

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

**Harrison, Michigan 48625**

*Jim 2/15/17*  
**Unapproved Minutes  
January 18, 2017**

**Meeting was called to Order at 9:00 a.m.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Present:** Commissioners: District 1: Dale Majewski, District 2: Samantha Pitchford, District 3: Leonard Strouse, District 4: Jack Kleinhardt, District 5: Sandra Bristol, District 6: Karen Lipovsky, District 7: Jim Gelios

**Absent: None**

**Others Present, Signing In:** Tom Pirnstill, Marty Johnson, and Peggy Dundas.

Clerk Lori Martin began the meeting by calling for nominations from the floor for the position of Chairperson.

It was moved by Commissioner Jim Gelios, seconded by Commissioner Leonard Strouse, to nominate Karen Lipovsky as Board Chairperson. Clerk Martin called for nominations three additional times and hearing none it was moved by Commissioner Jim Gelios, seconded by Commissioner Leonard Strouse, to close the nominations. Motion carried.

A unanimous vote was cast in favor of Karen Lipovsky and Clerk Martin declared her Chairperson.

Chairperson Lipovsky then called for nominations for Vice-Chair. It was moved by Commissioner Jim Gelios, seconded by Commissioner Leonard Strouse, to nominate Jack Kleinhardt as Vice-Chair. Nominations were called three additional times. Hearing none, a unanimous vote was cast in favor of Jack Kleinhardt for Vice-Chair.

It was then moved by Commissioner Leonard Strouse, seconded by Commissioner Samantha Pitchford, to adopt Resolution #17-01, Resolution for Electing the Chairperson to a One-Year Term.

Roll call vote revealed:

Yeas: (7) being Commissioners Strouse, Pitchford, Gelios, Bristol, Majewski, Lipovsky, and Kleinhardt

Nays: (0)

Absent: (0)

Resolution adopted.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was moved by Commissioner Majewski, seconded by Commissioner Pitchford, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Commissioner Strouse, seconded by Commissioner Majewski, to approve the Minutes of the December 18, 2016 meeting. Motion carried.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Marty Johnson welcomed the new Commissioner Sandy Bristol, the new County Clerk Lori Martin, and the new Chairperson Karen Lipovsky. He went on to recognize the grant that Jeanie Stewart worked to receive for Garfield Township along with input from Clare County Parks and Recreation Director and the match funding from Friends of Clare County Parks and Recreation to be used in obtaining that grant. He spoke of the many projects that Friends of Clare County Parks and Recreation help to fund and informed of the annual fundraiser scheduled for March 4, 2017. Mr. Johnson also spoke of the Frostbite Festival on February 18, 2017 and the Clare Chamber is having a fundraiser to get them into the Clare Depot at Brewin on McEwan in downtown Clare on February 10, 2017

Commissioner Strouse said that Governor Snyder mentioned the City of Harrison during his State of the State Address and the Rising Tide Project.

**COMMUNICATIONS LIST** None

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Tracy Byard attended the Veterans Freedom Park Snowball Fundraiser and it was a huge success. Administrator Byard also spoke of Maye Tessner-Rood being in contact with the original Rosie the Riveter who is now 96 years old and would have been in attendance if she were not hospitalized.

MERS pizza and planning meeting is set for May 18, 2017 at the County building for anyone in the County that would like to come in and learn about MERS.

Administrator Byard received an invitation from the City of Harrison for their Ribbon Cutting Ceremony scheduled for January 19, 2017 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to tour their new City Hall building.

Administrator Byard has been working mainly on the fixed assets getting them prepared for the auditors.

Commissioners asked at the last meeting for the DEQ report that they received. She then proceeded to read an email received from back from Terry Nichols which stated he received the report and the DEQ inspector Gary S. was at the last advisory landfill meeting in December, read the summary and gave Jim a copy. Mr. Nichols stated in his email the report said there was no justification for any of his complaints, there are no human health issues coming from Northern Oaks and the report is public record. Commissioner Gelios commented that another complaint was made in the same area regarding an odor, and the DEQ found it was caused from wet wood, sawdust, propane, and a garbage can. There has been no odor from the landfill according to the DEQ.

The County hosted Wellness meetings for 44North to educate the employees on the use of their new website to help the employees maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Administrator Byard noted that it was not put on the Agenda but Peggy Dundas was present to request severance pay from the Board. Ms. Dundas asked the Board to grant her two weeks' severance pay as allowed for in the Union Contract. It was moved by Commissioner Majewski and Seconded by Commissioner Kleinhardt to grant the two weeks' severance pay. Motion carried.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

Melissa Townsend the District Administrator for the Clare Conservation District gave an update of the gypsy moth suppression program. The egg mass surveys started in August 2016 and were performed in every township. It was determined that there was not a significant enough number of egg masses to consider a spray plot and are not recommending aerial spraying for this year. They are offering low cost gypsy moth traps for individuals to purchase in 2017 for \$7.00 at the Clare Conservation office in an effort to identify areas they are prevalent and limit the number of egg masses. Commissioner Kleinhardt questioned the presence of oak wilt and Ms. Townsend confirmed it is present in Clare County and urged him and the public to visit their website.

**CHAIRPERSONS REPORT**

Commissioner Lipovsky reported she did not make many changes to the standing committees. She appointed Commissioner Bristol to a few committees. Updates were made to date and times of some meetings.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Justice Committee**

It was moved by Commissioner Bristol and Seconded by Commissioner Pitchford to approve FY 2016/2017 Homeland Security Grant Program Grant Agreement. Motion carried.

**Health and Human Services Committee** None

**Physical Resources and Economic Development Committee**

It was then moved by Commissioner Pitchford, seconded by Commissioner Majewski, to adopt **Resolution of Intent #17-02**, to apply for financial assistance for FY 2017-2018 for our public transportation program, **Contract Resolution FY 2017-2018 #17-03**, which allows Tom Pirnstill to execute contracts with MDOT which are \$968,000.00 or less, **Resolution authorizing adoption and ratification of Contract Clauses Certification #17-04**, which governs how any transit project requirements apply and such clauses apply to all Federally funded contracts for FY 2017-2018, and **Resolution adoption and ratification of Public Act 51 to maintain an accessibility Plan with MDOT #17-05**, addressing accessibility for all residents.

Chairperson Lipovsky opened the floor for discussion.

Tom Pirnstill wanted to confirm that Clare County Transit is a private non-profit group that contracts with the Clare County Commissioners to provide public transportation and they seek no money from the County with the exception of the millage. Mr. Pirnstill proceeded to update everyone regarding their new Txt2Ride program so anyone can text their request instead of calling. They instituted a VIP program in which anyone over age 80 ride for free and veterans ride for just \$1.00. Clare County Transit installed 4 new busses last year to replace their aging fleet. There will be an open meeting for all residence of Clare County January 20, 2017 at the Transit Building from 2:00 – 4:00 to give an update on what they have done over the last year and a chance to talk about any unmet transportation that they think is needed in

the county to find out how they can better serve the community. Mr. Pirnstill also gave an update on the couple days the Transit was closed due to safety concerns over the icy roads. Lastly he updated everyone on the Ford Transit bus that will be used NEMT (non-emergency medical transportation) program in which 7 or 8 wheelchairs will fit in that bus.

Roll call vote revealed:

Yeas: (7) being Commissioners Pitchford, Majewski, Kleinhardt, Gelios, Bristol, Lipovsky, and Strouse

Nays: (0)

Absent: (0)

Resolution adopted.

### **Finance and Administration**

Statutory Finance Committee

It was moved by Commissioner Kleinhardt and seconded by Commissioner Majewski to approve Statutory Finance Committee meeting minutes of December 19, 2016 in the amount of \$68,839.48 and January 3, 2017 in the amount of \$55,422.95. Motion carried.

Monthly Expenditures

Moved by Commissioner Majewski and seconded by Commissioner Strouse to approve the expenditures for the month of December 2016 in the amount of \$1,536,971.09 with the General Fund expenditures totaling \$802,160.90. Motion carried.

