

AUGUST 14, 2012

The Board of Supervisors of Clinton County, Iowa, met. Present were Supervisors Schmidt, Staszewski and Davisson. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

5:30 P.M. Discussion – Public Measure to Change Manner in which Township Officials are Selected – Board of Supervisors and Township Officials

Board of Supervisors Chairman Brian Schmidt called the meeting to order and asked Clinton County Auditor Eric Van Lancker to provide some background on the reason for the meeting. Van Lancker explained the inception of the meeting's discussion and the process to address changing the township official selection process from elected to appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

Van Lancker read comments that were offered before the meeting from township officials who were not able to attend the meeting. Most of those comments were not in favor of changing the process.

Jerome Burken, Center Township, asked how the Board of Supervisors would appoint the township officials if a township chose to have its officials appointed as opposed to the current process of electing township officials. He asked if the Board of Supervisors would ask the existing township officials for input when appointing those individuals.

Fred Theide, DeWitt Township, asked if someone wants to volunteer to be a township official would they ask the Board of Supervisors? The question was answered yes, if the Board were approved to appoint township officials.

Supervisor Jill Davisson said she isn't sure if the townships would be losing local control by going to appointment by the Board of Supervisors, but townships would lose a layer of selecting their representatives.

Supervisor John Staszewski said the Board of Supervisors would more than likely ask other officials what they think of certain candidates to be appointed.

Mark Hahn, Orange Township, said his township currently has two trustees and himself who are serving their last terms and they are concerned with finding someone to run for election to take their seats. He added that the clerk position is especially difficult to replace. He asked how the Board of Supervisors would find people to fill the seats. Davisson said the Board would probably have an announcement of an open seat and if no one steps forward the Board of Supervisors would start going through township directories and making calls to potential candidates.

Schmidt asked what would happen if half the townships approved the public measure and half didn't. Van Lancker explained that if the Board of Supervisors authorized the public measure, it had to appear on the ballot in all townships. It could not be placed on the ballot for individual townships per Iowa Code. He added there are provisions for a township to change back to having their officials elected.

Burken asked how a poor trustee would be replaced. Davisson said the Board of Supervisors would have to be made aware of the issue so it could appoint a different person when that official's term expired. Don Tietjens, Elk River Township, commented it could happen that the Board of Supervisors may not know people in a given township and that could lead to a problem with appointment. Staszewski agreed and said that is why they would need input from the other township officials before the Board of Supervisors made an appointment.

The issue of township official pay was introduced. It was generally suggested that higher pay for the clerks may be appropriate.

Tietjens said some of the situations a township official may face can get quite involved and considering the pay it could be an insult. Burken suggested township officials could be paid in proportion to other county jobs. Staszewski asked if it would be better to pay by the hour or by the meeting. Tietjens said the clerk should be paid by the hour.

Doug Kelting, SpringRock Township, asked what if the Board of Supervisors just raised the hourly rate and see what happens. He suggested paying people for what they are worth and if it works it would be great. Davisson said she believes that's a great idea and would like to see if that addresses the issue of attracting candidates for the township positions. She added if it doesn't work, the issue can be revisited in two years.

Leon Bott, Hampshire Township, echoed what was stated several times during the meeting that clerks do a bulk of the work and that should be considered.

Schmidt said he is hearing that the public measure is not so much an interest, but addressing the pay may be the way to go. He said the pay issue for township officials can be discussed when the County begins working on its next budget in December.

The Board of Supervisors adjourned to meet on Monday, August 20, 2012.

Eric Van Lancker, County Auditor

Brian Schmidt, Chairperson

-APPROVED-

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County Auditor

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Chairperson