

**Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners
Committee of the Whole Meeting
July 24, 2018**

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners was called to order in the Commissioners Room by Chairperson John Wallace at 9:30 a.m.

Roll called and a quorum present.

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

ABSENT: None

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 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Carl Muscott citizen of Tuscarora Township commented on the proposed 800 MHz Radio System Millage Proposal. He stated that he was in full support of it and sees the need. Each of the Counties has their own opportunity to finance it as they see fit. Cheboygan County does have sufficient funds to pay for it from unassigned funds without even impacting the reserves. Charlevoix was going to pay the infrastructure costs from their unassigned funds and then do some sort of ballot proposal for the balance. In an article from the Petoskey News regarding the 800 MHz Radio System, the Emmet County Commissioners approved a five (5) year .31 mill ballot proposal by a 6 to 1 vote. Emmet County's cost was estimated at \$3.4 million dollars total and the ballot proposal millage would bring in \$4.12 million dollars. This should bring the Board cognoscente of how much extra monies the County was wasting by financing something that the County already has reserve funds for. He would like the voters to know that this was a new or extra millage and not an existing millage. The language was not clear.

Vince Lumetta citizen of Beaugrand Township, commented on the 800 MHz Radio System. At the last Board meeting there were some questions on the number of radios to be supplied, the number of units in place, and he would like to get some clarity. Commissioner Wallace stated that this was just an estimate.

Tom Smith citizen of Inverness Township commented on the Veterans Memorial Park located on Court Street. The grass was not cut for the memorial celebration. The park is old and the plaques need to be refurbished. He would like to see the park done over. Let's get that park cleaned up and show the respect that these folks deserve.

SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Frances Whitney presented the NEMCSA 2017 Annual Report with a power point presentation. A refresher was given on what community action agencies were included in NEMCSA. The community action agencies were established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which was President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty. NEMCSA was one of 29 in the State of Michigan and by far, the largest geographically. There were over 1,000 community action

agencies throughout the country. NEMCSA was formed in August of 1968 in Alpena, Michigan and this year was their 50th Anniversary. NEMCSA was formed to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty here in Northern Michigan. They started with just a budget of \$500,000 and by 2017 the operating budget was over \$51 million dollars. NEMCSA was a private non-profit community action agency that provided assistance to an adverse age range of under privilege individuals thru federal and state funds as well as public and employment funding systems. They truly are an agency that provides assistance from cradle to grave. An abbreviated mission of the agency was to provide quality programs and services to strengthen and enhance the self-sufficiency of individuals, families and communities, focusing on those who were experiencing an economic hardship. Not all the programs were income based, but referral based. NEMCSA has 22 core counties, which provides 35 programs. Approximately 700 employees were employed with an operating budget of \$51 million. The programs were lumped into divisions: Senior Services a/k/a Region 9 Agency Area on Aging, Care Management Program, In Home Services, Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, Early Head Start, Head Start, School Success Program, Homeless Assistance Program, Emergency Food Assistance Program, and Utility and Deliverable Fuels Program. NEMCSA has been here for 50 years to help alleviate causes of poverty in Northern Michigan. According to the Federal poverty guidelines in the State of Michigan, a family of four (4) who lives on an income of \$24,250 was considered living in poverty. Currently 16.7% of the State was living in poverty. 23.5% of children and 8.8% of senior citizens. In Cheboygan County, there were 30.1% of children and 9% of senior citizens ages 60 and better living in poverty with an average overall percentage of 18.2. For more information please visit www.nemcsa.org.

Veterans Director Richard Wiles presented the 2017 Veteran Services Annual Report. 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 \$20.7 million dollars in federal benefits in FY 2016 was awarded to Cheboygan County Veterans per Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures Fiscal Year 2017. 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. 2017/2018 Goals were presented. There were a total of 1,178 walk-ins and appointments. The office also received 2,314 phone calls in 2017. The claims processed by type were as follows: 66 Compensation; 9 Pension; 17 Surviving Spouse; 80 Burials; 52 Records Requested; 35 Health Care; 5 Homeless and 35 Intent to File. Veterans expenditures in Cheboygan County, which were monies coming into the County through VA Benefits were \$20,748,000. The Veterans population for Cheboygan County was 9.5%. 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 \$1,109.05; Soldier Relief Fund of \$1,632.08 and MI Veterans Trust Fund of \$8,498.23. 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 16,071 with 53 veterans driven by 7 volunteer drivers. The Board of Commissioners and Sheriff Clarmont thanked the Veteran's office for their great service. Discussion was held on the refurbishing of the Veterans' Memorial Park by getting some sort of committee together.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Jeff Lawson gave an update on the Gold Front/Gold Dust Demolition of Buildings. The Contractor is currently removing debris from the site this week and will be backfilling the site the week of the 30th. Discussion was held with the owners on patching the outside walls and remodeling. On the north side, they would most likely side it and on the south side, discussion was held to either paint it or try to clean it up prior to transferring ownership.

Administrator Jeff Lawson gave an update on the Straits Regional Ride. Emmet County has identified they would like to move forward with the expansion of three (3) routes in 2019. Straits Regional Ride Staff have been working with Emmet County's committee on route development and cost over the past year. A draft agreement will be developed for review and approval. The route expansion cost will be paid for by Emmet County contributions as well as state and federal transit match reimbursements. Staff will submit an amendment to Straits Regional Ride's transit budget for 2019 with the State of Michigan by mid-August to plan for the route extensions.

Administrator Jeff Lawson stated the Planning Commission has requested staff to send the draft solar regulations to legal counsel for final review prior to setting a public hearing for language consideration. Final consideration to be brought back to the Board for the September 11th Board Meeting.

Administrator Jeff Lawson gave an update on the Jail Expansion stating that the contractor was still working on the block walls and materials were coming in today to start working on the roof. Also the contractor has been working in various areas inside the jail. The Storage Building floors were to be poured tomorrow. An RFP was to be sent out for the security system upgrade.

Administrator Jeff Lawson commented on the Veterans Park. As Mr. Newman stated this was reported to us and he apologized for the condition of the park. It was discussed that the County needs to do more weed control of the park. He would appreciate it if there was a committee or a few veterans who would like to meet with him to discuss the future improvements of the park.

OLD BUSINESS

Administrator Jeff Lawson presented the Emergency Services Radio Millage Proposal. The Cheboygan County is one of three counties that have created the "CCE 911 Central Dispatch Authority" (CCE) for the purpose of providing emergency health or safety services, specifically to provide a primary public safety answering point (PSAP) and to provide public safety systems and communications services. CCE 911 has completed a radio study report that has identified the need to upgrade the radio system infrastructure to improve system coverage, system

security, voice clarity and interoperability between agencies due to past and proposed future FCC narrow banding. The project includes purchasing new radios and upgrading tower equipment utilized by CCE 911, police, fire and ambulance services throughout the County to maintain safe and reliable communications between CCE 911 and these emergency services providers. Discussion was held on the importance, how to present/clarify this to the public and the purchase price of the units.

Motion by Commissioner Newman, seconded by Commissioner Bolinger, to approve

Resolution #18-10

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HEREBY RESOLVES that the following proposal, the language of which is hereby approved by the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners and certified to the Cheboygan County Clerk, shall be submitted to the electors of Cheboygan County for a vote at the November 6, 2018 general election:

CHEBOYGAN COUNTY Emergency Services

Radio Millage Proposal

This proposal will permit the County to levy up to .5 mills for the purpose of providing funds to pay its share of the costs of the radio equipment and infrastructure upgrade for use by the CCE 911 Central Dispatch Authority (CCE) and the emergency service providers within the county in the years 2018-2021, inclusive.

Shall the tax limitation imposed under Article IX, Section 6 of the Michigan Constitution on the amount of ad valorem taxes which may be levied by the County of Cheboygan, State of Michigan, against taxable property in the County be increased by up to .5 mills (\$.50 per \$1,000 of taxable value) for a period of four (4) years, 2018 through 2021, inclusive, for the purpose of providing Cheboygan County's share of the funds needed by the CCE 911 Central Dispatch Authority (CCE) to purchase, install, maintain, and replace upgraded radio equipment for use by CCE and emergency service providers within Cheboygan County and to upgrade radio system infrastructure, including tower and tower equipment, required by the upgraded radio equipment, and shall the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners be authorized to levy such millage for these purposes? If approved and levied in its entirety, this millage would raise an estimated \$717,761 for Cheboygan County in 2018.

A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried with 6 yes, 1 no (Commissioner Gouine) and 0 absent.

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Jeff Lawson presented the Cheboygan County Emergency Operations Plan. OEM Staff in conjunction with the County's Local Planning Team have completed an update to the County's Emergency Basic Plan. The purpose of the plan is to establish policies and procedures that allow the County to provide a coordinated response to save lives, minimize injuries, protect property, preserve functioning civil government and maintain economic activities essential to survival and recovery from natural disasters and technological hazards.

Motion by Commissioner Sangster, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to approve the Cheboygan County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and authorize the Chair to sign. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

BOARD MEMBER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Commissioner Johnson commented that discussion was held in the past on updating the front security door. She would like to know if the Board would want to revisit this issue with winter coming. Administrator Lawson stated that there was a quote from ISO TEC, which was basically a drawer system with a part-time staff person. Items such as purses or metal could be passed through and searched. The numbers have been put together. He stated that there was a person from ISO TEC coming on Wednesday to look at the upgrade to install safety windows and doors in the courtrooms. This has been part of the delay because they were trying to coordinate these two projects together. If the timing doesn't work, then they might have to move forward with the upgrade of the security door.

Commissioner Johnson commented that at the last meeting there were resolutions opposing the assessing reform and she suggested that Cheboygan County do something like this. Administrator Lawson stated that this would be an action item at the next meeting. She commented on the Planning Commission making good movement on the solar issue, the expedited timing and the additional resources that they utilized was a huge benefit for Cheboygan County.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Carl Muscott citizen of Tuscarora Township thanked Commissioner Johnson for bringing up the security of the front door. He commented on the Planning Commission and the Planning and Zoning Department positions that were open. There were currently two positions currently posted. An acceptable wage for these types of positions was going to be difficult. He thanked Chuck Freese for his hard work on the solar farm ordinance.

Vince Lumetta citizen of Beaugrand Township offered a suggestion to the Board on the Veterans Memorial Park. In Cheboygan County, there were two (2) garden clubs that were very active, which were Bring It Volunteers and the Garden Club. It would be a good community spirited project.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - None

Motion by Commissioner Wallace seconded by Commissioner Newman to adjourn to the call of the chairperson. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent. Meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Karen L. Brewster
Cheboygan County Clerk Register

John B. Wallace
Chairperson