

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**March 16, 2023**

Commissioner Marchetti called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers on Thursday, March 16, 2023. Commissioner Howie offered the Invocation. Commissioner Locke led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: James Lawrence, Joyce Locke, Jeremiah Jones, Mary Howie, Samuel Barrera, Roseann Marchetti and RJ Lee.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Ryan Laylin.

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator Matthew Newton and Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment occurred.

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to amend the agenda to add New Business item **e. Resolution Approving Participation in Settlements and Approval of MSSA** and item **f. Approval of Security Awareness Training and Testing Policy**. Motion to amend carried by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the March 16, 2023, Cass County Committee of the Whole Agenda. Motion to approve the agenda carried by voice vote.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Treasurer Hope Anderson assured commissioners of the banking status of county funds before sharing a review of the Property Tax Foreclosure Process.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Marchetti shared Committee Reports.

## **DISTRICT REPORTS**

Commissioners Locke, Jones, Barrera, Marchetti and Lee provided district reports.

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Newton shared the Administrator's Report.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Financial Report was in the packet.

## **COUNTY PARTNERS**

Conservation District Director Jake Young provided updates from the Conservation District.

## **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael shared upcoming election information.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. MEDC Marine Patrol Grant:**

Sheriff Behnke informed commissioners that Cass County received half of a \$200,000 MEDC grant to be shared with Berrien County. With a \$20,000 matching contribution from the county, \$100,000 from the MEDC Grant would purchase a new marine patrol boat.

Commissioners agreed to move the item to the April 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

### **b. Jail – Lift Station Pump #2:**

Facilities Director Dave Reiff and County Administrator Matt Newton explained that the second pump at the lift station that services the jail recently failed. Per a signed agreement with the Village of Cassopolis the county must pay the replacement cost of

\$19,870. Director Reiff stated the village attempted to repair the pump; however, they were not successful.

Director Reiff shared that the pump was the original installation. New pumps were expected to last 10-20 years. He added that county-owned buildings had not been maintained and would most likely soon need repairs. Specifically, the Law and Courts Building had flooring/carpet issues while he expected major failures to occur in the jail.

The board agreed to move the item to the April 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

**c. Resolution of Recognition:**

- i. Resolution in Appreciation of Animal Control
- ii. Resolution in Appreciation of Michigan 911 Telecommunicators
- iii. Resolution Recognizing National Crime Victims' Rights Week

County Administrator Newton informed commissioners that the above resolutions were passed annually.

All agreed to move the resolutions to the April 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

**d. Claims Committee:**

Commissioner Howie opened discussion on bringing back a Board of Commissioners Committee to review financial claims prior to approval at a regular board meeting.

Administrator Newton cautioned commissioners on the timing of bill payments, warning that invoices paid late could incur extra fees. He added that, even with a BOC Claims Committee, bills would be paid before the board officially approved them. Administrator Newton also stated that it was extremely important on where the commissioners fell in the process as they did not want slow things down.

Treasurer Hope Anderson read MCL 48.40, "It shall be the duty of the county treasurer to receive all moneys belonging to the county, from whatever source they may be derived; and all moneys received by him for the use of the county, shall be paid by him only on the order of the board of supervisors, signed by their clerk, and countersigned by their chairman, except when special provision for the payment thereof is or shall be otherwise made by law."

Treasurer Anderson explained that she had concerns over the current financial process. She urged the county to look at their Financial Policy and Process.

Discussion continued from Clerk/Register Monica McMichael, Sheriff Behnke and Chief Judge Carol Bealor. All urged the board to reexamine the Financial Policy.

Commissioners agreed to place a discussion on the Claims Committee as well as the Financial Policy on the agenda of the next Policy Committee Meeting.

**e. Resolution Approving Participation in Settlements and Approval of MSSA:**

Administrator Newton explained the previous board was well-informed of the opioid litigation. With several new board members, Attorney Conybeare offered to attend a meeting to answer commissioner questions. After discussion, commissioners agreed they would read the packet of information provided.

Commissioners agreed to move the item to the April 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

**f. Approval of Security Awareness Training and Testing Policy:**

Administrator Newton advised the board that online phishing attacks had increased, with the county receiving 1000's of emails daily. Due to the increased threats, IT Director Jodi Nestich requested Security Awareness Training & Testing for county employees.

Administrator Newton explained the testing would involve no punitive action, but included training and meetings, if necessary.

Commissioners agreed to move the item to the April 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Agenda.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Marchetti congratulated Finance Director Rentfrow on receiving the Certificate of Financial Reporting as well as the Award of Financial Reporting. She also announced the tire and hazardous waste collection to take place from 3:00-6:00 p.m. on April 26, 2023, at the Cass County Road Commission.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Barrera moved, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Jeremiah Jones

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register