

**MACKINAC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS**  
**Thursday March 14, 2024**

The Mackinac County Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Thursday March 14, 2024 in the Circuit Courtroom, 100 S. Marley Street, St. Ignace, Michigan.

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

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

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

Absent: Mike Patrick

**Agenda Approval:** It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to approve the agenda as amended. VVMC. Absent: Patrick.

**Minutes Approval:**

It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to approve the minutes of February 26 as amended. VVMC. Absent: Patrick

It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the minutes of January 25 as presented. VVMC. Absent: Patrick

It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser and second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the minutes of February 8 as presented. VVMC. Absent: Patrick

It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to approve the joint meeting minutes of March 4 regarding the Dam on Big Manistique Lake with Luce County as amended. VVMC. Absent: Patrick

**Public Comment:**

Dick Pershinske, Veterans Board Chair – Spoke with Bonnie Toskey and she is still interested in being the County’s legal counsel.

Tim Hoffmann, Retired Addiction Specialist Physician – works part time at Sacred Heart. He is interested in being involved with the Opioid Committee and how they will be spending the opioid settlement funds.

**Elected Officials/Staff Reports:**

**Friend of the Court Josh Freed** – finalize the re-organization and changes to the job descriptions in the Friend of the Court Office. All the staff and the Judges are in agreement with these changes. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the new job descriptions and re-organization. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick.

**Chris Brynes, Mackinac Economic Alliance** – been busy working on grants. Recently hired Darcy Long to work on grants and contracts, he will be the face of the MEA.

**Dick Pershinske, Veterans Committee Chair** – still trying to get the correct amount for the renewal millage and the deadline is coming. Also discussed office space issues and looking at another facility. The Veterans Board will not be pursuing the state grant until next year due to limited staff and lack of time to efficiently service Veterans with benefits.

**Sheriff Ed Wilk** – still working on restructuring 2 jobs instead of reclass. This will be put on the next agenda for approval. Some exit signs need to be replaced. The Sheriff Union contract are expiring this year. Negotiations need to begin 90-120 days prior to the contract ending. August is a good time to start negotiations.

**Clerk Hillary Vowell** – is requesting another meeting to go over the reclass requests. The employees were not specifically invited to attend the meeting when the reclasses were discussed per AFSCME Union contract. Some employees did not attend and did not have an opportunity to answer questions or concerns. Commissioner Litzner thought this should be tabled until the first meeting in April when all the Commissioners will be present.

**Treasurer Jennifer Goudreau** – Delinquent tax payoff was \$11,000 less than last year. Will have a list of properties foreclosing after April 1.

**Equalization Director Mike Gillett** – working on equalization. Thinking about giving land divisions/splits/combinations back to the townships. The office can't seem to find more employees and with limited staff it's been difficult to keep up. The county does receive revenue for this but for each land division it's taking extra time away from the office staff. Commissioners had some questions. This will need to be discussed with the townships before any of this is handed over.

**New Business:**

Survey and Remont contracts were reviewed. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to authorize the Chair to sign the Survey and Remont contracts. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick. (contracts attached)

Resolution appointing the county as the County Approval Agency for the Materials Management Planning process and another resolution designating EUP Regional Planning as the Materials Management Planning Agency. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark approving both of these resolutions. Roll Call: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick. (resolutions attached)

Commissioner Kaiser moved to have Dick Pershinske removed from the Veterans Affairs Committee for the action taken by him during the Veterans Affairs Committee meeting held March 12, 2024 where he called for the motion to not apply for the FY 2025 County Veterans Service Fund Grant. Under MCL Sec 35.621 the County Board has the power to appoint the Veterans Affairs Committee. According to the opinion of Cohl, Stoker, & Toskey, P.C. dated April 19, 2023 the power to appoint is considered to confer the power to revoke the appointment. MCL 35.624 states that the County Department of Veterans Affairs shall perform such duties and exercise such powers as shall be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this act and any and all other benefits to which Veterans may be entitled as prescribed by the County Department of Veterans Affairs. The CVSF Grant was created and given a base grant of \$50,000 to each county for Veterans services. The removal of Dick Pershinske is in part due to the lack of cooperation with the forensic audit and choosing not to apply for the CVSF Grant. I further move to appoint Ms. Theresa Casteel to replace Mr. Dick Pershinske and Mr. John Kling to fill the vacancy of Mr. Paul Wandrie. It was second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott. Roll Call: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick.

Commissioner Kaiser said we do own the ambulance hall and, in the future, when the ambulance service moves into their new facility the board will look into moving the Veterans Affairs and possibly MSU Extension into it.

**Old Business:**

The board discussed the bids for new legal counsel for the county. Both bids were very similar. They decided on the bid from Young, Graham & Wendling, P.C. It was moved by Commissioner Clark second by Commissioner Kaiser to approve the bid for new legal counsel. Commissioners said we might want to continue to use Rich McNulty from Cohl, Stoker & Toskey, P.C. for union contracts. Sheriff Ed Wilk spoke up and said Bonnie Toskey does the negotiations for unions not Rich McNulty. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick

Commissioner Kaiser moved and Commissioner Clark second to authorize the Chair and Vice Chair to initiate contact with the new legal counsel Young, Graham & Wendling, P.C. to discuss some pending issues. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick

Amended Opioid Committee Resolution was reviewed. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Clark. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick. (resolution attached)

Commissioner Clark gave an update on the Dam committee. The Townships involved have been taking applications for committee members. Portage Township called Commissioner Kaiser and told her that a Special Assessment District was created years ago; there is no need to create one. Brevort Lake and Milakokia Lake dams need to have lake level variance created as well. This needs to be looked into.

County Administrator discussion was had. Commissioner Kaiser moved and Commissioner Clark second to create an ad hoc committee to go over job descriptions. Clerk Hillary Vowell said this topic was tabled at a previous meeting and was a moot point. She said the wage study needs to be addressed before taking on hiring a County Administrator. Commissioner Litzner had some reasons why he feels a County Administrator is needed. The board briefly discussed the wage study and the new wage tables they are working on. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick.

It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to go into closed session at 5:43pm to discuss property purchase. VVMV. Absent: Patrick. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to leave closed session. VVMC. Absent: Patrick. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Clark to move back into regular session at 5:50pm. VVMC. Absent: Patrick.

**Additional Board Member Business:**

Commissioner St. Louis-Scott said we need to do a retirement resolution for District Court Administrator. Clerk Hillary Vowell will prepare this for the next regular meeting.

Commissioner Kaiser said there is a ballot initiative opposing legislation to give the state control for solar and wind developments.

Commissioner Kaiser informed the board that the Veterans Affairs Committee hired an attorney out of Traverse City.

**Committee Reports:**

Commissioner St. Louis-Scott said MSU is putting out a survey on opioid use.

**Public Comment:**

Stephanie Fortino, St. Ignace News – wanted to remind the board that all deliberations must be done in a public meeting. Commissioners emailing each other and or round robin calls/emails could be violation of open meeting acts. It needs to be clear and open as possible for transparency. Any communications during a public meeting are subject to FOIA as well.

**Approval of Bills/Budget Amendments:**

The board reviewed the regular bills revised of March 15 for approval in the amount of \$92,314.14. These bills were approved by Commissioners Kaiser and St. Louis-Scott prior to the meeting. The checks needed to be put in the mail so the payments would not be late. 2 invoices were pulled when reviewing them and held. It was moved by Commissioner Clark second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the regular bills. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick (bills attached)

Invoice #91857 was previously held in the revised regular bills list of March 15. After some discussion it was moved by Commissioner Litzner second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to pay the invoice in the amount of \$750. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: Kaiser. Absent: Patrick. (bills attached)

The board reviewed the manual bills of February 29 for approval in the amount of \$682,117.51. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Kaiser to approve the manual bills. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick (bills attached)

The board reviewed the manual bills of March 8 for approval in the amount of \$21,811.03. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the manual bills. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick (bills attached)

The board reviewed the manual bills of March 7 for approval in the amount of \$41,181.71. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Kaiser to approve the manual bills. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick (bills attached)

The board reviewed the manual bills of March 14 for approval in the amount of \$28,902.44. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to approve the manual bills. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick (bills attached)

The board reviewed the additional bills of March 14 for approval in the amount of \$24,109.33. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Clark to approve the additional bills. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick (bills attached)

The board reviewed budget amendment #2024-10. It was moved by Commissioner Clark second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the budget amendment. Roll Call: YES: Clark, Kaiser, Litzner, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Patrick (amendment attached)

**Communications:**

January banking report, MSU Extension News, UPACC Resolution

**Adjournment:** It was moved by Commissioner Clark second by Commissioner Kaiser to adjourn the meeting at 6:20pm. VVMC

Hillary Vowell  
County Clerk