

**CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
March 24, 2015**

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

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Sheriff Dale Clarmont announced that an additional canine unit is being added to the Cheboygan County Sheriff's Department through Officer Dean Tebo. Tony and Roberta Matelski donated \$10,000 to the Cheboygan County Sheriff's Department to fund the additional unit. The Board of Commissioners on behalf of Cheboygan County and Sheriff Clarmont commended Tony and Roberta Matelski for their financial generosity in funding two canine units for the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Clarmont introduced Dean Tebo and Michael (Mr. Tebo's canine) and Matt LaCross and Taser (Mr. Lacrosse's canine). Taser will be turning 10 years old this year and will retire at the end of the year.

Carl Muscott, a citizen of Mullett Township, addressed the Board regarding the Mullett Township request for support for the grant application from the Michigan Trust. Mr. Muscott opposes the proposed project and the grant. He stated that the storm water drains are a large part of the grant and the proposed Topinabee streetscape project.

Stephenie Jacobson, a citizen of Inverness Township, thanked the Board, the County Clerk and the Planning Commission for their commitment to transparency as required by FOIA and the Open Meetings Act. Ms. Jacobsen also commended the leadership of the Board for their commitment to do government work at government meetings. Ms. Jacobson thanked Commissioner Matelski for his generous donation to the Sheriff's Department for the canine unit. Ms. Jacobson extended her condolences on behalf of the Tea Party to Commissioner Allor on the loss of her father.

Rachel Osborn, Mullett Township Clerk, addressed the Board to request support of Mullett Township's efforts for parking lot improvements for the beach at the Mullett Township Park in Topinabee. She stated since the beach improvements were made in the summer of 2013, the use of the beach has nearly doubled. Ms. Osborn said before the improvements it would have been impossible for anyone with a disability to enjoy Mullett Lake.

Carl Muscott contradicted Mullett Township Clerk Osborn's remarks pertaining to ADA beach access and stated that there is no data to show that the use of the Mullett Township beach has doubled.

SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Sheriff Dale Clarmont presented the 2014 Annual Report for the Cheboygan County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Clarmont used a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the report. He stated that the Community Corrections Service Program was eliminated in 2014, but that he has been working with the 53rd Circuit Court and the 89th District Court to recreate an internal Community Service Program in the jail. The 2014 Sheriff Department Budget amount of approved expenditures was \$3,336,722 and there was an unexpended balance of \$87,863. The 2014 revenues totaled \$228,452. Grant monies received last year totaled \$237,264. The Department also received other revenue funds from drug sale property forfeiture, sheriff wage reimbursements, sale of scrap and salvage, and livery inspections & ORV Ordinance which totaled \$14,774 in 2014. The actual cost to Cheboygan County taxpayers for the department last year was \$2,708,369. Commissioner Gauthier asked if the Social Security Finder's Fee is a new revenue line item for the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Clarmont stated it was. Commissioner Gauthier asked Sheriff Clarmont to elaborate the Senior Visit Program. Sheriff Clarmont stated that every year he visits the Senior Centers in the area as they are the number one victim for scams.

Honorable Judge Maria Barton presented the 2014 Annual Report for the 89th District Court. Judge Barton briefly reviewed the report and highlighted several areas. The 89th District Court has come in under budget for the last six years totaling a savings of approximately \$159,856. The 89th District Court has collected \$44,426 to date in cases where tax return garnishments were issued, collecting \$6,649 through 2014. The Polycom system installed in the 89th District Courtroom provided a multi-department savings of approximately \$4,710 in 2014 in prisoner transportation and visiting judge costs. The clearance rate of cases in the 89th District Court was 100% clearance in 2014 which means out of 4,315 new or reopened cases, the court disposed of 4,331 cases. Currently there are 18 participants in the Sobriety Court program. Since its inception, the Sobriety Court has saved over \$100,000 in jail costs based on \$20 per day per inmate. In 2014, the Sobriety Court participants completed 1370 hours of community service in lieu of employment hours and for sanctions. For 2014, the court met or exceeded state guidelines in case disposition rates. Last year the Court's revenue was \$709,473, down almost \$58,000 from 2013. The reduction in revenue is due to a decrease in misdemeanor traffic and criminal cases as well as a decrease in the general civil and small claims cases. Commissioner Gauthier asked Judge Barton if there is a total amount of uncollected court fines. Judge Barton stated that she could get the figure but that she knows the District Court collection rate is very high. Commissioner Allor what the typical amount of time is for a Sobriety Court participant. Judge Barton stated no less than 18 months up to 24 months. Commissioner Gauthier asked if participants can re-enter the Sobriety Court Program if they slip once they've graduated. Judge Barton stated that a situation like that has not occurred yet. Commissioner Gauthier asked Judge Barton if she thought the program is a success. Judge Barton stated that she does think it is a success. Commissioner Brown and Commissioner Wallace commended Judge Barton for the Sobriety Court Program.

County Prosecuting Attorney Daryl Vizina presented the 2014 Annual Report for the Cheboygan County Prosecutor's Office. Prosecutor Vizina reviewed the various duties of the Prosecutor's Office in processing all types of court cases. Prosecutor Vizina stated that the amount of felony cases increased slightly in 2014. Prosecutor Vizina stated that his office authorized 227 felony cases in 2014, which was up from 208 felony cases in 2013. The Prosecuting Attorney's office handled 1,175 cases total in 2014, compared to 1,156 cases in 2013, which is consistent with previous years and not including child support cases. Prosecutor Vizina stated that 2014 was the first year the office operated without a part time clerical position, a Domestic Violence Prosecutor and a Straits Area Narcotics Enforcement Prosecutor. Prosecutor Vizina commended his staff and the Assistant Prosecutors for their dedication to the office. Commissioner Wallace asked Prosecutor Vizina to clarify about truancy law enforcement in the area. Prosecutor Vizina stated that truancy resolution is being addressed with the Youth Task Force. Commissioner Gauthier commended Prosecutor Vizina for his successful year.

