

Joint Meeting Minutes between Emmet County Board of Supervisors & Palo Alto County Board of Supervisors

January 18, 2018

Emmet & Palo Alto Joint Supervisor Meeting

River Valley Telephone Company Board Room, Graettinger, Iowa

Emmet County Present: Bev Juhl  
John Pluth  
Jeff Quastad  
Tim Schumacher

Absent: Roger Hash

Palo Alto County Present: Roger Faulstick  
Keith Wirtz  
Ron Graettinger  
Craig Merrill

Absent: Linus Solberg

Present: Carmen Moser, Palo Alto County Auditor, and Colleen Anderson, Assistant to the Emmet County Auditor.

Present: Walter Davis-Oeth, Emmet County & Palo Alto County Engineer; Emmet County Conservation Director, Eric Anderson and Emmet County Naturalist, Ashley Reed.

Keith Wirtz called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

It was moved by Graettinger, seconded by Quastad, to nominate Bev Juhl as Chair and Colleen Anderson as Secretary. All ayes, motion carried.

It was moved by Quastad, seconded by Wirtz, to approve the minutes from last year's meeting held on January 12, 2017. All ayes, motion carried.

Chair Juhl stated to the joint boards, that discussions are now open.

They first talked about Health Insurance that each County has to offer. Palo Alto stated that last year they started offering a Health Savings Plan (HSA) as one of their options. They also offered different tiers of health insurance deductibles. Merrill did state that the HSA'S are more popular with young people. Contributions made by employees to a HSA account are pre-tax money. Moser did state that once you reach the age of 65 you could not start a HSA account. Their health insurance company is Blue Cross/Blue Shield and is acquired through ISAC. Merrill stated, by going through ISAC, it has been a big savings for Palo Alto. Currently 22 or 23 counties have their insurance through ISAC. Juhl noted that Emmet County also has Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance and theirs is acquired through IGHCP (Iowa Governmental Health Care Plan) and that Emmet County has been pleased with their insurance.

The topic then changed to the County's Conservation Department and the number of employees each have. Emmet County has two fulltime and five seasonal workers. Palo Alto has four full time, one part time, and four seasonal employees.

Davis-Oeth, Emmet & Palo Alto County Engineer stated that he tries to keep both boards up to date on everything. He stated that Palo Alto County is in the middle of union negotiations right now. There was some discussion on compensation time (comp time) earned by secondary road's employees. Recently, Emmet County Board of Supervisors extended the time for secondary roads employees to use their comp time to the middle of November instead of the end of June. Palo Alto secondary roads employees, at this time, may carry over 80 hours of comp time; this is the maximum that they can bank. Engineer stated that comp time banks remain fairly full. Davis-Oeth believes that this has made for more consistent staffing in Palo Alto, but also noted that they have more equipment operators. Pluth stated that by using the old way of having to use their comp time by the end of June that crews were minimal during the month of June.

Joint Board discussed their Compensation's Board recommendations. Both County's Compensation Boards approved a 4 percent raise. Both boards will further discuss these recommendations and neither county has acted on this yet.

The matrix for CERP (Construction Evaluation Resolution Permit) for hog confinements was next up for discussion. Both counties, in the past year, have had several confinement buildings constructed. Schumacher stated that Representative Gassman and Senator Guth, also Senator Johnson from Dickinson County have been at Emmet's Board meetings. Merrill stated that with two new hog plants being built, he believes we will see more facilities constructed. Quastad stated that there are things in the matrix that need to be changed and Merrill agreed that it needs to be fixed somewhat. Schumacher stated it seems like we should have a voice on the matrix somehow.

The recent Resolution presented by ISAC for the Opioid Epidemic was discussed between both Boards. Neither County signed the Resolution presented to them. Board members discussed that although opioids are a big problem, they feel this is more of a criminal matter and did not feel this is the direction they wanted to take at this time.

The Sheriff's offices were also discussed. Both Boards discussed the number of employees each office have. Juhl did state that Emmet County Sheriff stated that at this time, it takes one full time person to do all the transports for Emmet County. The question was asked to Juhl if someone is on active duty at all times. Juhl stated yes at least one or two officers. Palo Alto has contracts with two of their cities, Ruthven & Graettinger, and have 28E Agreements with the other small towns.

Juhl asked Conservation Director Anderson if he had anything he wanted to discuss. Anderson stated that Emmet County has great infrastructure and because of Emmet County allowing some LOSST funds to be used by Conservation, both campgrounds now have new playground equipment. They have also made silo sandboxes and silo gazebos. He stated that because of all of this, revenue dollars were up this year.

Davis-Oeth stated that he is looking to update secondary roads technology and have laptops with all of his staff, to be more mobile friendly.

Anderson asked Davis-Oeth about the access to the river with the upcoming Emmet Hill Bridge Project. Safety will be a big concern when the bridge is being constructed. Davis-Oeth stated that as soon as I have a real answer, I will let you know. They will possibly close the river access during the bridge construction project.

It was the consensus of both Boards, to meet again next year.

A motion was made by Pluth, seconded by Graettinger, to adjourn the meeting at 1:48 p.m. All ayes, motion carried.

---

Colleen Anderson, Assistant to the Auditor

---

Bev Juhl, Chair