

April 3, 2020 9:00 a.m.

The Jones County Board of Supervisors met in special session to address matters related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Present Chairman Manternach, Supervisors Eaken, Oswald, Rohwedder, and Zirkelbach.

*Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and to abide by health safety and social distancing guidelines, remote participation to this meeting was provided by electronic video and audio streaming via remote meeting software, with audio only access also available by telephone. Said remote participation electronic meeting access is permitted via a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency issued by Governor Kim Reynolds on March 19, 2020. Physical in-person access to the public was not permitted at this meeting. Full instructions for access via remote participation were included on the meeting agenda which was posted on the east, west, and north exterior doors of the Courthouse, the County web-site, and was emailed to the list of fifty-seven individuals who are typically emailed the agenda for Board of Supervisors' meetings. A statement was read at the beginning of the meeting noting that if it became apparent that the electronic meeting was being maliciously hacked or compromised the electronic access would be promptly terminated and the Board would proceed to adjourn the meeting.*

Chairman Manternach presented a statement stressing the importance of department heads sharing information with their staff, particularly the information coming from the Auditor, Emergency Management Coordinator, and Public Health Coordinator. He noted the concerns County employees have for their jobs, income, and health and welfare in this rapidly changing COVID-19 public health emergency. He encouraged all County staff to communicate their questions and concerns with the Board members.

The Emergency Management Coordinator, Public Health Coordinator, and Public Health Intern met with the Board to provide an update on emergency preparedness activities to address the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Emergency Management Coordinator reported additional deliveries of personal protective equipment and prioritization for distribution of personal protective equipment established by the Jones County Emergency Management Commission, businesses and individuals providing equipment and supplies, and concerns from the medical and correctional facilities in the County. The Community Health Specialist noted releasing public health statements regarding use of park facilities and reminding restaurant and food preparation vendors of the restrictions ordered by the Governor.

The Auditor requested authority to place a permanent drop box on the Courthouse property for payments, paper filings, and absentee ballots. She reported that she had been in communication with various department heads regarding the best location to meet the needs of the public and provide for a secure placement.

Moved by Eaken seconded by Rohwedder to authorize the placement of a permanent drop box on Courthouse property for payments, paper filings, and absentee ballots. All aye. Motion carried.

The Auditor presented information regarding options for employee compensation for COVID-19 related absences, subsequent to the newly adopted federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act H.R. 6201, noting that the Board could authorize supplementing the minimum requirements for two-thirds pay for certain types of absences. She also reported that she had spoken to the Sheriff and the County's labor relations consultant regarding the Board's ability to exclude the County's emergency responders and certain health care providers from the provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, to assure essential services were provided. The Sheriff provided input noting that he would prefer to limit the benefits allowed for emergency first responders to allow for flexibility with scheduling to maintain necessary coverage.

Moved by Zirkelbach seconded by Rohwedder to supplement the balance of the two-thirds minimum compensation requirement for the family related care provisions in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for Jones County employees for up to two weeks, with no impact on employee leave balances for that period. All aye. Motion carried.

Moved by Zirkelbach seconded by Oswald to wait for further clarification from the County's labor relations consultant before making a decision on the possible exclusion, or limitations, to the provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act regarding the provisions for emergency responders and health care providers. All aye. Motion carried.

Discussion was held regarding employees being allowed to work remotely from their homes, and procedures to maintain services to the public, while keeping employees safe. The provisions of a document presented by the Information Technology Coordinator regarding requirements for employees to follow when remotely accessing County data or using County computer equipment were discussed.

Moved by Rohwedder seconded by Eaken to adopt a Jones County Tele-work Agreement, with the addition of text to provide for an exception to the terms of the agreement regarding dependent care arrangements during any designated disaster emergency. All aye. Motion carried.

Discussion was held regarding policies from other counties that provide for paid administrative leave for situations such as the COVID-19 public health emergency, with a draft policy from Pocahontas County to be distributed to department heads for discussion at a later date.

Various elected officials and department heads shared changes they were making to their departmental operations to adjust to changes in work loads and health security measures.

The Sheriff inquired about restricting work and non-work related travel for County employees. Further clarification will be requested from the County's labor relations consultant.

Moved by Oswald seconded by Eaken to adjourn at 10:31 a.m. All aye. Motion carried.

Attest: Janine Sulzner, Auditor

Wayne Manternach, Chairman