

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**July 18, 2019**

Vice Chair Marchetti called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Annie File, Michael Grice, Roseann Marchetti,  
Robert Benjamin, Terry Ausra and Skip Dyes.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: E. Clark Cobb.

STAFF PRESENT: County Administrator Jeff Carmen and Clerk/Register Monica McMichael.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Benjamin moved, seconded by Commissioner Ausra, to approve the July 18, 2019 Committee of the Whole Agenda with the addition of New Business items 7. Discuss emergency purchase of A/C and 8. Future Committee of the Whole Meetings/Times. Motion carried by voice vote.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Discussion – Professional Witness Fees:** Administrator Carmen explained that Cass County was required to re-address sentencing for two juvenile life offense cases after the Supreme Court’s decision that juveniles could not be sentenced to life in prison without the opportunity for parole. Chief Judge Dobrich and Circuit Court Judge Herman requested a budget be established in order to pay the expert witness fees.
2. **Discussion – Data at 50% of cost to Farm & Home Publishers:** Information Systems Director Kerry Collins explained that in previous years the board agreed to provide electronic geographic information systems (GIS) data at half of the cost as set by the Board of Commissioners. The company again contacted the county to purchase the data at 50% of the cost. The data would be used to prepare a Cass County Plat Book to be sold by the County Conservation District. Discussion followed regarding for profit versus non-profit organizations as well as the difference between FOIA requests and requests for enhanced access data.
3. **Discussion – Establishment of authorized signatories for MERS:** Administrator Carmen requested that the board authorize the County Administrator and the County Finance Director to sign approving service credit for employees wishing to purchase additional years. Chair Benjamin

stated the change in process was a good example of an issue that did not require approval by the policy committee before presentation to the full board. He urged the board to realize that other items may be similar.

4. **Discussion – Radar units for Sheriff’s Office:** Sheriff Behnke asked the board to approve the budgeted purchase of four radar units.
5. **Discussion – Woodlands:** Commissioner Dyes explained that commissioners would vote on two resolutions at the July 18, 2019 Regular Board Meeting. The first resolution would remove the authority status of Woodlands while the second recommended that a consultant research the services, finances, needs, and facilities currently offered by Woodlands Behavioral Health and provide a report by October 17, 2019.

At the request of Chair Benjamin, Commissioner Dyes reviewed his knowledge of the history of meetings and communication between the County and the administration of Woodlands. Commissioner Grice went on to offer his concerns with services and the lack of answers/information from Woodlands.

Chair Benjamin asked Administrator Carmen, and Carmen verified, that the County could help finance the purchase in order to reduce the interest rate on the purchase of the building. Administrator Carmen offered an overview on how entities may utilize resources of the County in order to save funds on projects.

Commissioner Marchetti asked Commissioner Grice if he had examined the Financial Feasibility Study. He had not seen it; however, he stated that Woodlands borrowed funds from Midwest Energy in order to pay for the study.

Chair Benjamin stated that a meeting occurred where County officials met with Woodlands CEO Kathy Sheffield. At that meeting both parties verbally agreed to “back down” for 90 days in order to conduct further research. He stated that after that meeting written communication from CEO Kathy Sheffield informed the County that Woodlands chose to moved forward instead of waiting for 90 days. Chair Benjamin stated he wanted a review of mental health services provided to county residents, which is why he requested resolution R-137-19 appear on the July 18, 2019 Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

6. **(M-128-19) A motion to approve the June 20, 2019 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes:** Commissioner Dyes moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to approve the June 20, 2019 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.
7. **Emergency Purchase:** Sheriff Behnke and Administrator Carmen recommended the emergency purchase of a new air conditioning unit for the jail as there had been major air conditioning issues. Chair Benjamin moved, seconded by Commissioner Ausra, to place Resolution R-138-19 on the July 18, 2019 Regular Board Meeting Agenda under New Business. Motion carried by voice vote.

**8. Future COW Meetings:** Commissioner Marchetti asked board members for their thoughts on eliminating the Committee of the Whole Meeting. Commissioner Ausra stated that agenda items could be discussed at Regular Board Meetings instead of at the Committee of the Whole (COW). If there is a major topic, schedule a work session. Commissioner Dyes stated he would make anything work. Commissioner Grice offered his concern that open dialog would not occur at a Regular Board Meeting. He also wanted to be sure that agenda items were received in time to conduct research. Commissioner File stated that discussion could occur at the Regular Board Meetings. Chair Benjamin asked that Public Comment occur at the beginning of Regular Board Meetings if the COW was eliminated. Commissioner Marchetti added that she would work with either decision. Chair Benjamin informed board members they should plan on at least one more COW Meeting to allow him and Commissioner Grice to update board rules and procedures.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

George King stated that Commissioners Dyes and Grice presented their argument for the Woodlands resolutions very well. He went on to suggest that first meeting of the month be labeled as a COW and the second meeting of every month labeled as a Regular Board Meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Grice moved, seconded by Commissioner Ausra, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Roseann Marchetti, Vice Chair

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Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register