

# MINUTES

## SCOTT COUNTY CONFERENCE BOARD

PROPOSAL OF COUNTY ASSESSOR BUDGET  
**MONDAY FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2020 - 4:45 P.M.**

**BOARD ROOM – 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR**

SCOTT COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING  
600 W. 4TH ST. DAVENPORT, IA 52801

A meeting of the Scott County Conference Board was held on Monday February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 4:45 p.m. in the board room on the 1st floor of the Scott County Administrative Center, 600 W 4<sup>th</sup> St, Davenport IA. The purpose of the meeting was for the Board's review, discussion, and approval for publication of the Scott County Assessors proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-21. The meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m. by Board Chair Tony Knobbe with the following members present (roll call):

### **Schools:**

Glen Keppy – North Scott School, President

Jean Dickson - Pleasant Valley School Board, Director District #7

### **Mayors:**

Bob Gallagher – Bettendorf

Martin O'Boyle - Eldridge

Michael Limberg - Long Grove

Michael Bawden – Riverdale

Ronald Rice – Panorama Park

### **Supervisors:**

Tony Knobbe – Chair

Ken Beck

Brinson Kinzer

### **Other:**

Tom McManus – Scott County Assessor

John Kelly – Deputy Assessor, County Assessor's Office

Beth Haney – Office Manager, County Assessor's Office

A quorum was established by the voting units.

Next order of business was to designate the delegates for each voting unit of the Board.

Schools – Dickson  
Mayors – Limberg  
Supervisors – Beck

**A motion to approve the prior meeting minutes was made by Limberg, seconded by Beck, all ayes, motion carried.**

County Assessor McManus then delivered the Assessor's report. McManus reported on the status of the Assessor's Office current staff, as well as staffing changes, and briefly revisited the pay scale implemented in 2019. He also reminded the board that his re-appointment for another term will need to be considered by the Board at next year's meeting. McManus reported on the implementation and field testing success of the new tablets by appraisal staff and the subsequent increased efficiency. He also touched on recent security updates to the office, as well as an upcoming office remodel in 2020. McManus reported on the recent fulfillment of mandated continuing education requirements of the Assessor and the Deputy Assessor, and the ongoing education of other staff for necessary job skillset growth. He also requested to table discussion regarding the possibility of changing the office holiday schedule to enable time for further research and feasibility, if warranted.

McManus then reported on the Board of Review and assessment appeals, including; the steps property owners can take to challenge their assessments, the informal assessment review process, prior year's Board of Review session and stats, and the statuses of current and prior years PAAB and District Court appeals. There was a question regarding the protest count stats that was later determined to be a result of a property classification change. McManus said he would follow-up to verify, and report back. **At this time, McManus brought forward to the Conference Board a motion to re-appoint Tim Downing to another six year term on the Board of Review. Limberg made a motion to approve, Dickson seconded, all ayes, motion carried.**

McManus also reported on the 2019 Multi-Residential Equalization Order issued by the IDOR. The impact of the order on assessed values and on tax revenue differences were discussed. O'Boyle commented on the rollback and Gallagher inquired as to why and how the decision to protest was made. McManus stated he made the decision and that he felt the order was not warranted nor justified and that he also felt it was the Assessor's responsibility to stand up for fair and equitable assessments for taxpayers, and therefore moved forward with the appeal of the order. There was also discussion on the appeal meeting with the IDOR. At this time McManus also explained the process, and the possible unfair treatment of Scott County by the IDOR. There was discussion in the room as to how the budgets may be affected by the appeal. McManus elaborated that he has been reporting updates to Budget Manager David Farmer and keeping him apprised of the situation for county-wide budgeting purposes. McManus then informed the Board that they can collaborate and vote to take action against the Assessor's

appeal of the equalization order, if so desired. There was no further discussion. McManus also went over the results of the subsequent Board of Review Session in the fall that resulted from the equalization order.

McManus then reported on building permits issued for the previous year, including stats and breakdowns of counts and totals by classification and by cities and townships.

