
FOR THE YEAR 2013
BOARD OF SUPERVISOR'S MINUTE BOOK
CHEROKEE COUNTY, IOWA
JANUARY 8, 2013

The Cherokee County Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Tuesday, January 8, 2013 with Mark Leeds, Jeff Simonsen, Rick Mongan, Dennis Bush, and Ginger Walker present. Dan Whitney, *Chronicle Times*, represented the press. Tara Davis, Kristi Petersen, Arlene Hollenbeck, and Deb Bush were also in attendance. Unless otherwise indicated, all votes were offered as follows: Ayes - Simonsen, Mongan, Bush, Walker, Leeds; Nays – none; Abstentions – none.

Motion by Bush, seconded by Walker to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Mongan, seconded by Simonsen to approve the minutes of the previous meeting with one correction. Motion carried.

The supervisors discussed their authority in payment of claims incurred by county departments. Walker stated the supervisors do not have authority to deny payment of a claim made by a county department. She further explained that the supervisors should pay all bills as submitted because the department heads have authority over their own budgets and they have already approved payment of their own bills. Leeds interpreted the supervisors' authority to allow the board to question claims if they do not appear to comply with county policies. Leeds added that past practice has been to contact a department and ask for an explanation of the circumstances for a claim that is outside the parameters of county policy. Simonsen agreed that the supervisors have pulled claims in the past for clarification but did not recall a time when a claim was refused for payment. Walker asked if the supervisors even had authority to question any department about their bills. Bush suggested that situations with departments could be addressed at budget time since the supervisors have authority over the total bottom line of each departmental budget. Walker maintained her opinion that the supervisors do not have the authority to pull a claim even for consideration because it the department's responsibility to oversee the appropriateness of their own bills. Simonsen asked if the supervisors don't have authority over payment of bills, then why do they waste their time coming to meetings and taking official action to approve payments from county funds? Ryan Kolpin, County Attorney, was called to provide guidance on what authority Iowa Code provides to County Supervisors regarding review and payment of departmental bills.

Walker reported on the 911 phone upgrade and asked the supervisors to commit \$46,000 to the project. Dave Skou, 911 Director, has spoken with Qwest and an order needs to be placed soon for a timely installation date of May 15th. Consensus of the supervisors was to financially support replacement of the vital 911 equipment but formal action was tabled until it can be determined if the board can pay for the project with property tax funds or loan the funds to the 911 Commission. Kolpin indicated the County would not be able to loan funds, but he will research what options the supervisors have in funding equipment for a Commission operating under a 28E Agreement with the County. Kris Glienke, County Auditor, stated that she has contacted the State Auditor's Office for advice on acceptable options for the County to fund 911 equipment.

Dave Scott, County Sheriff, asked why his meal reimbursement has become such an issue. Scott wanted to explain why he hadn't gone according to the County's Policy of \$24 per day for meals and asked the supervisors to add \$10 to the daily meal allowance since it is nearly impossible to eat for \$24 in this day and age. Leeds explained to Scott that his meal reimbursements were discussed during the December 24th meeting, but since Scott had requested an appointment on the agenda and was unable to attend the meeting, the supervisors authorized the County Auditor to pay the County Mastercard bill that included Scott's meal expenses. Bush added that the issue wasn't so much the amount over the daily limit but the lack of itemized meal receipts that were questioned. Scott responded that he was contacted by the County Auditor's Office asking him for itemized receipts and payment for the amount over the \$24 limit. Scott stated that he didn't think he should need to provide itemized receipts and he also didn't think the County Auditor had any right to question his bills after he had approved them. Mongan agreed that it is often difficult to get an itemized meal receipt at many restaurants and it is an issue that should be considered during policy updates. Glienke asked the board to explain to Scott that her office does not determine which bills the supervisors will pay, however, the County Auditor's Office must follow the Cherokee County Personnel Policy that states "Auditors will not pay a voucher without an itemized receipt". Scott maintained his opinion that the County Auditor is deciding which bills to pay and distributed copies of an Attorney General's Opinion to the supervisors. Glienke informed Scott that she cannot write a check until the supervisors authorize her to do so through board action and if they choose to make an exception to the County policy, then they take formal action authorizing the Auditor to act outside the policy parameters. Glienke contended that her office will follow the County Policies as well as standard audit controls when processing bills and writing checks against

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county funds. Walker suggested the need for itemized meal receipts probably wasn't even necessary. Glienke recalled past instances of audit concerns about use of public funds for employee reimbursements and employee retirement parties. Walker asked to see the Iowa Code sections that said public funds can't be used to pay for parties along with what the supervisors' authority over department expenditures and the role of the County Auditor in the claims process. Kolpin reassured the supervisors that he will research the supervisors' authority and report back with his findings. Mongan asked if the supervisors should start recording their weekly meetings as a means of reviewing past discussions and decisions. Glienke suggested that a video camera be placed in the boardroom so the weekly board meetings could be recorded and made available to the public on the County's website. Walker indicated it would be a good idea to consider. Glienke added that the public has expressed concerns about the board meetings not being accessible during normal work hours and the online video would provide access 24/7.

Dana Evans, Veteran Affairs Director, presented an informative report detailing services provided to county veterans and their families in 2012. Evans proudly displayed a board that contains signatures of 600 veterans from across the world who have visited his downtown office over the past five years. Evans encourages all county departments and local businesses to participate in this summer's Veteran Appreciation Day which will pay tribute to the Civil War.

Arlene Hollenbeck, Marcus Historical Society, gave an update on the Marcus Fair Grounds Village project. The Historical Society has raised \$150,000 from donations and grants but estimate a \$50,000 shortage due to increased construction costs and limited contributions from volunteer labor. Hollenbeck thanked the board for their \$10,000 donation and requested additional funding from the county to assist in completing the project in time for the 2013 Marcus Fair in August. No action was taken.

Motion by Simonsen, seconded by Bush to approve the claims for payment as presented. Motion carried. A complete listing is available for review in the County Auditor's office and online.

Motion by Simonsen, seconded by Mongan to raise the daily employee meal reimbursement for overnight travel to \$34 per day. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Chairman Leeds adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

All board agendas and minutes are available online at www.cherokeecountyiowa.com.

Attest: _____

Mark Leeds, Chairman

Kris Glienke, County Auditor