

The Board of Supervisors of Lyon County, Iowa, met electronically, pursuant to Iowa Code 21.8, whereby "a meeting in person is impossible or impractical" - as the decision to restrict county facility public hours needs approval prior to the next regularly scheduled board meeting. Department heads were present via teleconference. Those present were: Chairman Mark Behrens, Jerry Birkey, Steve Herman, Merle Koedam, Josh Feucht, Auditor Jen Smit, Public Health Administrator Melissa Stillson, and EMA Arden Kopischke. Present via phone were: Sheriff VanderStoep, Economic Director Steve Simons, Treasurer Russ Hopp, Maintenance Director Lance Iwen, Attorney Shayne Mayer, Engineer Laura Sievers, Mental Health DSC Lisa Rockhill. Chairman Behrens asked for an update from Stillson and Kopischke regarding the COVID 19 virus. Stillson reported that in Lyon County there are still no cases reported. Stillson continues to work with businesses and community leaders reinforcing the importance of social distancing, hand washing, and staying home if sick. Kopischke also added that the reality in Kopischke's opinion is that it may be a month or more before things are starting to get back to "normal". Kopischke stated that the Board should keep this in mind when contemplating closing the county buildings to the public as it won't be for just a week or two. Stillson also reported that the schools are working online until 3-31-2020 and then plan to reassess in their school districts what they plan to do. Most colleges and universities in the areas have moved to online courses only for the remainder of the school year. Stillson also pointed out that President Trump stated in his address that we are just staring the uptick of the virus. This would mean that we are just starting to see the rise in cases. This will rise over the next week or weeks and then should hit a peak and begin to level off.

Chairman Behrens stated that they are meeting today to determine if for the safety of employees and public if the county buildings should be closed to the public. Stillson stated that the Public Health Office cannot be closed during a pandemic. Mayer also stated that there will be court held next Tuesday and Wednesday as recommended by Judge Hoffmeyer. Mayer stated that it was recommended by the courts to limit entry to the courthouse to one entrance for court days. This would mean moving the metal detection equipment down to first floor at the East entrance. Mayer explained that court security would then direct court attendees directly to the elevator and to 3rd floor. Court normally runs from 8 AM to Noon.

Behrens asked if foot traffic has changed at all this week in the buildings. Sheriff Vander Stoep noted that they have had a decrease of probably 70%. Vander Stoep also noted that they have stopped doing fingerprinting for the public and that may be one of the reasons as well for the decrease in foot traffic. Auditor Smit stated that the foot traffic related to the Auditor's Office has also slowed greatly since Monday. Treasurer Hopp noted that after driver's license services were closed traffic has slowed, but they are still doing registrations. Hopp also noted that the drop box located on the East side of the building is being used and is checked multiple times a day. Rockhill reported that clients have just not been showing up for scheduled appointments. She doesn't know if it is due to COVID 19 or other factors, but all in all the traffic has also slowed in the Mental Health/General Relief office. Engineer Sievers reported that they closed all the outlying shops to the public this week.

Supervisor Birkey asked Stillson and Kopischke for their recommendation in closing county buildings to the public. Stillson recommends that the Supervisors leave business as is. Stillson states that gas stations, grocery stores and other retailers are still open serving citizens and are doing well with implementing the recommendation of Iowa Public Health and the CDC. Kopischke states as this is a public health pandemic, he follows Stillson's lead and would echo what Stillson recommends. Kopischke also added that he would not recommend limiting hours of being open to the public as this only increase the amount of people to a smaller window of time increasing the amount of people in the offices, which is what we want to avoid at this time. Stillson was asked what reasons would be too close to the public. Stillson suggested that if there was a large number of cases in the county or a large number of employees that became ill making services decline.

It was noted that Lance is doing a great job making sure surfaces are being cleaned and departments are receiving requested cleaning supplies. Supervisor Birkey asked if the Board is willing to close to the public as it could mean being closed for an indefinite time, possibly up to 8 weeks. Birkey questions as to how the Board determines when it should open again.

Attorney Mayer posed the thought that if the Board doesn't close to the public, the public will keep coming. It is hard for departments to ask a citizen showing symptoms to leave their office once they are already there. In closing to the public, Mayer states that departments would still be working, would make appointments with citizens to help them complete business that cannot be done online.

Supervisor Feucht stated he would like to take the more proactive stance and recommend that the county buildings be closed to the public. Treasurer Hopp stated that is why drivers' licenses were closed as they were erring on the side of safety for employees as well as public.

Sievers mentioned that there will be 4 bid lettings in her department next week. If buildings are closed, how will she make bidders leave the office or not congregate in groups of more than 10? It was determined that Sievers could set up a conference call for bidders to call into to hear the bid letting results rather than waiting in the conference room for the results. Supervisor Feucht motioned to close the county buildings to the public with the exception of the Sheriff's Office, Public Health and 3rd Floor courtroom as of 8:00 A.M. Friday, March 20th, seconded by Koedam. Chairman Behrens asked for a rollcall vote: District 1 Feucht Support, District 2 Support Koedam, District 3 Support Behrens, District 4 Birkey NO, and District 5 Herman NO. Motion carried. 3-2.

The Board also noted that all leave policies are still in effect and will be followed. Supervisor Feucht asked if Stillson or Kopischke have a plan for if this virus does hit Lyon County hard. Stillson stated that it is a more of manual than a plan. It is a public health plan as to when and how the Public Health office responds during a pandemic, not specific to COVID-19, but any pandemic. Feucht requested a copy of it. Stillson stated she would have to scan it and email it as it is a 500-page document.

Feucht also asked if Lyon County has enough supplies on hand. Kopischke stated that no, Lyon County doesn't have a surplus and will request supplies through the State when it is warranted. The State will not send supplies if they are not currently needed as another county may need them now. Supervisor Behrens thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Stillson informed the Board that there is a local distillery in the county that has offered to make hand sanitizer for Lyon County as soon as they receive the products needed. Stillson has also been contacted by the Lyon County Riverboat Fund to see if they could help with any needs of the county. Stillson reported there are no immediate needs but that the county could use 2 AED's for Lake Pahoja. The Foundation also stated they would be willing to donate to supplies for disaster preparedness when needed.

Motion by Herman, second by Feucht to adjourn as there was no other business. Motion carried.

ATTEST _____ APPROVED _____
County Auditor Chairman

NOTE: These minutes are as recorded by the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors and are subject to Board approval at the next regular meeting.