

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

*approved  
7-15-2020*  
~~Unapproved minutes~~  
June 17, 2020

Harrison, Michigan 48625

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 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**

Mike Haley Hayes Township, Dave Lawrence Greenwood Township, Bill Hoefling Frost Township, and Mick Haley Harrison.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Commissioner Strouse, seconded by Commissioner Majewski to approve the Board of Commissioners Minutes for May 20, 2020. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none **motion carried.**

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Administrator Byard read an unsigned letter that was left in her mailbox.

Clerk/Register of Deeds commented that in the past the Board of Commissioners has not allowed unsigned letters.

**COMMUNICATIONS LIST**

No discussion

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Reminded commissioners to ask constituents to complete the census. Administrator Byard gave a thank you to security and department heads for making the process of re-opening go smoothly. Budgets are in, but she has not had a chance to work on yet because she is working on several other things. Reminder there is a budget meeting scheduled for July 15, 2020. Several volunteers are working on the animal control millage and have raised money to have signs printed – thank you to all volunteers for all their work.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR**

Community Services Director Lori Phelps announced that all of her offices are moving to their new location at the Harrison meal site (just down the road). She is in the process of spending CARES money Senior Services has received, which is close to \$100,000.00. and is in the process of writing a grant for Senior Services that is due next week.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

1. Michelle Ambrozaitis – Paperless tracking system  
It was moved by Commissioner Hoefling, seconded by Vice Chairperson Pitchford to allow the purchase of a paperless tracking system in the amount of approximately \$60,000.00 with \$37,000.00 to be paid from the BJA (Bureau of Justice Assistance) opioid grant and the remainder from the OWI (Operating While Intoxicated) Vehicle Forfeiture fund and the Crime Victim Rights grant (non-general fund money). Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Commissioner Majewski requested to table the request until the Board figures out what they are doing with the budget. Prosecuting Attorney Ambrozaitis confirmed no general fund money would be used, and explained the change of scope with the opioid grant, which was approved by the BJA. She also explained the portion of the OWI funds that would be used. Prosecutor Ambrozaitis explained how the purchase will save the county general funds on technical service fees. **Motion carried**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS/CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. Justice Committee

1. COPS Grant  
It was moved by Commissioner Fitzpatrick, seconded by Commissioner Hoefling to allow the Sheriff's Department to accept the COPS Grant Award in the amount of \$237,563.00 for the next two fiscal years with the county to fund those positions once the two-year period has ended. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Community Services Director Lori Phelps explained that the Sheriff's Department was down 4 deputies at the time the grant was written. These deputy positions have previously been approved to be filled. There was a great deal of discussion regarding the budget and whether the county can afford to keep these two deputies employed after the grant expires. Director Phelps pointed out that for the next 2 years the county will get 2 deputies at no cost to the county, and save the county \$237,000.00, **motion carried.**
2. Homeland Security Grant Program  
It was moved by Commissioner Haskell, seconded by Commissioner Hoefling to approve the homeland security intergovernmental agreement between West Michigan Regional Medical Consortium and Clare County. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Commissioner Fitzpatrick asked for a brief description on what this is. Administrator Byard stated that the West Michigan Regional Medical Consortium is the fiduciary for the emergency management funds, **motion carried.**
3. Magistrate Request  
It was moved by Vice Chairperson Pitchford, seconded by Commissioner Fitzpatrick to increase the District Court Magistrate's wages by \$5,000.00 annually, on a temporary basis, to assist as the Court Administrator and Magistrate/Referee for Circuit/Probate Court with funds to be transferred from the Probate Court budget. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Part time Court Administrator Darrell A. Schlese explained this is a temporary solution, which could last a couple years until the right person for the job is found to fill the position. **motion carried.**

B. Health and Human Services Committee

1. Employees Servicing Medicaid Reimbursed Clients  
It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Commissioner Strouse to approve Senior Services to follow Executive Order 2020 Medicaid Provider L-letter (L20-28) by increasing the hourly wage for the

**COMMITTEE REPORTS/CONSENT CALENDAR - continued**

**B. Health and Human Services Committee – continued**

employees servicing the Medicaid reimbursed clients by \$2.00 per hour during the COVID – 19 pandemic beginning April 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 and authorize the back payment of those funds. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Commissioner Fitzpatrick asked if all of this money is being paid out of Senior Services. Director Phelps explained this is for the Medicaid waiver patients only, **motion carried.**

**2. Yearly Funding with Area Agency on Aging**

It was moved by Commissioner Strouse, seconded by Commissioner Majewski to allow Senior Services to apply for their yearly funding through the Area Agency on Aging. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none **motion carried.**

**C. Physical Resources and Economic Development Committee**

**1. Equalization**

**a. Contract**

Equalization Director Pete Preston explained how the change in staff structure in Equalization has helped in cutting the budget. This change required a change to the contract.

It was moved by Commissioner Hoefling, seconded by Vice Chairperson Pitchford to approve the contract with Preston Community Services LLC for Equalization Services to begin on August 17, 2020 for a four-year period and allow the Chair to sign. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, there was discussion that the savings would be over \$20,000.00. Dusty Merritt spoke on behalf of the UAW Union and the union does not agree with the elimination of a more senior employee by promoting a lesser senior employee. There was a great deal more discussion regarding the qualifications of the two individuals, roll call vote revealed:

Yeas: (7) being Commissioners Hoefling, Pitchford, Haskell, Majewski, Strouse, Fitzpatrick, and Kleinhardt.

Nays: (0)

Absent: (0)

**Motion carried.**

**b. Supervisor Position**

It was moved by Commissioner Fitzpatrick, seconded by Commissioner Strouse to move Tracy Brubaker from Unit 1, Non-Supervisory unit to Unit 2, Supervisory to the Deputy Equalization Director position. roll call vote revealed:

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


Nays: (1) Commissioner Hoefling

Absent: (0)

**Motion carried.**

**c. L-4029**

It was moved by Commissioner Haskell, seconded by Commissioner Strouse to approve Notice of Certification of County Allocated Tax Levy, with the Board Chair and Clerk to sign the L-4029 and authorize the spread of tax rolls. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none **motion carried.**

  
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**COMMITTEE REPORTS/CONSENT CALENDAR - continued**

**D. Finance and Administration Committee**

**1. Statutory Finance Committee**

It was moved by Vice Chairperson Pitchford, seconded by Commissioner Majewski to approve Statutory Finance Committee meeting minutes of May 18, 2020 and June 1, 2020 in the amount of \$64,713.26 and \$36,108.62. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none **motion carried.**

**2. Monthly Expenditures**

It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Vice Chairperson Pitchford to approve the expenditures for the month of May 2020 in the amount of \$1,679,972.91 with the General Fund expenditures totaling \$925,842.88. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, hearing none **motion carried.**

**3. Budget Adjustments**

It was moved by Commissioner Strouse, seconded by Vice Chairperson Pitchford to approve Budget Adjustments #20-87, 20-88, 20-89, 20-92, 20-93, 20-94, 20-97 and 20-98 in the amount of \$147,742.00, \$69,135.87, \$10,000.00, \$29,192.90, \$62,380.00, \$150,000.00, \$6,655.48 and \$65,536.26 to be distributed. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Commissioner Strouse asked for explanation on the newly added budget adjustments, **motion carried.**

**CLERK/REGISTER OF DEEDS REPORT**

Clerk/Register of Deeds Lori Martin reported that the ballots have been ordered and received for the August 2020 election. Her office will be testing and getting the ballots to the local clerks this week. Secretary of State is providing PPE for township/cities, but also encouraging them to purchase extra. I may be asking the Bureau of Elections for a grant on behalf of the county/township/cities for high speed tabulator, asking the board to authorize \$2,500.00 toward the purchase. The Board did not give an answer at this time.

**Recess at 10:08 a.m.**

**Back in session 10:18 a.m.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Chairperson Kleinhardt asked Treasurer Jenny Beemer-Fritzinger if any revenues are down. Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger responded that the Administrator has those adjustments, they do not go to the Treasurer until after the Board approves them. Administrator Byard confirmed that she goes through the budget each week and makes the necessary adjustments.

Commissioner Strouse asked the Treasurer where the county is sitting with MERS. Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger replied that Administrator Byard gets the reports on MERS. Administrator Byard has not heard anything from MERS.

Treasurer Jenny Beemer-Fritzinger gave an update on the current position cash wise on all of the funds. She also pointed out that she highlighted the note on her report that the Michigan Association of County Treasurers panel of foreclosure attorneys are highly recommending not to transfer any foreclosure excess to the general fund due to the legal expenses for current and potential federal lawsuits, which may jeopardize prior years proceeds and risk of changes to legislation which governs the use of excess proceeds. Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger then confirmed she gave the board this same information last year.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS/SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS – continued**

2. Honorable Judge Farrell – Employee retirement discussion.  
Judge Farrell asked for clarification on the retirement offers, specifically what is the exit date for retiring employees, would a department head be able to replace an employee if more than one employee from a department took advantage of the retirement plan, and what insurance plan are the retiring employees required to take and what happens if the cost increases or decreases after retirement.

Administrator Byard handed out a spreadsheet that shows the savings if a department was allowed to re-hire after an employee retires and takes the offer of the county continuing to pay the health insurance for 2 years.

Clerk/Register of Deeds Martin re-read the motion that was approved at the last meeting, which stated the employee must pay their own cost share, whatever that share is.

It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Commissioner Strouse that the person that wants to take the early retirement gets, you know, the two years' benefits reflecting what the current benefits would be at the county, and given a 60-day window once you commit to the early retirement you have a 60-day window for your benefits from MERS to start. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Commissioner Fitzpatrick confirmed that if the cost share increases that is what the employee pays, and if the plan decreases that is what the retired employee gets, **motion carried.**

Judge Farrell asked for the Board's thoughts on replacing a second employee from one department if two people take advantage of the early retirement offer.

Commissioner Haskell asked what the cost savings would be if one employee retired and what if two employees retire and one employee is replaced. Administrator Byard confirmed that if one employee retired the savings would be roughly \$84,000.00 for two years for an employee to retire from courts. There was no change in the decision

Commissioner Haskell left the meeting at 11:23 a.m.  
Commissioner Haskell returned to the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson Jack Kleinhardt reported that, since the letters to the editor after the last board meeting, his phone lit up like a Christmas tree. Chairperson Kleinhardt then stated that one of the things he got chewed out for was that he said he wasn't going to be around and you guys would have to figure it out. He believes they need to look at the budget and turn over every stone.

**VICE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Vice Chairperson Samantha Pitchford reported that the new budget won't be fun and they have been kicking the can down the road for years. Vice Chairperson Pitchford hopes that this year will be different.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Majewski has been attending the meetings he can. Commissioner Majewski would like a resolution from the board on House Bill 4029 to allow concealed carry without a permit in the state for citizens.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT - continued**

It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Commissioner Fitzpatrick to send a letter of support for House Bill 4029. Chairperson Kleinhardt asked for discussion, Clerk Martin reminded the Board if CPL's ended that would also end revenue coming into the county in which she uses to help fund a partial employee, Commissioner Fitzpatrick indicated he will talk more about the CPL fund later in the meeting, **motion carried.**

Commissioner Majewski questioned the Undersheriff about noise complaints and gunshots and the Sheriff's Department's response to the complaints.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick left the meeting at 11:31 a.m.  
Commissioner Fitzpatrick returned to the meeting at 11:32 a.m.

Commissioner Strouse stated that Mr. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Kleinhardt, and Mr. Majewski were mentioned in the letter to the editor and thanked the men for their job and stated they do a good job looking out for their county.

Commissioner Hoefling has been able to get back to some of his meetings, and believes the county needs to go back to two meetings – one workshop and one meeting and highly recommends those workshop meeting begin again in July. Hayes Township suggested to him the Board look into the financially distressed municipality grant, and look into some webinars on COVID financing that MSU puts on.

Commissioner Haskell said most of his calls have been about gypsy moth and questioned when that would be put on the ballot.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick wants some kind of a database set up for motions that pertain to policy and procedure. It's more difficult than it should be to find motions. He would also like to see the audio recording available to the public. Commissioner Fitzpatrick then went on to discuss the use of the CPL Fund and the Clerk/Register of Deeds county issued cell phone.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mick Haley spoke regarding his letter to the editor after the last meeting, commented on the need for the board to do research on agenda items prior to meetings, asked for meetings in the evening when more constituents could attend, and would like more efficiency.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Undersheriff Miedzianowski asked if the Board wanted his deputies to continue the screening at the door. It was the consensus to keep security handling the screening.


Stacy Stocking, through Administrator Byard, asked if Board of Commissioners would allow a drive in concert that is displayed on a screen on county grounds with no cost to the county. Commissioner Majewski asked the administrator to check with the insurance company to make sure their liability insurance would cover if anyone was hurt on the property. It was the consensus of the board that if the county's liability insurance would cover it they would allow it.

  
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Commissioner Strouse asked Administrator Byard if the commissioners gave up their per diem pay. Administrator Byard confirmed there is still per diem available to the commissioners. Chairperson Kleinhardt confirmed that any commissioner that wants to take the per diem, they are entitled to it.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

  
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Lori Martin, Clerk  
Clare County Board of Commissioners

  
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~~Jack Kleinhardt~~, Chairperson  
Clare County Board of Commissioners

*vice* Samantha Pitchford