

**Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
June 27, 2017**

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

Roll called and a quorum present.

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Richard Sangster, Michael Newman, Cal Gouine, Roberta Matelski, John Wallace and Robert Bolinger.

**ABSENT:** None - District #1 vacant

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

**Motion** by Commissioner Gouine, seconded by Commissioner Bolinger to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with 6 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

County Clerk Karen Brewster opened the floor for nominations for the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioner Chairperson.

**Motion** by Commissioner Bolinger, seconded by Commissioner Newman, to nominate Commissioner John Wallace as Chairperson. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried with 6 yes, 0 no, and 0 absent.

Commissioner Wallace stated that there was no need to nominate a new Vice-Chairperson because Commissioner Sangster was doing a great job.

County Clerk Karen Brewster administered the oath of office to Commissioner John Wallace as Chairperson of the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Karen Johnson commented that she was a resident of Beaugrand Township for approximately 14 years and would be applying for the open seat on the Board of Commissioners and she wanted to introduce herself to the Board. Ms. Johnson stated that she was a Republican with extensive knowledge in the construction and planning industry. Her experience included being attentive to client needs, providing information and solutions to issues that may arise as well as working within a team environment. She believed that these assets would be in assistance to the Board of Commissioners in making decisions for Cheboygan County and made her the ideal candidate for the appointment.

Carl Muscott congratulated Commissioner Wallace for his newly elected position as Chairperson. He wanted to address the Canadian Geologic Repository issue who were

asking for a letter opposing the waste dump, which was nothing more than a 1,300 foot underground storage for low level radiation. Obviously, nuclear plants produce this type of waste that they have to deal with somehow. An article was passed around, which showed how much the marginalized support polling had been. In the article, they try to say that because of the United States County Association supporting them this meant that the whole United States was in support of it. He stated that the more pressing issue would be the Big Rock Nuclear Plant with seven (7) canisters stored in Charlevoix County. These were stored in transport canisters for approximately 20 years, which are low level nuclear radiation. Also stored right on the shore of Lake Michigan were 441 fuel rod assemblies. It was proposed initially to store those for a maximum of 10 years and it now has been two decades. Mr. Muscott commented on the demolition of the Gold Front Building. He stated that if they accept Mr. Lawson and the City of Cheboygan's premises that the more buildings that would be torn down, the more businesses they would attract. This was ridiculous. The more gaps that they get in retail down there, the fewer they would have. The City of Cheboygan was turning into a municipality owned entity and already owned 53 properties outside of the City, which was all non-productive as far as taxes go. Plus they were using Cheboygan County taxpayer's money to facilitate tearing the building down. He encouraged the Board to look at another alternative.

Susan Lux a resident of Wilmot Township stated that each year her neighbors throw a huge giant party. There was not a County noise ordinance in place, which needed to be implemented because this ties law enforcement from entering onto the property. Over one (1) year ago, Community Development was supposed to be looking into and implementing an ordinance for one (1) camper per residential property. She stated that there were approximately 500 campers who camped next to her property this past weekend. Her husband has cancer and was going through chemo. There was loud music, which sounded like bands playing right in her living room. This went on from Thursday night until Sunday evening. Day and night. Non-Stop. She stated that she could feel the bass in her chest and, unfortunately, she wasn't young anymore and didn't enjoy it. Also the noise from the party has disrupted the campers in the State Campground next door. There was an open invitation on social media with multiply web-sites. They had no security and no liquor license in place. It was a dangerous situation and out of control. Mrs. Lux stated that there needs to be a noise ordinance in place so that police officers could go in and do their job. This has to be taken care of and until it was, she would be attending every meeting. The citizens need to be protected and they need to make the community safe.

## **SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Veterans Director Richard Wiles presented the 2016 Veteran Services Annual Report. The Mission and Vision statement was read. During the first quarter of 2016 of the County Veterans Office underwent a personnel change with the previous Veteran Service Office resigning and the new assistant, Sara Cunningham, having only been there about a month. As the new Veterans Service Officer, he was hired and started in the position at the end of the month. VA Benefits had been granted to over 2,400

