

LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2018 4:00 P.M.

The Board met in joint session with the Linn County Farm Bureau, 1323 Boyson Rd., Hiawatha, IA. Present: Chairperson Harris, Vice Chairperson Houser, Supervisors Oleson, Rogers and Walker. Board members voting "AYE" unless otherwise noted.

Other County staff present: Steve Tucker, Finance Dir.; Dawn Jindrich, Budget Dir.; Les Beck, Planning & Development; Steve Gannon, County Engineer; Brad Ketels, Asst. County Engineer; Dennis Goemaat, Conservation Dir.; George Kanz, Conservation Board; Jon Gallagher, Soil Conservation; Col. John Stuelke, Sheriff's Office.

Tim Keegan, Farm Bureau County Action Committee Chair welcomed everyone and the following topics were discussed:

Dows Ground - Farm Bureau asked what the status of the Dows ground is. Supervisor Oleson explained that there is a planning stage in place and they are discussing the potential uses of the 185 acres and 306 acres. Jon Gallagher provided explanation regarding stream stabilization issues and long-term bank erosion.

Conservation Future Projects and Funding - Farm Bureau asked for clarification regarding the process of approving projects for funding. Dennis Goemaat explained that it takes approximately a year for a project to come before the Board of Supervisors. The project goes to the Water and Land Legacy Board first for discussion followed by the Conservation Board for a final decision and then finally to the Board of Supervisors.

Transition from Five to Three Supervisors - Farm Bureau was in favor of five supervisors with districts (existing plan). Chairperson Harris stated that the election will take place this November and he is not sure how three supervisors are going to accomplish the same amount of work as the five of them do now. He asked the Farm Bureau members what their expectations are of the supervisors and Farm Bureau members responded that they would like to see more of the urban supervisors willing to work in the rural area. They feel that the rural constituents do not have representation from the supervisors and that ag issues are a county issue and needs to be emphasized more.

Redistricting Plan - Farm Bureau members plan to hold a forum when the election gets closer so they can ask questions of those running for supervisor.

Budget Update - Dawn Jindrich stated that the FY19 budget is not finalized yet. There will be a one-year tax break due to new legislation that was passed regarding mental health funding. They are looking at a 60 cent per thousand tax rate reduction. The levy rate has been \$6.14 for several years and 76 cents of it was the mental health levy. It is too early to say if there will be a tax break for the following year.

Supervisor Rogers added that the legislature is discussing the commercial and industrial property tax backfill which has a \$2 million impact. Jindrich stated that there is a big chance the backfill will go away in the future and they will have to make up lost dollars, which could result in tax rates increasing (tax shift).

Dows Property - Les Beck stated that they are working on different concepts for development of the Dows Property including a possible working farm and residential and commercial components.

Prospect Meadows - Beck discussed urban renewal area designation.

Zoning Changes - Beck highlighted consumer fireworks sales and outbuildings being allowed as a principle structure on agricultural/rural parcels.

Animal Agriculture/Master Matrix - Beck stated that the Construction Evaluation Resolution (CER) is adopted annually by the Board of Supervisors. Farm Bureau is in favor of the Master Matrix as it is now.

Solar Power - Beck discussed the Solar Group Buy program and the county's SolSmart Gold designation. Farm Bureau members questioned possible tax credits with solar power and Chairperson Harris stated that he would follow up with the Assessor.

Consolidation of countywide communications center - Col. John Stuelke provided an update on the potential consolidation of PSAP's (Public Safety Answering Points) noting that they are not in favor of it for many reasons including the cost for a new standalone center. They do not see where there would be any possible savings with a consolidation.

Road and Bridge updates - Steve Gannon stated that a new road will be going to the fields and a RISE Grant will be used for turn lanes on Hwy. 13 for Prospect Meadows. Secrist Road is complete and County Home Road is prepared to go to five lanes and a possible roundabout at C Avenue.

Brad Ketels stated that he is working on their five-year program. They are waiting on results from the roads the DOT drove last year (pavement condition index).

Farm Bureau asked about damage to the county roads due to the new bypass in Mt. Vernon and if the vendor will be repairing the roads. Gannon stated that the state handles things in their own manner and the county will gain some costs due to acquiring roads from the state. Farm Bureau also asked about railroad crossings that are not signaled and if there are any changes. Gannon explained that is up to the railroads (Union Pacific, Canadian Pacific, etc.) and he does not think they are going to invest money in it.

Farm Bureau had questions about the process of the County Engineer's succession mainly about the interview process and if a Farm Bureau member could be part of it. Chairperson Harris explained that Gannon is retiring April 13th and Brad Ketels will be interim County Engineer during the busiest times (spring and summer) and then the Board will advertise for the position.

Supervisor Oleson added that the Board will decide who takes the position just like any other Department Head in the county. An interview team will be put together and there will be a lot of communication. The final candidates will be made known to the public. They plan to have someone in place before Thanksgiving.

Gannon stated that Ketels has 17 years of training and he recommends him as the next County Engineer.

Adjournment at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOEL D. MILLER, Linn County Auditor
By: Amanda Hoy, Executive Assistant

Approved by:

JOHN HARRIS, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors