

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
TWENTY-SECOND MEETING, 2024 SESSION (22)  
MAY 15, 2024**

The Buena Vista County Board of Supervisors and the Board of Health met in a joint special session on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 7:00 P.M. in the County Auditor's Conference Room with Chairperson Ringgenberg presiding, and the following other members present: Croker, Hartman, Merten, Snyder, for the Board of Supervisors and Jon McKenna, Dr. Robert Whitmore, Rhonda Ringgenberg, and Shelly Rock, for the Board of Health, and with Auditor Susan Lloyd as clerk for the joint meeting. Absent: Board of Health member Julie Sievers.

Unless otherwise indicated, all the following **motions** offered at this meeting were carried with the following vote: Ayes: Board of Supervisors-Croker, Hartman, Merten, Ringgenberg, and Snyder; Ayes: Board of Health-McKenna, Whitmore, Ringgenberg, Rock. Nays: none. Abstentions: none.

Others present for the meeting were: County Attorney Paul Allen, Assistant County Attorney Ashley Herrig, Payroll Clerk Yvonne Sandhoff, Environmental Health/Zoning Director Ben Mueggenberg, Environmental Health/Zoning Specialist Hunter Knudtson, Bldg/Grounds Superintendent Joe Keller, Kylea Ledesma, and Tom Ellis.

Chairperson Ringgenberg opened the meeting and asked County Attorney Paul Allen if he recommended going into closed session. Allen stated that he had some opening remarks to make first, and then he would recommend going into closed session to avoid irreparable injury to certain employee's reputation.

County Attorney Paul Allen stated that on May 2, he received a sexual **harassment complaint** from an employee in the Environmental Health Department regarding other county employees. Allen stated that he investigated to see if it violated applicable federal and state law, which it was determined to have not constituted a violation. Allen stated that in the course of the investigation, Allen determined that the boards should review certain employees' performance to determine if disciplinary action or discharge was warranted. Allen had requested the Auditor to send a notice to several individuals located in the basement of the Courthouse and asked them to respond if they would consent to a closed session. Auditor Lloyd stated that notices were sent out, and that the three individuals who were the primary subject of the review had consented and were in favor of a closed session. Lloyd did state that Kylea Ledesma had not consented. Allen stated that Ledesma's consent was not needed as she was not the subject of conduct review. Allen stated that both Boards were notified because Environmental Health/Zoning is supervised by both Boards.

Motion by Merten, second by Hartman, to go into **closed session** (at 7:07 P.M.) under Chapter 21.5(1)(i) of the 2024 Code of Iowa, to evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session. Ayes: Croker, Hartman, Merten, Ringgenberg, Snyder. Motion carried.

Motion by McKenna, second by Whitmore, to go into **closed session** (at 7:07 P.M.) under Chapter 21.5(1)(i) of the 2024 Code of Iowa, to evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session. Ayes: McKenna, Whitmore, Ringgenberg, Rock. Motion carried.

Motion by Snyder, second by Croker, to go out of **closed session** at 7:42 P.M. Carried.

Motion by McKenna, second by Whitmore, to go out of **closed session** at 7:42 P.M. Carried.

County Attorney Paul Allen presented a list of **recommendations** for both Boards to consider: Review of the employee handbook by all employees and signing off on the review annually; training of all employees yearly on sexual harassment; full-time employment of an HR person; a different location for the Environmental Health/Zoning Department, or place them under another department; a better system or structure of complaints, making them all go to the County Attorney, unless the county's attorney's office is the target of the complaint, in which case the complaint go to the County Auditor, who would then obtain an independent person to review; and deferring any disciplinary action to both Boards.

There being no further business, motion by Snyder, second by Hartman, to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. until Tuesday, May 21 at 8:30 a.m. for a regular session. Carried. Motion by McKenna, second by Whitmore, to adjourn the Board of Health at 7:47 p.m. Carried.