

Ringgold County Board of Supervisors Minutes July 16, 2018

The Ringgold County Board of Supervisors met in regular session Monday, July 16, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. with the following members present: Kraig Pennington, Paul Dykstra and Lyle Minnick.

A motion was made by Paul Dykstra and seconded by Lyle Minnick to approve the agenda with the addition of approving to advertise for a County Engineer.

AYES: Unanimous. NAYS: None.

The Board reviewed a letter presented from SICOG stating opposition of the DOT District 4 office moving from Atlantic to Council Bluffs. The Board does not feel the \$20 million cost to relocate is in the best interest of the region and agreed to move forward with approval of the letter.

On Friday, July 13, 2018, Engineer Travis Malone notified the Board of Supervisors of his resignation effective August 11, 2018. Considering this, the Board agreed to move forward with advertising to fill this vacancy.

At 2:00 p.m. Engineer Travis Malone and Road Superintendent Rod Shields met with the Board to provide secondary roads updates. Also present: Dick Elliott, Kelly Main, Polly Hartsook, Carl Jerome, Alan and Becky Taylor, Raymond Shields, Regan Main, Jennifer Brenneman, Jim Pedersen, Walt & Bev McGinnis, Joy & Jim Goins, Mike Sobotka, David Greene, Tracy Barnes, Malcom Eighmy, John Allen, Kate Zimmerman and Vera Haley. These members of the public were present to voice concerns about the recent resignation of the county engineer. The group questioned the reasoning for losing two engineers in less than two years and asked what, if anything, could be done to retain our current engineer. The Board stated they "did not have an opportunity" to make a counter offer.

The group also asked if an exit interview had been completed, and if so, what had the Board learned from it. They also inquired as to what measures the Board would take to retain a future engineer. Malone's resignation was received via text message on Friday, July 13th, and the Board stated it was a surprise to hear.

Regan Main expressed concern that Malone is leaving in less than a year of employment and stated her surprise at his resignation given the investment in Ringgold County he and his family had already made. She said she is trying to "read between the lines" as she said it doesn't seem like he would walk away just for a raise and more vacation time. She is worried about replacing him, expressed her concern about the difficulty in recruiting a quality engineer to move here, and discussed the increased cost for not having one in place.

The group feels micromanaging is taking place by the Board. The group stated when quality employees are hired, they should be entrusted to perform the duties of their position. Pennington explained he believes it is his responsibility to ask questions and understand the happenings within the secondary roads department. He said the Board constantly gets asked about various projects within the department, and therefore, he feels it is his duty to seek answers and be aware of what is taking place. Road Superintendent Rod Shields was asked his thoughts of the resignation. Shields responded he feels the Board is too involved in the day to day activities of the department, essentially micromanaging. He said the engineer should be left to do his job and be trusted to make decisions. Malone was the seventeenth engineer since Shields was hired 35 years ago, Shields said. Malone was asked if he had spoken with the supervisors previously about his discontentment. He said he had spoken with Pennington concerning following the chain of command and not bypassing him. Pennington agreed they had had this conversation and had said to

“agree to disagree.” Due to the absence of Engineer Malone, Pennington followed chain of command and went to Road Superintendent Rod Shields to discuss a concern. He does not feel it is appropriate to wait until the Engineer returns to solve a problem.

David Greene spoke about the difficulty the school had with retaining superintendents. Then, when Joe Drake came along the School Board worked with him on a plan and let him go with it. The school now is in better shape than it has been. Shields added, the School Board reviews the bills and the budget, other than that, Drake is left to perform his duties as that is what he was hired to do.

Malone was asked if, considering all the support present, would he reconsider his resignation. Malone expressed appreciation for the support of his work, even from people he did not personally know, but said he has already agreed to a contract in Adams County. Malone stated moving forward, the Board should familiarize themselves with Iowa Code section 309 as this outlines the duties of the Board of Supervisors and the duties of the Engineer.

The group expressed concern about the “known” reputation of Ringgold County’s track record of high turnover with engineers and how the Board would overcome that when hiring a new engineer. Kim Greenland asked the Board what the community could do to help in turning the situation around moving forward. Minnick and Pennington said better communication is needed. Dykstra talked more generally about the various duties and responsibilities of the Board and the sometimes-difficult decisions that need to be made. He expressed frustration with the overall situation.

Sheriff Mike Sobotka was present to discuss setting a new hearing date for the 20th street condemnation process. The group agreed on September 7, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.

Malone discussed with the Board the status of the P68 project. The Union 7 bridge project has been accelerated in an effort to complete the project timelier. The Blockton bridge will be poured on July 24th, Malone stated.

Conservation Director Kate Zimmerman was present to discuss with the group the graveling of 310th street into Boone Woods. Malone questioned what the plan is for the area. Zimmerman responded once there is adequate entry to the park, they plan to develop it. Currently they maintain the trails and two primitive campsites. Zimmerman stated there is no rush to gravel the road, 6 months to a year would be adequate she said. To confirm right of way, Malone suggested reaching out to Garden & Associates to survey the road to ensure accurate placement.

Shields reported spraying is nearly complete in the county right-of-way. Three mowers will be deployed in the coming weeks.

The Board reviewed claims to be paid Wednesday, July 18 (see separate claims register).

RESOLUTION RC18–123

WHEREAS, the Ringgold County Board of Supervisors hereby approves to sign the opposition letter for the DOT proposed consolidation.

THEREFORE, a motion was made by Lyle Minnick and seconded by Paul Dykstra stating such.

The vote on the resolution: AYES: All. NAYS: None.

ATTEST: Amanda Waske, Auditor. Passed and approved July 16, 2018.

RESOLUTION RC18–124

WHEREAS, the Ringgold County Board of Supervisors hereby approves to set a new condemnation hearing date of September 7, 2018 at 9am for the 240th Street project.

THEREFORE, a motion was made by Paul Dykstra and seconded by Kraig Pennington stating such.

The vote on the resolution: AYES: All. NAYS: None.

ATTEST: Amanda Waske, Auditor. Passed and approved July 16, 2018.

RESOLUTION RC18-125

WHEREAS, the Ringgold County Board of Supervisors hereby approves to pay claims to be paid on Wednesday, July 18, 2018.

THEREFORE, a motion was made by Lyle Minnick and seconded by Paul Dykstra stating such.

The vote on the resolution: AYES: All. NAYS: None.

ATTEST: Amanda Waske, Auditor. Passed and approved July 16, 2018.

A motion was made by Paul Dykstra and seconded by Lyle Minnick to approve the minutes.

There was no further business. A motion was made by Paul Dykstra and seconded by Lyle Minnick to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m.


Board of Supervisors Chairman

ATTEST: 
Ringgold County Auditor