Budget Adjustments

Moved by Commissioner Gelios and Seconded by Commissioner Majewski to approve Budget Adjustment #17-36, #17-37, and #17-38 in the amount of \$5,182.78, \$74,489.61, and \$8,000.00. Motion carried.

### **Clerk's Items**

- A. County Clerk/Register of Deeds Lori Martin spoke about her plans to move the 55<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court staff to the office space that was vacated by Accounting/Payroll after Board of Commissioners transferred them from under the authority of the Clerk to being under the authority of the Administrator in December of 2016. Clerk Martin offered her ideas about continuing the security for her office and installing a window as is in the rest of her office, while creating some privacy for the customers they are serving by building a small lobby, or using the current copy room that adjoins her office as a lobby and moving the copy room across the hall where her conference room currently is. Commissioner Gelios asked that Clerk Martin submit a written plan with a drawing and a price quote.
- B. Clerk Martin brought up to the board the union contract reads the pay scale for all union employees is based on years of service, and when she promoted two employees into their chief deputy positions Administrator Byard indicated they would not receive the pay for years of service already accumulated as the contract instructs, but rather they would start at a pay scale of after one year of service instead of three years of service because their lack of experience as supervisors as interpreted by the county attorney. After discussion it was agreed by the board members that the board was not required to take action by motion to increase the salary of the two chief deputy's based on years of service, but rather take the advice of the county attorney and leave their salary at one year of service, which is a 2% pay increase.
- C. Clerk Martin brought up the wage of another employee that was moved from a chief deputy, a supervisory position, to a deputy clerk, non-supervisory position, and her wage decreased by approximately \$2.00 per hour. Clerk Martin noted that the union contract indicated you could not decrease an employee's wages, but Administrator Byard has instructed the payroll department to decrease the employees wage based on the contract reading years of service at the advice of the county attorney. Commissioner Lipovsky confirmed that they had to abide by the union contract and the employee would take a wage decrease.
- D. Clerk Martin asked to replace two full time and one part time employee openings that she has available in her budget that was approved by the board of commissioners under the prior clerk at the beginning of this fiscal year. Commissioner Majewski indicated that he is in the process of a fact finding regarding the staffing needs for the Clerk/Register department from other counties. Clerk Martin also indicated she is doing the same thing along with seeking guidance from experienced County Clerks in how to make her office more efficient. After a great deal of discussion Clerk Martin offered a compromise by eliminating 3 budgeted and approved part time positions in exchange for the two full time budgeted and approved positions therefore cutting her current budget by over sixty thousand dollars. She has 1 full time court employee and 1 chief deputy clerk working in courts along with 1 part time person. It was moved by Commissioner Bristol and seconded by Commissioner Kleinhardt to allow Clerk Martin to fill 2 full time positions that were previously approved in her budget with her part time people as they have done for other department heads, and then work on a plan for the rest of the budget problems. Commissioner Lipovsky asked for any other discussion and Commissioner Gelios indicated he would rather approve promoting 1 part time to full time than approve 2 and lay someone off later. Commissioner Gelios asked for a roll call vote.

Roll call vote revealed:

Yeas: (2) being Commissioners Bristol and Kleinhardt

Nays: (5) Strouse, Gelios, Lipovsky, Pitchford, and Majewski

Absent: (0)

**Motion defeated**

Moved by Commissioner Gelios and seconded by Commissioner Bristol to approve Clerk Martin to promote 1 half time employee to full time. Commissioner Lipovsky asked for discussion. Commissioner Pitchford confirmed that over the past year they have all agreed to stop spending and put a hiring freeze on, nothing against Clerk Martin, but they have to stop at some point and they never seem to get there. Commissioner Lipovsky asked for a roll call vote.

Roll call vote revealed:

Yeas: (4) being Commissioners Gelios, Bristol, Lipovsky, and Kleinhardt

Nays: (3) Strouse, Majewski, and Pitchford

Absent: (0)

**Motion approved**

A budget meeting was scheduled for January 25, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. after being cautioned by Commissioner Pitchford on limiting the time reserved for the budget meeting because little gets accomplished when time is limited. Administrator Byard asked that the Board would make a priority at this next budget meeting naming a specific dollar amount that they will not exceed in the next budget.

Recess: 10:47 a.m.

Back in Session: 10:52 a.m.

**CLERK'S REPORT**

Clerk Martin reported a bumpy start to her first week in office by not having access to the county computer because it was missing. Once the computer was returned things smoothed out as she then had access to all the county files. She indicated that she is receiving old invoices for purchases that were not dealt with by the prior clerk, but still need to be paid once confirmed they are still outstanding because it is money that the county owes. It is not money that is in her budget this year so she is working with the Administrator on this issue. She then thanked Administrator Byard and the IT Department for all the extra help they are extending to her along with other department heads and township officials who are also helping where they can to make this an easier transition.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger spoke about two rabies clinics happening. The first will be January 21, 2017 from 12:00 - 2:00 at Family Farm and Home in Clare. Doctor Pohl will be there as well as Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger selling licenses. The second is taking place February 4, 2017 at the Clare County Animal Shelter from 11:00 - 1:00. The deadline to purchase a dog license without late fee is February 28, 2017.

Tax season is upon us. Township tax deadlines are February 28, 2017, which is also the last day you can pay delinquent taxes that her office holds before they go into forfeiture. If anyone is in forfeiture now the deadline to redeem their property is March 31, 2017. Show cause hearings for foreclosures will be on January 26, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., in her office, if anyone can show just cause why they can't pay their taxes Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger may be able to set up a payment plan for them.

Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger distributed an updated report on finances. If everything continues as projected so for the Board will end the FY with a deficit of \$116,000.00. She also confirmed she has put in \$950,000.00 to balance this year's budget from the delinquent tax fund, which cannot be done every year. Treasurer Beemer-Fritzinger confirmed Marty Johnson's comment that strategic planning sessions would be beneficial.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT**

None

**CHAIRPERSON REPORT**

Commissioner Lipovsky attended her meetings. She purchased tickets to the Veteran's Snowball, but asked that they be donated to another Veteran. Commissioner Lipovsky then thanked the board for allowing her to be the Board Chair and hope they all help her.

**VICE CHAIRPERSON REPORT**

Commissioner Kleinhardt is talking with the community and what they do not want is more taxes.

**COMMISSIONER REPORT**

Commissioner Bristol has been attending her township meetings. She has also heard from the community no new taxes.

Commissioner Pitchford has been attending her meetings. Village of Farwell is facing a big issue with their water wells.

Commissioner Majewski has been attending his meetings.

*jm*  
January 18, 2017

Commissioner Gelios reported that Hayes Township is looking at the expense they have with their law enforcement. What they decide may affect the county revenue.

Undersheriff Miedzianowski reported he met with Hayes Township and there are a couple options on the table. He also reported the Sheriff's Department has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$12,500.00 for Medical Marijuana Enforcement Education Communication, however the County already contributes \$25,000.00 to participate in this program and this grant brought it down to \$12,500.00.

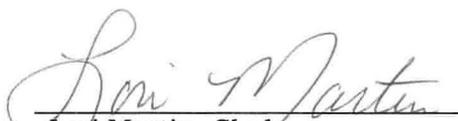
Commissioner Kleinhardt asked if they could make it a point to discuss whether or not the County would be asking for a millage for road patrol because Hayes Township indicated at the last meeting that the Boards actions will directly affect Hayes Township's decision on road patrol. Commissioner Lipovsky asked Administrator Byard to put that on the budget meeting agenda along with MSU Extension millage.

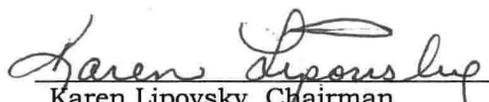
Commissioner Strouse attended most of his meetings. Today's vote was not picking on the Clerk. He voted for raises for others including elected officials that had not had a raise in 10 years. The Board needs to draw a line with spending.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**        None

**NEW BUSINESS**                None

**Meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.**

  
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Lori Martin, Clerk  
Clare County Board of Commissioners

  
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Karen Lipovsky, Chairman  
Clare County Board of Commissioners