

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

February 17, 2023

The County Board of Commissioners gathered for a workshop on Friday, February 17, 2023, at the Edward Lowe Center Tower of Tomorrow.

Chair Jones called the workshop to order at 9:02 a.m.

Commissioners Present: Mary Howie, RJ Lee, James Lawrence, Samuel Barrera, Joyce Locke, Jeremiah Jones, and Ryan Laylin.

Commissioners Absent: Roseann Marchetti.

Others present: Sheriff Richard Behnke, Undersheriff Clint Roach, Clerk/Register Monica McMichael, IT Director Jodi Nestich, Administrator Matt Newton, Administrative Specialist Jackie Taylor, Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow, Deputy Finance Director James Tito, GIS Director Erika Espeland, Deputy Friend of the Court Director Ravan Bakeman, Road Commission Manager Bob Thompson, Economic Development Commission Chair Les McClelland, Market Van Buren Executive Director Zach Morris and Market Van Buren Programs and Project Manager Sarah Snoeyink. Other employees and guests entered and exited throughout the day.

BROADBAND AND ROBIN GRANT

MEC Chief Technology Officer Terry Rubenthaler provided a brief update on the MEC SMART Park before discussing areas in Cass County that lacked Broadband Internet Service. Mr. Rubenthaler and MEC Representative Jennifer Gilliam then requested the county match MEC at 25% of a \$2.8 million broadband project (approximately \$700,000). MEC requested a verbal commitment by February 28, 2023, with a letter of support by March 13, 2023.

Administrator Newton stated broadband was an important goal of the county. He went on to discuss timing and the budget cycles. Commissioner Laylin discussed calling a meeting of the ARPA Committee. The county would contact MEC after meetings took place with committees as well as affected townships.

CASS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Market Van Buren Executive Director Zach Morris and Programs and Projects Manager Sara Snoeyink of Market Van Buren provided an overview of services provided to Cass County, local townships and local businesses since 2020. Director Morris reminded commissioners that a good economy existed when business, community and talent were in a balanced state. Market Van Buren strived to keep those three entities steady for the areas that they served. Mr. Morris and Ms. Snoeyink went on to discuss future goals for the Market Van Buren and Cass County partnership.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, AGENDA FORMAT, AND BYLAWS

Administrator Newton opened discussion on the Committee of the Whole. Discussion followed with various ideas to format the Committee of the Whole.

Regarding the Board of Commissioners Agenda, it was decided to:

- Eliminate introduction of visitors at Regular Commissioner Meetings
- Under Approval of the Agenda, Add: Additions/deletions to the agenda
- The Board of Commissioners would hold a regular meeting the first Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m.
- The Board of Commissioners would hold a Committee of the Whole the third Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m.
- A special meeting would be called for non-routine and time-sensitive matters

The Board agreed on the following regarding meeting minutes:

- The minutes would reflect that Public Comment occurred and that Board Members Comments or Announcements were provided.
- A draft copy of the minutes would be posted to the county intranet until board approval. Approved minutes would be posted on the county website

A formal motion would appear at the March 2, 2023, Regular Board Meeting to approve the modifications.

The Chair declared a lunch break at 12:09 p.m.

Chair Jones led discussion on Board Member Goals and Objectives over lunch.

The Workshop reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

FUND BALANCE/BUDGET REVIEW

Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow led discussion on the budget. She discussed the various funds, noting those that are reserved for specific purposes.

Director Rentfrow stated that the audit was completed at the end of the fiscal year. The fiscal year end coincides with tax collection, which is when the county sees the highest cash value. She cautioned commissioners on the dollar amount that will appear on the upcoming audit as the total amount was not unreserved.

Discussion continued regarding cash flow and financial policies approved by the board.

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE REVIEW/UPDATE

Lindsay Reed, Architect with Intersect Studios, provided an update on the architectural and design aspects of the Historic Courthouse Project.

John Walsh and Andy Wenzel of PlazaCorp informed commissioners that, permit pending, construction was set to begin mid-March. Work was expected to continue for ten months with technology and finishing to follow.

The workshop adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

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