

**ESS Coordination Meeting
Special Web Conference Meeting
May 16, 2024**

Attendance

Committee Members

Lisa Kent, Wapello County Recorder	Julie Haggerty, Polk County Recorder
Jolynn Goodchild, Plymouth County Recorder	Denise Baker, Wright County Recorder
Lindsay Laufersweiler, Webster County Recorder	Melissa Bahnsen, Cedar County Recorder
Natalie Steffener, Des Moines County Recorder	Jamie Stargell, Adams County Recorder
Dillon Malone, Iowa Title Guaranty	
Eric Sloan, IT Boone County	David Erickson, Dentons Davis Brown

Other Participants

Stacie Herridge, Story County Recorder	Erin Canfield, Boone County Recorder
Travis Case, Grundy County Recorder	Sandie Smith, Black Hawk County Recorder
ReNae Arnold, Dallas County Recorder	Nancy Booten, Lee County Recorder
Ann Ditsworth, Dickinson County Recorder	Jan Gemar, ILTA

Lisa Long, Iowa Land Records	Phil Dunshee, Iowa Land Records
Census Lo-liyong, Iowa Land Records	Kristen Delaney-Cole, Iowa Land Records
Samantha McMahon, Iowa Land Record	

Welcome

A meeting of the ESS Coordinating Committee was held via web conference.

February Meeting Summary

The meeting summary from February 15, 2024, was reviewed. Denise Baker made a motion to approve the meeting summary with a minor correction. Melissa Bahnsen seconded, and the motion was approved.

April Meeting Summary

The meeting summary from April 10, 2024, was reviewed. Melissa Bahnsen made a motion to approve the meeting summary with a minor correction. Lindsay Laufersweiler seconded, and the motion was approved.

Financial Reports

ESS 2024 First Quarter Reports

The Committee reviewed the financial reports for the first quarter of 2024. The Profit & Loss (P&L) statement for the quarter showed budgeted income of \$366,687.80 against expenses of \$309,748.98. ESS revolving income for the quarter stood at \$7,043,138.11, and revolving expenses amounted to \$7,052,461.94. The total net income, inclusive of all expenses, amounted to \$19,755.09.

The Balance Sheet indicated total assets and liabilities at \$2,411,959.07, with \$1,119,978.14 specifically held within the Bankers Trust Settlement account. It was noted that, given the use of accrual-based accounting, the balance sheet figures may appear higher than the actual bank account balance.

A request was made to approve the first Quarter Reports. Natalie Steffener made a motion to approve the financial. Dillon Malone seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Accounts Review

A memo was presented outlining the feasibility of placing funds controlled by ESS in an interest-bearing account. It was acknowledged that while generating interest income could be beneficial, ensuring robust cash flow for timely payments to counties remains a priority. The Project Manager indicated that investment and cashflow management options will continue to be explored, and an update will be provided later in 2024.

Payment Validation and Security Measures

A discussion was held on the security measures in place for different user accounts when they submit payments. Current payment workflows were reviewed, and it was noted that in some cases distributions of customer payments can be delayed if payment processes fail. However, counties are always fully paid for recording services. The ESS team will review distribution policies and procedures and report back to the Committee at a future meeting.

Introduction of Accounting Coordinator

The Committee was introduced to Samantha McMahon, Accounting Coordinator. Samantha started work on April 22, 2024.

2023 Audit Update

The ESS Committee received an update on the recent audit. The auditors found no issues and confirmed that the ESS financial reports reflect our current financial status and that proper controls are effectively implemented. The comprehensive audit report is expected in early August.

April E-Submission Trends

E-submission trends for April 2024 highlight an uptick in activity compared to 2023. The real estate market and recording activity is entering a period of peak activity and will be closely monitored.

Budget Amendment and Action Items

The Committee was informed that there were two action items associated with a proposed budget amendment. The Committee chose to take up the action items first.

Assignment of Credits for E-Submission

A recommendation was made to increase the assignment of credits for E-submission from \$115,000.00 to \$130,000.00. Lindsay Laufersweiler motioned to approve the increase, which was seconded by Melissa Bahnsen. The motion was approved.

