

CALHOUN COUNTY
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 10, 2012

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Regular Session of the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners convened at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 10, 2012 in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, County Building, Marshall, MI.

Chairman Kale called the meeting to order and requested the Deputy Clerk call the roll.

Present: Comrs. Dunn, Haadsma, Camp Seifke, Frisbie, VanSickle and Kale

Excused: Comr. Todd

Staff Present: County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott, Corporation Counsel Richard Lindsey, Human Resources Director Kim Archambault and Deputy Clerk Chris McComb

2 and 3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board held a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Comr. Haadsma.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"Moved Comr. Haadsma, supported by Comr. Frisbie to approve the agenda of the April 10, 2012 Regular Session of the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners as presented."

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of the March 15, 2012 Regular Session

"Moved Comr. VanSickle, supported by Comr. Dunn to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2012 Regular Session of the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners as presented."

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED

6. CITIZENS' TIME

James Berry of Marshall stated he originally planned to come to the Board meeting to speak on the Ott Preserve but in looking at the agenda he realized the Board had a bigger problem. He noted that on February 22 the State of Michigan gave all County Boards the power to abolish their Road Commissions. He believes the Road Commission is antiquated and reminds us of when budgets increased every year. He stated while he was looking for background information on the Road Commission minutes, he noticed there were several public official comments discussing the breakdown in communication between the Townships and the Road Commission and the Road Commissioners refused to answer or address concerns at the meeting.

Dale Jenks, Marshall Township resident and Road Commission employee, stated he knew people were wondering what changes could be made in road maintenance. He believed the County had a shining example of peak efficiency in the Calhoun County Sheriff's Department which had evolved into a class act and Al Byam surrounded himself with good people. He stated he and his coworkers envy the Sheriffs Department. He believed if you used the Road Commission employees' skills, they would do you proud. He stated he couldn't find words that would do justice to his coworkers and the Sheriff's Department. He appreciated the efforts the Board is making to straighten out the department.

Jackie Breman, Battle Creek, stated she was interested in the Road Commission Task Force because she had friends that work for the Road Commission and there were a lot of people who don't know what the Board's decision was going to be. She inquired why the task force had no community representatives or women and volunteered to serve on the task force.

7. ELECTED/APPOINTED COUNTY OFFICIALS' COMMENTS

Chris Vreeland, Parks Trustee, stated on the 19th of April the Board would vote on the trailway proposal. He stated he came to commend the Board for the time and deliberation spent on the trailway options. He stated another proposed route was given to the Parks Trustees at their last meeting and it was a good example of public and private sectors coming together to represent the County. He stated with government entities barely maintaining the status quo, he was hoping the money raised will be used wisely. He noted the Ott Preserve is a county park and there are people of good faith on both sides of controversy.

Chris Vreeland, also Chairman of the Road Commission, stated he noticed the task force had been created and there was an absence of a current Road Commissioner. He also volunteered to serve on the task force if they would like anyone who was actually currently doing the job to serve.

8. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

A. Alcohol Awareness Proclamation

Res. 34-2012

“Moved Comr. Haadsma, supported Comr. Frisbie to approve the following: Resolved the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim April 2012 as Alcohol Awareness Month.”

Comr. Dunn read the proclamation into the record.

WHEREAS, research continues to demonstrate alcohol use by young people poses dangers associated with acute impairment, threats to long-term brain development and overall safety and well-being; and

WHEREAS, it is illegal to give or allow youth under the age of 21 to drink alcohol in your home, even with their parents’ permission; and

WHEREAS, anyone found guilty of providing alcohol to underage youth can face up to a \$1,000 fine and sixty days in jail, in addition to any civil action that can be brought as a result of damages or injury related to the offense; each year approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking; and

WHEREAS, alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students and is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk for unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections; and

WHEREAS, youth that consume alcohol before the age of 15 are 40 percent more likely to develop alcohol dependence as adults. However, if consumption of alcohol can be delayed until the legal age of 21, serious alcohol-related problems can be reduced by 70 percent;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim the month of *April 2012*, as

“ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH”

In Calhoun County and encourages residents to refuse to provide alcoholic beverages to underage youth and to take the necessary steps to discourage the illegal and unhealthy practice, including the reporting of underage drinking by calling their local law enforcement. We call upon all citizens, parents, youth, governmental agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, hospitals, and schools to support efforts that will reduce and prevent underage drinking in our community.

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

Debbie Pierce from Substance Abuse Council accepted the proclamation. She noted they were hosting a town hall meeting on April 30 and working with local retailers for the spring alcohol awareness checks.

B. Calhoun County 2012 Equalization Report

Equalization Director Bonnie Payton stated the values were taken from 19 townships and 4 cities in the County. She stated the values were extracted from the assessment roles then further equalized according to state law, showing a 1.42% decrease in the State Equalized Value, for a total of \$4,116,930,142. She commended Deputy Director Hippensteel and staff for doing an excellent job and also thanked the local assessors for their dedication and hard work.

