

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

January 18, 2024

Vice Chair Barrera called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers on Thursday, January 18, 2024. Commissioner Lawrence offered the Invocation. Commissioner Marchetti led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: James Lawrence, Jeremiah Jones, Mary Howie, Samuel Barrera and Roseann Marchetti.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Ryan Laylin, Joyce Locke and RJ Lee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Chair Jones informed board members that two items would be added two New Business:

1. Friend of the Court Bank Depository Update
2. Ambulance Authority Discussion provided by Wayne Township Supervisor Frank Butts

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Howie moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the January 18, 2024, Cass County Committee of the Whole Agenda as amended. Motion to approve the agenda carried by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Jones moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the December 21, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes. Motion carried by voice vote.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director Rentfrow informed commissioners that the Financial Report was included in the packet. Commissioners had no questions.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. MSHDA CHILL Program

Treasurer Hope Anderson began by sharing a history of the Cass County Land Bank Authority. She then requested that the board approve a resolution in support of the Cass County Land Bank Authority applying for funding through the MSHDA Chill Program. If awarded, the funds could be used for two activities: homeowner rehabilitation, to preserve affordable housing units; and demolition/reconstruction/resale, to remove blight and infill with single-family housing for resale to income eligible homebuyers.

Commissioners agreed to move the item to the next regular board meeting consent agenda.

B. Master Plan Update

Vice Chair Barrera read the background provided in the Committee of the Whole Meeting packet.

Administrator Newton then explained that the county must update its Master Plan. He went on to explain that the Planning Commission requested quotes and reviewed proposals. After interviews and review, the Planning Commission asked the board to approve the quote from McKenna to complete an update of Cass County's Master Plan.

Rebecca Harvey, of McKenna, was present to discuss the plan and to answer questions. Ms. Harvey informed commissioners that additional charges should not be incurred as long as the project stayed within the scope of the proposal. If the Planning Commissioner requested in-person attendance for additional meetings, however, the county would incur additional fees.

Planning Commission Chair Dan Stutsman was in attendance to support the proposal.

Commissioner Marchetti requested that McKenna work with the County GIS Department to create maps instead of McKenna creating them.

Commissioners agreed to place the item on the next regular board meeting consent agenda.

C. Friend of the Court Bank Depository Update

Administrator Newton explained that the Friend of the Court (FOC) Office previously deposited funds with Fifth Third Bank in Cassopolis on a daily basis. With the closing of the Cassopolis Branch, FOC need to move their deposits to another bank. After research, FOC

decided to deposit their funds with G.W. Jones Exchange Bank in Cassopolis. A resolution would be prepared for board approval.

Board members agreed to move the item to the next regular board meeting consent agenda.

D. Ambulance Authority Discussion

Wayne Township Supervisor Frank Butts addressed the board regarding the shortage of ambulance coverage for nine municipalities within the county. He stated that the entities had formed an Ambulance Authority that had met four times. Since the previous company ceased coverage, the authority had contracted with SMCAS Ambulance to provide one ambulance to provide service for the nine municipalities. A second ambulance was expected to be in service on March 1, 2024, and would be stationed in the City of Dowagiac. Fees for services were charged to municipalities based on taxable value and population.

Mr. Butts went on to state that the authority expected a countywide emergency services millage in the future. He explained that a countywide millage would not affect current services. It would fund current services as well as provide funding for new services for municipalities in need of coverage.

CLOSED SESSION

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jones moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Approved: _____
Date

Vice-Chair Samuel Barrera

Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register