

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
FIFTY-FIRST MEETING, 2025 SESSION (51)
DECEMBER 16, 2025**

The Buena Vista County Board of Supervisors met in regular session on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 8:30 A.M. in the Boardroom with Chairman Merten presiding and the following other members present Croker, Hartman, Ringgenberg, Snyder, and with Auditor Susan Lloyd as clerk for the meeting. Absent: None.

Unless otherwise indicated, all the following **motions** offered at this meeting were carried with the following vote: Ayes: Croker, Hartman, Merten, Ringgenberg, Snyder. Nays: none. Abstentions: none.

Motion by Hartman, second by Snyder, to approve **today's agenda**. Carried.

Platinum Crush Project update: Engineer Bret Wilkinson says he is still working with DOT on the RISE grant, giving them more information for Phase 1. They are waiting for spring now on Phase 2, and the road is back open for now. Regarding Phase 3, Wilkinson received an email from the DOT and stated that the railroad agreed to what was presented at the railroad diagnostic meeting, so option 2 will be used for 70th Ave. and option 3 for 80th Ave. The consultant is moving forward with plans, having 30% plans in March, have a meeting in April, and having the 100% plans by March/April of 2027.

Secondary Roads Report: The plow crews were out on Saturday, but not on Sunday due to the bitter cold. Wilkinson stated that the hydraulic hoses can break when it is that cold. They may be hauling limestone and moving gravel this week once the roads are cleaned up and the trucks are cleaned up. There are still trees to cut down. Merten asked when there is a contract with the towns, don't they need to clear their roads? Wilkinson stated that Secondary Roads clears roads if they are out, and on Sunday, he had guys driving the roads and since nobody was stuck, they did not send anyone out to move snow. Wilkinson stated that towns have phone numbers to call if they have concerns about their roads.

Motion by Croker, second by Ringgenberg, to approve the **minutes** from 12/02/2025 as presented, and accept the following **reports:** November Conservation Board minutes and November BV County Solid Waste Commission minutes. Carried.

Chairman Merten asked if there was anyone online that wished to be heard during **Hear the Public** and there was none.

Auditor Susan Lloyd requested that the Board allow employees to donate vacation or comp time to an employee in her office (LJ) who is dealing with a medical issue and will exhaust all her available leave in the upcoming weeks. Motion by Snyder, second by Croker, to approve and allow county employees to **donate vacation or comp time** to an employee in the Auditor's Office (LJ) who is dealing with a medical issue and will exhaust all her available leave in the upcoming weeks. Carried.

Motion by Hartman, second by Snyder, to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the **Purchase Agreement** on 315 E. 5th St., Storm Lake, IA, between Thomas W. Fitzpatrick as trustee of Thomas and Susan Fitzpatrick Revocable Family Trust, dated July 15, 2024 (Sellers) and Buena Vista County (Buyers) for \$47,500. Ayes: Croker, Hartman, Merten, Snyder. Nays: Ringgenberg. Motion carried.

Motion by Croker, second by Hartman, to approve issuing a check for the purchase of **315 E. 5th St., Storm Lake, IA**, and authorize the Chair to sign any additional paperwork that may be needed, prior to the closing on December 30, 2025. Ayes: Croker, Hartman, Merten, Snyder. Nays: Ringgenberg. Motion carried.

Colleen Schwanz and Mitch Hogrefe with the **Buena Vista County Soil and Water Conservation District** presented their 2025 Report and came to ask for continued support in the FY'27 Budget. They have requested \$4,200, which is \$200 over the current year allocation. They use the county funds to support the conservation education programs in Buena Vista County. The board thanked the group for all they provided to the communities.

Executive Director Julie Edwards, **Upper Des Moines Opportunity**, presented the annual report for 2024 and requested \$20,000 for FY'27. During FY'25, they delivered a total of \$977,342 in direct assistance to individuals and families in BV County. The funds received from BV County are designated solely for UDMO client services and are used exclusively to support individuals in need within the county.

President/CEO Curt Strouth, VP of Economic Development Trevor Smith, and Business Retention & Workforce Partnership Coordinator Joanne Fallon, **Iowa Lakes Corridor**, presented the FY27 funding request. They reviewed some of the recent new programs that were implemented in 2025 including Homegrown Talent Initiative and the Big IDEA Challenge, along with Build My Future, which will be new for 2026. The group thanked the board for their continued support and requested \$35,000 for FY'27.

CEO High Lively and Associate Executive Director Cindy Voss, **Regional Transit Authority (RIDES)**, reviewed the FY'25 activities, which included 20,241 one-way trips within BV County. Voss stated that in BV County, they have a funding deficit of \$108,870. Lively stated that they are requesting a total of \$15,000 for FY'27, which is the first increase in their funding request in over two decades. This includes Operational Funding and Capital Replacement for transportation services in the county.

Mike Sandhoff, Buena Vista County Compensation Board Representative presented their Board's FY'27 salary recommendations from their November 19, 2025 meeting. Sandhoff stated that each Compensation Board representative prepared documentation supporting their elected official's recommended salary increase, and it will all be included with the minutes. Recommendations were as follows: 3% increase for all the elected officials, continuing Longevity for all elected officials and a \$2,000 stipend for the Board Chair, a \$500 stipend for the Board Vice-Chair, and a \$5,000 stipend for the Auditor, as the Board's Budget Director. The Board of Supervisors thanked Sandhoff for his time. Motion by Ringgenberg, second by Hartman, to acknowledge receipt of the **Buena Vista Compensation Board** salary recommendations for FY'27 for the elected officials. Carried.

Suana Wessendorf, President of the **Newell Historical Society** gave a summary of all their activities of the past year and reviewed their plans for FY'27. They are requesting \$1,000 for FY'27, which is the same as the current fiscal year. Wessendorf thanked the Board for their support.

Three members of the Buena Vista County **Library Association** (representing Linn Grove, Rembrandt, Sioux Rapids and Storm Lake) came in to thank the Board for their past support of the County libraries. The librarians reviewed their past programs, and each thanked the Board for supporting their city's library. Information from Albert City and Alta libraries, was also given to the Board. The Board thanked the Librarians for their service.

Attorney Katie Graham, Nyemaster Goode was present for the possible closed session. Motion by Croker, second by Snyder, to go into **closed session** (at 11:19 A.M.) under Chapter 21.5(1)(c) of the 2025 Code of Iowa, to discuss strategy with counsel in matters that are presently in litigation or where litigation is imminent where its disclosure would be likely to prejudice or disadvantage the position of the governmental body in that litigation. Ayes: Croker, Hartman, Merten, Ringgenberg, Snyder. Motion carried.

Motion by Snyder, second by Ringgenberg, to go out of **closed session** at 11:52 a.m. Carried.

There being no further business, motion by Croker, second by Snyder, to adjourn the meeting at 11:54 a.m. until Tuesday, December 23 at 8:30 a.m. for a special session. Carried.