ILR Staff Hours Adjustment

A request was presented to approve the increase of the Communication Coordinator's hours from 25 to 29 per week. Lindsay Laufersweiler moved to approve the increase. The motion was seconded by Natalie Steffener and it was approved.

CY 2024 Budget Amendment

The Project Manager provided a memorandum describing proposed amendments to the 2024 project budget. These adjustments reflect a re-examination of expenses and revenue based on new projections and the actual outcomes experienced, particularly for the months of March and April.

The budget amendments also included the approved increase in E-Submission credits and additional resources for the Communication Coordinator position. Projected net income was adjusted from \$16,474.78 to \$7459.39

A motion was made by Dillon Malone to approve the CY 2024 budget amendment as presented. Lindsay Laufersweiler seconded, and the motion was approved.

ESS Future Financial Planning

The Committee received a summary of future options for funding the ILR system. Updating and maintaining the ILR application would require significant investment including expanding the development team. The fee alternatives being explored for ILR would require an increase in fees equivalent to \$5 per document. The total budget would be projected to amount to \$2.4 million if it came to fruition. More details are expected to be available at the ESS Meeting on 30th May 2024.

Contracts and Agreements

Local Service Provider Maintenance Template

A request for approval was made to amend the local service provider maintenance agreement with a proposed change to the deadline for implementing the new county upload API to March 31, 2025. An exception was made for one service provider (Fidlar), who requested an extension to June 30, 2025. A motion was made by Julie Haggerty to approve the local service provider maintenance template as presented. Denise Baker seconded, and the motion was approved.

Point-Of-Sale

The Project Manager provided a brief update on the implementation of the new point of sale system. The project will soon be implemented. However, progress was delayed because of a missing report that is required for integration with the accounting system. This report is still pending. Once this issue is resolved, the implementation is expected to proceed swiftly.

ILR Cloud Migration

The migration to LightEdge managed services is complete, and the system is fully operational. The ILR technical team and LightEdge are currently fine-tuning the setup. It was noted that there is an issue with LightEdge's billing system, which has resulted in an invoice that exceeds the agreed amount in the service order. LightEdge has acknowledged the error and promised to issue a credit memo to correct the billing discrepancy, though this has not been finalized yet. Despite this billing issue, the cloud migration is functioning as expected, and the team is satisfied with the results.

Search Application

The Project Manager provided an update on upcoming changes to the search application. Users will that the full legal description will appear in the search results, i.e., the data will no longer be truncated. If there are more locations than can fit in the allotted space, the display will indicate "and 2 more" or a similar message, prompting users to check the index details for complete information.

The software development team is also working on changes to label abbreviations, sometimes to single letters, to display more information within the available space.

Beacon Connection

A discussion was held regarding the Beacon connection to the ILR website. Users in Beacon counties will now see a direct notice indicating that previously used links no longer function as before. Discussions are underway with auditors' affiliates and Beacon regarding the possibility of defining a consistent parcel identification number across counties. Feedback from the auditors' working group and Beacon is pending, and further updates will be provided as progress is made.

Recorder E-Submission Interface

The Project Manager reported on a pending update to the recorder E-Submission interface. This update will introduce a new search feature that allows county recorder users to specify a date range, enabling them to view all activity within that period. This enhancement has been requested by many recorders and is close to being moved to production.

Blockchain

The Project Manager addressed questions regarding the inclusion of blockchain technology in the modernization stakeholder survey. The purpose of including blockchain in the survey was to assess the level of interest among stakeholders. Iowa Land Records has been actively involved in discussions with the Property Records Industry Association (PRIA) regarding blockchain. The Project Manager emphasized that if blockchain technology were to be implemented, it ideally would be managed by a public entity, with Iowa Land Records being the most suitable organization for this role. It was noted that all concepts in the “abstract” of modernization ideas were represented in the survey.

Next meeting

The meeting was adjourned. The next regular meeting will be May 30, 2024.