LINN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
CEDAR RAPIDS, LINN COUNTY, IOWA
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026 9:30 A.M.

The Board met in session at the Linn County Jean Oxley Public Service Center. Present: Chairperson Running-Marquardt (arrived at 9:32 a.m.), Vice Chairperson Scheetz and Supervisor Meisheid. Board members voting "AYE" unless otherwise noted.

Vice Chairperson Scheetz called the meeting to order.

Motion by Scheetz, seconded by Meisheid to open Public Hearing on the proposed fiscal year 2027 property tax levy.

Sara Bearrows, Finance Dir., presented proof of publication adding that this meeting is for only the county portion of taxes and the budget process as cities and schools have their own meetings. She did receive feedback from the public and it was provided to the Board of Supervisors. Bearrows explained the following:

- Budget Process
- FY27 Budget Summary – countywide levy rate decreased to $6.05 from $6.06 in FY26; rural rate stayed the same and includes a reduction of $1.00 for rural residents from Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) allocation; expenditure budget of $160 million, a decrease of $6.2 million or 3.7% due to increases in software contracts, capital projects, and salaries and benefits, net against a decrease in ARPA funded expenditures.
- Property Tax Process
- Combined Tax Rate
- FY27 County Impact – Residential
- FY27 County Impact – Ag and Commercial

Anita Miller, 2534 27th St. SW, Cedar Rapids, stated that there are a lot of numbers in front of her. Their property taxes have doubled in 15 years and in the last 5 years their property value has increased 30%. They are living in the same old home with a small add on. She understands that an increase in property value is based on neighborhoods and there are nicer homes in their neighborhood. Miller continued to say that her son is starting a new family and with a high cost of living and an increase in property taxes and property values they may not have more children.

Troy Dahl, 1717 Hamer Dr. NW, Cedar Rapids, stated that last year he got a letter similar to this years about the tax and property value increase and is curious about the reasoning behind it. He knows they have to pay property taxes to fund the government. Dahl is an engineer by trade and knows the numbers. He really likes the Cedar Rapids area but thinks there are people that don't have the best interest in the county or the area and taxpayers can only pay so much. He makes really good money but struggles paying the tax increases. Dahl added that his property value went up $100k in 5 years and addressed a road issue that he has not gotten anywhere with. He understands that there needs to be funding for pensions, wages, and insurance for the county but struggles with it since he doesn't get pay increases or special benefits so why should the county? Dahl added that he also works 50 hours a week.

Supervisor Meisheid informed Dahl that Linn County only has jurisdiction for roads that aren't in a city. She also clarified that besides IPERS and benefits, there are no special benefits being received.

Michael Mefferd, 1249 W Mount Vernon Rd., Mount Vernon, gave background of the home he lives in noting that his assessed value was $150k and now it's $380k after he built a garage. The County Assessor visited his property and even with the value being decreased, his tax still went up. He works 60 plus hours a week at a small shop with no benefits or wage increases. He will be 60 in June and is struggling to pay off his house with the increases in taxes and fears he won't be able to retire. He questioned why he is paying for everyone else's retirement and benefits when he has nothing. The state and government are trying to push people out of their homes and then how will they get tax money? Mefferd commented on the millions of dollars being spent on bike trails and why taxpayers are paying for those repairs when their roads are crap. He added that there could be a yearly fee for bicycle registration and trail passes. It's higher the taxes, the tougher it gets and he doesn't want to work a third job as that isn't fair to try and live.

Daryl Hlas, 1850 Radio Rd, Marion, stated that he mimics comments that have already been made. He asked that they consider holding one of these meetings in the evenings to allow others to attend without having to take time off from work. He also asked about the possibility of two meetings in the future.

Sara Bearrows responded that they cannot change the date or time this year due to the publication date, however next year it will be changed.

Kyle Hane, 6920 Chelsea Dr. NE, Cedar Rapids, explained that he is currently engaged in litigation against Linn County offices including the Treasurer and a Linn County judge suggested that he come before this body and seek relief. He is requesting recognition of a religious exemption from property taxation and corresponding abatement of all property taxes assessed against his family home and land. Hane gave his statement of religious use including using his residence as a place of ministry, worship, instruction and religious formation. He also provided the statutory basis and definitions of Iowa Code 427.1(8) relating to the exemption for property used by religious institutions and societies for several purposes including religion, religious institution, church and society. Hane also explained the petition he is submitting today that explains the constitutional notice and reservation of rights. In closing, he prayed that the Board will do what is right.

Hanan, 3245 Southgate Pl. SW, Cedar Rapids, stated that he owns a hotel in Cedar Rapids and understands the costs for the county and city are rising each year and appreciates the work it takes to maintain the services. As a business, they collect 12% lodging tax from their guests which goes directly to the city and county to support tourism events and local promotion. That does not offset the property taxes they pay on the hotel and even small tax increases can add thousands of dollars annually. There is a strain on their business when revenue is flat or down. With projects such as the new data center, higher taxes push workers to stay in nearby cities. They have had to increase the cost of their rooms to accommodate for the increase in property taxes. This will affect local economic development in this area.

Scott Popejoy, 4520 Tama St. SE, Cedar Rapids, thanked the Board for the early presentation. He echoed comments made by the first speaker. His property values have gone up 30-35% and explained how much he has previously paid in taxes. He has not attended meetings to see how taxation works in Linn County and recently learned about the state's rollback. Popejoy added that the value of their properties has not gone up that much and they are being stiffed. He explained the breakdown of their taxes including local options sales tax noting that taxes went up 200%. They are already paying a heavy burden just for living in Cedar Rapids or Linn County. They should vote against tax increases.

Jerry Witt, County Assessor, explained that increases are due to Covid and market value. The sales last year and this year have been very stable so they shouldn't see very high increases overall. By Iowa Code, they have to be at market value and that is why they are seeing such large increases. He emphasized that legislators determine the laws and his job is to follow them. Letters were sent out Friday for the 2026 property values. Witt advised them that if they have a problem with their 2026 property values they can come to their office or the Cedar Rapids City Assessor's Office.

Discussion continued regarding additional opportunities to file including the 65+ Homestead Credit and Military Exemptions.

Dustin Peterson, Veteran Services Dir., added that his office can assist if people need help with their DD214 and requesting benefits.

Nick George, 3215 Ridgemore Dr. SE, Cedar Rapids, asked if they apply for the 65+ Homestead Credit every year and Witt responded that it's a one-time sign up.

Supervisor Meisheid stated that she appreciates everyone being here today. She emphasized that they are not shifting blame, however the county is responsible for 16% of the tax bill. The school boards, city council, state, etc. are included in the final piece. She is happy they were able to lower the levy a penny. Meisheid suggested that they show up at other governing body meetings as well.

Supervisor Scheetz echoes Meisheid's comments. He stressed that the Board has control over the countywide levy rate and lowering it by a penny. They cannot control what the city or schools do with their tax rates. He also thanked those for attending and speaking today.

Supervisor Running-Marquardt stated that the county is 15-16% of the tax bill and they take that very seriously. They reduced the levy by a penny, and the levy is not staying the same nor is it going up. They worked really hard to get there. They monitor every single dollar that comes through and they question things as well. Constituents hard earned tax dollars matter to the Board, and they are good efficient stewards of it.

Motion by Running-Marquardt, seconded by Scheetz to close public hearing.

Adjournment at 10:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

TODD E. TAYLOR, Linn County Auditor
By: Amanda Brown, Deputy Auditor

Approved by:

KIRSTEN RUNNING-MARQUARDT, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors