

LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025 9:00 A.M.

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

Supervisor Rogers called the meeting to order.

The Board received updates from the following Department Heads:

David Thielen, LCCS Exec. Dir. – Budget amendment is being prepared; Winter Weather Shelter will close March 31st. ECI/DECAT – Continuing to wait on the restructure of the Early Childhood programs (legislation has made it through both committees). Met with HR and Co. Attorney to discuss possible redesign and what that means. Juvenile Detention Center - two vacancies; annual state licensing (minor corrections); meeting with Risk Mgt, IT and Facilities to look at risks and liabilities identified at Juvenile Detention Center (additional cameras, etc.); Ryan White – starting a new contract April 1 (don't anticipate Federal funding reductions). Mental Health Access Center – 4th anniversary last month; on target for withdrawal management to start. Childhood Development – continue to watch legislation regarding funding for childcare centers. East Central Region - named the Disability Access Point. Should have a contract but don't know if any staff will be retained for those resources (work continues with the Region and the State). OPTIONS – received two grants (technology and training needs); preparing for the State's licensing for Medicaid and Accreditation in June/July. Was in Washington DC for the NACO legislative conference.

Supervisor Running-Marquardt stated that Auditor Taylor had some questions regarding the fencing contract at the Juvenile Detention Center and she advised him to reach out to Thielen.

Supervisor Rogers stated that he thoroughly enjoyed their collaboration and time together going back when Thielen was Exec. Dir. of ARC. He is thankful that he has been guiding Community Services through some really challenging times. Thielen has been a tremendous mentor and helped tremendously with the Region navigating a lot of complicated discussions and he has added greatly to his experience at Linn County.

Thielen thanked Rogers for his service at Linn County and specifically for his dedication for serving on Community Services boards. He saw many changes including privatizing Medicaid and rate challenges, Mental Health funding, closing of sheltered workshops and case management, Pandemic, two floods and Derecho. Good leaders take a challenge and turn it into a positive and that's what Rogers and his elected colleagues have done over the years. He listed the state-of-the-art buildings that were built and the opening of the Mental Health Access Center. Roger's years of leadership has benefited everyone in the community. Over 1,000 kids have gone through the childcare center since Rogers started and over 1,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities that have gone through their programs have gone on to thrive in the community (he helped to support during his tenure). Rogers was the loudest advocate for mental health care regardless of if they could afford it or not. His leadership is one of a kind, listened, sought assistance from experts when something didn't make sense and empowered those that he worked closely with. His level of appreciation will not go unnoticed.

Dennis Goemaat, Conservation Dir. – There are many weather dependent construction projects. Pinicon Ridge mountain bike trail (added a gravity park component); Pinicon Ridge Park campground expansion and cabin project (few weeks of work left); in final phases of Pinicon Ridge dredging project; Dows Maniti Trail underpass is complete; Morgan Creek Lodge Construction (pre-const. meeting was held); Conservation Board submitted a grant to the Ia. Dept. of Ag. & Land Stewardship for wetland project at Morgan Creek Park (bid documents are being designed); working with Nature Conservancy on oxbow restorations; starting to prep to open campgrounds (two weeks from this Friday). He continued to thank Supervisor Rogers for his strong support over the years, noting that I has been a real pleasure to work with him.

Supervisor Rogers thanked Goemaat noting that he has enjoyed his time with him as well as his predecessor, Dan Biechler and staff. He often remarks how he takes his kids to Wickiup quite often and playgrounds such as Wanatee. He's watched as Conservation blossomed under Brent Oleson's leadership and vision. This adds such a quality of life to the community especially with access to trails and outdoor spaces with accessibility for people with mobility challenges. It's been an absolute pleasure being a small part of their success.

Pramod Dwivedi, Health Dept. Dir. – Ozone season has started (no data available); QTS owns and manages data centers all over the U.S. and property has been purchased in Linn County (they use waterless cooling); revising the number of emergency generators; due to SF 558, the Linn County Code of Ordinances associated with Ambient Air Quality will be updated; a level-funded budget was submitted to IDNR; asking Iowa HHS to add staff for more cancer screenings; data was presented for clinic visits, communicable diseases, My Care Community, food, aquatic and tattoo safety. He also recognized two staff members, Alicia Steines and Sadie Nolan.

Dwivedi recognized Supervisor Rogers stating that his departure leaves a hole but also an impressive indelible mark on everyone. He is certain that his colleagues on the Board will feel his absence deeply and he counts himself among those that will miss him dearly. Rogers' steadfast leadership and visionary spirit has shaped their journey. He stepped up to support their expansion and his courage in taking risks and readiness to ask questions and his high values reminded them what true leadership is about. His legacy is built on compassion and general desire to serve everyone. In moments of challenge, he was there, not only as a boss but as a trusted friend. He brought hope, wisdom and guidance when it was needed most, enriching the lives of everyone around him. Rogers has always believed that every human being has a unique gift to share and given meaning and purpose to their collective work. He is deeply grateful to know him, and his legacy will continue to inspire them and will be reminding them that leadership is about making a difference in the lives of others. Rogers' departure leaves a mark so deep and void that whispers in each boardroom seat. His spirit has led the way with vision and courage come what may. He bolstered their growth with strength and care expanding their reach with a passion so rare. During COVID, his guidance he showed was a beacon of hope when the felt alone.

Jon Gallagher, Soil Conservation Dept. Head – spraying season; mid-contract management (typically 10 years); sign-up period for funding for commodity producers; federal resignation program (Linn County field office staff reduced by 1.75 FTE). Since resignation program was announced and the termination of probationary employees, the NRCS office had 50% staff reduction and will impact serving Linn County residents; water quality initiative funding is available (\$10/acre); met with representatives of Linn Coop re: cover crop initiatives; and partnerships with Farm Bureau.

Gallagher thanked Supervisor Rogers for his time with Linn County noting that his shaping of Linn County during his time moved the bar and he is thankful for that. He has always been personally impressed by Rogers' passion and conviction as well as his professionalism and willingness to advocate for issues that directly affect the lives of citizens. His devotion to protecting and working with county staff has always been equally impressive.

Supervisor Rogers stated that he appreciates their time together over the years and stated that Gallagher's level of expertise is unmatched. He has helped the Board navigate through solar projects and water conservation. He has never received a complaint, and everyone is very complimentary about his level of knowledge, professionalism, calm demeanor and that is deeply appreciated.

Dustin Peterson, Veteran Serv. Dir. - Budget is on target; next career networking event is April 2nd at Big Grove Brewery; Ia. Assoc of County Veteran Services conducted its first virtual commissioner training in March; Claims Clinic and Spring School in Des Moines in April; his office is playing a larger role in assisting homeless and at-risk veterans in the community. He has not experienced or heard of any negative effects of the Federal cuts.

Peterson continued to thank Supervisor Rogers for voicing his support for him, his staff and the veterans of Linn County. He thanked him for taking time to listen and provide guidance. The impact is huge.

Supervisor Rogers thanked Peterson for his kind remarks and stated that he thoroughly enjoyed their time together, his professionalism and expertise. He is a tremendous human meaning and a tremendous asset to Linn County.

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Adjournment at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

TODD E. TAYLOR, Linn County Auditor
By: Rebecca Shoop, Deputy Auditor

Approved by:

KIRSTEN RUNNING-MARQUARDT, Vice Chairperson
Board of Supervisors