

December 17, 2025, Minutes
Emergency Management Commission Budget Workshop

Call to Order

The budget workshop for the Story County Emergency Management Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Linda Murken.

Attendance:

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Name</u>
BOS	Linda Murken	Ames	John Haila
Cambridge	Bobby Chubbic	Collins	
Colo	Jeff Brinkman	Gilbert	Jon Popp
Huxley	Dave Kuhn	Kelley	Jackie Sapp
Maxwell	Dale Higgins	McCallsburg	Bill Lytle
Nevada		Roland	Kurtis Bower
Sheldahl		Slater	
Story City	Mike Jensen	Zearing	Marlin Beard/Sandy Ehrig
Sheriff		ISU	
SCEMA	Melissa Spencer	SCEMA	Josh Harding
Guest		Guest	

Consent Agenda

Approval of December Tentative Agenda
Motion by Haila, 2nd by Jensen to approve the Consent Agenda MCU

Old Business

None

New Business

Budgetary Uncertainties

Spencer started the presentation by discussing budgetary uncertainties and the potential impacts on the FY26 & FY27 budgets. The budgets presented in the workshop reflect the worst-case scenario and can be adjusted at the January public hearing. We are approving what the Commission would like published. The budget needs to be published by January 8th, which means the forms need to be to the paper before the end of December.

The final costs of the EOC AV system remain uncertain, and the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) that are part of the FY26 and FY27 budgets are in litigation at the federal level. The two lawsuits have to do with the grant performance period and allocations in relation to blue and red states. Iowa Homeland Security has been keeping coordinators apprised as they receive information.

There were concerns expressed about the length of time it is taking for the Engineer to provide the bid information. Spencer explained that this project is being worked on alongside Story County Facilities Management to make sure the construction and AV systems line up. The Engineer had started working on the construction bid, but has since been redirected to complete the AV bid first. The process will follow the County bid requirements since it is a significant project. It also made sense to work with the Engineering firm the County uses for construction-related projects to make the process as seamless as possible.

There was a question posed about purchasing the system components needed from retail sources. Harding explained it would not be advisable, as this is a system and not just TVs connected. Communications is the most important component of an EOC, and having a professional vendor develop and install the AV system is key to optimal functionality.

There were questions about how Spencer came up with the estimated \$200,000 cost for the system and additional soft costs. Spencer explained that the dollar figure comes from an estimate, from one vendor, so grant funding could be applied for. The dollar figure was based on the cost when the Mosaic building was still an option. This was the best estimate to start with, so the budget does not fall short when the project starts. Until the bid is provided by the Engineer and put out for vendors, Spencer has no idea what the final cost will be.

Fund Balance Sheet

Spencer reviewed the fund balance sheet components and how the figure correlates to the expenses, revenue, and designated reserves. The Commission still finds the information hard to follow and would like staff to consider alternate budget presentation forms. Spencer will look into different forms for the next budget year.

FY26 Budget Re-estimation

The FY26 budget re-estimation shows savings of \$9,919 due expense savings for the radio systems from the 30% contribution from the 9-1-1 Board, decreased fuel costs, and also from unanticipated revenue of \$2,738, which comes from fuel tax reimbursement, reimbursement for a class Harding attended and grant funding from Story County Public Health for the Health Alert Network radio frequencies programmed into the banked radios. The grant is not guaranteed year to year, so the revenue is not budgeted for. With the re-estimated savings from FY26 and savings from previous years, there is a total of \$36,434 in undesignated savings.

The agency has received a grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority for \$80,700 for the portable solar panel project that was not budgeted for. This is a dollar-for-dollar reimbursement from the State as the project progresses. We anticipate the project will be completed prior to the end of FY26.

As mentioned before, it is uncertain if the agency will see the \$39,000 from the EMPG grant during the FY26 budget. This leaves a shortfall in the revenue and ability to cover expenses. The Commission can use the \$36,434 of undesignated savings and \$2,656 from the EOC project to cover the revenue shortfall. There is always a chance the funds could come retroactively, but this will not be known before the budget publication date. If the funding comes, the Commission can determine how they would like to use the funds at a future meeting.

There will be an FY26 budget amendment to bring \$228,000 from the designated reserve for the EOC project. This will leave \$100,000 in the EOC project reserve going into the FY27 budget. Once the AV costs are known, there can be further discussion by the Commission on how they would like to use any cost savings from the designated reserve.

FY27 Proposed Budget

EMPG funds are uncertain, as discussed earlier. The proposed budget reflects no EMPG funds for FY27. Like the FY26 funds, there is a possibility they could be provided retroactively. The status of the funds won't be known until the lawsuits are settled. To ensure there is no shortfall with revenue, the EMPG funds won't be used to offset the request from the County Supplemental Fund. EMPG funds make up 11% of our annual budget.

There is an overall increase of \$27,752 in operational increases, which includes 3% COLA and anniversary steps. Education and training have been increased as Harding has the opportunity to take the Certified Public Manager course provided by Drake University and to attend the International Certified Emergency Management Conference. There is a 10% increase for employer health insurance and also truck and office contents insurance. There is a \$2,000 increase in expenses from July to October that must be covered until taxes come in.

Without EMPG and with the operational expenses reflected, the Commission's request from the County Supplemental will be \$395,311. The direction from the Commission in the past was to use the EMPG funding to offset the funding request. Overall, from FY25 to the proposed FY27 budget, operations have increased 4-6% annually. The increase from FY26-FY27 operationally is a 5% increase.

There was a question about the Disaster Fund and why that is no longer reflected. Spencer advised that the Commission had directed that the disaster funds be moved to the EOC project fund during previous budget discussions. Commission members expressed concern that they did not provide direction to move all the funds to the EOC project and not keep money in the disaster fund. Spencer will review past meeting minutes and send out what was discussed previously.

The Commission felt the 10% insurance increase was too much and directed Spencer to go back to the insurance providers and determine if this was an appropriate number. The Commission directed Spencer to remove the conference cost from the education and training line and reduce the fuel costs to \$3.00 per gallon instead of \$3.75. The Commission directed Spencer to remove the \$10,000 of funding for the future replacement of the trucks. Spencer will amend the proposed budget and send it out to the full Commission as soon as it is completed.

There was a discussion in relation to the drawdown from the County Supplemental if EMPG funding should be awarded retroactively. The Deputy Auditor Lisa Markley informed Murken that they would simply not draw down the funding from the Supplemental as budgeted for. Spencer will also follow up with Markley when they meet to complete the DOM budget forms.

Other

Reminder that the January meeting will be the public hearing for the budget and budget amendment. For your vote to count, an elected official needs to attend the meeting. The Mayors

would like to have dinner starting at 6:30 PM. Haila will let Spencer know what is available from their fund for dinner.

Next Meeting:

January 21, 2026, Budget Public Hearing-Elected Officials

Motion by Haila, 2nd by Bower to adjourn the meeting. MCU Meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM

DRAFT