect current QRS services in the cities throughout the County. Young responded those services would need to be addressed in whatever contract might be created with an outside provider. He pointed out that the QRS services were staffed with volunteers but do rely on Washington County Ambulance to provide their supplies. Seward added that, due to changes in Chapter 132 of the Iowa Code, there was concern that four out of seven of our Quick Responder Services throughout the County may no longer be certified by the state to be in existence if they received less than 100 calls per year based on a three-year average. Seward went on to say the County may be able to act as an umbrella to these services in order to keep them going if this could be negotiated into the contract. Therefore, it is crucial to get the word out to the public about the importance of this matter. Emergency Management Director Marissa Reisen urged everyone to talk to their representative and/or senator at the state level to address our current local ambulance and QRS concerns. On motion by Seward, seconded by Stoops, the Board voted to establish an advisory committee that will be called the "Washington County Ambulance Advisory Committee"; that the purpose of the committee shall be to investigate options for providing ambulance service that meets or exceeds the service presently provided in the County and make periodic reports to the Board of Supervisors as necessary; that the committee shall meet until such time that the Board of Supervisors act upon the question of the ambulance service to the County; that the committee shall be co-chaired by Supervisors Seward and Young; and that the membership of the committee is open to a representative from:

1. each City in the County
 2. Washington County Fire Mutual Aid Association
 3. Washington County EMS Association
 4. Washington County Hospital & Clinics
 5. Washington County Public Health
 6. Washington Economic Development Director
 7. others approved by the committee co-chairs
- The vote on the motion: Aye-Yoder, Seward, Miller, Stoops; Abstain-Young.

During the public comment portion of the meeting Reisen reminded everyone that this Saturday both Wellman and Brighton will be having their annual firemen's breakfast fundraisers. Seward added that Keota will be having their's this Sunday as well.

At 9:45 a.m. on motion by Miller, seconded by Young, the Board voted to adjourn.

ATTEST:
October 22, 2019

ROBERT C. YODER
Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

SUSAN J. MEEKS
Deputy Auditor