

**CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
JULY 26, 2016**

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

Roll called and a quorum present.

Present: Commissioners Chris Brown, 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 Gouine, seconded by Commissioner Allor, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Joseph Chimner, a citizen of the City of Cheboygan, addressed the Board about smart electric meter technology. Mr. Chimner stated that he and his wife had the power cut to their house because they would not install the smart meter or a digital meter. Mr. Chimner stated that a digital meter causes a lot of health issues.

Jamie Chimner, a citizen of the City of Cheboygan, addressed the Board to state that it has been 11 months since she's lost electricity because she has to have an analog meter. Ms. Chimner stated that 41 other counties and municipalities have passed a resolution supporting Representative Lee Chatfield's co-sponsored Michigan choice bill giving citizens a choice to have an analog meter. Ms. Chimner wants the Board to support Representative Chatfield.

John Kurczewski, a citizen of Tuscarora Township, addressed the Board to state that Jamie Chimner was told that in order to get her power back she would have to take a digital meter but now Consumers Energy doesn't have digital meters. Mr. Kurczewski asked where the 900,000 analog meters that have been removed from Oscoda County are. Mr. Kurczewski stated that the Consumers Energy website states that people can purchase old analog meters for a fee and he just wants the Board to support a resolution to give people a choice.

Millicent Mclaughlin addressed the Board to say that her husband had a pacemaker and died of heart failure. Ms. Mclaughlin stated that her husband used to hear strange wire noises and now she finds that Jamie Chimner is going through it too. Ms. Mclaughlin would like the Board to support giving people an option.

Jon Leslie, a citizen of Beaugrand Township, addressed the Board to say that everyone in the audience is there to feed the Board good information to make a community action. Mr. Leslie stated that whenever he sees shows on TV about Hitler that everyone raises their hand to say "Heir, Hitler" because they were going to jail if they didn't go along with the system. Mr. Leslie stated that the Board needs to be independent of the whole world and support their community with their thinking. Mr. Leslie stated that he's heard that smart meters are bad on talk radio for 8 years.

Dana Carver, a citizen of Forest Township, addressed the Board to say that she has seen a great improvement in Jamie Chimner's health and that she has known her for years. Ms. Carver stated that everyone has a right to their own lives and their own choices. Ms. Carver read quotes from founding fathers.

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Jim McKindles, a citizen of Presque Isle County, stated that he has been dealing with legislation that has been in the works for 3 years. Mr. McKelos stated that there aren't utility companies that have people's best interest in mind and that they are in business to make money. Mr. McKelos stated that there should be a free market for utilities and people would pay less and you would have corporations focused on catering to customers.

Nancy Schutz, a citizen of Presque Isle County, stated that she also witnessed Jamie Chimner at the chiropractor's office and couldn't believe the condition she was in. Mr. Schutz stated that she saw a lot of improvement in Jamie Chimner over time and she asked the Board to vote in support of the resolution.

SCHEDULED VISITORS

Director of SAYPA, Chris Ackerman, and Mari Hesselink, SAYPA Case Manager presented a SAYPA and Decisions to Actions update. Mari Hesselink stated that from October 2015 – present the SAYPA program has served 23 youth, resulting in 12 successful case closures to date. Ms. Hesselink stated that the remaining youth are continuing in the program or are close to completing it and being placed back into the schools of their choice. Ms. Hesselink stated that 96% who are working through the program avoided out-of-home placement. Ms. Hesselink stated that the SAYPA program utilizes Straits Regional Ride for the transport of SAYPA program participants to and from school and for the summer program. Ms. Hesselink explained the SAYPA summer volunteering program. Commissioner Allor asked if the SAYPA participants are required to be part of the SAYPA summer program or if they volunteer? Ms. Hesselink stated that the summer program is court ordered for youth to attend. Mr. Ackerman stated that because the number of students the program can have is limited they work with probation officers to determine which students would be best suited. Commissioner Gouine asked what percentage of the SAYPA participants uses prescription drugs. Mr. Ackerman stated that 1 – 2 students per year have drugs administered to them at SAYPA. Commissioner Gauthier commented that he had the chance to interact with some SAYPA participants at the History Center garage sale and he was really impressed with their work abilities and that he thinks the program is excellent. Commissioner Brown stated that the SAYPA program and the Decisions to Actions programs are excellent investments for the community. Commissioner Brown stated that it's not just the number of people who complete the program who are affected but that it has a rippling effect in the community and he commended both programs. Commissioner Wallace asked how the SAYPA program complements the Decisions to Actions program and vice versa. Mr. Ackerman stated that a lot of students that enter SAYPA have had the judge order them to the Decisions to Actions program and they go there with their parents/guardians and learn how to interact with each other and the students in turn bring those interaction skills to school. Commissioner Redmond stated that he serves on the Straits Regional Ride Board and sometime back there was concern about discipline on the SRR buses for the SAYPA program and a Bus Aide was hired to relieve that concern and he is very glad to hear that the Bus Aide has had such a positive effect on SAYPA busing.

Charlie Brown, Coordinator for the Decisions to Actions program, presented an update to the Board. Mr. Brown stated that regarding the three classes that were run in conjunction with the school year there were 62 participants (27 students and 36 parents). Mr. Brown stated that the program is so effective because they are providing skills to both the students and the parents. Mr. Brown stated that the program utilizes three criteria to measure success; the first and most important criteria being "number of youth that avoided out-of-home placement". Mr. Brown stated that this past year that the success rate for the first criteria was 96%, meaning they had only a couple of kids that ended up in out-of-home placement or secure detention. Mr. Brown stated that the second criteria used to measure the success of the Decision to Action program are "number of students who showed improved communications and less conflict with parents". Mr. Brown stated that this past year the success rate for the second criteria was 93%. Mr. Brown stated that the third criteria used to measure the success of the Decisions to Actions program is the "number of youth that displayed a reduction in behavioral problems". Mr. Brown stated this past

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year the rate of success for this criteria was 85%, meaning there is only a 15% recidivism rate in the program; students who go through the Decisions to Actions program but then go out and get into more trouble or have other difficulties. Mr. Brown stated that he appreciates that the County has taken on the Decisions to Actions program. Commissioner Wallace asked what timeframe have 340 youth done through the Decisions to Actions program. Mr. Brown stated that 340 youth have gone through the program since it started in 2004 under the auspices of North Country Community Mental Health. Commissioner Matelski asked if it is court ordered for the parents of youth to participate in the program or if that is voluntary. Mr. Brown stated that in almost every case the court does order the parents to the program and in other cases where the parents are not court ordered the youth have been referred to the program by school counselor or DHHS and parental attendance is voluntary. Commissioner Gauthier asked if Mr. Brown could explain how he uses mentors in the program. Mr. Brown stated each youth in the program has a volunteer, adult mentor to support the participants. Commissioner Brown thanked Mr. Brown and his wife for providing a meal at the Decisions to Actions program graduation. Commissioner Wallace stated that this is a money saving program for the County.

Dennis McKee, a representative from Consumers Energy, presented information on the Consumers Energy upgrade program for Smart Meter technology. Mr. McKee stated that they are about half way through the upgrading of meters across the state. Mr. McKee stated that Consumers Energy has 1.8 million electricity customers across the state and they've installed over one million new digital communication meters. Mr. McKee stated that the reason that Consumers Energy is replacing meters is because the analog meters that Consumers Energy have had on people's homes require for Consumers Energy to send a person out to someone's house and read the meters whereas the new meters transmit a message to Consumers Energy each night to inform the company how much electricity the customer has used. Mr. McKee stated that Consumers Energy is one of the first companies in the country to install meters that use cellular towers to read meters. Mr. McKee stated that the other benefit to the new meters is online access to electricity usage information. Mr. McKee also stated that the new meters can alert Consumers Energy if the power is out in a home. Mr. McKee stated that before Consumers Energy goes out to install the new meters, they send each customer a 30-day notice letting the customer know they will be upgrading the meter and they send a 2-week notice letting customers know that Consumers Energy representatives will be driving a white Ford Focus and be carrying identification and then the day of the meter replacement the representatives knock on the door and/or leave a door hanger notification that the meter has been replaced. Mr. McKee stated that he has spoken at a lot of places across Michigan and Consumers Energy has received some push back because of a misunderstanding that they are using a technology that they are not using. Mr. McKee stated that the system that is most common in the country is called the "Mesh System" for reading the meters; requiring utility companies to go into neighborhoods and install transmitters, collectors and receivers for information from the meters and transmit information back to the utility company every 15 minutes. Mr. McKee stated that the technology being utilized by Consumers Energy only sends one message back to the company in the middle of the night from the meter with no personal information in it. Mr. McKee that a lot of information has been fabricated by people asserting the Consumers Energy can know what people are utilizing energy for in their houses. Mr. McKee said that Consumers Energy does not have the ability nor the interest in collecting data on their customers or selling it to anyone. Mr. McKee stated that the Michigan Public Services Commission passed a regulation last year that when and if that type of data-collecting technology becomes available, that the information cannot be provided to a third party. Mr. McKee stated that this is a statewide program and they'll be done by the end of 2017. Mr. McKee stated that legislation was introduced last September to restrict the Smart Meter technology and provide access to analog meters. Mr. McKee stated that upgrading meters to Smart Meters is not about energy policy and that it is about utilizing the technology that best serves customers. Commissioner Redmond stated that the Board's concern is whether people have a choice and if they do have a choice, what is the cost. Mr. McKee stated that initially did not offer an "opt-out" program but the Michigan Public Service Commission, who regulates Consumers Energy, required them to have a manual-meter reading program for customers of all utility companies in the state. Mr. McKee stated that 99.5% of Consumers Energy customers

