Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
Monday, November 9, 2026

The Muscatine County Board of Supervisors met in regular session at 9:00 A.M. with Chick, Kirchner, Mather, Sauer and Sorensen present. The meeting was held at Discovery Center Conference Room, 3300 Cedar Street, Muscatine, Iowa. Chairperson Chick presiding.

On a motion by Sorensen, second Mather, the agenda was approved as presented. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Mather, the board moved to accept claims dated November 9, 2026, in the amount of $906,558.70. Ayes: All.

Chairperson Chick and the Board opened for discussion Muscatine County Community Services Trust Services for guardianship, conservatorship and payee clients with the County Attorney's office and Jessica Bopes, Muscatine Community Services Director to present first with public comment to follow. Sorensen stated

Assistant County Attorney Paul Choi reviewed the Iowa Code requirements regarding guardianship, conservatorship and payee services. Choi stated the Code is not specific to what is required of counties to provide services. Choi stated conflict concerns within the attorney's office that have occurred with mental health committals or if a crime is committed regarding Community Services clients. Choi explained that the county is responsible for court costs for indigent people for guardianships and conservatorship and explained new legislation for end-of-life care. Chick stated he spoke to the state office about payee service clients and the transition period to change to the state services could take months to years (as there is a waiting list at this time of 75 people).

Jessica Bopes, Muscatine County Community Services Director presented a slideshow stating the true cost of the Trust program, the history of the County Relief Office (since January 1936) and the reviewed the program developed by Kenny Duncan in the 1960's. Duncan's program developed the staff members of Community Services to help residents that needed assistance with decision making. The program is a safety net for community members that may fall through the cracks and many of the clients of the Trust program no longer have support from family and friends for various reasons. Bopes reviewed requirements of Iowa Code 252.25, stating the purpose is to provide temporary relief while helping individuals overcome barriers to self-sufficiency and economic independence. Bopes stated the Representative Payee program (Trust Department), serves 185 Muscatine residents, as the program manages a client's own money for needs prioritized for items such as food, housing and utility expenses. Bopes stated there is no state program that provides this service, and very few private agencies provide this service. The presentation stated 96 residents use Muscatine County Community Services as guardians and 28 residents received services through the conservatorship program. Payee clients pay $57 monthly, which is the amount allowed by Social Security. Guardianships/Conservatorship clients are charged $300 per year. Bopes stated the true cost of the Trust program is $186,540.52 and presented numbers on how the the clients put money back into the community with rent, mortgage payments, utilities, food, etc. Bopes asked if the goal of the Board is to cut the budget or is the goal to eliminate the program? Bopes asked if the budget needs cut, then she is requesting some direction on how much to cut. Bopes stated she is assigned by the court for guardianship/conservatorships and questioned how

will these clients be handed off? Who will take care of them? Bopes stated in consulting the public guardian's office, she thinks a transition would be three to four years and expressed her concerns on the type of care they would receive. Mather asked Bopes to review how the employee percentage of time is allocated for each of the services. Bopes reviewed each employee and the percentages for VA services, General Assistance, and Trust services. Bopes stated her department is open to options to lower other budget items to continue the payee service program to the community. Bopes reviewed costs and held discussion with the Board on statistics of MCSA homeless shelter stays. Jason Dornbush, Executive Director of MCSA, reviewed the shelter average stays and costs as they relate to payee services. Bopes reviewed the anticipated negatives to the community if programs are cut, such as no personal care per clients,homeless population will soar, potential criminal behavior increases and more mental health commitments. Bopes stated the true strength of local government lies in its ability to care for the people it serves and we should take great pride in being part of a community that serves to protect lives, stability and safety for the residents.

