



CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

August 24, 2023

5:15 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – *Chair Jones*
2. **INVOCATION** – *Commissioner Lawrence*
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – *Commissioner Locke*
4. **ROLL CALL** - *Clerk/Register Monica McMichael*
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT** (limit 3 minutes/person)
6. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** – *Commissioner Laylin*
7. **RECOGNITIONS**
8. **PRESENTATIONS**
9. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
10. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **M-128-23** – Motion to approve Letter of Intent with County as Co-Applicant with Market Van Buren for Round 2 of Michigan Department of Agriculture’s Rural Readiness Grant.
 - B. **FY 24 Budget**
11. **ADJOURNMENT**



CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Matthew Newton, County Administrator

DATE: August 24, 2023

RE: MDARD Rural Readiness Grant – Housing Study

REQUEST:

Approve LOI with Market Van Buren for Rural Readiness Grant.

BACKGROUND:

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Rural Readiness Grant is opening for Round 2. The maximum grant award is \$50,000.00 with a minimum of a 20% match. We have had discussions about working to produce a county-wide housing study. This would be one of the priorities we reviewed in the Recommended Budget as well. Additionally, during recent County Leader's Meetings, we've heard feedback from local units that they are interested in partnering together on this sort of initiative as well.

The County was not eligible in Round 1 for the whole County as they had specific areas of the State that were designated. In Round 2, the entire County would be eligible. What is being proposed here is for the County to sign on with Market Van Buren as a co-applicant. Essentially, MVB would be responsible for the administration of the grant and would take on the fiduciary responsibility as well. This is similar to the way in which the Broadband Mapping Grant was approached. This approach also allows for increased flexibility with potential matching dollars from private entities and local units.

The timeline for the grant requires that a Letter of Intent be submitted on or before August 31st. After review, MDARD would send invitations to proceed with applications on or before September 25th. Then, the final grant application would be due on or before November 2nd. Please note, approval to move forward with the LOI, in partnership with MVB, does not obligate the County to any sort of financial commitment at this time.

The proposed LOI is attached for review.

REVIEWS:

Prior to submitting this request, this agenda item was reviewed by all impacted departments noted below: (Ex: Administration, Maintenance, HR, and IT)

Administration

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:

There is no financial impact with submitting the LOI. Any County matching funds, if proposed, would be evaluated in the application process if we are invited to apply by MDARD.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve M-128-23 to authorize the LOI be submitted to MDARD as a co-application between Market Van Buren and Cass County.



**Office of Rural Development (ORD)
Letter of Intent for Rural Readiness Funding Grant**

LEAD APPLICANT Market Van Buren				
MAILING ADDRESS 32849 E. Red Arrow Hwy #100	CITY Paw Paw	COUNTY Van Buren	STATE MI	ZIP CODE 49001
CONTACT PERSON Sarah Snoeyink	TELEPHONE NO. 269-215-4931		E-MAIL ADDRESS snoeyinks@marketvanburen.org	

CO-APPLICANT/PARTNER ORGANIZATION(S) (IF APPLICABLE) – ATTACH SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL CO-APPLICANT(S)/PARTNER(S) Cass County				
MAILING ADDRESS 120 N Broadway St	CITY Cassopolis	COUNTY Cass	STATE MI	ZIP CODE 49031
CONTACT PERSON Matthew Newton	TELEPHONE NO. 269-445-4420		E-MAIL ADDRESS matthewn@cassco.org	

INDICATE ELIGIBILITY FOR RURAL READINESS GRANT FUNDING (CHECK ONLY ONE):

- PROJECT IS LOCATED IN A RURAL READINESS GRANT ELIGIBLE AREA (PER GRANT PROGRAM GUIDANCE)**
- SELF-IDENTIFIED RURAL AREA (IF SELECTING THIS OPTION, PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF A FEDERAL OR STATE PROGRAM THAT CLASSIFIES YOUR AREA AS RURAL:**

Five of the 11 census tracts in Cass County are explicitly eligible for Rural Readiness Grant Funded per program guidelines.

The whole of Cass County qualified as a rural county per the 2023 MDARD Rural Development Grant Program (RDGP) [guidelines](#) and [brochure](#). In the RDGP, there were two criteria by which a whole county could be deemed a rural community eligible for RDGP funds: (1) the county had a population of 70,000 or fewer people or (2) the county was a micropolitan statistical area, which is defined by the OMB as an urban cluster with a population of at least 10,000 but fewer than 50,000 people. According to the 2020 census, Cass County’s estimated population as of July 1, 2022 was 51,403; therefore, Cass County qualified for the RDGP on the basis of being a rural county and not a micropolitan statistical area.

INDICATE THE COUNTY OR COUNTIES THAT THE RURAL READINESS GRANT PROJECT WILL SERVE:

This program will serve Cass County.

TYPE OF ORD RURAL READINESS GRANT PROJECT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- Cross-sector collaboration**
- Partnerships and Planning**
- Development Readiness**
- Rural Capacity Building**

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RURAL READINESS GRANT PROJECT

Summary: Cass County, in partnership with Market Van Buren, seeks to develop a county-level Housing Strategic Plan informed by a residential Target Market Analysis (TMA); the strategic plan and TMA will be used to catalyze efforts to develop a unified, county-level group focused on addressing the housing shortage through collaboration. Overall, this project seeks to support community and economic development by empowering local communities to effectively address the ongoing housing shortage.

Background: The TMA will identify the market potential for new and rehabbed housing units, migration patterns, target markets, and other data necessary to quantify the gap between housing stock and demand. This data will support communities in their efforts to attract new residents, new businesses, and residential developers. Barring significant, disruptive economic events, the TMA will provide valid market demand projections for 5 years; after 5 years, the TMA’s validity declines, but the data retains its informative value for up to 10 years to support local decision-making.

The Strategic Plan will build upon the TMA by reviewing existing county-level planning, zoning, and housing tools and policies to determine if current practices are aligned with the results of the TMA. The Strategic Plan will be shared with local municipalities and empower them to evaluate whether their zoning and ordinance policies align with current demand for housing.

While some communities may have the capacity leverage the TMA and Strategic Housing Plan to attract residential development on their own, most will not. Therefore, this project will conclude with formal efforts to develop a unified, county-level group focused on addressing the housing shortage through cross-sector collaboration in alignment with regional strategies.

STREET ADDRESS OR PROJECT LOCATION DESCRIPTION (IF THERE ARE MULTIPLE SITES, PLEASE ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS(S))

The entirety of Cass County will be included within the study, and each of the County's 21 municipalities will receive an individual TMA report detailing their community. These municipalities include 4 villages, 1 city, a portion of the City of Niles, and 15 townships.

Attached is a map which outlines Cass County and the 21 jurisdictions that will benefit from this project.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE HOW THE PROPOSED PROJECT MEETS THE GRANT GOALS (REFER TO “ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES” IN THE GRANT GUIDELINES)

Cross-Sector Collaboration: Community and stakeholder engagement across sectors, units of government, and local agencies will begin with a cost-sharing approach for funding; the intent is to pursue matching funds for this project both from the public and private sector. By capitalizing on economies of scale, every unit of government in Cass will have access to resources that would otherwise be unavailable for most due to budget constraints, which will support cross-community collaboration. Additionally, the effort to develop a unified, county-level group focused on addressing housing issues will prioritize engagement from local units, community organizations, and housing industry professionals; the objective of blending public, private, and nonprofit expertise will be to support cross-sector information sharing and collaboration.

Partnerships & Planning: The TMA and Strategic Plan will ready local municipalities to address the ongoing housing shortage by empowering them to create policy and resource systems that attract and support developer-led housing projects. Throughout the project, stakeholders will be engaged through interviews, community tours, and facilitated conversations to ensure local practices and existing assets are integrated into the development of the TMA and Strategic Plan. The project will conclude with collaborative meetings to discuss (1) TMA findings, (2) the Strategic Plan, (3) how to effectively leverage TMA data, and (4) establishing a formal, county-level group to address housing.

Development Readiness: The long-term outcome of this project is that communities will be equipped with resources they need to attract future housing development and thus address the ongoing, countywide housing shortage. This project will support cultivation of resources that attract development projects that meet local housing market demand and supply residential developers with the data they need to secure project financing through strong proformas.

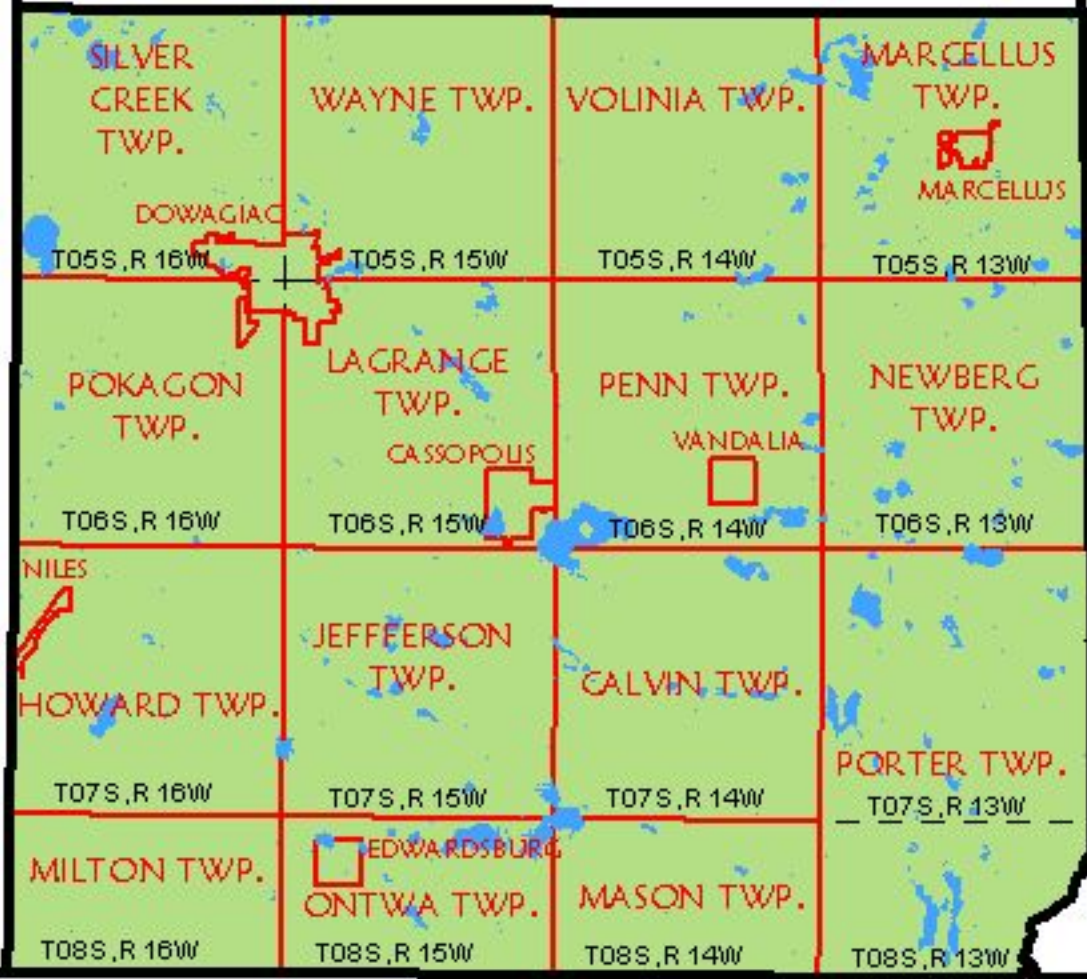
Rural Capacity Building: Market Van Buren will coordinate the project for all units of government. Because of Cass County’s rural nature, most local governments do not have the staff or capacity to engage in a project of this magnitude. Universal availability of TMA data and the strategic plan will catalyze efforts to develop a unified, county-level group focused on addressing the housing shortage through cross-sector collaboration; through collaboration and resource sharing, this effort will support expansion of rural Cass County communities’ capacity to address housing.

BUDGET: THE BELOW SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED (a more detailed budget will be requested if invited to submit a full application)

TOTAL PROJECT COST (inclusive of the below Rural Readiness funding request and 20% match)	\$50,000	ANTICIPATED SOURCE(S) OF MATCH: Several local employers have expressed interest in providing matching funds; public funds will be pursued to subsidize study costs if necessary. This may include Cass County or local units. Note: Formal commitments will follow contingent upon an invitation to proceed with the grant application process.
RURAL READINESS FUNDING REQUEST	\$50,000	
TOTAL MATCH	\$50,000	

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CASS COUNTY



CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Matthew Newton, County Administrator

DATE: August 24, 2023

RE: FY 24 and FY 25 General Appropriations Act Resolution

REQUEST:

- 1) Determine which budget option shall proceed as the proposed budget.
- 2) Approve: A) Holding Public Hearing on Proposed FY 24/25 Budget and B) Adding Resolution for FY 24/25 General Appropriations Act to the September 7th Regular Meeting

BACKGROUND:

The Recommended FY 24 Budget was presented during the August 10th Regular Meeting. To adopt the budget, there are a few steps that must be completed. First, A Public Hearing must be published in a newspaper of general circulation throughout the County for a period of 10 days and a resolution adopting the budget must be adopted.