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Grennetta Thomassey PhD, of the Tip of the Mitt Water Council, thanked the Board for the letter of support to Governor Snyder regarding the Enbridge pipeline. Dr. Thomassey distributed Tip of the Mitt Water Council information to each commissioner. Dr. Thomassey commented on the GAPS analysis located in the Board packets and stated that she hopes the analysis is useful. Commissioner Matelski asked Dr. Thomassey why the Cheboygan River dredging is being dumped into the lake. Dr. Thomassey responded that the dredging is a congressionally appropriated project to widen the river for the USCG Cutter Mackinaw. She stated that she is looking into the issue and does not have an answer at this time. She stated that she could not find a permit attached to the project to provide details. Discussion was held.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Lawson reported on several ongoing projects. Administrator Lawson reminded the Board that the Board Planning Session is scheduled for March 26 at 9 AM at Audie's restaurant. Administrator Lawson said the Community Development Department is working with MSHDA for the housing program to do a target market analysis of housing opportunities in the City of Cheboygan, Tuscarora Township, and the Tower area of the County.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Redmond presented the request from Mullett Township for support for Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Application to secure grant funding for the proposed Topinabee Beach Park parking lot expansion project. Commissioner Redmond stated that the letter requesting support was dated November 2014. Commissioner Redmond said that since that time the Board has developed a policy regarding what information is necessary from townships if they are requesting support from the County for township efforts, including public hearing minutes, letters of support from other persons or entities, and anything that would help to understand what the project is about. Commissioner Redmond stated that the necessary information has been received from Mullett Township regarding the aforementioned project.

Motion by Commissioner Gouine, seconded by Commissioner Wallace to approve the request that the Board of Commissioners provide a letter of support for Mullett Township's application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund to secure grant funding for the proposed Topinabee Beach Park improvement project and authorize the Chairperson to sign the letter. Commissioner Allor noted that the public hearing minutes only stated when the public comment opened and closed and did not include details of what was said. Discussion was held. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried with 5 yes, 2 no (Commissioner Allor and Commissioner Matelski) and 0 absent.

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Lawson presented the Northeast Michigan Recycling Collaborative Grant Support Letter from NEMCOG. He explained that Emmet County and NEMCOG have proposed a grant application be submitted through the region to apply for funding to build a four county education campaign to educate the public on recycling to increase participation and reduce container contamination within the system.

Motion by Commissioner Gauthier, seconded by Commissioner Gouine to authorize the County Administrator to submit a letter of support for the NE MI Recycling Collaborative Education Grant. Motion carried with 6 yes, 1 no (Commissioner Matelski) and 0 absent.

BOARD MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Commissioner Wallace stated that he was notified that the Northeast Consortium can no longer pay for mileage reimbursement and that it would be the responsibility of the county.

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Commissioner Wallace also noted that the County have could two commissioners on the Northeast Consortium and currently it is just him.

Commissioner Redmond asked Administrator Lawson to get the memo regarding a supervisory staff request for a pay increase to the Board and to place the discussion on the next Board meeting agenda.

Commissioner Brown stated that an individual in his district has served more than 50 years in township government. Commissioner Brown asked if the Board would give them a certificate of appreciation. Commissioner Redmond stated he does not see an issue with that.

Commissioner Redmond stated that the Board Planning Session at Audie’s in Mackinaw City will begin at 9 A.M. Thursday, March 26 and will run until approximately 3:30 or 4 P.M. at the latest.

Commissioner Gouine stated that the Board needs to address tightening up architectural specifications for quoting prices for projects because there were a lot of loose ends in the last project. Commissioner Redmond asked Commissioner Gouine to follow up with the Administrator.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Stephenie Jacobsen, a citizen of Inverness Township, commented that she really liked the report from the District Court and the Sheriff regarding taking on projects internally. Ms. Jacobsen stated that the Federal Government has no constitutional authority to make drug laws and individual rights are being compromised as a result. Drug laws are a state issue and the money being spent for a failed effort is increasing. Ms. Jacobsen stated she is comparatively against the Department of Homeland Security as there is no constitutional authority to make regulations. Ms. Jacobsen commented regarding the Tip of the Mitt presentation by asking who pays their salary and how are they overseen. Ms. Jacobsen stated she is opposed to the Topinabee improvement project because of a lack of informational transparency.

Carl Muscott, a citizen of Mullett Township, thanked Commissioner Matelski and Roberta for their donation to the Sheriff’s Department Canine Unit. Mr. Muscott stated that regarding the Topinabee project that the Board is endorsing a township government that is not operating as open government. Mr. Muscott also thanked Sheriff Clarmont and everyone else that gave annual reports.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Commissioner Gauthier stated that he loves living in a country where there is freedom of expression.

Motion by Commissioner Matelski, seconded by Commissioner Redmond, to adjourn to the call of the Chair. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent. Meeting adjourned at 12:32 P.M.

Mary Ellen Tryban
Clerk/Register of Deeds

Pete Redmond
Chairperson