Deputy Equalization Director John Hippensteel pointed out the highlights of the report with the Commissioners. He stated the property values were coming around and leveling off in values. He stated the remainder of the study would show all units were at 50% equalized value. He stated the Equalization Department would recommend support of all units at 50%.

Res. 35-2012

“Moved Comr. VanSickle, supported by Comr. Frisbie to approve the following: Resolved the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners do hereby approve the 2012 Calhoun County Equalization Report.”

Comr. Camp Seifke inquired if the agricultural comparisons were sales from inside the county or out.

Hippensteel stated he could not say what the local units had done but they used comparisons inside the County. He stated they had looked at comparisons at the County border but didn't use them.

Comr. Camp Seifke inquired if when looking at vacant land, the wooded land was separated from tillable and from non-tillable.

Hippensteel confirmed they were breaking the numbers down as much as possible.

Comr. Haadsma asked for an overview of how well the assessing departments have worked together since the consolidation with Marshall and Albion.

Hippensteel stated he believed it was going very well. He stated he attended an Albion Board meeting for a question and answer session which was very informative for the Council. He stated he believed both units were happy with no complaints.

On a roll call vote, Yes – 6, Excused – 1 (Todd). Motion CARRIED.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Petitions, Communications, Reports

1. Notice of Public Hearing from the Village of Tekonsha Regarding an Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate Application from Jorgensen Steel Machining and Fabrication, Inc. for New Equipment.
2. Notice of Public Hearing from the City of Battle Creek Regarding Granting PCPC, Inc. an Industrial Facilities Exemption Certificate.

B. Resolutions

1. Senior Millage Allocation Committee Reappointments
(Terms to Expire April 30, 2015)

- {a} Rod Auton
- {b} Willie Tabb
- {c} Jennie Hoffman

2. Road Commission Task Force
(Terms to Expire December 31, 2012)

- {a} Steve Frisbie
- {b} Blaine VanSickle
- {c} Rob Behnke
- {d} Dick Sweet
- {e} Art Kale

“Moved Comr. Frisbie, supported by Comr. Dunn to approve the following: Resolved the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners do hereby approve the Consent Agenda of the April 10, 2012 Regular Session Agenda as presented.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

Comr. Haadsma stated he would like to propose changing the composition of the task force, as Ms. Breman and Road Commissioner Vreeland had indicated they would volunteer to participate. He stated he would like to make an amendment to the agenda and make a motion to add them. Motion died for lack of support.

Comr. Camp Seifke stated she would like to remove Item 9b2 from the Consent Agenda.

Res. 35-2012

“Moved Comr. Haadsma, supported by Comr. Dunn to approve the following: Resolved the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners do hereby approve the Consent Agenda of the April 10, 2012 Regular Session Agenda after the removal of Item 9b2.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

9.b.2. Road Commission Task Force

Res. 35-2012

“Moved Comr. VanSickle, supported by Comr. Frisbie to approve the following: Resolved the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners do hereby approve the Road Commission Task Force as presented.”

“Moved Comr. Haadsma, supported by Comr. Camp Seifke moved for the amendment of the addition of Jackie Breman and Chris Vreeland to the Road Commission Task Force.”

Comr. Kale stated when the Board put together the Road Commissioner Selection Committee his direction to the committee was for them to find best person to serve and to find anyone less was not fair to the people of the county. He stated it was no secret he and Comr. Frisbie had been in favor of making changes at the Road Commission because there had been too many complaints. He believed the Board would be remiss if they did not do something and that's what the purpose of the task force was. He stated his thought process in putting the task force together was no different than the Road Commissioner Selection Committee. He stated Comr. VanSickle knew the needs of the farmers, as his family had farmed for years. He stated Rob Behnke had been Supervisor of Pennfield for 15 years and they put together a feasibility study for all the roads in Pennfield. He noted there was a private citizen, Dick Sweet from Lee Township, whom Comr. Kale had met when campaigning and believed was the smartest businessman he knew. Comr. Kale stated he was all about doing things in a business environment and Mr. Sweet had six successful businesses right now and stated he was thrilled the County would have an opportunity to work with him. He stated he was proud of the team; he wanted to get in, do a thorough evaluation and find out what needed to be done. He noted the purpose of the task force was not to eliminate jobs, it was to evaluate the concerns of the citizens and we needed people like Mr. Sweet and Mr. Behnke.

