

**Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners
Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 26, 2020**

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners was called to order via telephonic attendance by Commissioner Wallace at 9:30 a.m.

Roll called and a quorum present.

PRESENT: Commissioners Mary Ellen Tryban, Richard Sangster, Michael Newman, Cal Gouine, Roberta Matelski, John Wallace and Steve Warfield.

ABSENT: None

Also in attendance: Louis Vallance, Scott Swanson, Gil Archambo, Veterans Director Rick Wiles, Sheriff Dale Clarmont, Treasurer Buffy J. Weldon, Administrator Jeff Lawson, IT Director Dave Berg, Administration Assistant Kathy Morrow and County Clerk Karen L. Brewster

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

Motion by Commissioner Gouine, seconded by Commissioner Warfield, to approve the agenda adding B. Work Share Program Participation COVID-19 under 9) New Business. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Louis Vallance citizen of Grant Township questioned if the City of Cheboygan was going to have the 4th of July fireworks and hold the 4th of July Parade this year. Cheboygan County might be the only County that would have a display this year. He also questioned the status of the Cheboygan County Fair, if the Cheboygan County Cooling Shelter would be open for the public with the warmer weather coming and if Straits Regional Ride Buses were not in service, how to get a refund on the bus passes that were purchased.

SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT REPORTS - None

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Jeff Lawson gave an update on the County Building Status. The County Building remains open with limited public access. Although some employees will continue to work remotely, many will be returning to their building work stations this week. Staff has installed clear barriers in many departments and re-arranged some work areas. Employees must conduct a prescreening each day and are directed not to report to work and notify their supervisor if any symptoms are present. Cleaning protocols have been implemented.

Staff will continue to work with the public to provide service on-line as well as by phone. Appointments will be scheduled for services that cannot be completed remotely. All persons entering County facilities must wear face coverings in public areas and stay within 6' ft. of another person. All persons entering County facilities must confirm that they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms.

Administrator Jeff Lawson gave an update on Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The Planning Commission and staff continue to develop amendments to the zoning ordinance to permit flexible temporary outdoor sales, display and service areas, as well as permit additional temporary signage within commercial districts to provide businesses flexibility to operate while under social distancing recommendations. Once the language is completed, a public hearing will be scheduled.

Administrator Jeff Lawson gave an update on the County Building Repairs. After discussion with the Treasurer, another option has been identified to complete repair of the vault wall that would convert the space into office area and potentially reduce the cost of the project. This option would remove the vault door wall and open the area up to the main office. The outer walls would remain in place with walls anchored to the steel beams of the building. As the engineer identified in their report, the outer walls would be structurally sound, but could potentially shift. The anchors would be installed to permit this type of movement. The engineer is developing a cost estimate to confirm estimated savings. Lengthy discussion was held on what procedure to use in repairing the wall.

Administrator Jeff Lawson gave an update on the Marina Fuel Project. The bids for the Marina Fuel Project have been temporarily suspended until confirmation from the State is received that grant funding spending is reauthorized for projects. Funding was suspended due to COVID-19. Once permitted, the project will be re-bid and a project completion schedule developed. The grant award to the County for project completion has been extended until May 2022.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Jeff Lawson presented the Indigent Defense Compliance Plan/Grant Application. Act No. 93 of 2013 established the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission to develop a system to provide indigent defendants in criminal cases with effective assistance of counsel. In 2017 the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs approved the first four standards for the indigent criminal defense system. The standards are:

Standard 1- Provide continued Training and Education to indigent defense attorneys.

Standard 2- Initial Interview- Defendant must be provided opportunity to have an initial interview with defense council.

Standard 3- Investigation and Experts- Defense counsel may seek licensed investigators or seek expert witnesses to defend client if applicable.

Standard 4- Counsel at First Appearance- Defense counsel must be appointed to provide assistance to defendant as soon as defendant's liberty is restricted by the court as well as counsel provided at other critical stages of the case.

The County must apply for Compliance Plan and Cost Analysis Renewal for approval by the MIDC to receive funding for the 2020-2021 Plan. The County must provide base cost funding in the amount of \$144,373.48 All cost to provide indigent defense above the base cost will be paid by the State of Michigan upon approval of the unit's indigent defense plan.

