

**CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
August 27, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners was called to order in the Commissioners Room by Vice Chairperson Pete Redmond at 9:30 a.m.

Roll called and a quorum present.

Present: Commissioners Pete Redmond, Bruce Gauthier, Cal Gouine, Tony Matelski, John Wallace, and Sue Allor

Absent: Commissioner Linda Socha

Commissioner Wallace gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Commissioner Allor, seconded by Commissioner Gauthier to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with 6 yes, 0 no and 1 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Mary Ann Stillwell addressed the Board representing retired former MERS employees. Ms. Stillwell stated that as a group, they are requesting a raise in their retirement compensation. She made claim that three years ago, raises in retirement benefits as promised had ceased. The retiree group is requesting this be addressed during current budget negotiations. Commissioner Redmond questioned how many retirees are in the group. Ms. Stillwell stated there are approximately 25 retirees. Commissioner Redmond suggested that the group draft a written request directed to the Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator.

Steph Jacobson, a resident of Inverness Township, addressed the Board regarding the Blue Ways Initiative grant money accepted by Cheboygan County, which was highlighted approximately one month ago in the Cheboygan Tribune. The Blue Ways Initiative grant was introduced through NEMCOG. Ms. Jacobson urged Commissioners to examine the NEMCOG philosophy on land and resource management, specifically regarding the Blue Ways Initiative. Jim Olson also addressed the Board regarding his support for the statements made by Ms. Jacobson, as well as his concern and research regarding the Blue Ways Initiative.

SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Mary Talaske, Director of the Cheboygan County Humane Society, presented an update on the shelter. She stated that Phase I of the shelter remodel plan has been completed and they are very happy with it. For Phase II, the Humane Society would like two separate dog kennel areas, one area for adoptable animals and one area for stray animals. Ms. Talaske stated that they are in need of a better air filtration system, as well as storage space, as they currently have none. Commissioner Redmond inquired as to whether or not the Humane Society is collecting donations for Phase II of the remodel at this time. Ms. Talaske clarified that they are currently collecting donations. Administrator Lawson added that Phase II is being considered in this next budget cycle and may preliminarily move forward into the construction phase in summer 2014.

Ms. Talaske mentioned the "Cop Drop" which is an upcoming fund raiser for the Humane Society to be held on Saturday, August 31. Commissioner Matelski, Sheriff Clarmont and Ms. Talaske plan to participate in this event and will be jumping out of a plane.

Commissioner Tony Matelski and his wife, Roberta Matelski, presented Ms. Talaske with a donation for the Cheboygan County Humane Society of \$10,000.

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Del Reynolds, Chairman of the Cheboygan County Airport Authority, presented an update on the airport. Mr. Reynolds stated that the earliest records for the airport are from 1940. In the 1990's, the City broke away from the airport making it the *Cheboygan County Airport*. The Airport Board meets six times per. The funding for the airport mainly comes from Cheboygan County. Assets of the airport are at approximately \$1.5 million. Straits Regional Ride is also housed at the Cheboygan County Airport. Mr. Reynolds stated that overall usage of airport services were down, but that the airport is doing reasonably well overall. Currently, the County allocation amount to the Airport is approximately \$60,000. Commissioner Matelski requested that all of the road signs need to be changed in order to read "Cheboygan County" Airport. Commissioner Allor questioned whether planes are charged landing fees at the Cheboygan County Airport. Mr. Reynolds clarified that it depends whether or not the flights landing are commercial or private; landing fees are charged to commercial flights.

Michael Roper, the Cheboygan County Road Commission Manager presented the 2012 Cheboygan County Road Commission Annual Report. Mr. Roper stated that currently the cash fund balance is approximately \$1.36 million. There are 38 individuals employed by the Road Commission. He stated that there are five township road millages which have proved to be very helpful in funding, updating and maintaining their local roads. As of the end of 2012, there was approximately \$2.375 million of debt on the CCRC building in Indian River. The Cheboygan County Road Commission is self-insured. It was estimated that the cost to bring primary and local roads up to good condition would require approximately \$40 million. Michigan ranks 50th per capita spending for roads in the nation. Commissioner Allor questioned Mr. Roper on the use of fracking brine on the roads, and how the Road Commission determines suppliers and procedures regarding brine. Mr. Roper stated that a bid is issued annually for brine, and the bid specs have been modified such that there is no allowance of frack brine for purchase. Commissioner Gauthier inquired about whether a distinction needs to be made about brine from traditional wells versus flow-black fluid from frack wells. Mr. Roper clarified that there is brine, and there is also by-product brine that comes from wells that are not fracked that pass DEQ regulation and which the Road Commission has been using for years. There is also frack well brine which the DEQ permitted for a period of time but have since changed specs to no longer allow its use. Commissioner Gauthier asked how MTF funds are calculated and distributed to the Road Commission and if the calculation is based on population and miles. Mr. Roper clarified that the funds are calculated using a complicated formula including such variables as population and mileage. Commissioner Gauthier questioned whether the townships that have road millages do their own road work. Mr. Roper state that they contract road work to be done with the Road Commission. Commissioner Gauthier asked Mr. Roper which solution for road funding he would like to see from the recent State Legislature proposals concerning an increase in gas tax. Mr. Roper said that as to the short term, he would like to see a few cents per gallon raised for the gas tax as it stands. Commissioner Wallace commended Michael Roper for his role and service in the Road Commission.

Ken Paquet, Chairman of the Cheboygan County Road Commission, also addressed the Board regarding the state of the Road Commission. Mr. Paquet stated that they have hired more temporary help to save on wages/fringes, especially in the winter for extra snow plowing help. The Commission has purchased a new road grader, and a few new mowers. They are doing some small projects at the township level (\$100,000 or less), and focusing more on maintaining roads that are already forged. Commissioner Matelski questioned legislation which restricts Road Commissions from completing projects over \$100,000. Mr. Roper confirmed that the Road Commission cannot work on projects that are over \$100,000 of federal dollars with their own staff; such projects would need to be contracted out. Commissioner Gouine inquired as to Road Commission enforcement in retrieving funds from logging trucks utilizing, and subsequently damaging, public roads. Mr. Paquette stated that it is difficult to pin point directly who is doing the damage. Mr. Roper stated that unless the trucks are over the weight capacity, there is no real repercussion that can take place.

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Honorable Probate Judge Robert Butts presented the 2012 Probate and 53rd Circuit Family Court Annual Report. The Byrne Grant for SAYPA was pulled this year due to sequestration. New Probate Court case filings are up 23%, the juvenile caseload is up 40%, child protection proceedings are up 50%, and adoption proceedings are up 39% over a five year average (2007-2012). Regarding collection rate, including money collected for restitution, fines and costs, this Court ranks higher than its regional and state partners at successfully collecting. The Juvenile Independent Court has had two successful graduates since its origination. If the case load increases for the Juvenile Independence Court, there would be other grant funding opportunities available. Commissioner Matelski inquired as to the monetary amount of the Byrne Grant. Judge Butts clarified that the grant was for \$100,000, but that the Court has already made budget adjustments to compensate for its loss in the proposed budget for the upcoming Fiscal Year. The Court is applying for another grant at this time. Commissioner Allor clarified with Judge Butts that it was indeed the SAYPA program that was affected by the sequestration of the Byrne Grant and that those programs are going to continue in the next Fiscal Year due to revisions and cuts that the Court has made. Judge Butts affirmed. Commissioner Gauthier inquired as to the amount of counseling the Court is going to be able to provide because they had to cut back to compensate for the SAYPA program. Judge Butts affirmed that it would continue, but would be significantly reduced. Judge Butts stated that the SAYPA program coordinators will come later in the year and give their separate report.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Lawson informed the board that the County Surveyor identified a possible encroachment on the neighboring property to the North of the County Building. There may be an upcoming property swap and a 10-foot drainage easement. Legal counsel will draft any necessary quit claim deeds and easements.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

CITIZENS COMMENTS – None

BOARD MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Steve Schnell, Community Development Director, presented the Home Improvement Loan Services Program Guidelines for discussion. There were some changes and clarifications made to the guidelines, including clarification of what constitutes “overcrowding” in a home, the ability to build additions in people’s homes, the ability to do interior improvements, or in limited cases – the ability to replace a residence. Additionally, some of the financial procedures for the housing program have been refined. Commissioner Allor asked if there are any stipulations in the Housing Program loan contracts/guidelines regarding a house having to be sold for more than its assessed value upon need of sale. Mr. Schnell stated that there are not restrictions on how the homes may be sold. Commissioner Gouine wanted to confirm that the last say in the sale of a home under contract would still be up to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Schnell affirmed. Commissioner Gauthier inquired as to the establishment of an Equal Opportunity Committee. Mr. Schnell stated that the Advocate does the first review and if there is not a satisfactory resolution then the Board of Commissioners may establish a committee that then handles the resolution in question. The committee can be appointed ad hoc as needed. Commissioner Gauthier requested that *sexual preference* be added to the list of non-discriminatory agents constituting equal opportunity. Mr. Schnell confirmed. Commissioner Redmond stated that the Home Improvement Loan Service Program Guidelines would come before the Board again for a vote after the necessary updates have been made.

Mr. Schnell then presented the Cheboygan County Master Plan for review and discussion. He stated that in late 2011, all of the Cheboygan County entities were made aware that the

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Cheboygan County Planning Commission was going to revise the Master Plan. The process began with some public input workshops. Since then, 39 public meetings have taken place. The Planning Commission does the planning, and there is a requirement by State law that the Board of Commissioners reviews the plan. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing after a 63-day waiting period has lapsed. At that point, the Planning Commission will adopt the finalized Master Plan. It is intended that the Master Plan would be reviewed on an annual basis. An Executive Summary of the Master Plan was prepared for the Board, which kept the land use map and pertinent information all in one document. The Zoning Plan was included to outline how the master plan would be objectively implemented, most generally in the form of zoning ordinance amendments. The Zoning Plan is required by State law. Mr. Schnell outlined several specific ordinance amendments and public input discussion highlights included in the Master Plan. He said there was a cumulative total of approximately 150 people in attendance at the public input meetings throughout the revision/planning process for the Master Plan. Commissioner Gauthier commented on how well the master plan was compiled, and asked when the Planning Commission would be revisiting the Master Plan for annual review. Mr. Schnell stated that it would generally be done in December. Commissioner Redmond expressed the concerns of Commissioner Socha in her absence. First, he stated that in regards to the Boy Scout camp area, referenced on Page 82 of the Master Plan, it should be rephrased to establish that the property was sold to Mullett Township for only \$1 so that they could do their improvements. Secondly, there should be correction of a terminology error referenced on Page 100 of the Master Plan wherein recycling should be listed as a surcharge, not a tax. Commissioner Gouine commented that Mullett Township is currently creating a new site layout and redoing bathrooms at the Boy Scout Camp area. Mr. Schnell also stated that a parallel project to the Master Plan is a Recreation Plan rewrite. There will be public input workshops opportunities for this as well. Commissioner Allor mentioned that there is a reference to “Cheboygan Hospital” on Page 112 of the Master Plan. Terminologies need to be corrected. Commissioner Redmond stated that Steve Schnell would make the appropriate modifications to the Master Plan, and then it will come back before the Board for review at the September 10th Finance/Business meeting.

CITIZENS COMMENT – None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT

Commissioner Matelski commented on the 457 MERS plan handout included with the last pay stub. Administrator Lawson stated there are three 457 plans available for employees to utilize.

Commissioner Redmond stated that an actuarial may need to be done in order to examine the compensation/benefits for current retirees.

Commissioner Wallace stated that the property dispute between Sherwood and Cheboygan County may only be a few “minutes” off on the survey of the property and the whole city could be off that much.

Commissioner Wallace commented on a lawsuit in Tuscarora Township. He stated that it was determined that on the former US-27 Highway, the right of ways are not 150-foot wide any longer, but that they are now 66-feet wide because they have reverted to the County. He said this will effect a lot of things all along the US-27 corridor.

Motion by Commissioner Matelski, seconded by Commissioner Wallace, to adjourn to the call of the Chair. Meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Amber Libby
Chief Deputy Clerk/Register of Deeds

Linda Socha
Chairperson