



# THE LENOX TIME TABLE



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## County engineer resigns

Justin Savage, Taylor County Engineer, turned in his resignation to the Taylor County Board of Supervisors on March 7. Savage is taking a position as engineer for Decatur County.

## Audit report released

## For Lenox Municipal Utilities

Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn & Co., P.C., CPAs have released an audit report on Lenox Municipal Utilities.

The auditors reported that Electric Fund revenues (including non-operating) totaled \$2,187,900 for the year ended December 31, 2023, a 3.0% increase from 2022. The revenues included \$2,023,600 in current use charges, \$41,300 in miscellaneous and rentals, and \$123,000 in investment income.

Electric Fund expenses totaled \$1,463,700, a 19.5% decrease from the prior year, and included \$815,300 for plant and distribution, \$437,600 for support services, and \$210,800 for depreciation and other expenses.

The auditors also reported that Water Fund revenues (including non-operating) totaled \$1,678,800 for the year ended December 31, 2023, a 51.8% increase from 2022. The revenues included \$1,163,900 current use charges, \$422,900 in grant proceeds, \$32,900 in investment income, and \$59,100 of other revenues.

Water Fund expenses for the

year totaled \$1,011,100, a 4.0% increase from the prior year, and included \$612,700 for plant and distribution, \$213,500 for support services, \$160,500 for depreciation and other expenses, and \$24,400 for interest costs.

The auditors also reported that Communication Fund revenues (including non-operating) totaled \$804,000 for the year ended December 31, 2023, an 8.6% increase from 2022. The revenues included \$801,300 of current use charges, \$700 in miscellaneous and rentals, and \$2,000 in interest income.

Communication Fund expenses for the year totaled \$731,600, a 5.7% increase from the prior year, and included \$268,000 for plant expense, \$365,200 for support services, \$82,100 for depreciation and other expenses, and \$16,300 for interest costs.

A copy of the audit report will soon be available for review in the office of the Auditor of State and the Utility office.

## Taylor County digitizes files

Taylor County has now converted many of their paper files to digital files, making it easier for those wanting to research real estate records or track family history.

Judy Henry, Taylor County Auditor, said when they got the COVID money, they looked into converting paper files to digital files. Taylor County is one of the few counties in Iowa that had not done that. Pam Wilmarth, supervisor at the time, talked to each department to see what records they would like to have digitized. Offices wanting to digitize files were the auditor's office for supervisor minutes, assessor's office for the green cards with the property's history, and Iowa Land Records deeds before 2004 for the recorder's office.

Two companies came in to bid on the project. ARCASearch provided a much better quality image. They signed up and got on their waiting list. They

came in April 2023 and began scanning files in the basement of the courthouse. They finished around July 1.

Henry said people will be able to go in and type in a name and the ARCASearch will give them all documents with that name on it. "This is going to be a real advantage for people doing family research," said Henry. "Across the nation, they can't come back to Bedford, Iowa, and look through the books. This will allow public to look at those deeds."

The cost for the recorder's office was \$56,000 and the total was about \$65,000. The ARPA money was used because it would be a benefit to the community.

The public can access these records by going to the county website at [taylorcounty.iowa.gov](http://taylorcounty.iowa.gov) and click on the ARCASearch link.

The county will be switching to Beacon for looking up real estate records. Currently, the

county is using Midland for GIS. The cost is also lower than Midland. The initial setup fee was \$25,000 and the rest of the year added an additional \$5,000 for a total of \$30,000 for the first year. The second and third year will be \$22,000. The first year was paid through the ARPA funds and the rest will be paid from the IT department. The new system will be popular with realtors and appraisals. Through Beacon, it will have aerial maps with an eagle's view from the street level. People can search to see where their tax dollars are being spent, look up legal descriptions on properties, property sketches and photos. Realtors and banks will be able to figure taxes at loan closings as the program has a tax calculator. It will also have CSR ratings for soil from the USDA.

"This will have so much to it," said Henry.

It can also be accessed on a link through the county's website.

## New truck, new pool rates approved by Lenox City Council

Lenox City Council approved the purchase of a new truck, set new pool rates, and reviewed the budget for next year at their March 11 meeting.

Allison Kitzman, city administrator, presented a bid from Karl Chevrolet for a 2024 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 HD, 4 WD, double cab, work truck. Bid came in at \$47,076.80. They took out the conversion package and the safety package and added the snow plow package which adds a light on top. Final bid was \$45,141.80. The truck won't be available July if it gets ordered right away. The council approved the bid. The truck will be used for the roads department.

The council approved a golf cart agreement. The cost will be \$950 per cart per season. Total cost for 12 carts will be \$11,400. The carts will be delivered April 1.

The council reviewed an increase in pool rates. Kitzman said she met with the park and rec board. Suggested new price is \$90 for single pool pass; \$150 for family pool pass; \$50/child for public swimming lessons; \$65 per 30 minutes for private swimming lessons. Rental of the pool for private pool parties will be based on the number of people. Those rates are: 1-25 people, \$100/hour; 26-50 people, \$125/hour; 51-75 people, \$150/hour; 76-100 people, \$175/hour; 101 and over, \$200/hour. Baby pool is \$25 additional per hour. There is a maximum of two hours for pool parties. The council approved the new rates.

Kitzman reviewed the budget for fiscal year 2025. The state legislature made changes to the budget, limiting the amount that can be levied by cities and counties. The change combines the general fund and emergency levy into a combined general

fund levy. Their goal is to bring all levies back under or to the \$8.10 maximum levy rate. They can no longer tax for the library and community center. This will result in revenue reductions for most cities. If a city does not grow more than 2.99%, they will not be impacted. Any percentage above 2.99% will become their new maximum. Any city that grows more than six percent will have a growth reduction of three percent. "The more a city grows, the more you get punished," said Kitzman. "Our growth was pretty off the charts."

The current year valuation was \$40,580,385; the new FY 25 valuation is \$47,580,620, an 17.25% increase. The current levy rate is \$8.77500. The growth limit reduced it to 3% with a new levy rate of \$8.51.944 for 2025 year. The amount of revenue decreased by \$12,160. In the current year, the city levied \$1.3500 for civic for a total of \$5,479, \$2,700 for the library for a total of \$10,957, and \$2,700 for emergency for a total of \$10,957. They can no longer levy for that.

"It may not seem like much, but that's a lot in the general fund," said Kitzman.

The debt collected matches the amount of the payment to the bank.

The city's total tax levy for FY 2025 will be \$14.108813. A new rule this year requires the county auditor to mail out notices to all property owners detailing levies for each taxing entity.

Kitzman reviewed the budget schedule. On April 8 at 5:00 p.m., they will hold a special meeting for property tax maximum levy. At 5:30 p.m. during the regular council meeting, they will set a date for a public hearing to adopt the budget for April 22. A hearing on budget adoption will be held April 22. The budget will

## Lenox All-Conference lists for their efforts this season

By Tyler Peterson

Junior Sadie Cox, junior Zoey Reed, senior Kaitlyn Van Gelder, junior Gabe Funk, and senior Carter Reed all earned themselves a spot on All-Conference lists for their efforts this season in Pride of Iowa Conference play.

Sadie also was named Class 1A Third Team All-State; she had a season to remember, shooting nearly 50% from the floor, averaging over 19 points and 15 boards per game, notching 18 double-double, one triple dou-

ble, in addition to setting school records in points in a single game with 35, and scoring her 1000th point! Cox led the Tigers in points, rebounds, and blocks this season and was top three in the Pride of Iowa as well. Sadie proved she belonged all season as one of the top five players in the conference. It is worth noting that two POI teams were ranked in the top ten in the state and one (MstM) made the state tournament.

Zoey landed herself a well deserved spot on the All-POI

Second Team. Reed averaged over 13 points, five boards, three dimes, and two steals a game for the Tigers. Reed was on every team's scouting report this season, and in the POI proved she was one of the top ten players.

Kaitlyn was named by the POI coaches to the Honorable Mention list this season. The senior shot over 50% from the floor this season, seven points, four rebounds, and a pair of steals per game.

Gabe was named unanimous

## Lenox School Board fills vacancy

Lenox School Board met on Wednesday, March 13 to fill a vacancy after Jamie Horton submitted her resignation at the February meeting.

The board advertised for interested individuals to send in a letter to the school board secretary with answers to the following questions: 1) Why are you interested

in serving on the board? 2) How will your past and current experiences contribute to the Board's work?

The board received five letters and voted to have Josias Pacheco fill the vacancy. He will be sworn in at their next meeting on Wednesday, March 20. His term will expire in November of 2025.

## Lenox Library Bake Sale

The Lenox Public Library will hold its annual bake sale on Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 A.M. to noon. Buy, Bake or Donate! All proceeds will go to the children's Summer Reading Program. You may bring your donated baked goods to the library on Friday or Saturday. Call 641-333-4411 for more information. Free will donation.

## Lenox Sorority Egg Hunt

Saturday March 30th, 2024  
10:00am  
LENOX COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Come celebrate with the  
Bunny and Chick.

Grand Prize for all age groups.

**Lenox Sorority**

## LMU votes to drop cable TV

Lenox Municipal Utilities Board of Trustees voted to disband cable TV in Lenox at their March 14 meeting. The board also designated their economic dollars, and reviewed the audit report.

Jeff Tull, LMU manager, said they have been discussing the cable TV system for several months. Programming costs continue to increase and if they continue to provide cable TV, they will be required to change to a different system at a cost of more than \$60,000. The board has to decide on whether to invest more money into TV or discontinue offering it to the citizens of Lenox.

Tull said they have been in contact with all the programmers and are required to give at least a month's notice to all of them. The Minerva contract expires

May 19 and they will discontinue running it in November. Current programming costs are \$247,000 annually. Farmers Mutual Telephone Company can provide Innovative Cable TV system and requires an investment by LMU of more than \$60,000 plus some equipment changes which would add to their debt. Without TV, communications will still have about \$180,000 in expenses to run internet and telephone and have income from those subscribers.

"I hate to get rid of it, but I don't want to spend a bunch more money and get deeper in debt," said Tull. "It's a double edge sword."

"My gut feeling is it should be gone, my heart feeling is I really hate to get rid of it," said Wayne Haidisiak. He added that

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