Jason Dornbush, Executive Director of MCSA, 312 Iowa Avenue, Muscatine, spoke on behalf of the Payee Trust Program. Dornbush stated for many citizens they have no support system, and he has seen firsthand the benefits of the Payee Trust Program in comparison of the struggles of those not in the program. Dornbush stated money is going back to local landlords, utilities stay connected and businesses as bills are paid timely and it keeps the payee clients housed and ensures dignity, stability and independence. Dornbush stated at MCSA we see first-hand how the program keeps individuals housed as they could fall into crisis very quickly if they miss a rent payment and are evicted (causing them back into the homeless shelter with costs increasing to local government). Dornbush stated as county leaders you have the opportunity to maintain the investment with prevention rather than pay for the crisis later. Dornbush respectfully asked the Board to maintain the services.

Nancy Nauman, 37 Geneva Drive, Muscatine, Regional Director for Optimae Services, located at 1409 Wisconsin Street, stated she has worked alongside individuals with disabilities (and their families) for nearly 46 years. Nauman stated she is also a taxpayer and has always been proud of how Muscatine County takes care of its most vulnerable citizens and is here today to urge you to continue the payee, guardianship and conservatorship services. Nauman stated the service clients know and trust the Trust employees which ensures their wellbeing. If the program is eliminated many people would have nowhere else to go. Nauman stated the program is an extra layer of accountability for the clients and a stability safeguard. Nauman urged the Board to continue the program as our county has a long history of looking after its most vulnerable citizens.

Julie Berry, 1015 Poplar Street, Muscatine, stated she is court appointed guardianship for her brother with the assistance of Community Services and the Payee Trust Program. Berry stated the program has allowed her to be support to her developmentally disabled brother as a sister instead of trying to struggle with a complicated system. Berry stated originally she shared the responsibility of her brother's needs with her mother, who can no longer assist. Berry stated she paid a private attorney a lot of money to be court appointed as guardian but there was no guidance on how to manage court reporting requirements and social security. Berry stated Community Services has handled the paperwork of court filings and paying my brother's bills. Berry stated the

concern that if something happens to her, she knows her brother is well taken care of. Berry stated the program has allowed her to be a sister and not drown in the paperwork. Berry stated what will happen to the people in the community who do not have a sister or a supportive family. Berry asked the Board to preserve the program.

Felicia Toppert, Calamus, IA, former Community Services Director, stated the program is a model program and the envy of other counties who desire the same type of program. Toppert stated the employees of Community Services know the clients personally and a public or private guardian will not be as personal or effective. Toppert stated 65% of the Trust employees' time is working directly with clients. The Trust program requires receipts where other programs do not require receipts. Sauer asked what Toppert would predict as an estimate of homelessness increase if the program was eliminated for the current clients. Toppert stated she believes 50% would be homeless within a year.

Cathryn Hahn, 821 Barry Avenue, Muscatine, stated she has worked for AEA serving families with disabilities and been involved at the local and state level for disability advocacy. Hahn stated she raised a son with disabilities, until he passed away in 2020. Hahn stated she would like to see her tax dollars go to the program that serves a portion of the population who is unseen but needs to remain stable. Hahn stated she would like to point out that everything that has occurred in the past 10 years with privatizing Medicare, making a detriment. Hahn stated once the local entity was taken away and given to the state the services have been next to impossible to access with 17,000 people on a waiting list for services since 2014.. Hahn stated services were to be cut with the privatization that would have impacted her son to stay in the community. At that time, Hahn enlisted the help of State Representative Gary Carlson, Mike Johannsen, Director of Muscatine Community Services and the assistance of Community Service employees allowed services to continue and urges the Board to see the impact and how this would be a very different community without the programs. Hahn stated she hopes the Board will see the value to the program with a minimal cost to maintain stability.

Marc Hines, Chief Executive Officer of Crossroads, Inc, 1424 Houser Street, Muscatine, stated the importance of the services cannot be overstated as some their program clients are part of the Trust program. Hines reviewed all the critical issues the legals guardians assist with. Hines stated we understand the difficult financial constraints the county is up against and are grateful for the years of the Trust services plus understand any changes are not being considered lightly. Hines stated he wants to focus on timing as the impact of work requirements and income verification with the enactment of the One Bill Beautiful Bill Act (HR1) will introduce complexity and confusion within the next few months. Hines stated representative payees will be a critical firewall against lapses in Medicaid eligibility and how services and providers are paid. Hines stated with last week's election will no doubt have implications on Medicaid recipients as Governor Elect Sand campaigned on an overhaul of the managed care system. Hines stated while he supports this it will cause major disruptions in case management and enrollment and while this happens the importance of a guardian will be required. Hines urged the Board to maintain the Trust services for at least one more year of full funding as a transition will be difficult, perhaps taking years. Hines stated a transition will take a group of caring and informed individuals with organizations working together to form a solution.

John Beckey, 1923 North Tipton Road, Muscatine, stated he wants to thank our County Auditor for running a great election. Beckey stated he has been resident my entire life and an adult taxpayer. Beckey wished people would quit watching over his taxes and just let him pay the taxes. Beckey stated all the people in this room have received services from tax dollars. The Trust Program clients need our tax money for their services as other people do not need tax dollars. Beckey stated he was proud of Muscatine, but his pride has diminished unfortunately because of what we feel about money instead of community. Beckey stated we are a community. What does that mean? It means we take care of each other when buildings are falling, floods occur and when people need help. We are struggling in this country, and Muscatine is part of it, and needs to realize compassion for our fellow people. Beckey started in 1983 with Muscatine Welfare Association, with Ken Duncan, Mike Johannsen, Nancy Nauman and a Board of Supervisors who understood community. Beckey stated we need to understand community instead of getting rid of a program that helps this community.

Mike Johannsen, 3414 Provence Lane, Muscatine, former Community Services Director for 37 ½ years. Johannsen stated the program traces its origins back to the 1960's when Ken Duncan, Relief Director and Judge R.K. Stohr saw a need to protect a vulnerable population in our county from becoming an easy target. The work of the Community Services Trust program has kept people housed and stable by using resources they are eligible for with saves the county thousands of dollars in General Assistance payments. Johannsen stated Ken Duncan won a national award from Social Security for his efforts to secure Social Security for the people in Muscatine County. The program is one of the ways Muscatine County meets the needs of the poor and provides a safety net for those at risk. For the past 60 years, Muscatine County has found the means to care for people in need, and the program has been an effective way to meet that goal. Johannsen stated the best government is the one closest to its people and encouraged the Board to continue the funding for the effective Trust program.

Nicholas Hays, 227 Mulberry Avenue, Muscatine, stated he is here to support Community Services to maintain the Trust program. Hays stated he grew up in Nebraska and worked for an organization similar to Crossroads, Inc. Hays stated programs like this are important. Hays stated he commends Bopes and her team on serving the needs of the payee clients. Hays urged the Board to look past the numbers on a spreadsheet and look at the human beings the program serves to give them human dignity.

Martha Lang, 2101 Nettle Avenue, Muscatine, stated she has worn many different hats in her lifetime and in this community. Lang stated in the times she has lived elsewhere, others have responded with gratitude and shock to learn the services of safety nets our community has provided. Lang stated we can look back in history for programs that served the least of us such as the Lutheran Homes Orphanage in the 1880's and then into the 1900's in which Community Services was basically formed. Lang stated as a taxpayer she is willing to pay an average of 13 cents per day (or less than $50 per year) to continue the program and who it serves.

Charles Lorensen, 1808 Briarwood Lane, Muscatine, stated he found it interesting this meeting was set after election day. Lorensen stated his concerns with millions of dollars spent downtown

when the dollars could be spent to help people. Lorensen stated our schools are filled with niceties; believes projects could be delayed and corporations could assist with donations.
The Board held discussion regarding how legislators have lowered state taxes while creating constraints on county government. The Board expressed how other budget changes will be considered and thanked Administrative & Finance Director Kala Naber for her work with budget numbers and thanked the work of Muscatine County Community Services. No action was taken regarding the Muscatine County Community Services Trust Services.

