

**MINUTES OF THE CLARE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

Harrison, Michigan 48625

9/18/19
Unapproved minutes
September 11, 2019

Meeting was called to order at 9:09 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

District 1 Dale Majewski, District 2 Samantha Pitchford, District 3 Leonard Strouse, District 4 Jack Kleinhardt, District 5 Mark Fitzpatrick, District 6 David Hoefling, and District 7 Jeff Haskell.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

No Commissioners Absent

OTHERS PRESENT

Tracey Connelly City of Harrison, Marcus Atkins MIFSM Saginaw, and Steve Scoville Farwell Area Schools.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Strouse, seconded by Commissioner Majewski, to approve the agenda. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Commissioner Hoefling to approve the Special Board of Commissioners Minutes for August 21, 2019. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none motion carried.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Scoville, Member of Friends of Parks and Recreation of Clare County encouraged the board to look at other areas to cut and the revenue that comes in from the Parks and Recreation.

Dave Roe, former school teacher, supports Clare County Parks and Recreation, Clare County has two highways that go through and you need a draw, most of the draw is tourism, don't cut Parks and Recreation.

Tracy Connelly, HEADCO, Harrison DDA, City of Harrison, Harrison Market, Chamber of Commerce, informed the Board our economic growth comes from tourism, tourism comes from economic growth, and that is how to gain more revenue through economic growth.

Nia Becker Clare County Conservation District Forester was present to remind the Commissioners it is important to invest in Parks and Recreation, part of why people buy property and spend money here is because of the recreation in the area. Ms. Becker stated she moved out of Clare County to Cadillac specifically because there are more recreation opportunities.

Joy Simmer, City of Clare Parks and Recreation spoke in support of Clare County Parks and Recreation and the benefit of Parks and Recreation, people look at the recreation in a community when looking for a place to move to.

Leonard Strouse spoke regarding the millions of dollars that are spent chasing thieves and the Board of Commissioners have to cut good programs to pay for the thieves.


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Tracy Connelly spoke on one of the ways to change what Commissioner Strouse was speaking about is to provide things that people are looking for and to provide jobs through Middle Michigan and Parks and Recreation.

Christine Stevens, president of Harrison Chamber of Commerce commented on the improvements that have been made in the 6 years she has lived here and encouraged the Board of Commissioners to keep the Parks and Recreation. She also spoke about Middle Michigan Development Corporation and the great need to continue to grow our community and jobs.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick commented on the lack of revenue. There are good programs in our community, but the good does not seem to be generating income to keep up with the increase in costs. Costs keep going up, revenues keep going down, and he is not sure how the Board of Commissioner's offset that.

Dave Roe disagreed with Commissioner Fitzpatrick and believes that Parks and Recreation brings money into the community by tourism which supports the small businesses.

Tracy Connelly stated it would cost so much more for each city/township to hire their own Economic Developer. It would be much cheaper to keep Middle Michigan.

Commissioner Majewski believes Clare County is a highly taxes county and that is why people are not attracted to Clare County, and Friends of Parks and Recreation will still be active even without Clare County Parks and Recreation.

Bill Hoefling echoed what Commissioner Majewski stated regarding living on a fixed income and agreed something has to change.

Commissioner Haskell talked about the benefit to keeping Middle Michigan because they bring money and jobs to our community.

Administrator Byard informed the Board of Commissioners that if they cut Clare County Parks and Recreation that would eliminate the non-profit Friends of Parks and Recreation.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick reminded everyone that for every dollar put back in the budget that is a dollar that has to be taken back out from somewhere else.

Prosecuting Attorney Michelle Ambrozaitis pointed out that the County is promoting a private 501C3 with government funds. If you go to the County Website and click on Clare County Parks and Recreation, it takes you to a private 501C3 organization, the County is promoting this non-profit organization and that is not legal.

Christine Stevens spoke in support of Middle Michigan Development Corporation and how if we have jobs to offer when our kids grow up, they get jobs and stay here. Without Middle Michigan the jobs are not here.

Chairperson Kleinhardt thanked everyone for taking time out of their day to come in and support these organizations. The State of Michigan has sent Clare County a letter stating their fund balance is dangerously low and the State will come in and take over if the Commissioner's don't bring the fund balance up.

2019 BUDGET APPEALS

a. General Budgetary Overview/ Comments

Don Kolander- Director of Parks & Recreation
Director of Parks and Recreation Don Kolander thanked everyone for coming out and supporting Clare County Parks and Recreation. Director Kolander then spoke about all the mom and pop stores and restaurants that are supported by the dollars that come in from recreation in this area. Director Kolander handed out a packet and pointed out Clare County is one of the unhealthiest counties in the State of Michigan (79th out of 83). Clare County Parks and Recreation helps with this issue. Director Kolander listed the many areas that Clare County Parks and Recreation has helped improve the community and the many fundraising efforts. In the packet you will see a list of organizations that Clare County Parks and Recreation has donated funds to, then listed goals and objectives for 2019. Director Kolander included many support letters from community members in the packet that he handed out to the Commissioners.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Public hearings opened at 10:03 a.m.

1. Loan request to USDA Rural Development
Director of Senior Services Lori Phelps would like to purchase a facility in the City of Clare and remodel it for the City of Clare meal site for a total of a maximum of \$545,000.00.

2. Grant request to USDA Rural Development
Director of Senior Services Lori Phelps would like to apply for a grant to purchase a handicap accessible van for medical transportation for Senior Services.

2019 BUDGET APPEALS - continued

a. General Budgetary Overview/ Comments – continued

James McBryde- Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC)
Jim McBryde of MMDC spoke regarding the cuts that were made to MMDC a few years ago, and MMDC has never cut the services to Clare County. Pam O'Laughlin of MMDC spoke regarding the 4 new industrial buildings and 3 with no tax abatement which created 40 new jobs, 2017 Clare County unemployment was 9.1% and 2019 Clare County unemployment is at 5.3%, there is the return on your investment. Mr. McBryde spoke regarding the Wind Towers projects in surrounding counties and how much revenue will be lost if Clare County let's this opportunity pass by and Mr. McBryde is on top of this and involved in bringing wind towers into Clare County. Apex has already determined there are pockets in Clare County that are good for wind.

**Recess at 10:40 a.m.
Back in session 10:58 a.m.**

PUBLIC HEARINGS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS - continued

Public hearing closed 10:59 a.m.

1. Loan request to USDA Rural Development
It was moved by Commissioner Strouse, seconded by Commissioner Majewski to allow a loan request to USDA Rural Development for the purchase and renovation of a dining center/commercial kitchen to accommodate the increasing demand of senior meals for Clare County Senior Services. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Commissioner Haskell asked how much of a cost savings per year by purchasing, Director Phelps confirmed a savings of \$42,000.00 per year instead of renting at \$80,000.00 per year to Clare Castle, motion carried.

2. Grant request to USDA Rural Development
It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Vice Chairperson Pitchford to allow a grant request to USDA Rural Development for the purchase of a handicap accessible van for non-emergency medical transportation thru Clare County Senior Services. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Justice Committee

No Report

B. Health and Human Services Committee

No Report

C. Physical Resources and Economic Development Committee

No Report

D. Finance and Administration Committee

1. Replace Employee - Clerk
Clerk/Register of Deeds Lori Martin explained this position is one that is already in her budget, this is not a new position, and will be saving \$5,053.02 from the originally budgeted amount. Clerk/Register Martin confirmed she has 4 deputy circuit court clerks, 1 has retired, 1 is going on FMLA, that only leaves 2 court employees. Circuit Court and Recovery Court are in session at the same time that leaves no one in her office to run the office. Statute states she cannot close her office unless the courthouse is closed. Then reminded the Commissioners that she is running 5 less employees than the previous administration.

It was moved by Commissioner Hoefling, seconded by Commissioner Majewski to allow the Clerk/ Register of Deeds to replace a retiring employee. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none motion carried.

Prosecuting Attorney Michelle Ambrozaitis provided notice of a potential problem with the Michigan Indigent Defense program in regard to payments. The Judges are ordering the prior flat fee amount and the Indigent Defense is paying the attorneys, as require, on a \$90.00 per hour basis. Chief Deputy Clerk Stacy Pechacek also brought up the issue that no one is determining full or partial indigence, therefor when the State of Michigan asks for their 20% of the partial indigence funds collected, there will be no funds to hand over. Administrator Byard asked Clare County Attorney David Stoker for any insight. Attorney Stoker agreed in most counties the Indigent Defense Director determines complete or partial indigence.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/CONSENT CALENDAR-continued

D. Finance and Administration Committee

Mr. Stoker's opinion is that both Judges and Indigent Defense Director have authority and if one refuses then the county should make the other party make the determination. Administrator Byard will check with Barb Klimaszewski's supervisor and get back with the Clerk and the Board. Treasurer Beemer-Fritzingler also asked the Administrator for the Indigent Defense Director's financial records to match them with the County financial records because the funds that are going into the general fund will have to be paid back to the Indigent Fund and the Treasurer would like to see that figure so she can prepare.

Commissioner Strouse brought before the Board of Commissioners a travel and expense report that exceeded the county policy limits for lodging. The Board had discussion and after discussion and explanation from the department head it was approved to be paid.

Parks and Recreation and Middle Michigan Development Corporation discussion continued. Commissioner Majewski cannot approve bringing back these two departments when the Sheriff is still down deputies. Chairperson Kleinhardt questioned the Sheriff as to whether his department was down deputies because the Commissioners cuts and the Sheriff confirmed he is absolutely down deputies because of the cuts to this FY-2020 budget.

Commissioner Majewski pointed out the motion has already been voted on and passed. If the issue is to be reconsidered it must come from the person who made the motion. Commissioner Hoefling made the original motion to cut Parks and Recreation and Vice Chairperson Pitchford made the motion to cut Middle Michigan. Neither Commissioner brought their issue back to the table therefor the cuts remain in effect.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marcus Atkins Saginaw Senior Development Director for Michigan Institute of Forensic Science and Development Comprehensive. They try to look at counties budgets and offer comprehensive medical examiner services. They have a facility in Saginaw that is a forensic and toxicology lab as well as a morgue storage facility. Clare County was consistent in their budget from 2013 until 2018 at about \$60,000.00 per year, and it jumped \$20,000.00 in 2018, you would not see that with them. If you contract with them the price would not increase no matter what the increase in services are needed. Asked to allow them to come back for special presentation and ultimately submit a bid. Administrator Byard confirmed Clare County is under a 3-year contract with Mecosta County, and increase was because of increase in autopsies. Mr. Atkins left the Administrator with a sample contract.

Commissioner Strouse asked if the Board was still on track to take the Road Commission issue to vote in August. Administrator Byard stated the resolution has not been prepared yet.

It was moved by Commissioner Majewski seconded by Commissioner Strouse to go into closed session to discuss litigation – Lee Schunk vs. Clare County Election Commission, motion carried.

**Recess for closes session at 11:50 a.m.
Back in session 12:12 p.m.**

Chairperson Kleinhardt excused himself from the meeting during closed session at 11:59 a.m. and did not return.


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It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Commissioner Haskell to go into closes session to discuss union negotiations.

Roll call vote revealed:

Yeas: (6) being Commissioners Majewski, Haskell, Hoefling, Fitzpatrick, Strouse, and Pitchford

Nays: (0)

Absent: (1) Chairperson Kleinhardt

Motion carried

Recess at 12:14 p.m.

Back in session 12:43 p.m.

It was moved by Commissioner Haskell, seconded by Commissioner Hoefling to approve Units 3,4 & 5 collective bargaining agreements and authorize board chair to sign, motion carried.

Judge Joshua M. Farrell discussed the county travel and expense budget/policy with the Board of Commissioners along with all the hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant money he has brought into this community.

Treasurer Beemer-Fritzingler handed out an updated budget report that she prepared and let the Commissioner's know she had to put extra delinquent tax money in the FY-2019 budget because there will be more expenses coming from Probate and Child Care Fund. An amount has not been submitted yet.

Treasurer Beemer-Fritzingler also indicated that she was reviewing current FY-2019 budget during public comment and found several items that are over budget.

Commissioner Strouse updated the Board of Commissioner's that the Drain Commissioner will be coming to the next meeting asking to borrow more money for the drain project.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

Meeting Adjourned at 12:56 p.m.



Lori Martin, Clerk
Clare County Board of Commissioners



Jack Kleinhardt, Chairperson
Clare County Board of Commissioners