

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

April 16, 2020

The County Board of Commissioners met for their regular meeting on Thursday, April 16th, 2020 via a Zoom connection due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Chairperson Marchetti called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Commissioner Cobb gave the invocation.

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: County Administrator Jeff Carmen, Chief Deputy Clerk/Register Heather Harding, Information Systems Deputy Director Jodi Nestich and Sheriff Richard Behnke.

PUBLIC COMMENT
(agenda items only)

Chair Marchetti explained to all of the individuals that had called in or were watching via Zoom how the “public comment” would work. She informed everyone involved that IS Deputy Director Jodi Nestich was on and would serve as the host. Anyone that wanted to make a public comment could raise their hand using a button in the program, Jodi would then unmute them and they could speak at that time. Chair Marchetti then asked the participants if there was any public comment. After a few moments, Jodi indicated there was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Ausra moved, seconded by Commissioner Dyes, to approve the Regular Meeting of the Cass County Board of Commissioners amended agenda. Chair Marchetti informed the Chief Deputy Clerk that all votes would need to be by roll call vote.

The Chair instructed the Chief Deputy to call roll:

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

NO(0): None.

The motion to approve the Regular Meeting amended agenda carried by roll call vote.

PRESENTATION

Chair Marchetti informed the board that Equalization Director Tami Stewart had joined them via phone and was available for any questions regarding the Cass County Equalization Annual Report. Commissioner Benjamin asked Equalization Director Stewart if the COLA was down to 0 and, if it was not, if she thinks it would happen? Equalization Director Stewart informed them that for the 2020 assessments the CPI was set at 1.9. She went on further to explain that it was set by the State and there was no indication of it changing. There was no further discussion.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

M-52-20 Motion to approve Claims dated April 8, 2020.

M-53-20 Motion to approve the April 2, 2020 Board of Commissioners Regular meeting minutes.

The Chair instructed the Chief Deputy Clerk to call roll:

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

NO(0): None.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

County Administrator Jeff Carmen provided the Administrator's Report.

SHERIFF BEHNKE PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

Sheriff Behnke reported that his office had three COVID 19 cases. Two of the individuals were back in the office and the last individual should be back on Monday.

He purchased 3 cases of reusable face shields for his staff. They were implemented on Wednesday for road deputies and corrections staff. Chair Marchetti asked if the shields were able to be cleaned. Sheriff Behnke informed them that they could be cleaned and reused. He also reported that car accidents were down due to people staying home; however, larcenies are up. There was no further discussion.

FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director provided the finance report. There was no discussion.

ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATE

Prosecutor Victor Fitz and Judge Susan Dobrich gave updates with regard to their respective offices.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chair Marchetti informed everyone that Van Buren/Cass District Health Department Administrator Jeff Elliott was unable to attend and that she would provide some information to the group. Updates will be available on the VBCDHD website every day at 3 pm with regard to COVID 19. The Health Department had laid off or furloughed 60% of their staff at this time. Director Elliott wanted Chair Marchetti to let everyone know he is available at any time to talk to anyone with questions or concerns.

NEW BUSINESS

R-54-20

CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2020 COUNTY EQUALIZATION REPORT

AS SUBMITTED

WHEREAS, the Equalization Department has examined the assessment rolls of the 15 Townships and 2 Cities within Cass County to determine whether the real and personal property in the respective Townships and Cities has been equally and uniformly assessed; and

WHEREAS, based on this examination and studies it conducted, the Equalization Department has prepared and presented to the County Board of Commissioners the attached 2020 Equalization Report; and

WHEREAS, said Equalization Report presents recommended County equalized valuations for each of the 15 Townships and 2 Cities within the County; and

WHEREAS, the recommended County equalized valuations were determined by adding to, or deducting from, the assessed valuations of taxable property in the 15 Townships and 2 Cities within the County, the amount necessary to arrive at the appropriate proportion of true cash value.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cass County Board of Commissioners accepts and adopts the recommended County equalized valuations presented in the 2020 Equalization Report prepared by the Cass County Equalization Department for a total 2020 equalized valuation of real and personal property of \$3,219,114,401 with the breakdown of equalized valuation by property classification as follows:

Agricultural Real Property	\$ 568,198,243
Commercial Real Property	\$ 106,754,383
Industrial Real Property	\$ 42,623,294
Residential Real Property	\$ 2,241,549,936
Developmental Real Property	<u>\$ 0</u>
 Total Real Property	 \$ 2,959,125,856
 Total Personal Property	 <u>\$ 259,988,545</u>
 Total Real and Personal Property	 \$ 3,219,114,401

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cass County Board Chairperson and the County Clerk of the Board of Commissioners are authorized to sign the report; further, that the County Administrator and the Equalization Director are authorized to represent Cass County at both Preliminary and Final State Equalization sessions, if deemed necessary.

Commissioner Dyes moved, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, to approve Resolution R-54-20. There was no discussion.

The Chair instructed the Chief Deputy Clerk to call roll:

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

NO(0): None.

Resolution R-54-20 2020 State Equalized Values passed by roll call vote.

R-55-20

RENEWAL – DRUG ENFORCEMENT MILLAGE

WHEREAS, there continues to be a serious drug problem in Cass County despite the efforts of law enforcement agencies and community groups to eradicate this problem; and

WHEREAS, the Sheriff and Dowagiac Police Chief asked the Cass County Board of Commissioners to place a request before the voters on 2004; and

WHEREAS, a millage of fifty hundredths of one mill was approved by the electors in 2004 to fund the operation of a County-wide drug enforcement and prosecution team, for our years; and

WHEREAS, the millage was billed in December 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007; and

WHEREAS, a millage of forty-eight and five one hundredth of one mill was approved by the electors in 2008 to continue to fund the operation of a County-wide drug enforcement and prosecution team, for four years; and

WHEREAS, the millage was approved and assessed in December 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011; and

WHEREAS, the millage was approved and assessed in December 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015; and

WHEREAS, the millage was approved and assessed in December 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is of the opinion that it is desirable to renew said millage to provide for continued funding of the successful drug enforcement team.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following renewal be placed on the ballot for consideration by the voters of Cass County at the primary election to be held on August 4, 2020 and that the form of the proposal shall be as follows:

In support of law enforcement, criminal justice, and public safety for the citizens of Cass County, including the areas of drug enforcement, prosecution, education and treatment; shall there be approved a renewal of up to .4805 mill levy [Forty-eight and five one hundredths (48.05) cents per thousand (\$1,000.00) dollars] which may be assessed against the taxable value of real and personal property in Cass County for a period of four (4) years being 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. It is estimated that the revenue collected as a result of this renewal in the first year will be \$1,075,640.

YES _____ NO _____

Commissioner File moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to approve Resolution R-55-20 2020 Drug Enforcement Renewal Millage. There was no discussion.

The Chair instructed the Chief Deputy Clerk to call roll:

YES(7): Commissioner Grice, Marchetti, Benjamin, Cobb, Ausra, File and Dyes.

NO(0): None.

Resolution R-55-20 passed by roll call vote.

M-56-20

Commissioner Grice moved, seconded by Commissioner Dyes, to approve quarterly budget adjustments for quarter ending March 31, 2020. Discussion followed.

The Chair instructed the Chief Deputy Clerk to call roll:

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

NO(0): None.

Motion M-56-20 approval of quarterly budget adjustments for quarter ending March 31, 2020 passed by roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ron McAdam asked if the Board of Commissioners or Administration would offer direction for the boards of Cass County on board meetings during the COVID 19 pandemic.

CLOSED SESSION

There was none.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioners File, Ausra, Cobb, Benjamin and Marchetti offered comments/announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Benjamin moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Roseann Marchetti, Chair

Heather Harding, Chief Deputy Clerk/Register