

**CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
AUGUST 23, 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.

Commissioner Redmond added an agenda item under New Business for Item B *Secondary Road Patrol Grant Application*.

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

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

John Kurczewski, a citizen of Tuscarora Township, addressed the Board to state that it was unacceptable and morally reprehensible that the Board chose not to support State Representatives Smart Meter bill. Mr. Kurczewski stated that citizens cannot go to another electric company and the Smart Meters are unsafe for citizens. Mr. Kurczewski stated that the Attorney General's office stated that the new Smart Meters present no benefits to users and there are hackers that that hack into digital meters and affect many digital meters at once. Mr. Kurczewski stated that he wants the Board to take up another resolution and vote again.

Jamie Chimner, a citizen of the City of Cheboygan, addressed the Board to state that she is not the only one who needs an analog meter and that there are people in the community who suffer worse than she does. Ms. Chimner stated that she is very disappointed in the Board and thanked the two Commissioners who did vote in support of the resolution. Ms. Chimner stated that 41 other communities have supported resolutions like it. Ms. Chimner said she hasn't had electricity for a year and no one has checked on her to see how she is doing.

Linda Rogers, a citizen of Beaugrand Township, stated that she was recently appointed to the Cheboygan County Economic Development Corporation and she wanted to introduce herself to the Board. Commissioner Redmond stated that the EDC will become active within the next month.

**SCHEDULED VISITORS**

Dallas Hyde, Director of Cheboygan Life Support Systems, presented an update on Cheboygan Life Support Systems. Mr. Hyde gave a brief background on the ambulance millage and that they need to set the millage rate back up to .25 mills. Mr. Hyde stated that the millage helps to pay for equipment purchases and wages. Mr. Hyde stated that Cheboygan Life Support Systems was becoming more of a training center for new EMS staff and the wages were not competitive but they are becoming gradually more competitive. Mr. Hyde stated that Cheboygan Life Support Systems loses some staff to nursing careers because nursing is a two-year degree that starts them out at \$30/hour compared with the \$16/hour that is paid for EMS. Mr. Hyde discussed the Cheboygan Life Support System Capital Improvement Plan regarding the main purchases they

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need to make. Mr. Hyde stated that one of the biggest impacts on Cheboygan Life Support Systems was the closing of the Cheboygan hospital because the number of ambulance transfers to Petoskey hospital increased substantially and that they stay very busy. Mr. Hyde stated that one of the biggest expenses they are facing is the ambulance replacement as they hope to replace one ambulance per year. Mr. Hyde stated that the ambulances put on about 76,000 miles per year and that their oldest ambulance has over 300,000 miles on it. Mr. Hyde stated that without the ambulance millage that Cheboygan Life Support Systems would have to decrease services and they would not be able to meet demand.

Commissioner Gauthier asked for clarification on the number of patients that are initially delivered to Cheboygan hospital and then transported to Petoskey hospital. Mr. Hyde stated that there is a transport matrix and that certain patients based on their condition are transported directly to Petoskey or go to Cheboygan for stabilization or release. Mr. Hyde stated that over 80% of patients in Indian River go straight to Petoskey hospital and others go to Gaylord hospital.

Commissioner Gouine asked about the amount of capital that will need to be invested for new communication radios. Mr. Hyde stated that it is really just a guess at this point because everyone is considering 800 megahertz radios and that hopefully there would be a grant in place. Mr. Hyde stated that normally they have to replace a radio every few years but because of the narrow banding issue they have had to replace all of the radios all at once four or five years ago and replacing all of the radios at once to 800 megahertz is going to be very expensive. Mr. Hyde stated that CCE is looking into the issue and he is on the committee as well.

Commissioner Brown asked what the Cheboygan Life Support System operations look like in St. Ignace. Mr. Hyde explained that Cheboygan Life Support System does the billing for the ambulance company up there and that they pay for any shortfalls and in return they pay Cheboygan Life Support System a quarter of their contract fees. Commissioner Brown stated that he rode in a Cheboygan Life Support System ambulance this summer and that everyone did a great job.

Commissioner Allor asked what level of participation that Cheboygan Life Support System gets with the subscription plan they offer. Mr. Hyde stated that not a lot of people subscribe in Cheboygan as do people in smaller communities and that they usually break even in Cheboygan.

Commissioner Matelski asked if they have many calls to pick up someone from the jail. Mr. Hyde stated that they do not get a lot of calls; possibly 10 – 15 calls per year where they actually transport someone.

Commissioner Redmond stated that he appreciates all of the hard work that Mr. Hyde and his staff and their Board of Directors do. Commissioner Redmond stated that things are running very smoothly and that it is critical for the millage to come back up to .25 mills in November after election to keep operations running.

Andy Hayes, Director of the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, presented an update on Northern Lakes Economic Alliance. Mr. Hayes stated that NLEA is an alliance of many organizations that come together all heading in the same direction. Mr. Hayes stated that NLEA is a private non-profit corporation representing a partnership between Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Cheboygan counties who provide the funding for NLEA. Mr. Hayes stated that the mission of NLEA is to help companies and local governments to retain and create quality jobs in the area. Mr. Hayes stated that the NLEA offices are located in Boyne City, MI and that there is a 28-member Board of Directors including Commissioner Bruce Gauthier, Jim Granger, Sue Eno, Jeff Lawson, and Steve Schnell appointed by Cheboygan County. Mr. Hayes stated that in regards to economic development that what happens in one county affects what happens in the other counties and that 1 out of 10 people in the region live in one county and work in another county. Mr. Hayes stated that NLEA is successful because economic development, community development and entrepreneurial support working all together out of necessity in rural Northern Michigan and it

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works better. Mr. Hayes stated that there are strong chamber of commerce partnerships; 9 chambers within 4 county region. Mr. Hayes stated that potential business could walk into any chambers office and they can help and get ahold of the NLEA. Mr. Hayes stated that the business research stations are successful and the NLEA website has lots of tools for businesses, business planning, marketing, etc. Mr. Hayes stated that the NLEA sets out publication tools including strategic plans, newsletters, president's reports, annual reports and staff project reports. Mr. Hayes stated that NLEA needs companies producing "base jobs"; companies that produce base jobs are from a company that makes something outside of the region and bring new money into the area like Moran Iron Works, Ryba Marine and LINK in this area. Mr. Hayes stated that NLEA holds growth company roundtables 4 times a year where companies can come and share ideas and what they are learning about peer-to-peer. Mr. Hayes stated that the roundtables are a great way for businesses to develop relationships. Mr. Hayes stated that the NLEA has a mobile training lab that goes to the high schools and the colleges. Mr. Hayes stated that Straits Area Federal Credit Union reconstruction won project of the year.

Commissioner Gauthier asked about NLEA staff member Bethany. Mr. Hayes stated that Bethany was leaving the NLEA.

Commissioner Matelski asked about the accuracy of the ratio in the presentation that claims that the population within the NLEA region is 108,000 and that there are 13,000 businesses. Mr. Hayes stated that the data was from the census bureau and they are counting every possible person. Mr. Hayes stated that there are 130-150 companies in the area providing base jobs.

Commissioner Allor asked how often the mobile training center is utilized. Mr. Hayes stated that they are used constantly and goes wherever it is needed. Mr. Hayes stated that it goes to high schools for vocational program training. Commissioner Allor asked about how often the business resource/research centers are utilized. Mr. Hayes stated that they are used every day but that it is difficult to track the usage.

Commissioner Redmond commented that the latest concerns surround the arrival of the Meijer's coming to Cheboygan and when it will occur and that the City of Cheboygan Council is ready to approve the extension of the water main out to the site. Commissioner Redmond thanked Mr. Hayes for the presentation and for what NLEA does for Cheboygan County.

### ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Lawson stated that CCE 9-1-1 is working on a report with the steering committee to analyze the change in technology for the need to change to the 800 megahertz radios. Administrator Lawson stated that the biggest concern is how they would be paid for and that over the next few months the committee will work with staff and figure out how to pay for it. Administrator Lawson stated that the Finance Director would be heavily involved with that. Administrator Lawson stated that it will be quite expensive and that there may be grant opportunities for fire services. Commissioner Allor sought clarification about the terms being used for this technology. Administrator Lawson stated that that is why we want the report to answer the gray areas because there are a lot of agencies that need to understand this better and we need to know why we need to transfer to a new technology. Commissioner Allor asked if the 800 megahertz frequency comes into play with the narrow banding. Administrator Lawson stated that trying to communicate through buildings is where there were complaints. Sheriff Clarmont stated that bottom line is that the federal government is going to mandate narrow banding again and they need to analyze a cost differential to fix the radios again or just go to another system and right now it is going to be more cost efficient to switch to 800 megahertz system then it is to stay on the VHF system because it is putting a band aid on what is going to get worse in the future. Sheriff Clarmont stated that the 800 megahertz system is the extreme high frequency and narrow banding only occurs under the VHF system and the 800 megahertz system will not be affected by the federal narrow banding. Administrator Lawson stated that the purpose of the research is to analyze all of this information and present it in a report. Administrator Lawson stated that part of

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the report will show the requirements of the demand being put on the system and what backup would be available if the 800 megahertz system were to go down and how things could be paid for.

