

**MACKINAC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS**  
**Wednesday June 12, 2024**

The Mackinac County Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Wednesday June 12, 2024 in the Circuit Courtroom, 100 S. Marley Street, St. Ignace, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Kaiser at 4:30pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance of the United States of America was recited.

Roll Call: Jodi Kaiser, Mike Patrick, Judy St. Louis-Scott. Absent: Corina Clark, Dan Litzner

**Agenda Approval:** It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the agenda as amended. VVMC

**Minutes Approval:** It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the minutes of May 23 as amended. VVMC.

**Public Comment:**

Dick Pershinske, Veterans Committee Chair – spoke about the Veterans Committee meeting on June 11. He feels Veterans Services with other entities such as Community Action are not organized to provide services. Currently there are 3 homeless Veterans in the County. And a FOIA request was turned over to MSP for investigation.

**Elected Officials/Staff Reports:**

**Clerk Hillary Vowell** – requested to move the Deputy Admin Clerk position to pay grade 5 step 3 at \$21.25 hr. Per the union contract the Board of Commissioners can move an employee up to step 3 . The current Deputy Admin Clerk is looking for other jobs for higher pay and Clerk Vowell would like to keep her as an employee. Commissioner Kaiser said since she was not a new employee this did not apply. Clerk Vowell said she has been employed less than 1 year and it should apply. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to deny this request. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (request attached)

**New Business:**

**Les Cheneaus Community Schools Superintendent Bob Lohff** – spoke on the need for a School Resource Officer. School safety is #1 concern right now. This officer could provide education to staff and students on safety issues. This needs to be further discussed with the Sheriff and brought back at a later date.

**Equalization Director Mike Gillett** – could not attend this meeting so he gave Clerk Vowell the L4029 tax rate request to have the Board approve it. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the L4029. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (L4029 attached)

**Old Business:**

the sidewalk bids were reviewed: Winberg Masonry - \$13,600 and Clark Contracting - \$14,000. The board discussed the bids and it was decided to go with Clark Contracting after the Board contacted Winberg Masonry last fall for sidewalk repairs and he would not return any calls. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the bid from Clark Contracting in the amount of \$14,000. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (bids attached)

The Circuit Courtroom remodel engineering bids were reviewed. Court Administrator Heather Wilk presented bids from Sidock Group and Byce Services to the board. Craig Froggett and Fred Ganyon from Clark Contracting were present to answer questions. If the board hired Clark Contracting at the project manager, they can team with either engineering firm. After some discussion it was decided to go with Sidock Group as the engineering firm and project manager would be Clark Contracting. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the contract with Sidock/Clark Contracting. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (bids attached)

Reclass request of the Circuit Court Administrator and the Prosecutors Crime Victim Advocate will be postponed until all board members can be present.

Discussion of the Veterans Committee resolution was had. Commissioner Patrick said item D- is an opinion and needs to be stricken. And second paragraph on last page under "be it further resolved" should be set by Veteran Committee not by Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Kaiser said this resolution will be reviewed by the Veterans Committee further and brought to a later meeting.

Discussion of the letter to Cohl, Stoker & Toskey will be postponed until the full board can be present.

It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to go into closed session at 5:42pm. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner Kaiser to leave closed session at 5:47pm. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to go back into regular session at 5:48pm. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner.

**Additional Board Member Business:**

Commissioner Patrick attended Mental Health meeting in Traverse City. Commissioner Kaiser said the MMP NOI has been submitted to EGLE and the housing project should be closing on the property soon.

It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to authorize Treasurer Goudreau to wire funds for the closing of the housing project property. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner.

Commissioner Kaiser attended meeting to go over the Friend of the Court wages for 2025. Judge Graham recommended added travel expenses to his wages. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to allow Commissioner Kaiser to enter into negotiations for the pay structure of the FOC. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner.

Commissioner Kaiser spoke on the Veterans Audit and mediation. She said Attorney Bonnie Toskey said the Veterans Committee has to comply with the audit.

Friend of the Court Josh Freed – requested to keep Kathleen Smith on hand to train a new employee in the office until September. He is requesting money be used from the special fund 215 to cover the costs. He would like an additional \$6000. Kathleen agreed to a lower hourly rate of \$40. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the \$6000 from the 215 funds for Kathleen Smith. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner.

**Committee Reports:**

Commissioner St. Louis-Scott said the Opioid Committee will be meeting again in July.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Approval of Bills/Budget Amendments:**

The board reviewed the regular bills of June 12 for approval in the amount of \$46,225.65. These bills were previously reviewed and approved prior to the meeting due to an additional week between meetings. The Clerk's Office did not want the bills to be late. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the regular bills. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (bills attached)

The board reviewed the manual bills of May 30 for approval in the amount of \$23,226.27. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner Kaiser to approve the manual bills. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (bills attached)

The board reviewed the additional bills part 1 of June 12 for approval in the amount of \$161,303.84. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner Kaiser to approve the additional bills. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (bills attached)

The board reviewed the additional bills part 2 of June 12 for approval in the amount of \$147,493.91. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the additional bills. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (bills attached)

The board reviewed budget amendment #2024.19. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the budget amendment. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (amendment attached)

The board reviewed budget amendment #2024.20. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the budget amendment. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (amendment attached)

The board reviewed budget amendment #2024.21. After some discussion it was decided to table this amendment. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner Kaiser to table this amendment. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (amendment attached)

The board reviewed budget amendment #2024.22. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the budget amendment. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (amendment attached)

The board reviewed budget amendment #2024.23. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the budget amendment. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (amendment attached)

The board reviewed budget amendment #2024.24. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the budget amendment. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark, Litzner. (amendment attached)

**Communications:**

Animal Shelter reports, thank you letter from Les Cheneaux Community Foundation, MSU Extension newsletter, April banking report.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned to the call of the Vice Chair at 6:19pm.

Hillary Vowell  
County Clerk

**Mackinac County Board of Commissioners Meeting June 12, 2024  
Commissioner Kaiser Report**

**MMP-** Hillary and I submitted the Notice of Intent for the multicounty Materials Management Planning Process on June 11 after receiving the signed Interlocal Agreement from Chippewa and Luce Counties.

**Housing:** A corrected final title Commitment was issued for the property purchase with the Brownfield Authority as purchaser- so that should be closing soon. We need to authorize the treasurer to wire funds to complete the sale for the Housing Project for the amount due at closing.

**Veteran's Committee:**

Apparently, a complaint was filed with the State Police Friday for an investigation by the person who filed the FOIA. I have no details or what is in that complaint but if the State Police contact you, refer them to our counsel Peter Wendling at Up North Law.

With the notification that the Veterans committee were not going to comply with the mediation agreement that they signed May 3 with legal counsel present (that apparently they no longer retain), our counsel has done the following

- 1) Called Dept. of Treasury
- 2) Called our forensic auditors and forwarded some material to him.
- 3) Called Bonnie Toskey and she has intimated to him that the Veterans Committee need to comply with the forensic audit and she would be calling Mr. Pershinske. As of yesterday, according to Mr. Pershinske that has not happened yet. She said that the confidentiality clause in the contract covers privacy issues.
- 4) The rent payments may be withheld until there is an open and transparent process and the committee follows their current policy.
  - 1) Mackinac County Veterans Assistance Policy states
    - a. Veterans Assistance will only be used for emergency, of last resort and for an emergent need that will be resolved completely. If the approval of the assistance will only extend the situation and not eliminate the emergent need from continuing or recurring, it shall be a denial.
    - b. Mackinac County will accept only 1 application from an eligible veteran per year. If a second application is submitted it will be required approval of a majority of the veterans committee, regardless of circumstance and amount of money requested.
      - i. For FY 2023-to date a total of \$6,750 has been paid to a single vendor for monthly rent in 8 invoices and 7 checks. A couple from the 299 fund and the rest from the 276 Fund.
  - 2) Policies lacking:

- a. What is the limit in dollar amount a veteran is entitled too? The counties I have seen have a maximum benefit of \$1,000-\$2500 per veteran.
  - b. An appeal process?
  - c. Minimum financial threshold? ie below 80% AMI ? 50% AMI, no income threshold???
  - d. Website advertises that the only county veteran benefits available is the burial allowance for veterans and their spouses, widows or widowers.
- 5) The veterans committee want the county to reimburse the 276 fund for the purchase of office equipment that they bought claiming the county has to provide for that by statute. True, that the County has to provide office space and furniture/equipment, which the county has paid for by way of the millage. The millage is the county's millage used to fund and operate the Veteran's Department; the county's obligation has been met.
- i. Language from millage passed 11/3/2020 "funding for the County Department of Veterans Services and assistance to indigent veterans and their dependents within Mackinac County"
- 6) They have received 2 letters of interest for the opening on the Vet Committee. I requested that those letter and any others be sent to each of the Board of Commissioners. They will be interviewing at their July meeting.
- 7) Also discovered that they had hired another attorney before in April of 2024 from Pennsylvania and paid them \$2,054.00 (Clark Hill, PLC) in addition to True North who represented them at mediation which cost another \$3,607.

**Attended Joint FOC Meeting with Judge Graham and Luce, Schoolcraft County on June 11**

- 1) Alger County was absent, Luce and Schoolcraft County didn't want to discuss it and were going to go back to their Boards -so it was short.
- 2) Asking for permission to enter into discussion with the other three counties with some flexibility. Judge Graham rolled mileage amount into salary so that some of it is reimbursable through the State. This increased the FOC Salary by a little over \$7650 for FY 2025. Salary plus fringes is estimated at \$131,000.00
  - a. Options are
    - i. Base it on rolling 3-year average caseload/hearings (Mackinac County would save roughly \$13,375)
    - ii. Set amount where Schoolcraft and Mackinac pay 30% and other two counties pay 20% (Mackinac County would save \$9,746)

## **MEETING NOTICE**

A meeting of the Mackinac County Election Commission  
will be held Friday July 26, 2024 at 9:30a.m.

The meeting will take place in the County Clerks Office,  
100 S. Marley Street, St. Ignace, MI 49781

Purpose of the meeting is to approve poll workers  
for Early Voting.