

Waterloo, Iowa February 2, 2023

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Black Hawk, in the State of Iowa, met in regular adjourned meeting at the Courthouse in Waterloo, County Seat of said County, and electronically via Zoom, at two o'clock (2:00) p.m., pursuant to law, to the rules of said Board, and to adjournment. The meeting was called to order and on roll call there were present: Tavis Hall, Tom Little, Chris Schwartz, Dan Trelka, and Linda Laylin, Chair.

Absent: None.

Unless otherwise noted, all actions were approved unanimously.

Moved by Trelka, seconded by Hall that the AGENDA be received and place on file with the County Auditor as approved. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION – County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Levy and 28E Agreement. Assistant County Attorney Mike Treinen provided a draft amended Consolidated Public Safety Communications 28E Agreement to the Board and summarized its contents. It creates a separate legal entity called the Black Hawk Communications Center which would be governed by a board of directors consisting of five members with weighted votes: two county supervisors holding 51% of the votes, a Cedar Falls mayor or council member with 11% of the vote, a Waterloo mayor or council member with 28% of the vote, and a mayor or council member representing the other cities with 10% of the vote. Employees would be employed by the center, and the county would provide necessary services. A technical advisory committee would consist of public safety officials. The center budget would be paid by the Emergency Management Commission (EMC). The county would approve a countywide EMA levy through its general fund to pay the center's expenses. The levy would be phased in beginning in FY25, 25% per year, until the center budget is fully paid through the county EMA levy beginning in FY28.

Trelka said he shared an idea that would make the dispatch center a standalone county department with oversight from the E911 Service Board. Schwartz said he liked the phase-in approach but would like to see it begin in FY24. Laylin said that the Board should review various ideas, but it shouldn't be rushed into a quick decision. Treinen agreed, saying if the agreement commenced in FY24 there would be unintended consequences. He said a bill currently under consideration in the state legislature would give the EMC the authority to impose the EMA levy, but that according to a court ruling in Mahaska County, the levy could not be used to fund a dispatch center without the approval of the board of supervisors.

Hudson Mayor George Wessel liked the initial draft and suggested that the cities budget an increase for FY24 to begin addressing the needs identified in the Consolidated Communications Center study by DELTAWRX. He suggested changing the current sharing formula from 80% based on calls for service and 20% based on population to 70%/30%.

Hall said if the phase-in of the levy begins in FY25, the county ought to consider contributing an amount in FY24 from reserves. Finance Director Michelle Weidner said reserves shouldn't be used for ongoing expenses.

Waterloo Mayor Quentin Hart, Evansdale Mayor Deanne Kobliska, La Porte City Mayor Jasmine Gaston and Gilbertville Mayor Mark Thome described how their cities were paying more than their fair shares. Dunkerton Mayor Michael Schares said the issue should have been addressed when consolidated dispatch was first organized. He hoped the county would assist by using cash reserves and asked that a phased-in EMA levy be phased in quicker.

Laylin said that sharing the costs based on property valuation seems to be the most popular solution, but the hard part of making it work is the planning, which the parties must now concentrate on. She said the Board would discuss the draft agreement during its budget sessions.

On motion and vote the meeting adjourned.

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Linda Laylin, Chair, Board of Supervisors

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Grant Veeder, County Auditor