

**CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
May 28, 2013**

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

Roll called and a quorum present.

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

Absent: None

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

Motion by Commissioner Matelski, seconded by Commissioner Wallace to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS – None

SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Sheriff Dale Clarmont introduced the Search and Rescue Team Mounted Division which is new this year. Sheriff Clarmont stated that there were several horses in the parking lot for viewing during the break. Beth Riker, a member of the newly formed mounted division spoke about her group of thirteen horses and riders offering volunteer time and services for the Cheboygan County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team. Commissioner Socha extended welcome and thanks to Beth Riker and her group of mounted volunteer riders and horses.

Diane Rekowski, Director of the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG), presented an overview of NEMCOG. NEMCOG was formed under the Regional Planning Act (PA 281 of 1945) in 1968 to serve eight counties in Northeast Michigan, including Cheboygan. NEMCOG is currently funded through individual contracts, state and federal grants/programs and member appropriations. NEMCOG member benefits provide technical services at a nonprofit/membership rate, a representative seat on a NEMCOG Board, a set amount of no-fee services per year per member, a voice regarding regional issues, regional representation at state/federal level, access to grant information, census data, and overall economic development planning. Ms. Rekowski explained various benefits of collaboration with NEMCOG to ensure efficient delivery of services throughout the region, to identify gaps/needs in business services and develop a means to address those areas, and to strengthen networks between economic and community development stakeholders. She reported on specific programs that have directly affected Cheboygan County, including the Community Corrections Program. This program provides NEMCOG staff to work with the Courts to provide alternatives to jail either for earned release or alternatives to incarceration. This equates to savings to the County as the inmate days in jail are reduced or are in-lieu of jail. For Cheboygan County specifically the community alternatives include Drug Court, GED services, Intensive Supervision at T-House, Drunk Driving Reimbursement, Residential Services and the Saturday Weekend Work Program. Ms. Rekowski reported a savings of approximately \$186,000 as a result of the Community Corrections Program based on jail bed days saved for Cheboygan County. There are also various MDOT programs, Water Resource Programs, and Community & Economic Development Programs provided to the region. Ms. Rekowski stated that in 2002, the finance committee of NEMCOG determined a need for a \$50,000 base of financial support to be collected from all of the member counties and municipalities which they service. Dues are based on a region's taxable value and population.

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The 2013 fiscal year appropriation from the eight counties to NEMCOG is \$53,152, due to a 10% increase in membership fees to the member counties. Commissioner Matelski stated that according to information at a recent Road Commission meeting, MDOT plans to discontinue mowing the grass along I-75 from the Mackinac Bridge south to West Branch. Ms. Rekowski said that is interesting since the State of Michigan is trying to draw people into Michigan through the Pure Michigan campaign. Commissioner Socha asked why Emmet County's appropriation formula is separate and different. Ms. Rekowski explained that Emmet County is out of the NEMCOG region in terms of boundaries, but as a county adjacent to the region has become a member of NEMCOG, and also belongs to the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Commissioner Socha stated that Cheboygan County tends to identify more with the Northwest region rather than the Northeast region, and asked if NEMCOG would see this as an issue due to the current boundaries of the Councils of Government. Ms. Rekowski stated that she does not see it as an issue as they actively collaborate with other councils. Commissioner Wallace asked if Ms. Rekowski would provide a recent audit/budget for NEMCOG. Ms. Rekowski stated that she would get that information to County Administrator Jeff Lawson.

Linda Neuss, Chair of the Cheboygan Economic Development Group, introduced Christine Hammond, PhD from North Central Michigan College (NCMC). Dr. Hammond provided an overview of NCMC's recent involvement in the Cheboygan area. The Straits Area Education Center facility opened in Cheboygan to facilitate more NCMC academic advising and course opportunity right in Cheboygan. The Northern Lakes Economic Alliance has recently reported that employment in 2012 has returned to the same levels reported in pre-recession 2007. Dr. Hammond supports that the education provided by NCMC is an investment in a depressed economy, based primarily on the comparative cost of a credit hour to other colleges and universities offering similar courses. Dr. Hammond also reported that 25% of NCMC students go on to obtain a Bachelor's Degree. Commissioner Gauthier inquired as to the actual enrollment figures for the Cheboygan campus of NCMC. Dr. Hammond reported that at this time there are approximately 213 students at the Cheboygan Center. The college hopes to expand course offerings so that an individual can obtain a full Associate's Degree all in Cheboygan, without having to commute to Petoskey. The building in which the Straits Area Education Center is adequate in terms of classroom space, but it would be helpful to expand in other ways in that building to make it a full educational center. Commissioner Wallace inquired as to the out-of-district rate the Cheboygan students pay per credit hour. Dr. Hammond reported that NCMC receives about 26% of their budget from the State, slightly more than 26% comes from property taxes in Emmet County and the remainder comes from tuition and fees. The difference in tuition from the in-district credit hour and the out-of-district credit hour is made up from the millage that the Emmet County citizens pay.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT - None

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Lawson presented the United Design Associates Inc. professional service agreement for emergency marina dredging. The State of Michigan has issued grant funding to the County for the emergency dredging of the marina harbor. United Design Associates Inc. will prepare the necessary plans, complete permit application, conduct project inspections and provide construction administration for the project. United Design Associates Inc. will sub contract with firms to conduct surveying and soil testing as identified in the agreement. The agreement will cost \$36,250 and that amount is to be reimbursed by the State of Michigan.

Motion by Commissioner Matelski, seconded by Commissioner Redmond, to approve the professional service agreement between the County of Cheboygan and United Design Associates Inc. for engineering services related to the emergency dredging of the county marina harbor, authorize the Chairperson to sign and authorize necessary budget adjustments. Commissioners

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Socha and Allor pointed out several typos in the agreement which will be corrected. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

Administrator Lawson presented a letter of recommendation to NEMCSA. Every three years a multi-year grant request must be initiated by the Cheboygan County Council on Aging for a 3-year funding period from their NEMCSA funding sources. This funding accounts for approximately half of their resources that allow them to provide homemaker services, respite care, personal care and home delivered meals to the home bound seniors in our area. It also subsidizes their congregate meal program. This grant request must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Socha read the prepared letter.

Motion by Commissioner Gauthier, seconded by Commissioner Allor, to authorize the Chairperson to sign a letter of recommendation to NEMCSA on behalf of the Cheboygan County Council on Aging in order to allow the grant proposal to be submitted by the due date of June 7, 2013. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no, and 0 absent.

Community Development Director, Steve Schnell, presented the Cheboygan County Housing Commission Mortgage Discharge – Project-H-11-320ER. He explained that Straits Area Federal Credit Union (SAFCU) has requested a mortgage discharge from Cheboygan County and the Housing Commission for a property on which the County has a lien. The mortgage with SAFCU balance was \$44,075.94. The home was recently appraised at \$40,000. The balance on the loan for Cheboygan County as of 12/31/2012 was \$8,264.41.

The elderly homeowners are no longer able to reside in their house and are unable to make payments. To avoid foreclosure, the son who has power of attorney, has provided the credit union with a Deed in Lieu of Foreclosure. SAFCU is willing to compensate Cheboygan County \$500. The County Mortgage Forgiveness Policy states that we must analyze each request on an individual basis with the intent to recapture the maximum amount of funding possible. MSHDA has granted approval of the mortgage discharge. The Housing Commission, at its May 20th meeting, recommended approval by the County Board of Commissioners of this mortgage discharge request.

Motion by Commissioner Gouine, seconded by Commissioner Matelski, to approve the Mortgage Discharge for Housing Commission Project #H-11-320ER and authorize the Chairperson to sign. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no, and 0 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS – None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - Commissioner Socha stated that in the packet for the next Finance/Business meeting to be held June 11th, 2013, the Board of Commissioners will receive a compilation of the Board planning session results and goals compiled John Armhein. Action will be required at that time to formally adopt the Board Goals. Also, the Elected Officials meeting will be held on June 14th, 2013.

Commissioner Wallace reminded everyone of the Northeast Talent Summit on June 25th at Garland Lodge sponsored by Michigan Works.

Motion by Commissioner Redmond, seconded by Commissioner Wallace, to adjourn to the call of the Chair. Meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Mary Ellen Tryban
Cheboygan County Clerk/Register of Deeds

Linda Socha
Chairperson