The goal here would be to finalize which budget option is desired by the BOC, approve for the Public Hearing to be held on September 7th, and add the Resolution for the FY 24/25 General Appropriations Act for approval as well. The draft resolution attached is based upon the Recommended Budget. If a different option is selected or any revisions are requested by the Board of Commissioners, those would be incorporated into the final draft of the proposed budget and the resolution that would be presented for approval.

Once an option is determined, we can move forward with printing a copy of the proposed budget to be placed in the Clerk's Office, publishing the Public Notice in the newspaper as required, and plan to proceed forward with the formal adoption of the budget. Again, please note, the resolution adopting the FY 24 Budget must be completed prior to September 30th.

REVIEWS:

Prior to submitting this request, this agenda item was reviewed by all impacted departments noted below: (Ex: Administration, Maintenance, HR, and IT)

Administration

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:

The FY 24 and FY 25 General Appropriations Act establishes the budget for all County Funds for the upcoming year.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) Determine which Budget option should move forward as the Final Draft Budget.
- 2) Approve for a Public Hearing to be held and the FY 24 and FY 25 General Appropriations Act Resolution be added to the Agenda under New Business for the September 7th Regular Meeting.

CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

R-###-23

FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND FISCAL YEAR 2025 GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT

WHEREAS, the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act (Public Act 2 of 1968) provides a system of unified procedures for the preparation and execution of budgets for units of local government; and

WHEREAS, the County Administrator has prepared a recommended budget as required by Public Act 2; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Board of Commissioners to provide for the solvency of county fiscal operations by adopting an Appropriations Act as required by law; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners, in accordance with the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, held a public hearing on the FY 2024 and FY 2025 budget on September 7, 2023, after proper notice was published in a newspaper of general circulation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Cass County Board of Commissioners that this General Appropriations Act is adopted for October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024 and October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025 and provides by departmental activity, the budgets as approved and amended by the Board this date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this General Appropriations Act reflects the application of \$1,281,931.00 and \$2,423,561.00 respectively from the General Fund fund balance for a FY 2022-2023 and FY 2023-2024 balanced budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the budgets of the Other Funds as attached; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this budget reflects a reasonable allocation of available resources to the various County departments, boards, and agencies, and allows for all mandated services, programs, and activities to be performed at or above reasonable, necessary, and serviceable levels; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that every appropriation is subject to all County policies as well as the conditions set forth in this resolution and that any modification, addition, or deletion, of such amounts hereby adopted shall be done in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Board of Commissioners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners grants authority to appointed Boards and Commissions to manage their assigned budgets as adopted herein; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is understood that revenues and expenses may vary from those which are currently contemplated and may be changed from time to time by the Board of Commissioners during the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years as deemed necessary. Consequently, there may be a need to increase or decrease various portions of the approved budget and/or impose a hiring freeze and/or impose reductions in force due to unforeseen financial changes; therefore, the Board of Commissioners reserves the right to impose a hiring freeze at any time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those positions included in the budget and programs which are supported partially or in whole by grant, cost sharing, reimbursement, or other source of outside funding are only approved contingent upon the County receiving the budgeted revenues. Upon notification that budgeted funding of a position or program shall not be received, the Elected Official or Department Head shall immediately notify the County Administrator and that position shall be immediately removed if funding is exhausted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Administrator shall oversee the preparation and maintenance of accounts in every office to enforce this Act as adopted and that the Board of Commissioners permits the County Administrator to execute transfers between line items of departments so as to eliminate the necessity for budget amendments except between distinct departmental activities.

ADOPTED THIS 7th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2023

ATTEST:

Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register
COUNTY OF CASS

Jeremiah Jones, Chair
CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS