

**OFFICE OF  
PAGE COUNTY AUDITOR  
AND COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS**

112 E Main St Clarinda, Iowa 51632

712-542-3219 Fax 712-542-5019

**MELISSA WELLHAUSEN**

Anne Iversen, Deputy Auditor

Bethany Murphy, Deputy Auditor

Kristin Wagoner, Deputy Auditor

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Board of Supervisor Minutes**

June 27, 2023

In response to Supervisor Holmes comments regarding the board of supervisor minutes, the following information is being provided to the public to clarify.

Attached is a memorandum from County Attorney Sonksen, dated May 19, 2023, which he prepared after consulting with the Attorney General's office. Sonksen references Attorney General Opinion 82-1-13, which he attached, and states "It is the opinion of my office that in reading the code sections noted above in conjunction with Attorney General Opinion 82-1-13, the text and format of the board of supervisor minutes are determined by the auditor for publication as required by statute." When the legislature drafted this part of the Code of Iowa they chose to assign this duty to the county auditor and not the board of supervisors or someone of the board's choosing. It provides checks and balances that make sure the minutes are objective.

Iowa Code sections 349.16 and 349.18 provide further clarification on the publishing requirements of board of supervisor proceedings. As shown in 349.18(3)(a), the county auditor shall furnish a copy of the proceedings to be published, within one week following the adjournment of the board.

In addition to County Attorney Sonksen's opinion, I have sought the advice of legal counsel through the Iowa State Association of Counties. They again referenced the Iowa Code sections stated above and are of the opinion that the minutes must be published, even if they have not been finalized in the necessary time frame. After repeated conversations with the County Attorney, I feel that I am upholding my duties as required by the Code of Iowa regarding the minutes. I am highly concerned that certain members of the board of supervisors would ask me not to fulfill my statutory duty in an effort to hide information from the public. I have had many constituents approach me recently and thank me for the transparency in the minutes.

As the Page County Auditor and Commissioner of Elections for over twelve years, I have always taken pride in Page County and the duties of my office, which are very diversified. The board of supervisor minutes not only create transparency in county government, but are a great reference in the future. My office has led the way in digitizing historic records, including board of supervisor minutes, to make these available to the public.

Melissa Wellhausen  
Page County Auditor &  
Commissioner of Elections