

MACKINAC COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS
Wednesday March 27, 2024

The Mackinac County Board of Commissioners held their regular meeting on Wednesday March 27, 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: Jodi Kaiser, Dan Litzner, Mike Patrick, Judy St. Louis-Scott. Absent: Corina Clark.

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

Public Comment:

Deb Garlock – spoke on behalf of the Veterans Office and the services they have offered her and her husband. She does want anything to disrupt the Veterans Office and their services.

Dick Pershinske – read a statement on behalf of the Veterans Affairs Office regarding the new lawsuit that was served upon the Board of Commissioners.

Tim Dolehanty – spoke on behalf of the Veterans Affairs Office and Veteran Chair Dick Pershinske. Said removal of an officer or agent can only occur if the agent is incompetent to execute duties properly or if charges and evidence and is found guilty of official misconduct, or habitual or willful neglect of duty, and if the misconduct or neglect is sufficient cause for removal. The board passed a motion to remove Dick Pershinske from the Veterans Committee without properly being informed of his charges and did not receive a hearing. He called for the board to vacate the motion to terminate Dick Pershinske from the Veterans Committee and comply with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act. He presented the board with a FOIA request for all communications between the board members regarding the Veterans Committee from January 1 – March 27, 2024. (statement attached)

Diane Patrick – former County Commissioner and the board at that time had established the Veterans Committee. They worked diligently to get the Veterans Office up and running. It bothers her to see how the Veterans Office is being treated by the board.

Darlene Belleville – spoke in support of the Veterans Office. Said her son has relied on the benefits and the Veterans Office has helped him immensely.

Elected Officials/Staff Reports:

Treasurer Jennifer Goudreau – Monday coming up is foreclosure day. All the settlements checks are in the mail.

Sheriff Ed Wilk – the new metal detectors are installed and working. Restructuring 2 positions within the Sheriffs Office. Commissioner Litzner had some questions for the Sheriff. With the restructuring of the positions this will give the Sheriff the capability to move employees into different classifications as needed. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the restructuring of the 2 positions. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark. (request letter attached)

Sheriff Ed Wilk also requested to hire an additional Corrections Officer for the jail. This will bring staff up to 6 night and 6-day Correction Officers. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioners St. Louis-Scott to approve the additional Corrections Officer. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: Litzner. Absent: Clark.

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

Clerk Hillary Vowell – county still having a hard time filling the open part time maintenance position. Would like to look into changing the position into full time. Full time maintenance person is doing his best to keep up but with spring coming and yard work he will need help. Maintenance used to have 2 full time positions should be put back to that. Commissioner Patrick said he spoke with retired maintenance and he said it should be moved to full time as well.

Lester Livermore, Road Commissioner – said with the money savings from the mild winter, the Road Commissioner has been able to purchase new 2 graders. And Manager Dirk Heckman has been elected Chairperson of the Michigan County Road Commission Association. He will be the leader of all the Road Commissions in the State.

Darcy Long, Mackinac Economic Alliance – There's a program available to small business that were impacted by covid. April 9 at 2pm at Little Bear East there will be a meeting where small business owners can attend to learn more about funding assistance.

New Business:

Retirement resolution was presented for approval for Luce/Mackinac County District Court Administrator Jeanine Stephenson. It was moved by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott second by Commissioner Patrick to sign the retirement resolution. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark.

Commissioner Kaiser said the board was advised by their legal counsel to rescind the motion that was passed from the meeting on March 14 to have Dick Pershinske removed from the Veterans Committee. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to rescind the motion. Commissioner Patrick said there needs to be a lot of discussion regarding this. He feels Commissioner Kaiser is out of line in these actions and due to her actions, a lawsuit has been filed. Commissioner Patrick calls for

Commissioner Kaiser to be removed from all committees and liaisons. Chair Litzner said he will take this under advisement. Commissioner St. Louis-Scott said it was never the boards intention to disband the Veterans Committee. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark.

Veterans Chair Dick Pershinske told the board that the letter of intent to apply for the State Grant has been sent in. The deadline is Monday April 1.

Contract for R.S. Scott Engineering for the pre-engineering on the housing project was presented. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to authorize the contract. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark. (contract attached)

The board received a letter from Attorney Mark Dobias on behalf of Prosecutor J. Stuart Spencer for 21 years of MERS credit. In 2023 this request was denied by the board based on a legal opinion from county legal counsel. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner Kaiser to deny this request again per legal opinion and authorize Chair Litzner to send letter to Attorney Mark Dobias denying. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark. (letter attached)

Old Business:

None

Additional Board Member Business:

Commissioner Litzner said equalization needs to be done by April 9. The regular meeting will be scheduled to April 9. 4:00pm will be equalization and regular meeting will be at 4:30pm.

Committee Reports:

Commissioner Patrick said that the green light has been installed in Veterans Office and the lights in basement repaired.

Commissioner Kaiser said they are still looking for signatures for the ballot initiative opposing legislation to give the state control for solar and wind developments.

Public Comment:

Lewis Hitts – recommended the board hire an arbitrator to sit down with the Veterans Committee to resolve issues. Hiring attorneys is costing tax payers more money.

Dick Pershinske – said Veterans Committee would be willing to sit down and discuss issues with the board. Commissioner St. Louis-Scott said it was not the intention of the board to dismantle the Veterans Committee.

Deb Garlock – spoke again on the Veterans Office.

Rebecca Jackson – asked how the board was proceeding with the wage study and when can the employees expect it to happen.

Diane Patrick – said personal opinion is not public policy.

Mark Maeda – said the board may want to set up a PA system that it's hard to hear in court room. He spoke on lack of policy. 80% of counties in Michigan have millages for their Veterans.

Approval of Bills/Budget Amendments:

The board reviewed the regular bills revised of March 27 for approval in the amount of \$35,352.19. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the regular bills. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark (bills attached)

The board reviewed the manual bills of March 20 for approval in the amount of \$2,317,634.67. It was moved by Commissioner Kaiser second by Commissioner Patrick to approve the manual bills. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark (bills attached)

The board reviewed the additional bills of March 27 for approval in the amount of \$808,755.37. It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner St. Louis-Scott to approve the additional bills. Roll Call: YES: Kaiser, Litzner, Patrick, St. Louis-Scott. NO: none. Absent: Clark (bills attached)

Communications:

February banking report, Bureau of Indian Affairs letter, Baraga County resolutions, Ingham County resolution, MSU Ext Youth Program News

Adjournment: It was moved by Commissioner Patrick second by Commissioner Kaiser to adjourn the meeting at 5:40pm. VVMC

Hillary Vowell
County Clerk