

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

January 8, 2026

The Cass County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, January 8, 2026, in Commission Chambers.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Barrera provided the Invocation. Commissioner Grice led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Tom Langley, James Lawrence, Alan Northrop, Jeremiah Jones, Michael Grice, Samuel Barrera, Roseann Marchetti and RJ Lee.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Items Only)

Public comment occurred.

ORGANIZATIONAL BUSINESS

Election of Chair for a One-Year Term

Commissioner Langley moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to retain Commissioner Jones as Chair and Commissioner Lawrence as Vice-Chair. Commissioner Marchetti requested a roll call vote.

Yes (8): Commissioners Lee, Marchetti, Langley, Lawrence, Jones, Barrera, Northrop and Grice.

No (0): None.

Motion carried by roll call vote. Clerk/Register McMichael turned the meeting over to Chair Jones.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the January 8, 2026, Cass County Board of Commissioner's Agenda. Motion carried by voice vote.

RECOGNITIONS

None.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Chair Lawrence moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, 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-3-2026) A motion to approve Claims dated 11/26/2025 to 12/31/2025

(M-4-2026) A motion to approve December 4, 2025 meeting minutes

(M-5-2026) A motion to approve December 18, 2025 special meeting minutes

(M-7-2026) A motion to December 18, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes

(M-8-2026) A motion to implement Board of Commissioner Bylaws and Rules of Procedure amendments

(M-9-2026) A motion to implement ACH (Automatic Clearing House) Policy Amendments

(M-10-2026) A motion to approve the appointment of Tharan Suvarna to the Parks and Recreation Commission with a term expiring 1/1/2029

(M-11-2026) A motion to approve the appointment of Tharan Suvarna to the Planning Commission with a term expiring 1/1/2029

(M-12-2026) A motion to approve the appointment of Jenny Park to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission with a term expiring 12/31/2027

(M-13-2026) A motion to approve the amendment to Ron McAdam's current appointment term to the Cass District Library Board

(M-14-2026) A motion to approve the purchase and budget adjustments for two 2024 Chevy Silverado pick-up trucks for CCDET and the Sheriff's Office

(M-15-2026) A motion correct the re-appointment term for James Dodd to the Southwest Planning Commission with a corrected term expiring 12/31/2027

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (8): Commissioners Lawrence, Northrop, Jones, Grice, Barrera, Marchetti, Lee and Langley.

No (0): None.

The Consent Agenda carried by roll call vote.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners Lawrence, Northrop, Grice, Barrera and Marchetti offered committee reports.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Jennifer Rentfrow provided the Administrator's Report.

COUNTY PARTNERS

Director Charity Green relayed a report from the Conservation District.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Treasurer Anderson shared an update.

NEW BUSINESS

M-16-2016

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the Marcellus Township Police contract for 2026 between the Cass County Sheriff's Office and the Marcellus Township Board. Motion carried by voice vote.

R-1-2026

Commissioner Lawrence moved, seconded by Commissioner Langley, to approve the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION URGING TRANSPARENCY AND A COMPREHENSIVE
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR DATA CENTER DEVELOPMENT**

WHEREAS, data centers are specialized facilities that house computing and networking systems used to store, process, and manage large volumes of data; and

WHEREAS, the demand for data centers has increased rapidly due to the growth of cloud computing and artificial intelligence, resulting in growing concern nationwide and within the State of Michigan regarding their environmental, infrastructure, and community impacts; and

WHEREAS, Cass County is committed to responsible growth, fiscal stewardship, and the protection of community resources, including water, energy infrastructure, and land use compatibility; and

WHEREAS, large-scale data centers typically require significant electrical and water resources, which may strain local utility systems, impact utility rates for residents, and create noise, heat, and other environmental or quality-of-life concerns for surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, thoughtful planning and transparency are essential to ensure that any proposed data center development aligns with Cass County's long-term land use goals, infrastructure capacity, and the interests of residents and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, responsible regulation of data centers should include consideration of appropriate zoning districts, compatibility with surrounding land uses, setbacks from residential or sensitive areas, noise mitigation, screening of mechanical equipment, disclosure of anticipated energy and water usage, workforce impacts, and meaningful community engagement; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of Cass County residents that any data center development occur within a clear and comprehensive regulatory framework that protects public resources, ensures transparency, and prevents unintended financial or environmental consequences;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cass County Board of Commissioners urges all relevant local governmental units, planning authorities, and electric utility providers serving Cass County to develop and implement a comprehensive regulatory framework governing proposed data center development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cass County Board of Commissioners encourages transparency and public disclosure regarding any proposed data center project, including but not limited to the following information being made available to local officials and the public:

- The source of electrical power for the facility and its consistency with state and local clean energy goals;
- The anticipated water usage of the facility, including daily, monthly, and annual demand, and plans to mitigate impacts on water quality and availability;

- How electric utilities intend to meet increased load demands without shifting costs to existing ratepayers or creating stranded infrastructure;
- What contractual protections, minimum usage requirements, or exit provisions will be in place to ensure local residents are not financially burdened if a project is reduced or abandoned; and
- What measures will be implemented to ensure environmental compliance, equitable cost allocation, and meaningful community benefit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cass County Clerk is directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Cass County Planning Commission; all municipalities within Cass County, including Calvin Township, Howard Township, Jefferson Township, LaGrange Township, Marcellus Township, Mason Township, Milton Township, Newberg Township, Ontwa Township, Penn Township, Pokagon Township, Porter Township, Silver Creek Township, Volinia Township, Wayne Township; the City of Dowagiac; the City of Niles; the Village of Cassopolis; the Village of Edwardsburg; the Village of Marcellus; the Village of Vandalia; relevant state and federal legislative offices; and electric utility providers serving Cass County. Discussion followed.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (8): Commissioners Grice, Northrop, Barrera, Jones, Lawrence, Langley, Marchetti and Lee.

No (0): None.

Resolution R-1-2026 carried by roll call vote.

R-2-2026

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner Lawrence, to approve the following resolution:

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE MASTER PLAN FOR CASS COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Public Act 33 of 2008, authorizes counties to conduct a Master Plan process.

WHEREAS, the Cass County Planning Commission, utilizing a public process and engaging the residents of Cass County, has created a draft Master Plan.

WHEREAS, the draft Master Plan was distributed to neighboring communities, regional entities, and the general public for review and comment, as required by Public Act 33 of 2008.

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has recommended adoption of the Master Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Master Plan is hereby adopted by the County Commission.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (8): Commissioners Northrop, Barrera, Jones, Lawrence, Langley, Marchetti, Lee and Grice.

No (0): None.

Resolution R-2-2026 carried by roll call vote.

R-3-2026

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to approve the following resolution and to allow Administrator Rentfrow to update the name of signatories on the contracts:

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS WITH THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE CORRECTIONS SERGEANTS UNION; FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS AND CLERKS EMPLOYEES' UNION; FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE ANIMAL CONTROL EMPLOYEES' UNION; COMMAND OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN UNION CAPTAINS, LIEUTENANTS, AND DISPATCH COORDINATORS' UNION; POLICE OFFICERS LABOR COUNCIL ROAD SERGEANTS AND DISPATCH SUPERVISOR UNION; FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE ROAD DEPUTIES AND DETECTIVES UNION; AND FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE DISPATCHERS UNION

WHEREAS, the Sheriff, Human Resources/Payroll Director and Cass County Administrator in good faith have negotiated collective bargaining agreements with the Fraternal Order of Police Corrections Sergeants Union; the Fraternal Order of Police Corrections Officers and Clerks Employees' Union; Fraternal Order of Police Animal Control Employees' Union; Command Officers Association of Michigan Union Captains, Lieutenants, and Dispatch Coordinator Union; Police Officers Labor Council Road Sergeants and Dispatch Supervisor Union; Fraternal Order of Police Road Deputies and Detectives union; and the Fraternal Order of Police Dispatchers Union, concerning wages, hours, terms and other conditions of employment; and

WHEREAS, the Agreements have been lawfully and properly ratified by the membership of the Fraternal Order of Police Corrections Sergeants Union; the Fraternal Order of Police Corrections Officers and Clerks Employees' Union; the Fraternal Order of Police Animal Control Employees' Union; and the Command Officers Association of Michigan Captains, Lieutenants, and Dispatch Coordinator Union; Police Officers Labor Council Road Sergeants and Dispatcher Supervisor Union; the Fraternal Order of Police Road Deputies and Detectives Union; and the Fraternal Order of Police Dispatchers Union; and

WHEREAS, the Cass County Board of Commissioners find that the best interests of the County are served by executing the Agreements; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Cass County Board of Commissioners as follows:

1. The collective bargaining agreements between Cass County and Fraternal Order of Police Corrections Sergeants Union; the Fraternal Order of Police Corrections Officers and Clerks Employees' Union; the Fraternal Order of Police Animal Control Employees' Union; and the Command Officers Association of Michigan Captains, Lieutenants, and Dispatch Coordinator Union; Police Officers Labor Council Road Sergeants and Dispatcher Supervisor Union; the Fraternal Order of Police Rod Deputies and Detectives Union; and the Fraternal Order of Police Dispatchers Union are hereby authorized and approved.
2. The Chairperson of the Cass County Board of Commissioners is hereby authorized to execute said agreements on behalf of Cass County.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (8): Commissioners Barrera, Jones, Lawrence, Langley, Marchetti, Lee, Grice and Northrop.

No (0): None.

Resolution R-3-2026 carried by roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CLOSED SESSION

None.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioners Jones, Grice, Barrera, Marchetti and Lee shared comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jones adjourned the meeting at 5:23 p.m

Approved: _____
Date

Chair Jeremiah Jones

Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register