The Board recessed at 10:45 A.M. and reconvened at 10:52 A.M.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Mather, the Board approved a 2027 Wildlife Diversity Habitat Management Grant application in the amount of $7,500, with Conservation Director Katie Hammond. Ayes: All.

On a motion by Mather, second by Kirchner, the Board approved Resolution #11-09-26-01 Granting an Extension for Filing of Replat of Brookside Subdivision. Ayes: All.

**RESOLUTION #11-09-26-01**
**RESOLUTION GRANTING EXTENSION FOR FILING THE FINAL PLAT OF BROOKSIDE ADDITION SUBDIVISION**

WHEREAS, the Muscatine County Board of Supervisors approved the preliminary and final plat of the Brookside Addition Subdivision on August 16, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Article III, Section 1.7 of the Muscatine County Subdivision Ordinance requires recording of the final plat within 90 days of its approval; and

WHEREAS, the final plat was not recorded within the 90-day window and an application for an extension of time was not made to the Board of Supervisors under the provisions of Section 1.7; and

WHEREAS, owing to an additional period of time being needed to file the final plat; and

WHEREAS, the attorney representing the owners has submitted a written request for an extension after the 90-day filing period has expired and has paid the $100 fee, as required by Section 1.7.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Muscatine County Board of Supervisors:

1. That Steve Kundel, attorney for the Brookside Addition owners, is granted an additional 90 days to file the final plat and otherwise comply with the subdivision ordinance.

Passed and approved this 9th day of November, 2026.

ATTEST:

/s/Tibe Vander Linden
Muscatine County Auditor

/s/Danny Chick, Chairperson
Muscatine County Board of Supervisors

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board approved the minutes of the November 2, 2026 regular meeting. Ayes: All.

Correspondence:

All Supervisors had conversations with citizens on the future discussion of trust services.
Kirchner had a discussion with a resident regarding a ditch issue on 180th Street.
Mather was contacted by a woman who needed assistance. Mather contacted Community Services.

Committee & Meeting Reports:

Kirchner attended Muscatine County Fair Board Annual meeting and regular Fair Board meeting on October 27, 2026.

On a motion by Sorensen, second by Sauer, the Board accepted October 2026 payroll claims. Ayes: All.

Human Resources Director Kayla Petersen and Administrative & Finance Director Kala Naber held discussion with the Board regarding possible action regarding revision to the unused vacation section of the Muscatine County Employee Handbook. The Board tabled the action item until a draft is prepared and presented of the overall proposed changes to the Employee Handbook.

The Board held discussion regarding Fiscal Year 27/28 county departments budget expectations. Sorensen stated the reality of the upcoming budget will be the change to a 2% cap based on revenue levy, which will be different formula than prior years. Sorensen stated if departments have non-levy revenue those expenses will not be capped. Information Services Director Bill Riley expressed his concerns regarding vendors who have stated potential 10-20% increases. Sorensen stated capital funding may need to be reviewed for certain budget items, such as computer server updates. Sorensen stated department heads should submit proposed budgets with 2% or less increase for review. Naber stated it will be difficult to budget for health insurance as renewal costs are not expected until February 2027. Naber stated she has requested health insurance options, however one option received was 16.5% higher than the current Wellmark plans. Naber stated ISAC is looking into options and high-deductible options with Wellmark have been requested.

On a motion by Chick, second by Sorensen, the Board moved regarding FY27/28 outside agency requests and their budget presentation to be submitted by letter. Ayes: All.

Information Services Director Bill Riley acknowledged and thanked the county maintenance department for their quick response over the past month on weekends due to server room issues. County Auditor Tibe Vander Linden announced the Canvass of Election will be held on November 10, 2026, at 10:00 A.M. in the Board room.

County Development Director Eric Furnas expressed his concerns with the need to tighten the budget expenses as the maintenance department may have short falls due to budget constraints. Furnas stated heating and air conditioning temperatures may need to be adjusted in the attempt to save money.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

ATTEST:

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| _____ | _____ |
| Tibe Vander Linden | Danny Chick, Chairperson |
| County Auditor | Board of Supervisors |