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have accepted the new communicating digital meters and only .5% of customers have requested the non-communicating, analog meters. Mr. McKee stated that some customers still have analog meters, some customers have digital non-communicating meters and some customers have received the upgraded digital communicating meter. Mr. McKee said that if a customer does not want to utilize a communicating digital meter, they keep whatever technology is at their home for the time being and then at some point Consumers Energy will pull the analog meters and replace them with digital meters. Mr. McKee said that analog meters are being scrapped and other utility companies are not interested in that technology. Mr. McKee stated there are costs associated with older technology as Consumers Energy has to continue sending out meter readers and those costs are going to be borne by the customers who elect to keep that old technology. Mr. McKee stated that there is a one-time fee of \$69.39 and a monthly fee of \$9.99 for customers who “opt out” which is still eventual replacement of their meter in the future. Commissioner Gauthier asked what benefits there are to the customers with the digital communicating meters. Mr. McKee stated that because Consumers Energy is regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission, Consumers Energy had to make a business case in advance of them moving forward with the upgrade program; a \$750 million program with a \$1.9 billion benefit to customers in controlling costs and enhance services. Commissioner Gauthier asked if the technology in the new meters is like cellphone technology and affects hypersensitive people. Mr. McKee stated that the Michigan Public Service Commission conducted a study and concluded in a report that the new communicating digital meters are safe, beneficial and enhances services to customers and that the non-communicating digital meters, which have been installed for over 15 years were not ever an issue of debate until Smart Meters began to be installed. Mr. McKee stated that when customers ask to be “off the grid”, Consumers Energy representatives go locally and confirm with the individual that being “off the grid” is truly their request. Commissioner Gauthier asked if it is really too large of a burden on Consumers Energy to have .5% of their customers who don’t want the new Smart Meter technology. Mr. McKee stated that analog meters have not been installed for more than a decade. Commissioner Matelski asked what the duration of the cellphone call is to transmit the data to Consumers Energy. Mr. McKee stated that it is a half of a second. Commissioner Matelski asked if there is any trouble with “dead spots” in cellular service. Mr. McKee stated that there is some communication in some spots. Mr. McKee stated that they have approximately 97% coverage across their service area with Verizon but some spots along rural areas or dunes and lakes are spotty so they still install the communicating meters and send someone out to read them but that over time in order to enhance communication systems capabilities. Commissioner Matelski asked about some of the content in the literature the Board has been provided regarding new digital meters interfering with the electricity waves in your house. Mr. McKee stated that all of Consumers Energy meters have to be approved and safe for usage and the meter itself does not pose a threat to customers; it is merely an energy measurement device. Commissioner Matelski stated that he can’t see any difference between an analog meter and a digital meter in that the meters don’t convert the electrical waves. Commissioner Brown stated that there are radio controlled water meters in some municipalities. Commissioner Wallace doesn’t see any difference in electromagnetic fields between an analog meter and a digital meter. Commissioner Gouine asked how often the meters are emitting waves. Mr. McKee stated the meter only send one text message of data to Consumers Energy each day. Commissioner Allor asked when the Michigan Public Service Commission ordered utility companies to allow customers to “opt out”. Mr. McKee stated it was several years ago. Mr. McKee stated that Consumers Energy does have an “opt out” program but there are individuals who dangerously pull their own digital meter in advance of the established “opt out” program. Commissioner Allor asked if analog meters are being replaced why those extra analog meters can’t be installed onto homes of customers who want the analog meters. Mr. McKee stated that analog meters have not been installed for more than a decade and that it is an older technology that is not as reliable, as accurate as the newer technology and he is unaware of any other utility companies today who install analog meters. Commissioner Allor stated that it is interesting that Mr. McKee stated that Consumers Energy is serving customers. Mr. McKee stated that Consumers Energy is a regulated utility and they are operating to serve. Commissioner Matelski sought clarification that customers can “opt out” of new meters and keep their old meters. Mr. McKee stated that if a customer gets notification that Consumers Energy is going to upgrade their

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meter, the customer can “opt out, and whatever meter technology that the customer has on their home at that time stays there until at some point Consumers Energy upgrades them – it could be an extended period of time. Mr. McKee said it is very rare that customers “opt out” to keep an analog meter because it’s most likely that they have a non-communicating digital meter. Commissioner Brown stated that he agrees with individuals having a choice but that it should be user-pay and the costs for someone else’s choice should not be transposed onto the majority of other customers who have the new technology meters. Commissioner Allor asked what reasons customers have given to “opt out” of the new meter replacements. Mr. McKee stated that most frequently it is confusion over whether Consumers Energy is part of a government surveillance program.