Administrator Lawson stated that the Economic Development Corporation goals and objectives were reviewed at the spring work session and that the Community Development staff scheduled to have a meeting with the new EDC board. Commissioner Gauthier asked why the EDC Board is not meeting as an individual board. Administrator Lawson stated that they are meeting with Community Development staff first to go over goals and objectives.

Administrator Lawson stated that regarding the jail expansion study that there are four architecture groups interested in looking at the jail and developing a proposal for a space needs assessment, preliminary site plan and construction cost estimate for expansion of the jail to provide a kitchen facility, equipment and vehicle storage as well as construction of additional cells. Administrator Lawson stated that the Request for Proposals will be opened and reviewed by the end of the month and then he'll come forth with a recommendation.

**OLD BUSINESS** – None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Finance Director Kari Kortz presented the State Fiscal Year 2017 – 2021 Title IV-E (Abuse & Neglect) Reimbursement Program.

**Motion** by Commissioner Gauthier, seconded by Commissioner Gouine to approve agreement number PROFC17-16001 between the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Cheboygan County and authorize the Chairperson to sign. Furthermore, authorize the Chairperson to sign any forthcoming agreements or required documentation upon the review and approval of the Finance Director, and the Cheboygan County legal counsel, if applicable including submission of the FY 2017-2021 Reimbursement Program using Electronic Payment Request (EPR) system on behalf of the Board Chairperson. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

Finance Director Kari Kortz presented the Secondary Road Patrol and Traffic Accident Prevention Grant Application. Ms. Kortz stated that the application is due by September 1, 2016 and was just received a few weeks ago.

**Motion** by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Wallace to approve the FY 2017 Secondary Road Patrol Grant Application. A roll call vote was taken. Motion approved with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

**BOARD MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION** - None

### **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Jamie Chimner, a citizen of the City of Cheboygan, addressed the Board to say that there are 21 empty business storefronts in downtown Cheboygan – now including Zany Kitchen. Mr. Chimner stated that she was the Executive Secretary for Chamber of Commerce in Montmorency County and the people that “just make things in their garage” can make good money and can hire other people to help them. Ms. Chimner stated that Main Street is embarrassing and she dealt with this in Lewiston and brought people in and if one person can run the Chamber of Commerce and run the craft shows that others can too.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Matelski commented that the County should address whether they are in need of an animal control ordinance and it's relation to the money paid by the townships for animal control. Commissioner Matelski asked if the County has an animal control ordinance. Commissioner Matelski noted that when he was a township supervisor he was under the understanding that it was the townships responsibility for animal control and that the townships could not donate money. Administrator Lawson stated that the first documentation after the change in state legislation was in 1972, and there is not an ordinance in the County in response to that but that we should probably have an ordinance in place. Administrator Lawson stated that the County has operations for the enforcement side of animal control through the Sheriff's Department but he is not sure how that translates over to the prosecutorial side of it. Administrator Lawson stated that township units can create their own ordinance so that they were not under a County ordinance but legal counsel could have to confirm that. Administrator Lawson stated that there is a 25 year long-term operational agreement with the Humane Society but the County should probably adopt an ordinance based on the 1972 legislation. Commissioner Matelski asked if a County ordinance would make the townships off the hook. Administrator Lawson was not sure if a township has an ordinance for animal control if they are not responsible for animal control at the end of the day. Commissioner Matelski stated that the County needs to look into it because it is working fine right now except the townships need something to base their payments to the Humane Society on. Commissioner Wallace commented that he thought the County has a contract with the Humane Society.

Commissioner Brown commented that in the absence of the townships providing animal control that the County provides it. Commissioner Allor noted that donations from townships are illegal. Administrator Lawson stated that the mission of the legislation in 1972 was to centralize animal control to the county but there's nothing that mandates it and by practice the counties picked up animal control but not by direction of an ordinance. Administrator Lawson stated that if the county stopped providing animal control tomorrow that there would be an animal control issue in the County.

Commissioner Matelski questioned the use/need of Smart Meters. Commissioner Matelski stated that electric companies are going to need Smart Meters to regulate the flow of power. Commissioner Matelski commented on an article he read about plant closures and Consumers Energy operating solar facilities. Commissioner Matelski noted that we could be facing a crisis regarding electricity shortages with the closure of coal fired plants and a shift in focus to renewable energy.

Commissioner Wallace commented that he left a "report card" for Michigan Works on everyone's desk.

Commissioner Redmond reminded the Board that there is an Elected Officials meeting to discuss budget issues on August 24 at the County Building.

**Motion** by Commissioner Matelski, seconded by Commissioner Brown, to adjourn to the call of the Chair. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:35 AM.

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Mary Ellen Tryban  
County Clerk/Register

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Pete Redmond  
Chairperson