Motion by Commissioner Sangster, seconded by Commissioner Tryban, to approve the Cheboygan County Indigent Defense Compliance Plan/Grant Application for submittal to the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission with any required modifications by MIDC and authorize the Chair to sign. A roll call was taken. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no, and 0 absent.

Administrator Jeff Lawson presented the Work Share Program Participation – COVID-19. Due to COVID-19 the County has experienced a loss in revenue collection of over \$40,000 in less than two months. Continue revenue loss is expected throughout the remainder of the 2020 fiscal year. Participation in the Work Share Program-COVID-19 will allow the County to save on payroll cost while providing employee's with compensation to maintain wages. The program allows employers to keep employees working with reduced hours, while employees collect partial unemployment benefits to make up a portion of lost wages. Employees may also be eligible to receive the additional \$600.00 per week PUC payment until the end of July. Employee groups would be identified to be placed in the program with a weekly work reduction of approximately five hours per week for up to a 52 week period. An Unemployment Insurance Agency Fact Sheet was presented to the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Sangster questioned if the Union bargaining committee would be affected by this program and how much of the taxpayer dollars was going into these programs.

Administrator Lawson stated that the AFSCME Union was aware of the Work Share Program and was against using this program. Pursuant to the AFSCME contract approval is not needed for the reduction of hours. This would be a significant savings to the county of \$115,000 to \$140,000, but this is costing the Federal Government and taxpayers across the nation. An estimate of 25 to 30 County employees would be enrolled under the State Work Share Program. This program was only for hourly and not salary employees.

Commissioner Wallace commented that he was concerned with the morality of employees being on this program and Cheboygan County benefiting from it. The County would be paying people more to not work than to work. Correct?

Commissioner Warfield concurred with Commissioner Wallace and commented that Cheboygan County does have reserves if the Board does not decide to utilize this program. This is a bitter pill to swallow, but at the end of the day the County Board has to position themselves for a potential savings of \$140,000.

Commissioner Gouine commented that the employees would make up the difference working one (1) hour less per day and still receives the \$600. He also felt that employee productivity would still be up.

Commissioner Newman commented that the Administrator has taken a lot of time to do the research in making this recommendation to perceive with this avenue and he supported his decision.

Commissioner Matelski commented that she agreed with Commissioner Newman in that the Administrator has put a lot of time and effort into this and was in support.

Commissioner Tryban commented that she agreed with Commissioner Warfield in regard to it is hard to swallow, but if it saves the County money in the long run, it would be worth it.

Motion by Commissioner Warfield, seconded by Commissioner Tryban, to authorize the County Administrator to enroll identified employees into the Work Share Program for up to 52 weeks. A roll call was taken. Motion carried with 6 yes, 1 no (Commissioner Wallace), and 0 absent.

BOARD MEMBER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION - None

CITIZENS COMMENTS - None

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Commissioner Wallace commented that Board needs to get back into open session as quick as we can and schedule the Board Planning Session.

Commissioner Warfield commented that he would also like to move forward with the Planning Session as quickly as we possibly can.

Commissioner Tryban questioned if the Fair Board was going to meet anytime soon because decisions need to be made soon rather than later. Even if the fair wasn't cancelled due to health issues, if it takes place, doesn't draw people and loses money, then who would bear the expense. She stated that Otsego County, Montmorency County and Ionia Free Fair all have been cancelled and she heard that the Emmet County Fair was going to be cancelled. Also the 4th of July fireworks have been cancelled in other cities. With the Cheboygan fireworks being held at the fairgrounds, the property across the street is always jammed with people, who congregate there for more of the day.

Commissioner Newman commented that he believed that the Fair Board was meeting on June 1st via telephonic attendance.

Administrator Lawson suggested having a group of commissioners meet with the Fair Board President and the Fair Manager prior to the Fair Board's June meeting. This would be an ad hoc committee consisting of Commissioners Mary Ellen Tryban, Mike Newman, and Cal Gouine along with myself.

Commissioner Gouine commented that he didn't feel that the Fair Board needed to be prodded and he thought that they were trying to find out what they are allowed to do.

Motion by Commissioner Sangster, seconded by Commissioner Newman, to adjourn to the call of the chairperson. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent. A roll call vote was taken. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Karen L. Brewster
County Clerk/Register

John B. Wallace
Chairperson of Board of Commissioners