Mr. McKee introduced Tim Petroski the Public Affairs Manager from Consumers Energy. Mr. Petroski said if there are issues that come up with Consumers Energy he is the contact person.

Commissioner Redmond asked for Board consensus regarding moving forward with a resolution of support up for Board vote in August regarding House Bill 4916. The Board affirms. Discussion was held.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Administrator Lawson stated that the Heritage Cove case has a hearing scheduled for August 4 in Circuit Court.

Administrator Lawson stated that through the Office of Emergency Management the Hazard Mitigation Plan will be available to the public online next week for review and that it is currently available for the Board to download off of the cloud and that there will need to be September Board approval for that. Commissioner Redmond stated that there has been a new director of the Office of Emergency Management hired – Megan Anderson. OEM now is advertising for a deputy director.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

BOARD MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION – None

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Jamie Chimner, a citizen of the City of Cheboygan, addressed the Board and thanked Mr. McKee for telling “all of his untruths”. She said she has been diagnosed as electronic magnetically sensitive which is a disabling diagnosis under the ADA. Ms. Chimner stated that she got her old phone landline back from AT & T.

John Kurczewski, a citizen of Tuscarora Township, reminded the Board that the Pledge of Allegiance states “justice for all”, not some. Mr. Kurczewski stated that the House Bill co-sponsored by Representative Lee Chatfield is for “all”. Mr. Kurczewski stated that the Attorney General has instituted a complaint line for issues arising with the smart meters and has found that there is no proven benefit to the new meters. Mr. Kurczewski stated that the non-communicating digital meters transmit the same dirty electricity as the smart meters throughout the wiring of your house. Mr. Kurczewski left a copy of Dr. Carpenter’s sworn testimony with the Board; Mr. Kurczewski asserts that Dr. Carpenter swore under oath that digital meters are not safe.

Joseph Chimner, a citizen of the City of Cheboygan, stated that the switching mode power is in the “opt out” meter. Mr. Chimner stated that the “opt out” meter is what he had on his house for 7-8 years and what was causing the problems. Mr. Chimner stated that devices give off dirty electricity that interferes with the frequencies of AM radios.

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Jim McKindles, a citizen of Presque Isle County, addressed the Board to say that the smart meters do not save one single watt power and that doesn't see the purpose of the meter and it is not saving anyone money. Mr. McKindles said there have been a lot of fires throughout the country because of utility companies improperly installing meters. Mr. McKindles said the data collected through the meters is sold to third parties and being profited for it.

Dana Carver, a citizen of Forest Township, addressed the Board to say that electromagnetic radiation goes throughout homes approximately 190,000 times a day and that it is a problem with the "opt out" meters. Ms. Carver said that it is an untruth that no municipalities have passed a resolution against Smart Meters and she listed 41 counties that have. Ms. Carver stated that she is a customer of Presque Isle Electric and people can get analog meters and that Presque Isle Electric stated that they would inform their customers if they ever decide to use the Smart Meter technology because they know people are against it. Ms. Carver stated if people are forced to purchase electricity from a specific electric company than the company should be forced to provide a product that is safe for your body.

Jon Leslie, a citizen of Beaugrand Township, addressed the Board to say that you can put an AM radio next to your TV to find a leaky cable. Mr. Leslie stated that there is psychological warfare using frequencies. Mr. Leslie stated that Mr. McKee was talking about "Agenda 21" and that we lost our health we started taking the ashes from our fireplaces and putting them in the garden and then eating out of the garden. Mr. Leslie stated that this Board needs to support the "opt out" for the consumer so that they can be independent from the big corporations that control things.

Bob Trower a citizen of Cheboygan County, stated that ignorance is bliss and very profitable for big corporations. He questioned how the Smart Meters you can go online and check every hour on your power usage but the meter only sends a signal once a day.

Dennis McKee, a representative from Consumers Energy, addressed the Board to stated that he is proud to work for Consumers Energy and that in his 23 years with Consumers Energy he has never had to stand up and defend his own honor. Mr. McKee stated that Consumers Energy is a regulated utility and that he was called a liar today but he is responsible for reporting factual information to the body that regulates Consumers Energy. Mr. McKee stated that the house bill that the Board is considering supporting is not been supported by any jurisdictions within the Consumers Energy service territory and there may have been other resolutions passed prior to the introduction of the house bill being considered. Mr. McKee stated that Consumers Energy gets a once per day meter read about how much energy the customer has used in the event there has been a disruption of power or power outage. Mr. McKee stated that the information he provided today is factual information and he stands behind it.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None

Motion by Commissioner Matelski, seconded by Commissioner Brown, to adjourn to the call of the Chair. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:26 AM.

Mary Ellen Tryban
County Clerk/Register

Pete Redmond
Chairperson