McManus then reported on past and present assessments of Scott County properties, including; the differences of odd and even assessment years, the upcoming mailing of assessment notices, the appeal process and options for property owners, the assessment timeline, assessment value change stats, and reports and breakdowns of parcel counts and assessed value totals by class and by cities and townships. McManus mentioned that prior to the meeting it was brought to his attention that the data in the Assessment Value Change Breakdown report may be in error. McManus said he would follow-up and report back any issues. McManus informed the Board that if anyone would want any other property data statistics for any reason to contact the Assessor's Office for help.

McManus then reported on the proposed budget of the County Assessor's Office for the coming fiscal year. There was discussion as to whether the Board would approve and vote on individual line items, or vote on the overall budget request as a whole at the conclusion of the budget report. The Board opted to approve the overall budget as a whole. **McManus requested a 2.5% COLA increase for ALL STAFF, sans himself**, and reported this request aligns with the county COLA increase recommendation.

**McManus then requested the following staffing salary adjustments as outlined in the budget:**

- **ASSESSOR – No eval/step raise, and no COLA requested.**
- **CHIEF DEPUTY – position currently vacant and not expected to fill in near future.**
- **DEPUTY – request up to 5% max eval/step increase. Note: prior year's salary is from prior Deputy's salary.**
- **APPRAISER III – position currently vacant and not expected to fill in near future.**
- **APPRAISER II – F.K. - requesting up to 5% max eval/step increase.**
- **APPRAISER I – N.R. - requesting up to 5% max eval/step increase.**
- **APPRAISER I – J.H. - requesting up to 5% max eval/step increase.**
- **APPRAISER I – S.M. - requesting up to 3% max eval/step increase.**
- **OFFICE MANAGER – No eval/step raise. Maxed out in pay scale.**
- **CHIEF CLERK – requesting up to 2% max eval/step increase.**
- **CLERK - requesting up to 5% max eval/step increase.**

There was discussion as to how the Assessor's pay scale and step increases align with the county's 2019 newly adopted compensation policy and why Assessor's staff eval/step increases

were greater than recommended county step increases. McManus described the skilled nature of appraisal work, as well staff educational requirements, and multiple other differences that warrant higher employee eval/step adjustments for Assessor's staff than other county department staff. Knobbe commented that the county does not want to lose skilled employees to surrounding counties and that recent staff turnover made it appear the office wasn't overcompensating staff. There was a question as to why the Office Manager's salary was only requesting the 2.5% COLA increase but the budget line item displayed 4.17%. McManus stated he wasn't exactly sure but would follow up and report back to the Board.

**McManus then requested the board vote to align the County Assessor's Office deferred compensation policy to match the new county policy, changing employee max match from \$500 to \$1,000 per employee, with a retroactive start date, effective January 1, 2020, and removing the Merit line item from the budget and transferring the Merit funds into the Def Comp line item. A motion to approve was made by Beck, seconded by Limberg, all ayes, motion carried.**

McManus reported on the rest of the budget line item by line item including; employee benefit requirements, expected operational expenses, and explained any adjustments line items as needed. **McManus made sure to report in more detail on large budget items such as the purchase of an additional departmental vehicle, subsequent line items affected by vehicle purchase, and additional revenue for Pushpin software, among other things.** He noted that the total budget amount was to increase \$48,500, or about 12% from the prior year's requested budget, however he noted the Assessor's levy rate is decreasing again this year, for the fourth year in a row. He stated the reason for this is that the Assessor is buying down a high fund balance from years prior when office budgeted for contracted appraisal services. He also commented that the Scott County Assessor's Office still has the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest levy rate of all Assessor's Offices in the entire state. **A motion to accept the Assessor's proposed budget for publication and set for public hearing was made by Beck, seconded by Limberg, all ayes, motion carried.**

No old business reported.

No new business reported.

The date of the meeting for public hearing and adoption of the County Assessor's budget was set by the Board for Monday March 2nd, 2019 at 4:45 p.m. in the Board Room on the first floor of the Scott County Administrative Center, 600 W 4<sup>th</sup> St, Davenport IA.

**At 5:58 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Limberg, second by Beck, all ayes, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tom McManus,  
Conference Board Clerk,  
Scott County, Iowa

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tony Knobbe,  
Conference Board Chair,  
Scott County, Iowa

**SIGNED COPIES RETAINED IN COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE**