

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING**

August 24, 2023

The Cass County Board of Commissioners gathered for a special meeting on Thursday, August 24, 2023, in Commission Chambers.

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Commissioner Lawrence provided 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: Ryan Laylin, James Lawrence, Joyce Locke, Jeremiah Jones, Mary Howie, Samuel Barrera, Roseann Marchetti and RJ Lee.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment occurred.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice-Chair Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the August 24, 2023, Cass County Board of Commissioner's Agenda. Motion carried by voice vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

RECOGNITIONS

None.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

M-128-23

Commissioner Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve a Letter of Intent with the County as Co-Applicant with Market Van Buren for Round 2 of Michigan Department of Agriculture's Rural Readiness Grant. Discussion followed. All commissioners other than Commissioner Howie voted yes. Motion carried by voice vote.

FY 24 Budget

Chair Jones opened discussion on the FY 2024 Budget and clarified that the board would not vote to approve a budget at the Special Meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the three budget options and to choose an option to move to a future meeting for a vote. Legal requirements included placing the proposed budget in the Clerk/Register of Deeds Office for public inspection as well as holding a public hearing.

Administrator Newton reminded commissioners they could amend budgets after final approval.

Commissioners proceeded to discuss the pros and cons of Budget Option 2 (Administrator's Recommended Budget) and Budget Option 3 (no use of Fund Balance Budget/balanced budget). It was noted the two budgets were similar; however, Budget Option 3 included the transfer in of \$500,000 from the Cass County Drug Enforcement Fund (CCDET) as well as the elimination of 11 positions. Of the 11 proposed positions to be eliminated, 6 were vacant.

Commissioner Barrera stated that he did not agree with using \$500,000 in CCDET Funds to balance the budget. He informed the board that he would support allocating the \$500,000 in CCDET funds for necessary jail upgrades/improvements. He went on to share that he did not agree with eliminating fully staffed positions. He then asked that the vacant positions be eliminated from the proposed budget with the knowledge that the board could approve posting any eliminated position if the request was made and deemed necessary. Commissioner Marchetti added that the Sheriff should have been consulted before CCDET funds were utilized in any budget. She went on to state that she agreed with Commissioner Barrera's proposal.

Chair Jones then asked each commissioner to announce the budget option with which they wished to proceed:

Commissioner Lee: Option 3, no staffed positions eliminated and \$500,000 in CCDET funding allocated to jail repairs.

Commissioner Marchetti: Option 3, no staffed positions eliminated and \$500,000 in CCDET funding allocated to jail repairs.

Commissioner Barrera: Option 3, no staffed positions eliminated and \$500,000 in CCDET funding allocated to jail repairs.

Vice-Chair Laylin: Option 3 with no layoffs.

Chair Jones: Option 3 with no staffed positions eliminated. Elected officials/departments heads could request permission to post and hire eliminated positions.

Commissioner Howie: Option 2.

Commissioner Locke: Option 3 with no staffed positions eliminated.

Commissioner Lawrence: Option 2.

The majority of commissioners chose Budget Option 3 with no staffed positions eliminated. The proposed \$500,000 from the CCDET Millage would be allocated for jail improvements.

Sheriff Behnke clarified that the elimination of positions included one Sheriff's Office Road Deputy and one Sheriff's Office Corrections Officer. Finance Director Rentfrow informed the Sheriff that the jail position included in the eliminations was not a corrections officer but rather a clerical position. Because the clerical position was staffed, it would not be eliminated in the FY 2024 Proposed Budget. Administrator Newton clarified that the dollar amount equivalent to a full-time Sheriff's Office Detective would be eliminated from the budget.

Administrator Newton added that the Administrator's Office would eliminate two full-time positions in the proposed FY 2024 Budget. In addition to the Administrator's Office and the Sheriff's Office, the courts and Animal Control had vacant positions that would be eliminated in the FY 2024 Proposed Budget.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Approved: _____
Date

Chair Jeremiah Jones

Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register