

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

April 2, 2020

The Cass County Board of Commissioner met in regular session on Thursday, April 2, 2020 via telephone.

Chair Marchetti called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Chair immediately informed commissioners that a board member raised concern over a violation of the Open Meetings Act. Chair Marchetti adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m. in order to allow Prosecutor Fitz to research the issue. The meeting would reconvene Monday, April 6, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

April 6, 2020

The County Board of Commissioners continued the April 2, 2020 regular session on Monday, April 6, 2020 via telephone.

Chair Marchetti reconvened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. Commissioner File provided the Invocation.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Terry Ausra, Annie File, Skip Dyes, Mike Grice, Roseann Marchetti, Robert Benjamin and E. Clark Cobb.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Phone attendees introduced themselves.

Commissioner Benjamin requested to make a point of information. He asked that all phone attendees mute their phones.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Items Only)

CCIEA Union President and Friend of the Court employee Tina Butler and Probate Court employee Linda Kramb asked questions regarding R-51-20. Questions included clarification on the \$1.7-\$2 million budget shortfall as well as the essential versus non-essential designation for employees.

County Treasurer Hope Anderson thanked Administrator Carmen for the public drop box outside of the County Building. She went on to state that she had an emergency plan for her office to continue to function and provide services to the residents of Cass County.

Judge Dobrich explained the requirements of the courts during the pandemic. She also discussed employees working remotely in order to reduce the number of employees in the buildings. She asked that everyone work together.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael read comments submitted via e-mail by Clerk/Register's Office employee Mary Parmley and Administrator's Office employee Patty Dohm. The comments requested clarification on R-51-20.

Prosecutor Victor Fitz thanked board members, Administrator Carmen and Deputy Information Systems Director Jodi Nestich for their work to conduct the remote board meeting. He also thanked commissioners for caring about employees as they were the strongest asset of the county.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Dyes moved, seconded by Commissioner Cobb, to approve the April 2, 2020 Cass County Board of Commissioner's Agenda. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Benjamin moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to amend the agenda to remove R-51-20 from New Business. Discussion followed.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (2) : Commissioners Grice and Benjamin.

No (5): Commissioners File, Cobb, Marchetti, Dyes and Ausra.

The motion to amend the agenda failed by roll call vote.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll on approving the original agenda:

Yes (6): Commissioners Cobb, Marchetti, Dyes, Ausra, Benjamin and File.

No (1): Commissioner Grice.

Motion to approve the agenda carried by roll call vote.

RECOGNITIONS

None.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice Chair Dyes moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, that the following items be voted on at one time by roll call vote and be considered as a consent agenda by the Board of Commissioners:

(M-47-20) A motion to approve Claims dated March 27, 2020.

(M-48-20) A motion to approve the March 5, 2020 Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes and the March 13, 2020 Board of Commissioners Emergency Meeting Minutes.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (7): Commissioners Cobb, Marchetti, Dyes, Ausra, Benjamin, File and Grice.

No (0): None.

The Consent Agenda carried by roll call vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Commissioner Benjamin furnished a committee report.

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

County Administrator Jeff Carmen provided the Administrator's Report.

SHERIFF BEHNKE PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

Sheriff Behnke informed commissioners that, with cooperation from the courts, Prosecutor Fitz, defense attorneys and community corrections, the jail population was reduced from 109 to 47 inmates. He thanked everyone for their help in keeping inmates and jail staff safe.

Sheriff Behnke went on to inform commissioners that several Sheriff's Office employees were exposed to an individual with COVID-19. He thanked the Michigan State Police for covering Cass County while county officers were quarantined. He also thanked the Cass/Van Buren Health Department for their help. As of the board meeting, no employees were quarantined and three that tested positive were recovering at home. Finally, he thanked his staff for their positive attitudes and perseverance during the outbreak.

ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATE

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

M-45-20

Commissioner Cobb moved, seconded by Commissioner Dyes, to approve the Amended Cass County Investment Policy. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Benjamin moved, seconded by Commissioner Dyes, to amend the Amended Cass County Investment Policy to replace ‘specific securities as listed and amended in M.C.L. 129.91’ in Section VIII paragraph 1 to read ‘all permitted specific securities as listed and amended in M.C.L. 129.91 Section 1 (1)’”.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (7): Commissioners Marchetti, Dyes, Ausra, Benjamin, File, Grice and Cobb.

No (0): None.

Motion to amend M-45-20 carried by roll call vote.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll to approve the amended policy:

Yes (7): Commissioners Dyes, Ausra, Benjamin, File, Grice, Cobb and Marchetti.

No (0): None.

The motion to approve M-45-20 as amended carried by roll call vote.

M-46-20

Commissioner Ausra moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to approve the Amended Cass County Deposit Policy.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (7): Commissioners Ausra, Benjamin, File, Grice, Cobb, Marchetti and Dyes.

No (0): None.

Motion M-46-20 carried by roll call vote.

M-49-20

Commissioner File moved, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, to approve the FY2019 Audit.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (7): Commissioners Benjamin, File, Grice, Cobb, Marchetti, Dyes and Ausra.

No (0): None.

Motion M-49-20 carried by roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

M-50-20

Commissioner Grice moved, seconded by Commissioner Dyes, to approve the revised Cass County Survey and Remonumentation Plan.

Yes (7): Commissioners File, Grice, Cobb, Marchetti, Dyes, Ausra and Benjamin.

No (0): None.

Motion M-50-20 carried by roll call vote.

Discussion – Purchase of ZOOM

Deputy Information Systems Director Jodi Nestich provided information on web conference solutions for the county. Discussion followed. Deputy Information Systems Director Jodi Nestich will work with County Administration to have a web conference system in place before the April 16, 2020 Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting.

Discussion – COVID-19 Update

Administrator Carmen stated that there were no significant updates. He did inform commissioners that numbers were expected to increase within 7-10 days as tests were more available in the region.

Commissioners agreed to place the COVID-19 Update item under Old Business on each regular board meeting agenda until the pandemic ended.

R-51-20

Commissioner Ausra moved, seconded by Commissioner File, to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Pandemic is an unprecedented Public Health Emergency; and

WHEREAS, Every day new Federal and State orders change both how we serve our residents and how we care for our employees; and

WHEREAS, The Governor's Executive Orders to shelter in place and restrict movements as well as group gatherings, have expanded their scope and duration; and

WHEREAS, Cass County, as all employers is required to designate essential Employees and Functions and Non-essential employees, in order to restrict movement and exposure; and

WHEREAS, The County and Courts employs 191 Employees and have deemed 124 essential and 67 as nonessential and the 67 nonessential represent costs of \$61,000 per week; and

WHEREAS, The County Finance Director estimates a \$1,700,000-\$2,000,000 budgeted revenue reduction the Current Fiscal Year due to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Cass County Board of Commissioners that a hiring freeze is implemented effective immediately and that Capital Purchases must be evaluated for delay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that The County Administrator and HR Staff Continue to develop options to transition Non-Essential and also Essential employees who may qualify for special consideration, off the County payroll, by availing themselves as many as 13 different options provided by Federal Law, State Order, Collective Bargaining Agreements, County Policies, for income and benefits continuation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Sick Leave Bank Sharing and ETO sharing is approved to provide 2 more options and flexibility to our employees and that County Services will continue to be provided by advanced call in but that County Facilities will continue to be closed to general public circulation other than by specific invitation, a court order or proceeding. And finally, that these Special Provisions will remain in effect indefinitely and will be reviewed as to ongoing need and impact monthly.

Discussion followed.

Commissioner Benjamin moved, seconded by Commissioner Cobb, to amend the resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 Pandemic is an unprecedented Public Health Emergency; and

WHEREAS, Every day new Federal and State orders change both how we serve our residents and how we care for our employees; and

WHEREAS, The Governor's Executive Orders to shelter in place and restrict movements as well as group gatherings, have expanded their scope and duration; and

WHEREAS, Cass County, as all employers is required to designate essential Employees and Functions and Non-essential employees, in order to restrict movement and exposure; and

WHEREAS, The County and Courts employs 191 Employees; and

WHEREAS, The County Finance Director estimates a \$1,700,000-\$2,000,000 budgeted revenue reduction the Current Fiscal Year due to the COVID 19 Pandemic.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Cass County Board of Commissioners that a hiring freeze is implemented effective immediately and that Capital Purchases must be evaluated for delay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that The County Administrator and HR Staff Continue to develop options to transition Non-Essential and also Essential employees who may qualify for special consideration, off the County payroll, by availing themselves as many as 13 different options provided by Federal Law, State Order, Collective Bargaining Agreements, County Policies, for income and benefits continuation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Sick Leave Bank Sharing, vacation and ETO sharing is approved to provide 2 more options and flexibility to our employees and that County Services will continue to be provided by advanced call in but that County Facilities will continue to be restricted to general public circulation other than by specific invitation, a court order or proceeding. And finally, that these Special Provisions will remain in effect indefinitely and will be reviewed as to ongoing need and impact monthly.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (7): Commissioners Grice, Cobb, Dyes, Marchetti, Ausra, Benjamin and File.

No (0): None.

Motion to amend the resolution carried by roll call vote.

Discussion followed.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (6): Commissioners Cobb, Dyes, Marchetti, Ausra, File and Grice.

No (1): Commissioner Benjamin.

Resolution R-51-20 carried by roll call vote.

Commissioner Dyes questioned the letter of resignation from Commissioner Benjamin received in December 2019 with a last day in office of March 31, 2020. Commissioner Benjamin explained that he did not submit an official resignation to the board.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Friend of the Court employee Tina Butler, Probate Court employee Linda Kramb, Friend of the Court employee Chelsea Olkowski, Friend of the Court employee Fern Smith, Friend of the Court employee Barb Daniels, Clerk/Register employee Amy Juroff, Clerk/Register employee Mary Parmley expressed their disappointment with the board and voiced concerns over R-51-20.

Judge Dobrich and Finance Director Becky Moore provided clarification on benefits and salaries during furlough.

County resident Ron McAdam thanked the commissioners and elected officials for holding a successful telephone meeting.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael read a comment submitted by Ontwa Township Supervisor Jerry Marchetti. Supervisor Marchetti thanked Equalization Director Tami Stewart and Clerk/Register Monica McMichael for helping set up the Township millage renewal resolutions for fire, ambulance, and police on the August ballot.

CLOSED SESSION

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Cobb announced the hazardous waste collection was moved to August 15, 2020. He would keep commissioners informed of any changes.

Commissioner Benjamin thanked the public for working through the call. He also thanked Chair Marchetti for her work to organize the call.

Chair Marchetti thanked everyone for speaking up. She announced the next regular board meeting would take place April 16, 2020. Commissioners should expect a new format for that meeting.

Administrator Carmen thanked Court Administrator Carol Bealor for standing by to assist anyone needing handicapped accessibility during the call. He also thanked Information Systems employees Jodi Nestich, James DeJong and Mike Davis for their work to support the employees and commissioners.

Chair Marchetti thanked Jodi Nestich and Prosecutor Fitz for their work to organize the remote meeting. She also thanked commissioners for their participation in the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Dyes moved, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Approved: _____
Date

Roseann Marchetti, Chairperson

Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register