LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024 9:00 A.M.

The Board met in session at the Linn County Jean Oxley Public Service Center. Present: Chairperson Running-Marquardt and Vice Chairperson Rogers. Absent: Supervisor Zumbach (personal business). Board members voting "AYE" unless otherwise noted.

Chairperson Running-Marquardt called the meeting to order.

Motion by Running-Marquardt, seconded by Rogers to approve minutes of February 26, 2024 as printed.

Sonia Evans, Finance & Budget, presented US Treasury ARPA deadlines and obligation dates.

Discussion continued regarding internal Linn County projects and if deadlines cannot be met, can those funds be reallocated elsewhere (other community projects). If deadlines cannot be met, dollars would need to be returned.

Darrin Gage, Dir. of Policy & Admin., suggested a July 1 deadline for bricks and mortar and capital campaigns and an August 1 deadline for all other projects.

Gage presented the current Weather Related Delays or Closings Policy. The Telework Policy was explained as it relates to the Weather Related Policy.

Dennis Goemaat, Conservation Dir., stated that they have a lot of tasks to do after a snow event, so they are asking to be put in the same category as Secondary Roads and the Sheriff's Dept.

Matt Warfield, Deputy Auditor, stated that the Elections Department has statutory requirements and is required to follow those requirements.

Rhonda Betsworth, Deputy Auditor, stated that typically her team does not telework but has agreements on file for weather emergency purposes. They are responsible for issuing payroll regardless of the weather.

Andrea Ewers, Human Resources, stated that they are focusing on the equity issue since the majority of county employees do not have the luxury of working from home.

Gloria Witzberger, Child Development, asked if her department would be considered essential workers. She explained that the families they serve need to be working or going to school. Those workers are in low paying jobs and don't have a lot of flexibility. They have stayed open to accommodate their situations.

Dawn Jindrich, Finance Dir., requested that an "as needed" clause be added to the policy. She stated that her staff has specific days of the week when they need to be home, and they would all prefer that they be working from home rather than taking an entire day off.

Jon Gallagher, Soil Conservation, pointed out that there are county departments housed within another entity's building (like himself) and wanted to make sure that the policy addressed how those employees are to respond. He noted that his building usually stays open when the county closes.

Joi Alexander, Communications Dir., asked that those elected officials that make independent decisions to close at different times than everyone else, notify her so that it is communicated to the public correctly.

Gayle Keiser, County Atty. staff, stated that they are housed at the Courthouse which generally stays open when the county closes. Most of her employees have a telework agreement and they are very supportive of the staff that have the option to work from home.

Nichole Baker-Brown, LCCS, stated that they have telework agreements in place, but that an "as needed" clause would be helpful.

Carolyn Siebrecht, County Recorder, asked for clarification regarding the amount of notification that is required, noting that if staff feel safe enough to drive to work, then they come in. If they don't feel safe, then they stay home. She leaves it up to the individual.

Brent Oleson, County Treasurer, stated that historically the county does not close, and when they do, it is only the rarest circumstances. He'd like to see that continue and to let departments make their own decisions.

Gage also noted that if an employe chooses to stay at work even if the building closes, there needs to be a supervisor present.

Nicki Finger, Deputy Treasurer, stated that they had an event where the office was closing early and the only two managers in the office that day lived near Troy Mills and Vinton. An employee lived a couple blocks away and said they wanted to stay. One of those supervisors had to stay.

Becky Shoop, Deputy Auditor, questioned why a supervisor needs to stay and babysit employees and where is that rule written. She noted that Auditor's staff are allowed to work without a supervisor present.

The Recorder's Office indicated that due to Passport regulations, at least one supervisor must be present.

Gage responded that he does not know where that rule came from but he would find out.

Charlie Nichols, Planning & Development Dir., stated that they have a number of staff that have to keep up certifications. They take classes online and when the county closes, that is a good opportunity to take those classes at home.

Staci Meade, LCCS, questioned if someone can go over their maximum remote hours if it is because of the weather. That question will be referred to HR.

Chairperson Running-Marquardt gave a recap of some projects that are being worked on: Safety Issues – what goals have departments set to ensure staff goes home to their families every night. Example: Treasurer Oleson is looking at equipment for repetitive motions; Road Dept. & Conservation have done some amazing things and reduced reportable injuries. Internal storage of county building plans/information – Facilities staff and GIS are working on this project. County owned land and Leases – looking at what Linn County owned land can be sold as well as lease consolidation. Utilities – can solar panels be installed. Budget situation – There was no Offer pot and they don't see any in the future. They will not be moving anything over to the supplemental budget next budget cycle and things will be tough. Attendees were encouraged to share any ideas for efficiencies within the county budget. The Board is open to all ideas.

Motion by Running-Marquardt, seconded by Rogers to enter into a closed session pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.5(1)(k) to discuss information contained in records in the custody of a governmental body that are confidential records pursuant to section 22.7, subsection 50.

VOTE: Running-Marquardt – Aye Rogers - Aye

Motion by Rogers, seconded by Running-Marquardt to go out of closed session.

VOTE: Running-Marquardt – Aye Rogers - Aye

Adjournment at 11:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JOEL D. MILLER, Linn County Auditor
By: Rebecca Shoop, Deputy Auditor

APPROVED BY:

KIRSTEN RUNNING-MARQUARDT, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors