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Harrison County Assessor  
111 N. 2nd Ave. Logan, IA 51546

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Harrison County Conference Board  
August 30, 2018 Minutes

The Harrison County Conference Board met in the Harrison County Courthouse, Supervisors' Office at 8:00 a.m. on August 30, 2018. Meeting Agenda was noted for Committee and Board Appointments. Meeting notice was posted August 6, 2018 at the Assessor's office and upon the Harrison County Courthouse bulletin board.

Chairman, John Straight, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Those in attendance were:

Supervisors: John Straight, Walter Utman

School Board Representatives:

Randy Koenig, Logan Magnolia

Mayors:

Jason Knickman, Dunlap; Brian Rife, Mondamin; Dave Weigelt, Magnolia;

Sherman Struble, Missouri Valley Pro-Tem; Lori Cohrs, Logan Pro-Tem

Assessor/Clerk: Brenda Loftus

Others in Attendance: Joanna Barnard, Chief Deputy Assessor; Susan Bonham, Auditor

Moved by Weigelt, seconded by Struble, to approve the agenda as written.

Motion carried. Unanimous vote.

Moved by Koenig, seconded by Utman, to approve the minutes from February 15, 2018 as written.

Motion carried. Unanimous vote.

Assessor Loftus, reported to the Board that all 4 classes and 5 tests have been completed as required for ICA Designation (Iowa Certified Assessor). Certification was received June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Thirty individuals started the course series required for certification. Sixteen designees took the final test. Of those 16, only 3 individuals passed the final exam to receive an ICA Certification.

The Board was updated on the progress of the Reappraisal Project. Data collection has been completed for all classifications. Reviewers are currently active in the incorporated city limits and will be starting in the rural areas soon. The last report from Vanguard showed a 41% completion of the review process. Income and expense statement requests were mailed to approximately 400 commercial rentals or leased properties. At last count 140 of these properties had returned their information for study. Preliminary work has been completed for residential land calculation. Map areas have been created for each city and rural areas for delineation of value. Topography will be reviewed for each parcel. All parcels are being studied for proper classification. All parcels currently receiving exemptions will be reviewed and verified to be in compliance with required qualifications. The exemptions currently being reviewed include: Forest Reserve, Fruit Tree, Impoundments, Native Prairie, Wetland, and Pollution Control. Additional research was required for the following portions of the project: railroads, airports, billboards, towers, and telecommunication properties.

The Board then moved on to new business.

Salary/Review Committee

The Conference Board had requested, at the February 15, 2018 meeting, to reconvene in August to appoint a Salary/Review Committee. This committee would do research and bring independent and unbiased information to the Conference Board.

Chairman Straight questioned if a committee is needed, as all information regarding salary is included and discussed in the January budget meetings.

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Koenig recalled that the question from the previous meeting was regarding how the current salary was based, whether it was based upon other salaries in the courthouse, an established salary for the position, years of service, and/or what criteria lead to previously higher salary for this position. Does a basis need to be created or will past practices be continued? At that time, no basis was discovered to discuss the salary, which is why a committee was requested to develop the criteria to be used to create the salary, currently and for future individuals.

Rife stated that he felt a committee would not work, and individual Board members could do their own research. The assessor is currently paid the same as the elected officials. In his opinion, her position is appointed & requires a higher grade of education and training, too. He feels adjustments need to be made that are fair for everyone.

Knickman and Koenig agreed there would have to be a full board discussion, with or without a committee.

Cohrs offered up an opportunity to solicit information using the Assessor's Association forums. Questions could be asked of other county assessors and then passed along to the Board members.

Loftus and Barnard both indicated they felt that the Board wanted someone else to do the research, as means to produce an unbiased opinion. The original question was, "what established the hiring salary for the assessor?"

Utman responded that the assessor's salary was based on the salary of all the elected officials.

Loftus' concern was that the previous assessor was not based upon the elected officials.

Koenig stated that he felt a set salary was offered at the time of hire. Rife asked if there had been a review process after hire for eligible raises. A review was proposed after six months of employment. This would have occurred at the next January budget meeting. Information was presented at that time and a raise was requested. This has occurred for each year since.

Rife identified that he would be interested in looking at eligibility for raises at different points due to a new level of education or certification.

Utman & Straight questioned if the same opportunity would be extended to the elected officials, due to their continuing education.

Rife responded that the assessor's position is not an elected position.

Loftus also added that the elected officials do not receive a deduction upon entering office as she had.

Utman and Rife discussed the engineer's salary decrease upon hire from the previous individual. Bonham added that it was approximately \$10,000. Rife concluded this would be similar to the dollar amount of deduction from the assessor's salary, but would be a larger percentage based upon the pay scale.

Rife indicated that the Assessor's position is similar to the Engineer's, as there are certain requirements to obtain the job.

Utman pointed out that the newly hired Board of Health Director was brought in at less than the previous individual. After questions from Barnard & Loftus, he indicated it was not the same as the elected officials' salaries and he does possess a Master's degree as preferred by the Board of Health, but not necessarily required. These decisions were at the discretion of the Board of Health.

Loftus requested input for the research criteria sought from the Iowa Association of Assessors. Items requested by the Board have varied per year. Questions and research items were presented as follows:

Koenig: How are the salaries based and on what? Are educational stipends provided? Comparison by valuation.

Rife: Comparison of parcel counts. How many counties base the assessor's salary on the elected officials' salaries? Comparison by elected office.

Loftus presented a template spreadsheet of jurisdictions. Items included were population, parcel count, valuation, budget and salary. Members of the Board concurred this template would be acceptable.

Koenig expressed that he did not envy the supervisors position to keep track of the many salaries. He requested the supervisors' input, wondering if the Conference Board changes things, will it work. He did not want to create problems in other departments, but he wanted to give a fair chance to the assessor's earnings.

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Moved by Weigelt, seconded by Cohrs, to not appoint a Salary/Review Committee.

Roll call vote:

Supervisors: John Straight - Y, Walter Utman - Y

School Board Representatives:

Randy Koenig, Logan Magnolia – N

Mayors:

Jason Knickman, Dunlap - Y; Brian Rife, Mondamin – Y; David Weigelt, Magnolia - Y;

Sherman Struble, Missouri Valley - Y; Lori Cohrs, Logan - Y

Motion carried.

Utman requested that the salary information be provided to the Conference Board a week or two prior to the next meeting.

Board of Review appointments were reviewed.

The assessor was given direction at the February meeting to inquire with those members who have expiring terms for the year of 2019 regarding interest in continuing their membership on the Board of Review.

Boustead and Lightwine had been contacted and would be willing to continue to serve on the Board of Review for a new term, starting January 1, 2019.

Moved by Rife, seconded by Cohrs, to approve the reappointment of Marilyn Boustead and Myrna Lightwine to the Board of Review. (Six year term) Motion carried. Unanimous vote.

The acting members of the Board of Review will be as follows:

Rolland Roberts, Dunlap - (2015); Nick Cleveland, Woodbine (2016); Paul Oldberg, Missouri Valley (2018);

Marilyn Boustead, Woodbine (2019); & Myrna Lightwine, Pisgah (2019).

Examining Board appointments were reviewed.

The terms of the Examining Board will expire for 2019. The Conference Board discussed the requirements to appoint/reappoint the members of the Examining Board. The Examining Board is responsible for interviewing, administering examinations, and making recommendations to the Conference Board upon the need to appoint an assessor. Each voting unit of the Conference Board independently appoints one person to the Examining Board for a six year term.

Currently appointed members had been contacted by the Assessor per the Conference Board's request and are willing to serve a new term.

Moved by Knickman, seconded by Struble, to approve the reappointment of Paul Fouts, Ed Gambs, and Vicki Argotsinger to the Examining Board. Motion carried. Unanimous vote.

The acting members of the Examining Board will be as follows:

Paul Fouts (Mayor Appointment – 2019), Ed Gambs (School Board Appointment – 2019), Vicki Argotsinger (Supervisor Appointment – 2019)

Assessor Vehicle Usage

A memo was presented to the Assessor by the Board of Supervisors on July 26<sup>th</sup>. The memo discussed a vehicle policy that needed to be followed. After review of the Assessor and Conference Board files & minutes, no policy was found. The Conference Board discussed that a copy of the previously adopted policy will need to be produced or a new policy will need to be adopted. Discussion was made regarding usage when attending classes or meetings.

Motion was made by Cohrs, seconded by Struble, to table the item until the January 2019 meeting. Motion carried. Unanimous vote.

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Meeting was adjourned. Motion made by Rife, seconded by Struble. Motion carried.

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Chairman

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Clerk