



STUTSMAN COUNTY



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January 21, 2025

House Political Subdivisions Committee
Donald W. Longmuir, Chairman
Testimony In Opposition of HB 1384

Chairman Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee, the Stutsman County Commission opposes HB 1384 requiring full-time county auditors to be elected officials.

Stutsman County has been a home-rule county since August 1, 2000. The home rule charter that was approved by majority vote of the public dictates that the Auditor, among other offices, be filled by appointment by the Board of County Commissioners.

The reason for changing from an elected auditor position to an appointed position was to ensure the person holding the position had a background in finance and was not just a winner of a popularity contest. With the county handling tens of millions of dollars in funds from multiple sources, it's essential the person holding the position be knowledgeable of the rules for each fund, all state and federal law restrictions, and finance in general.

For Stutsman County, having the auditor as an appointed position has allowed the County Commission to interview individuals for the position and select an individual that is best suited for that very demanding position.

Anyone can run for an elected auditor position, regardless of whether they possess any financial knowledge whatsoever. If that individual is elected, they become the auditor, and the County Commission can do nothing to resolve the issue. This type of mindset is not in the best interest of efficient county government and in no way benefits the public who we serve.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jerry Bergquist, Chairman
Stutsman County Commission
jlbergquist@stutsmancounty.gov

County Commissioners

Jerry Bergquist – Jamestown
Chad Wolsky – Jamestown
Levi Taylor – Ypsilanti
Michael Hansen – Montpelier
Amanda Hastings – Jamestown

County Officials

Jessica Alonge – Auditor/COO
Maureen Pederson – Treasurer/Recorder
Tyler Perleberg – Tax Director
Fritz Fremgen – States Attorney
Chad Kaiser – Sheriff

Josh Smaage – Dir. Of Information Technology
Shannon Davis – Human Resource Director
Mandi Freije – Human Service Zone Director
Chad Jackson – Jail Administrator
Jessica Moser – 911/Emergency Manager

David Bratton – Veterans Service Officer
Jesse Christianson – Int. Road Superintendent
Karl Bergh – Park Superintendent
Ashley Kjellberg – Extension Agent
Brenda Jarski-Weber – Extension Agent