

BOARD OF HEALTH MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING TAMA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH & HOME CARE

Monday June 5, 2023 – 12:00 P.M.
Meeting held at Tama County Supervisors Meeting Room

Present: Dr. Hineman Sherry Parks, PA-C Sally Custer
Lori Johnson Jolynn Harger Dan Anderson – Tama Co. BOS
Curt Hilmer – Tama Co. BOS Mick Ferris Bill Faircloth – Tama Co. BOS
Shannon Zoffka Heather Bombei Steve Salasek – Marshall Co. BOS
Tammy Wise – Tama Co. HR Several members of the
public

Absent: Casey Schmidt Chris Behrens

The meeting was called to order by Sherry Parks, Chairman at 12:08 p.m.

Topic:

Bill Faircloth stated that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss hiring a full time employee to do the Zoning/Sanitarian/Weed Commissioner for Tama County and the same positions in Marshall County. He says that the Sanitarian position would still report to the Board of Health, but be supervised by the Board of Supervisors. He said that Marshall County originally approached them to see if this is something that might work with the two counties. They would have to do a 28E Agreement between the two counties. The Supervisors feel that this would save the county money.

Tammy Wise said that the positions would be around \$60-\$70,000 from Tama County and \$70-\$80,000 from Marshall County. They set the wage range higher, but would aim for a lower wage when hiring.

Sherry Parks told the Board of Supervisors that the Board of Health has not changed their position on the Environmental Health Officer job. The current Environmental Health Officer, Chris Behrens, is salaried at 17 hours per week, with no benefits. She sees no financial gain by hiring a full time person for this position. Also, Chris has straightened out problems that were left there before he started the position. The DNR has told the Board of Health that they are happy with the job our Environmental Health Officer is doing.

Tammy Wise said that she thinks it's a good idea to put the jobs together so there is access to the person Monday through Friday.

Sherry Parks replied that Chris is available most days, as his other job is pretty flexible. She also wondered how much time a person would have for Marshall County if currently Chris is working 17 hours a week, sometimes more here.

Tammy said that she sees benefits from a full time position. There are definite differences between the two counties. Each county can learn from one another. It shouldn't be about the money. The Board of Supervisors will pay for this position. They would still report to the Board of Health.

Curt Hilmer asked if the Board of Supervisors would pay the benefits. Tammy replied that Marshall County would reimburse us.

Sherry Parks said that the overall cost is low with the current Environmental Health Officer, he is working 17 hours per week and is getting the job done, plus has support staff available to assist with paperwork. Sherry also said that she doesn't agree with the numbers that were given on the expense spreadsheet that she received.

Tammy Wise said that she didn't have exact numbers to add to the spreadsheet.

It was asked what Chris made in a year. Sherry replied \$20,889 last year.

Tammy said that the estimate of the new positions is \$70,000, but they would try to hire at \$55,000. Tammy said that they really wanted to come together to make a new position.

Someone asked how all this work was supposed to be done in a 40 hour work week, when it appears it could be more like 50 hours. Tammy Wise said then they would pay overtime. Financially it just makes sense.

Dr. Hineman said that the Board of Health focuses more on public health. There is over 30 years of experience on the Board of Health working to ensure the public health of Tama County. It has been her experience in the last few years that there have been several public health issues that have been significantly improved under the current Environmental Health Officer. She has concerns as a Board member that things will deteriorate if the job is changed as proposed. The Environmental Health Officer has duties to public health to help prevent the spread of disease.

Dan Anderson said that saving \$60,000 helps Tama County.

Sherry Parks said that the Environmental Health Officer position brings in revenue too, it's not just an expense. Looking from a health prospective it is important that the job is done correctly.

Tammy Wise said that is not fair to say the Board of Supervisors would not do it correctly, because the previous person was a Board of Health employee.

Bill Faircloth said that they want the person to do the job right, whomever applies.

Richard Arp asked if this person would have the county's health insurance and how much it costs for each employee. Tammy replied that it cost \$30,000, but we don't know if the person that applies will need the insurance or might be a veteran covered under Veteran Administration.

A member of the public asked if someone could speak about the issues of the previous employee. They asked if this was public record anywhere. Dr. Hineman replied that it is public record in the past Board of Health meeting minutes on the website.

Dr. Hineman replied that some homeowners had to be reimbursed for issues. Richard Arp asked if the Board of Health had to pay certain people? Lori Johnson said that yes, we did have to pay out some money. Richard asked what the amount was. Lori said she would look that up.

A member of the public asked if this would go against Iowa Code by changing the oversight of the Environmental Health Officer position. Tammy said that the position would still report to the Board of Health but be supervised by the Board of Supervisors.

A member of the public asked how all the positions can be one job. Tammy Wise says she feels like we have the time.

Lori Johnson reported that the number we have budgeted is \$51,000 to pay for problems in the past.

Steve Salasek said that it has worked well between the two counties sharing Todd. He said that Todd works 4 hours a day between all three positions. Steve said he doesn't know why the position would need monitored as they report to the Board of Health. He said that the current job they would have to offer would not be a full time position and feels they would have a hard time hiring someone.

Someone asked what the qualifications would be for the positions. Tammy Wise replied that the Environmental Health position would require more training, but the other ones would not require as much.

Shannon Zoffka shared that when Todd was employed as the Tama County Environmental Health Officer, it was supposed to be 20 Tama/20 Marshall for the Sanitarian position. Several issues came to light and were brought to the Board of Health.

Richard Arp said that he felt that it would require more hours to get the job done. He feels that the Environmental Health position should be left alone. He suggested that they join the two other jobs and let the Board of Health

use their expertise to take care of the Environmental Health position. Tama County would get the short end of the stick if all the positions were combined. That is what happened with Powesheik County and the Engineer position.

Comment was made that Todd was not helpful with the Zoning Board. Someone also said that the healthcare department has done an excellent job with this position and we should keep them.

Micki Ferris said that the Board of Health has discussed this issue and they are not in agreement with changing the Environmental Health position. They feel that Chris is doing an excellent job, he is fully trained, and is able to get the work done correctly in 17 hours a week. He is available even when he is at his other job, he returns calls in a reasonable time frame and on the weekends. He has taken care of situations that he inherited from the previous Environmental Health Officer. He attends all of our meetings, and has a report ready. If he is not able to attend he has a report ready to be shared. The DNR has stated he is doing a good job. He has a continuity that can be relied on.

Tammy Wise said that we would know the work was being done by the new employee by their reporting of what they are doing.

Richard Arp asked whose idea it was to make the two counties, one position. Tammy Wise said that Marshall County called us.

Steve Salasek said the current Marshall County position as is, is not full time. He asked if they separate out the Tama County Environmental Health position from the Zoning/Weeds that maybe that along with Marshall County positions could be full time.

Dan Anderson says he thinks that \$60,000 is a savings to both counties and feels they could get someone hired for that.

Comment was made by Bill Faircloth "well this just isn't going to work", with Dan Anderson replying, "I guess not."

Public comments included "If it isn't broke don't fix it" and "We have a good Environmental Health Officer here".

Bill Faircloth said that today was just for discussion, no action will be taken.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jolynn Harger, Executive/Financial Assistant