

**PUBLIC HEARING – COUNTY DITCH #4
REDETERMINATION OF BENEFITS
September 12, 2017**

The Big Stone County Board of Commissioners met in the courtroom at the Courthouse at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, September 12, 2017 for the public hearing for the Redetermination of Benefits for County Ditch #4. Chairman Backer called the hearing to order with Commissioners Berning, Olson and Sandberg present. Commissioner Athey was absent. Also present were John Boots, Diane and Bob Henriksen, Curt Arndt, Cal Gunnink, Ditch Viewers John Cunningham, Mark Dietz and Eldon Knutson, Ditch Attorney Maury Noonan, County Engineer Todd Larson, Maintenance Supervisor Darwin Karsky, County Auditor Michelle Knutson, and Deputy Auditor Holly Wellendorf. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Attorney Noonan reviewed the purpose of the meeting. He stated that the viewers would present their report and there would be an opportunity to ask questions.

Auditor Knutson reported that the notice was mailed, posted and published as required.

Viewer Cunningham provided history on the ditch, explained their process for determining benefits/damages and reported that additional acres have been added. In addition, a 16.5-foot buffer will now be established along the ditch.

Chairman Backer asked for public comments. Mr. Gunnink stated that he previously met with the viewers and expressed his concerns and questions regarding the benefits attributed to his property. Mr. Gunnink questioned whether his property in fact receives the benefits that the viewers attributed to his land, and that, in his opinion, the amount of benefits is incorrect because the water flows through a wetland and natural waterway to an outlet. The viewers addressed Mr. Gunnink's questions and concerns regarding his property. The viewers explained the process they used to determine benefits and damages for Mr. Gunnink's property and specifically noted that it was necessary to include the impacts from the bluff on the end of the ditch within their determination of benefits for his property. The viewers agreed that the benefits attributed to Mr. Gunnink's property were proper. Mr. Boots asked for clarification on who has access to the established buffers. Auditor Knutson responded that buffers allow the county access for maintenance on the ditch. Mr. Henriksen asked if the purchase of the land for the buffer will be filed in the Records Office. This process is something the board will be considering.

Mr. Noonan reviewed the approval criteria for the board's consideration. Motion by Berning, seconded by Olson and carried to approve the Findings of Fact and Order approving the Redetermination of Benefits.

Chairman Backer declared the hearing adjourned at 1:20 PM.

Jay Backer, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Michelle Knutson, Auditor