

**CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
April 22, 2014**

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, John Wallace, Cal Gouine, Tony Matelski, and Sue Allor

Absent: None

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

Commissioner Socha advised that Judge Maria Barton requested to move her presentation of the 2013 District Court Annual Report to the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Gouine, seconded by Commissioner Allor to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS - None

SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Judge Scott Pavlich presented the 2013 Circuit Court Annual Report. He reported that civil and criminal filings increased slightly but has remained consistent for the last five years. There were nine jury trials conducted in the 53rd Circuit Court for 2013. Circuit Court collections increased in 2013 from \$160,000 to \$201,000; \$108,000 of which was restitution collections and \$93,000 of which was fines and costs. That is a significant increase, some of which is attributable to a new provision from the Prosecuting Attorney in plea agreements of ordering payments of money due on the day of criminal sentencing. Judge Pavlich reported that there have been 16 total graduates from the Drug Court program, 6 graduates in 2013. He reported on performance measures being initiated by the Supreme Court Administration Office which would create a dashboard program to monitor the speedy resolution of cases per court. He stated he is not certain how the limitations of attempting to speedily resolve every case would work, as some cases would be better serviced by being put on hold, which would skew the numbers of the dashboard measurements. Judge Pavlich reported on a predictive modeling behavior program that the Friend of the Court is implementing. He also reported that the Friend of the Court has also implemented an amnesty program for individuals with outstanding bench warrants for non-payment/non-appearance which has resolved 12 out of the 80 outstanding bench warrants the court has authorized. Judge Pavlich addressed the issue of courtroom security and the possibility of an expansion of a current order to establish the entire county building as gun-free. Judy Thompson, the previous Collections Clerk for the 53rd Circuit Court has retired, and has been replaced by Tina Jewell. Commissioner Gauthier asked if an individual may reapply to the Drug Court Program if they have previously failed it. Judge Pavlich stated there is substantial forgiveness for individuals in the program before they are kicked out. He stated that it is conceivable that someone could re-qualify for the program but it has not happened yet. Commissioner Gauthier asked what the factors were regarding the extension of the order prohibiting firearms for the entire county building. Judge Pavlich stated initially the order was to protect the courtroom from weapons, but there are various court proceedings with court personnel operations being conducted all throughout the building and it makes more sense for the prohibition of firearms to be all or nothing for the county building. Commissioner Allor asked Judge Pavlich to explain the predictive modeling behavior program being utilized by the Friend of the Court's office. Judge Pavlich explained that there are certain factors and criteria in Friend of the Court cases that can assist in

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determining the maximum amount of collection (i.e. when would be the best time to issue a warrant or jail time for non-payment/non-support). Commissioner Socha stated that the collection rates are fairly high. Judge Pavlich stated our collection rates are higher than average for the State of Michigan. Commissioner Socha said the 53rd Circuit Court's numbers are consistently good regarding cost containment and case age and increase in collections. She reported that it is directly attributable to how Judge Pavlich is running his court and he, as well as the other elected officials reporting the same consistencies, should be commended. Commissioner Socha thanked Judge Pavlich for being conscientious.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – None

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

Equalization Director Janice Eaton presented the 2014 Equalization Report. The report consists of columnar figures and charts showing the assessed values from the individual townships and city, the county equalized values, and the ratio for each class of property by unit.

The recommended County equalized value of real property for 2014 was \$1,558,899,715; the recommended County equalized value of personal property for 2014 was \$58,607,850; with the total recommended County equalized value of \$1,617,507,565. This represents a 2.71% increase in equalized overall value compared to 2013 values.

Ms. Eaton stated that the State of Michigan will be reimbursing local units of government for a variety of exemptions. Ms. Eaton reported an estimated taxable value amount loss of \$5,430,400 for personal property tax exemptions; and an estimated taxable value amount loss of \$2,954,057 for the disabled veterans property exemption. She emphasized these are estimates.

Commissioner Socha stated she believes there is legislation pending regarding the reimbursement of counties for the disabled veteran's exemption as well. Ms. Eaton stated she has also heard that. Commissioner Socha asked if there was a loss in value regarding the pipeline state tax commission change as there were losses reported for Emmet County. Ms. Eaton reported she has not seen a loss yet. Administrator Lawson stated that there have been utility gains regarding the pipeline but that there could be a challenge to that coming forward. Commissioner Socha stated she is glad to see the 2.71% increase in overall equalized value in the county. She stated she is disappointed to see a slight .2% decrease in agricultural value, but that it is not much. Ms. Eaton stated that some agricultural property was transferred into residential property which would account for some of the loss. Commissioner Socha noted that Mackinaw has 39% of commercial property for Cheboygan County and the City of Cheboygan has 24% of the commercial property. She also noted that the City of Cheboygan is only 4.3% of residential properties for Cheboygan County. County Treasurer Linda Cronan noted that the number of properties she foreclosed on this year has gone down compared to last year by 7 properties.

Motion by Commissioner Gauthier, seconded by Commissioner Allor to adopt the 2014 Cheboygan County Equalization report as presented reflecting a County Equalized Value for Real Property of \$1,558,899,175 and Personal Property of \$58,607,850 for a total 2014 County Equalized Value of \$1,617,507,565. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

Undersheriff Mike Newman presented the State of Michigan FY 2014 Operation Stonegarden Grant. Finance Director Kari Kortz noted that the application deadline is April 30, 2014. Commissioner Socha asked if authorization for the Chairperson to sign required documentation needs to be included in the motion. Ms. Kortz affirmed. Commissioner Socha asked if the total allocation for all of the Stonegarden grants has increased. Undersheriff Newman stated that he

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believes it has decreased from original grants received in previous years. Commissioner Socha noted that Cheboygan County qualifies for this grant because it is considered a border county relevant to homeland security. She stated that there is no local money match for the Stonegarden Grant.

Motion by Commissioner Wallace, seconded by Commissioner Redmond to approve the submission of the State of Michigan FY 2014 Operation Stonegarden Grant application by the April 30th, 2014 deadline after review by the County Finance Director and authorize the Chairperson to sign any required documentation. Discussion was held regarding the potential use of local money after grants end. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

Undersheriff Newman noted that Sheriff Clarmont was not present for the meeting because he was deployed for the week in Grayling.

CITIZENS COMMENTS – None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Commissioner Matelski stated that the Humane Society is having their Spring Fling Fundraiser on Sunday, April 27, 2014 at the Eagles starting at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Gauthier wished Don Horrocks good luck in his campaign for County Commissioner.

A break was held from 10:10 a.m. until 10:45 a.m.

Jon Leslie, a citizen of the City of Cheboygan, approached the Board relating his plan to bring back a railroad system using steam engines to Cheboygan and other areas of Northern Michigan to be used as a tourist attraction and various other ideas he has to stimulate the economy.

Administrator Lawson updated the Board on several projects. He said there is a pre-construction meeting for the county building and Reid building parking lot tomorrow and construction is forecasted to begin about the second week of May. Commissioner Socha asked if the County has received the final easement deed from the neighbors to the north of the county building. Administrator Lawson reported that it has not been received yet. He stated that he will be meeting with Humane Society personnel and the architect to go over the preliminary information for the Phase II remodeling. He and IT personnel will be meeting with the website developer on Thursday to finish the final platform for the web page so the departments can start adding information. Administrator Lawson reported on security doors for the county building and request for proposals submitted for that. He also reported that the Building Official position has become available for refilling. Al Hoard is remaining authorized to electronically sign necessary documents until a replacement has been secured. Administrator Lawson also stated that the county is working with the staff of the C.C.E. 9-1-1, the C.C.E. 9-1-1 Board, as well as the other administrators to create job descriptions for a director, and a deputy director and they will ultimately do an organizational review of staffing for the organization. Administrator Lawson stated that the District No. 4 Health Department building construction project is going to be complicated to fund. The renovations are looking to be around \$1.4-1.5 million. The Health Department seems to be a long-term partner moving forward. Community Mental Health's ability to commit to funding is uncertain at this time. Administrator Lawson pointed out that one of the primary issues at the Senior Center on Sand Road is the septic system. Engineers are addressing alternative resolutions for the issues they are having. Discussion was held regarding whether or not there are certain kinds of medications at the Senior Center knocking out the bacteria needed for an effective septic field. Administrator Lawson reported on the marina project. The frost laws are restricting the progression of the project.

The Board recessed for lunch from 11:15 a.m. to 11:27 a.m.

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Civil Counsel, Attorney Peter Wendling, presented a Zoning Training Seminar for the Board. Mr. Wendling presented a general overview on zoning decision; zoning functions of the Board of Commissioners, the Planning Commission, the ZBA, and the Zoning Staff; the procedure for making discretionary administrative zoning decisions; and the procedure for making legislative zoning decisions.

Motion by Commissioner Matelski, seconded by Commissioner Allor, to adjourn to the call of the Chair. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent. Meeting adjourned at 12:51 P.M.

Mary Ellen Tryban
County Clerk/Register of Deeds

Linda Socha
Chairperson