veterans in Cheboygan County. VA Benefits not only improve veteran's life, but also the local economy. Over \$19.4 million dollars in federal benefits in FY 2016 was awarded to Cheboygan County Veterans per Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures Fiscal Year 2016. Services provided were as follows: Service Connected Disability Compensation; Veteran Pension; Survivor Pension; Burial Benefits; Dependency and Indemnity Compensation; VA Health Care Enrollment; DAV Van ride coordination and other travel options; Military Records Request; Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment; Emergency Financial Assistance; Automotive and Special Adaptive Equipment; Dependent and Survivor Benefits; VA Ancillary Benefits; and Veteran Advocacy. The new staff hit the ground running with many accomplishments. 2017/2018 Goals were presented. There were a total of 1,159 walk-ins and appointments. The office also received 2,035 phone calls in 2016. The claims processed by type were as follows: 35 Compensation; 3 Pension; 7 Surviving Spouse; 68 Burials; 69 Records Requested; 47 Health Care and 59 Intent to File. Veterans expenditures in Cheboygan County, which were monies coming into the County through VA Benefits were \$19,485,000. The Veterans population for Cheboygan County was 10.8%. The VSO provides financial assistance for emergency needs to qualified veterans and their families for temporary assistance covering emergencies or hardships concerning shelter, food utilities, automobiles, and other circumstances. Assistance MUST be for an emergency and not for the relief of an inconvenience, want, or desire and cannot be used for long term or reoccurring problems. There were three assistance funds available through their office and each had specific eligibility requirements for the veteran or family member to qualify as follows: Veterans Assistance Fund (funded solely by donations), Soldiers Relief Fund (funded by Cheboygan County), and MI Veterans Trust Fund (funded by MVTF) (State). If approved, assistance was always paid directly to a vendor, not the applicant. Financial assistant accounts were paid from the Veterans Assistance Fund of \$2,441.41; Soldier Relief Fund of \$3,237.03 and MI Veterans Trust Fund of \$13,423.54. The county office regained control of the DAV Van operations in March 2016. At that time, veterans were only being transported to Mackinaw City or Gaylord. They worked with the VA in Saginaw to get permission to expand their travel limits and were now able to transport veterans not only to regular VA medical appointments, but also to any VA referred private medical appointment within the state. They were also able to use any prearranged high visibility, public location as a pickup and drop off spot to make it more convenient for the county veterans. Presently, included were Veteran Service buildings, Mackinaw CBOC, and Assisted Living facilities. Van rides were dependent on volunteer driver availability and weather. Average time for a volunteer driver to go through the approval process had been 1-2 months. The DAV van's annual miles totaled 14,875 with 62 veterans driven by 8 volunteer drivers. The Board of Commissioners and Sheriff Clarmont thanked the Veteran's office for their great service.

Sheriff Dale Clarmont presented the 2016 Cheboygan County Sheriff's Department Annual Report. The actual expenditures of the Department came in at \$151,869 (4%) below the requested budget of \$3.772 million. Sheriff Clarmont stated that the jail revenues were \$316,811, grant funding and donation revenues were \$215,898, and other assorted revenues produced the total revenue for the jail of \$534,046 in 2016.

The expenditures of the Department in 2016 were \$3.620 million with the 2016 actual cost totaling \$3.086 million. The average In-County inmate totaled 79 inmates per year. The Cheboygan County Work Crew Program totaled a net savings to taxpayers of \$19,411. He read a letter written to the editor from David Martin in support of the Work Crew Program and the benefits to the county. The total labor hours were 6,000. Sheriff Clarmont stated that the county work crew program was a win-win. Road Patrol statistics logged in calls totaling 11,328 and there were 513 arrests in 2016. Continued services from the Cheboygan County Sheriff Department Search and Rescue Team with local fire department of five (5) emergency response calls, which were 100% successful; project lifesaver program and a child missing program; continued effective School Liaison Officer Program for all Cheboygan County Schools; continued effective ORV/Marine/Snowmobile Patrols and continued Department K-9 Unit. There were a total of 70 calls responded to by the K-9 Unit. Sheriff Clarmont thanked Tony and Roberta Matelski who donated an additional \$12,000 for the canine unit. The Sheriff's Department does Community Education/Committee appointments; continuing collaborative effort with the Cheboygan County Council on Aging and have continued hours of the Wolverine substation on Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 P.M.. Jail medical program had continued success with reducing costs and prescriptions with District Health Department #4 and the jail was Narcotic Free. The Fiscal Year 2016 County Jail Medical Expenditures totaled \$41,793. Sheriff Clarmont reported that the Department was 100% compliance with MSTC Corrections Officers Training Certification; MDOC Administrative Rules and MCOLES training standards. Programs offered within the jail were Alcoholics Anonymous, Community Mental Health, Abuse Counseling and Prevention and Bible Study.

Wilmot Township Citizen Susan Lux commented that the Sheriff's Department was grossly under-budget. She thanked the Matelski's for their contributions to the K-9 Unit and stated that this makes a big difference in the schools and also in the community. The School Resource Officer, Ron Fenlon who opens his phone up to kids for "Text a Cop" was also under-paid. This was a huge task to take on and she thanked the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Clarmont stated that Officer Fenlon was 100% committed. Also, Mrs. Lux stated that the work crew project was brilliant.

Sheriff Clarmont commented that he talked with Mrs. Lux and he recommended she come before the Board. The number one issue that they have with parties was there was no County noise ordinance and because of that, it ties their hands. This was only one of several throughout the County that had started to spring up. If the County had a County noise ordinance, it could be regulated some-what, however, it was certainly within the Townships right to issue those permits. Discussion held on the procedure of getting a noise ordinance passed. Sheriff Clarmont congratulated Commissioner Wallace on his election as Chairperson.

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Jeff Lawson was looking for some guidance from the Board of Commissioners on scheduling a meeting to interview and appoint a new Commissioner for District #1. Applications were open until the 5<sup>th</sup> of July, 2017.

**Motion** by Commissioner Sangster, seconded by Commissioner Newman, to approve scheduling a Reconvened Meeting on Friday, July 14, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.. Motion carried with 6 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

Administrator Jeff Lawson reported that the CCE Central Dispatch Radio Study was received and would be put on the web page. The motion was in support of two recommendations: Change to the 800 MHz Radio System and approve a funding option to implement this project and for the CCE Board of Directors to direct CCE staff to begin contract discussions with the MPSCS and to prepare an RFP to obtain future quotes from vendors for the necessary equipment. The CCE 911 would like to set up meetings in the next several months to give updates not only on this project, but other projects that were being worked on.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Administrator Lawson presented the MSHDA Blight Elimination Grant Ratification – Gold Front Building. The Gold Front properties located in Downtown Cheboygan were sold on a land contract by the County as part of a tax sale in 2011. The person that purchased the property could no longer make the payments and deeded the property back to the County. He and Treasurer Weldon met with representatives of the City, which indicated that they were supportive of the buildings being removed. This fit into the City's plans associated with Festival Square and the Opera House. The City had provided preliminary confirmation identifying the possible redevelopment of the parcel after building demolition as a landscape and parking area as part of the redevelopment of the area.

The State of Michigan accepted applications for grant funding for demolition projects within communities through the MSHSDA Blight Elimination Program up until June 21, 2017. The proposed project was for demolition of two (2) blighted commercial buildings located at 417 N. Main Street and 418 N. Huron Street, Cheboygan, MI 49721. The buildings were located in downtown Cheboygan and previously functioned as a restaurant with apartments above, and a banquet hall/bowling alley. The two buildings were adjacent to each other and had a combined total of approximately 27,000 square feet. The estimated cost of the project was \$242,000 with \$200,000 (79%) State funds and \$42,000 (21%) of project cost Cheboygan County match (5% of project cost to be returned to the County for administration fees). The County was not committed to match the payment until a grant agreement was offered by the State, approved and signed by the County. Authorization to sign a grant agreement would be completed after an offer of grant award was received from the State. Discussion held on the perimeters of the grant process.

Commissioner Wallace stated that after being in the real estate business, he could not think of anybody who would want to pay \$300,000 for a vacant lot in the middle of Cheboygan, with a small lot, which goes from street to street as an investment. Commissioner Sangster stated that this was a win win for everyone. Administrator Lawson stated that the costs were based on previous demolitions in the county, but what was not in the bid was the redevelopment costs. Additional costs in whatever infrastructure was needed from the unit that owns it. Commissioner Sangster stated that it was not the end all, but the first step in the right direction.

**Motion** by Commissioner Sangster, seconded by Commissioner Newman to ratify grant application for MSHDA Blight Elimination Funds from the State of Michigan in the amount of \$200,000 as submitted on behalf of the Board Chairperson. Motion carried with 6 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Sangster stated that he was concerned with the discretions of the letter opposing Canadian Geologic Repository. Several people listed on this document were either deceased or not in office. The document needed to be updated and he would have a problem endorsing it. Administrator Lawson commented that back in 2014 the Board was asked to sign the resolution, which was done. This particular document came before him from Commissioner Brown before he left. Mr. Brown did an initial review and asked him to put it on the agenda. If the Board would like to alter this, it could be modified in any way or simply state that they didn't take any action.

**Motion** by Commissioner Sangster, seconded by Commissioner Bolinger, to receive and file correspondence with no action taken. Motion carried with 6 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

## **BOARD MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Sangster discussed getting more information regarding the issues with Mrs. Lux. Administrator Lawson stated that he would have his staff put together a report, do some preliminary research on the ordinance and bring it back to the Board.

## **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Carl Muscott commented that he was in agreement with Commissioner Sangster in that Cheboygan County and City residents all paid taxes here in Cheboygan County. At the last Board of Commissioner meeting, the Board passed an amendment to the zoning ordinance identifying a family dwelling as a group of individuals. Cheboygan County was in violation under the Code of Federal Regulations Title 42, which was a federal group of laws that protect fair standard housing. He stated that the definition of "family" under Title 42 included a single individual. In a handout, which he passed out showed tons of available materials on line. He questioned why the Community Development Department chooses to ignore the fact that for more than twenty (20) years, court cases

set precedence and determined that the planning and zoning ordinances had to adhere to the Fair Standards Act. This most recent amendment needs something along these lines as a revision. Mr. Muscott asked that the County not violate federal law.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - None**

**Motion** by Commissioner Sangster, seconded by Commissioner Bolinger, to adjourn to the call of the chairperson. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

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Karen L. Brewster  
Cheboygan County Clerk/Register

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John B. Wallace  
Chairperson Board of Commissioners