

MINUTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BUTLER COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HELD ON May 4, 2021.

With social distancing guidelines being maintained at in-person meetings, an electronic participation option is made available. This complies with Iowa Code section 21.8 that outlines the guidelines to hold an electronic meeting when there are valid concerns that an in-person meeting is “impossible or impractical”.

Meeting called to order at 9:00 A.M. by Chairman Greg Barnett with members Rusty Eddy and Tom Heidenwirth present. Moved by Eddy, second by Heidenwirth to approve the agenda. All ayes. Motion carried.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read. Motioned by Barnett, second by Heidenwirth to approve the minutes as read. All ayes. Motion carried.

Ted Junker, New Hartford, had public comment, information and questions regarding the wind energy agenda item and Barnett asked him to speak freely during that time.

Planning & Zoning Environmental Health Specialist, Misty Day, explained she spoke with County Attorney, Dave Kuehner, and presented two different moratorium options. One option would be to establish a moratorium to stop wind farms in Butler County. Day explained there had been one county that tried this, but there had been litigation. The second option would be to establish a moratorium that would delay the acceptance of applications until our new, stricter ordinance standards were in place. Day mentioned that could potentially deter the process and the wind farm company could possibly move on to another area. Ted Junker shared information he has gathered on the wind farms including different moratoriums, other county lawsuits, the loopholes wind farm companies use, and the easement agreements they are handing out. Junker feels they are not being forthright with the easement agreements by not explaining them in their entirety and one option would be to have a moratorium in place requiring them to have to hold public meetings before getting any easements signed. Junker shared that he attended the Grundy County Board of Supervisors meeting on Monday and said the wind energy companies have a week head start. He also shared Grundy County will plan to vote on a moratorium next week which will state applications will need to wait until an updated ordinance was ready. Junker also shared there are online petitions circulating and he had a map showing all the citizens they had spoken to that were against wind turbines in Butler County. Randy Folkerts, Parkersburg, dropped off additional research that he provided to Eddy and thanked the board for getting on top of this issue. Additional discussions were held regarding the environmental impact of these wind turbines and their carbon footprint. Kevin Truax, Parkersburg, commented that he spoke with Abigail Maas from Iowa County regarding her research on wind turbines and provided her website, iacowind.org, as a resource. Barnett stated he felt it was clear that citizens have spoken and he would like to get something done right away. Day shared that she would like to get a committee together to get the best ordinance possible and based on all the county citizens' research presented she felt this would be the best option. County Attorney Dave Kuehner mentioned to get a moratorium established the county would need to follow the same procedures as any other ordinance amendment and require a public hearing and the board discussed how soon a public hearing could be held.

Greg Barnett shared the following COVID-19 updates from Public Health: There have been 8 new cases, 2 recoveries, no hospitalizations or deaths, and a 2.1% positivity rate. Trinity Rail is scheduled for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine on Wednesday and they are the last manufacturer in the county. Following the Wednesday clinic at Trinity Rail, Public Health plans to schedule a public Johnson & Johnson clinic. There is a boost clinic scheduled for today and a Moderna prime clinic scheduled on Friday.

Emily Schwickerath, District Director for Congressman Randy Feenstra's office introduced herself, shared a summary of Congressman Feenstra's work history, his current priorities and that he serves on the Agriculture, Science, Space and Technology and Budget committees.

Kevin Truax, Parkersburg, shared his concerns with increased assessments and how that would translate to actual taxes due. Truax shared a real-life scenario to demonstrate a possible tax burden that would result just to pay property taxes. Truax shared the feedback he received on Facebook and explained that he has looked through ten years of county budgets that seems pretty consistent until this past year. Truax provided figures from the FY21 budget and asked for some answers regarding the increase in taxes. He also has concerns regarding why the county is not proactively adjusting the mill rate to offset the assessment increases or explaining where the increase in taxes are being spent and if the tax money is needed. Truax continued that he is concerned people will be leaving the community of Parkersburg and that he also spoke with the school board and the City of Parkersburg. Additional discussions were held regarding fund balances, rollbacks, county population, county expenses, new industries, fluctuating valuations, public perception, and the benefit of having citizens invited to public meetings. Truax explained he felt the board should be able to look at the budget and be able to recognize a large tax increase and think to adjust the mill rate if the money is not needed. Eddy and Barnett both shared they are pleased to have citizens attend meetings, provide opinions and suggestions as they arise.

County Auditor Leslie Groen shared the process of establishing a Temporary Redistricting Commission consisting of three people by May 15, 2021. Groen explained since the Board is all the same political party, they will appoint two people and the chairperson of the minority party will appoint one person. Elections Deputy, Mary Brouwer, clarified Republicans would not have to appoint two Republicans and vice versa with the Democrat minority appointment.

Motioned by Eddy, second by Barnett to approve the utility permit for Butler County REC new service line @ 20623 270th Street. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motioned by Barnett, second by Heidenwirth to approve claims. All ayes. Motion carried.

Board acknowledged receipt of Manure Management Plan Annual Updates for Debner Partners, Kampman Site, Hauser, Lindell Limited, and Rick Juchems. Also, MMP Short Forms for Schipper East Finisher Farm #61603, Lindaman Finisher Farm #63630, and Schipper East Finisher Farm #61603.

Motioned by Barnett, second by Heidenwirth to adjourn the regular meeting at 10:46 A.M. to May 11, 2021 at 9:00 A.M. Motion carried.

The above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes and proceedings of a regular adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Butler County, Iowa on May 4, 2021.

Attest:

Butler County Auditor

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors