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## Interim EMA director working on certifications

Jan 13, 2021

E-mail, snail mail and bills have been piling up for Piatt County's Emergency Management Agency since director Mike Holmes went on sick leave Sept. 30. Backlogged work prompted the Piatt County board to appoint sheriff David Hunt as interim EMA director in November.

Hunt told the county board EMA committee on Dec. 5 that he is focused on: A) keeping the personal protective equipment pipeline running to county agencies; and B) keeping up with accreditations for the agency, some of which come due in the first quarter of the year.

"I'm still working on the paperwork for the accreditation. We received an extension from Jan. 15 to March 15," said Hunt about the department's certification from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. "I was very appreciative of that," he added.

Hunt also told the committee he has also been in contact with the University of Indiana to compile the county's hazard mitigation plan.

"This is something that is common for other counties to do, to hire out through a grant process to get the hazard mitigation plan completed," he said.

Hunt said the county has worked in the past with the university, which has some of the county's information already on file and may be willing to wait on payment until a grant is received. The county's portion of payment can be in-kind work it does during the application process, likely negating the need for a cash outlay.

A quarterly report to the state is also due Jan. 31.

"This is the time of year when everything is coming due," said Hunt.

Also time-sensitive are claims for public assistance dollars, which can recover up to 80 percent of COVID-related costs for government entities. That also needs to be filed by the

end of January.

Holmes is still employed by the county, but is currently off duty under the Family and Medical Leave Act. He is the lone staff member dedicated to EMA, except for Hunt as interim director.

The committee held an executive session to discuss a personnel issue at their meeting, but no action was taken.

## **Bills**

Committee members were confused about some of the bills presented to them – possibly due to the lack of communication with Holmes – but paid four vendors anyway.

One was a bill for \$74.01 to County Market that dated back to March. It included items ranging from Clorox and cleaning supplies to coffee and two donuts.

Ray Spencer felt some of the charges could be personal and not directly EMA-related, but thought the vendor should probably be paid.

“I think it’s the right thing to do at this point,” agreed State’s Attorney Sarah Perry.

A phone bill for \$210.65 to FirstNet was also paid, which included charges for three phones for the EMA department.

Committee Chairman Shannon Carroll said getting questions answered regarding bills has proved difficult, saying queries to Holmes were being directed to his attorney.

Hunt noted that, without more information, “we don’t know it (the charge account) was not used for county business.”

When asked how long he would be willing to serve as interim director, the sheriff replied, “I’ll do it until I can’t.”