

March 18, 2020 4:30 p.m.

The Jones County Board of Supervisors met in special session. Present Chairman Manternach, Supervisors Oswald, Rohwedder, and Zirkelbach. Supervisor Eaken was absent.

[Remote access to the meeting was provided via the internet, with remote access instructions included in an email to all email recipients of the agenda.]

Moved by Zirkelbach seconded by Oswald to waive the reading of the minutes of the March 17, 2020 meeting until the March 24, 2020 meeting. All aye. Motion carried.

Several department heads were present for the meeting, either in-person, or by remote access. Topics discussed were emergency preparations to address the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) public health emergency.

The Emergency Management Coordinator and Public Health Director presented a Disaster Declaration for the Board to consider for approval related to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Moved by Rohwedder seconded by Oswald to authorize the Chairman to sign the following Local Disaster Declaration:

The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory virus designated as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization. The pandemic is causing widespread human and economic impacts to Jones County. It is causing a public health emergency in Jones County by generating multiple disruptions and impacts on healthcare infrastructure and continuity of Jones County government that may cause delays or interrupt capacity to deliver necessary services. It is appropriate and in the interests of the public health and safety to rapidly address community spread of COVID-19 and subsequent cascading impacts, such as economic distress, and would further protect the health and safety of the public, to declare an emergency in Jones County. The cost and magnitude of responding to and recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is far in excess of Jones County's available resources.

Jones County Emergency Management and Jones County Public Health have recommended a local disaster be declared. Declaration of a local disaster emergency will assist and permit access to local emergency funds, Federal and State assistance, adjustments to policies, procedures, and ordinances to ensure the public's health and welfare.

Therefore, the Jones County Board of Supervisors have declared a state of emergency authorized under Iowa State Statute and will execute the expenditure of emergency funds from all available sources, the invoking of mutual aid agreements, and the applying to the State of Iowa for assistance. [2020-025]

The Sheriff and Auditor led the discussion regarding access to public buildings during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Amongst various health related security measures to be implemented at the Courthouse, the west (handicapped) entrance to the Courthouse will become the only access in to the Courthouse, with an attendant at the security window in the lobby area during normal business hours (to be staffed by various offices) to verify all persons accessing the building pass a health screening survey and have either an appointment with a specific office, a scheduled court hearing or other court matter, or are employed within the building, and that a payment/document drop box will be available to the public in the vestibule before reaching the screening area. A health

screening document will be provided to County staff in all other County buildings to use for screening of employees and when screening for limited public access into those facilities.

The Auditor and Attorney led the discussion regarding public meeting schedules, alternate locations, and alternate communication methods. Several options were discussed including the possible use of the Monticello City Council chambers, and various remote access options. A web-based remote meeting software will be used for the March 24, 2020 meeting to be held at the Courthouse, with physical public access still allowed (subject to change), and subject to health screening questions. Instructions to remotely access the meeting will be provided on all posted and emailed copies of the agenda.

The Emergency Management Coordinator led the discussion regarding the possible use of various County resources to assist with food deliveries to home-bound families, with a focus on home-bound senior citizens, and reviewed a request from HACAP to provide deliveries of food to home-bound families.

Moved by Oswald seconded by Rohwedder to authorize the use of JETS vehicles and staff to assist with meal deliveries for home-bound families, with a focus on home-bound senior citizens. All aye. Motion carried.

The Emergency Management Coordinator also provided information from the U.S. Small Business Administration regarding possible assistance for small businesses in Iowa impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Auditor led the discussion regarding compensation options for County employees who cannot be at work, or whose hours have been reduced, due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and provided an update on new unemployment benefits available to Iowa's workforce impacted by the public health emergency, as well as an update on the status of federal legislation that is proposed to provide benefits to the workforce impacted by the public health emergency.

Moved by Zirkelbach seconded by Rohwedder to provide the following benefits, until further notice, to County employees impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency:

Sick pay is to be used as defined in the employee handbook or union contract, with the following exceptions:

- The waiting period for new employees to use sick leave has been waived.
- Sick leave may be used to care for the employee's spouse or child. The three-day per year limitation has been temporarily suspended.
- If an employee's sick leave accruals have been exhausted, they may request an advance of up to 18 days (one-year accrual) – subject to a written agreement that any negative balance at the end of employment will be deducted from the employee's last paycheck.
- Proof of illness provisions have been temporarily waived, subject to the discretion of the department head.

Vacation pay may be used for absences for other purposes related to this public health emergency, including situations where day care services are no longer available for an employee's children due to this public health emergency. If an employee has exhausted their vacation leave accruals, or is not yet eligible to use vacation leave, they may request an advance of up to five days (one week) to be used for purposes related to this public health emergency – subject to a written agreement that any negative balance at the end of employment will be deducted from the employee's last paycheck.

Benefit eligibility will not be reduced during this public health emergency for persons employed by Jones County, however, employees will be required to continue to contribute their portion of any benefit, i.e. health insurance.

All aye. Motion carried.

The Attorney presented a request from the State Judicial Branch to clarify the Board's March 17, 2020 action to close the Jones County Courthouse and all County facilities to public access.

Moved by Oswald seconded by Zirkelbach to further clarify the Board's March 17, 2020 action to close the Jones County Courthouse and all County facilities to public access should not be read so as to close, cancel, or continue scheduled court hearings, and that persons with scheduled court hearings that may be impacted by the closing should contact the Clerk of Court or their own attorney regarding said hearings. All aye. Motion carried.

The Auditor provided information on a three-year federal grant awarded to a joint coalition of local law enforcement agencies, and reported that they have requested Jones County serve as the fiscal agent for the grant, and that the Area Substance Abuse Council will be hiring one full-time employee and one part-time employee to provide the services the grant funding will pay for.

Moved by Zirkelbach seconded by Oswald for Jones County to serve as the fiscal agent for the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program (COAP) grant awarded to a joint coalition of local law enforcement agencies by the Office of Drug Control Policy for a pre-arrest and post-arrest diversion program to be administered by the Area Substance Abuse Council. All aye. Motion carried. (Auditor's note: The COAP grant program has subsequently been renamed to COSSAP – Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program.)

Supervisor Oswald provided an update on efforts by Iowa Workforce Development to merge various workforce regions in the state, noting that every county within each proposed merged region must agree to the merger.

The Emergency Management Coordinator requested to temporarily repurpose the Courthouse conference room into an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during the COVID-19 public health emergency, and noted that access to the room would be limited. The Board granted her request.

Moved by Oswald seconded by Rohwedder to adjourn at 6:31 p.m. All aye. Motion carried.

Attest: Janine Sulzner, Auditor

Wayne Manternach, Chairman