Comr. Camp Seifke stated as the agenda had become public she had received many questions and wanted to remind people that the first April meeting was always scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month so the meeting date had not been changed to try to hide this task force. She stated it was not a surprise that Comr. Kale had put this on the agenda because he had been talking about it at every meeting for months. She stated she had been listening very closely to Comr. Kale using the word I and we. She stated she would like to see public representation and she had a problem with one person putting together this task force. Comr. Camp Seifke stated she didn't feel the board would have control once the committee was launched. She stated moving forward, understanding there were enough votes to do so, she would like a report at every meeting on what is going on. She would like all of their meetings to be open and published. She wished they hadn't had to do this publicly and they could have sat down privately. She hoped this wasn't how they were going to move forward.

Comr. Frisbie stated that everyone had failed to mention that House Bills 5125 and 5126 were designed to be pretty transparent so there was no attempt to hide anything. He stated the role of the task force was to recommend. He appreciated Chair Kale's comments about a smaller committee being nimble, as large committees can become very divisive. He stated the Board needed to put trust into the people who were dealing with the road issue because we need to find a resolution. He stated if you start creating a task force that was overwhelming in numbers it would become bogged down. Comr. Frisbie asked the Board to have a little more trust in the committees they create.

Comr. Kale stated he had talked to Comr. Camp Seifke previously about the make-up of the task force and got no push back. He stated the first time concerns were brought up was right before the meeting. He stated he had spoken to all of the Commissioners earlier and had gotten no negative feedback. He stated the task force would have an organizational meeting next week. Comr. Kale stated he took exception to what was said and would leave it at that.

Comr. Haadsma stated he had been contacted by Comr. Kale prior to the agenda going out and no problem with the five proposed. He stated the reason he had proposed to expand to seven was to address the issues brought up by Ms. Breman and Road Comr. Vreeland.

Comr. Camp Seifke stated she wanted to make a point of clarification, that Comr. Kale had told her about the task force ten minutes before the agenda would go out.

On a voice vote, Motion for Amendment FAILED.

On a voice vote, Motion to Approve as Presented, Res. 35-2012, CARRIED.

10. SPECIAL COMMITTEE/ WORKSHOP/BOARD REPORTS

Comr. Haadsma stated he had attended the Senior Health Fair, it was well done, he was pleased to see so many vendors and appreciated that they provided so much information.

Comr. Haadsma thanked Chair Kale, for including them when he spoke at Spring Arbor University. He stated they had received many good questions.

Comr. VanSickle stated he had attended a legislative conference for Board Commissioners and found most of the workshops very informative. He stated the opening day presentation was given by Michigan State University Extension and it was centered on the auto industry and all the spin off business. He was disappointed that in the information coming from a Michigan agricultural college, agriculture was only mentioned once and they focused on the auto industry job numbers and how Michigan revolves around it. He noted that one in four citizens of Michigan was employed within the agricultural industry.

Comr. Frisbie stated the Health Board would bring forward candidate to fill the open position soon.

Comr. Frisbie noted the Budget Committee would be meeting soon. He stated he was looking forward to starting work on the budget and working with staff and Comrs. Haadsma and Kale.

Comr. Kale stated he attended the Michigan Association of Counties convention with Comr. VanSickle and others. He explained they split up to attend different workshops then shared the information so they get make the most of all the sessions offered. He noted a big part of the convention was to meet with other counties to compare how issues were being addressed.

11. UNFINISHED AND OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

12. NEW BUSINESS AND COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. County Administrator/Controller's Report

Administrator/Controller Scott thanked Equalization Director Bonnie Payton, Deputy Equalization Director John Hippensteel and the staff of the Equalization Department. She stated the annual report was a culmination of their work, shows the work of local units and makes sure everything across the county is equalized. She stated the report was encouraging, but was still showing residential equalized values were less than in 2004. She stated there would be a proposal in the House to eliminate personal property taxes coming soon, for which the legislation would be introduced in phases with possible replacement of revenue. She stated the elimination would be a significant impact on our budget and it hadn't been determined whether the replacements offered were secure enough or if we would need to cut services because of revenue loss.

Administrator/Controller Scott stated the trailway proposal had been in the County's Master Plan for almost 10 years. She explained that the Trailway Alliance was part of planning a Michigan coast to coast trailway system, which fit into the Master Plan and included a trail through the Ott Preserve. She stated the County, as landowners of the Ott Preserve, had worked to get a trail agreeable with the county, the Parks Trustees, the Road Commission, the Friends of the Ott and the Trailway Alliance. She stated the attempt to get private easements next to the Ott failed but they believed they finally had a proposed trail that took advantage of an existing trail. She stated it went along the border of the Ott, was minimally invasive, and could be done within the same budget. She stated the grants were already in place and next was to have the agreement that was already approved by the Board amended to change the route. Administrator/Controller Scott stated Corporation Counsel was working on the amendment and there would need to be agreement by all the other parties first. She stated once the Board approves then the engineering plan and more action would take place. She stated the grants have been extended but they could only extend them for a little while longer so the work needed to get started to meet the deadlines. She stated the amended agreement would be brought to the Board on May 3.

Comr. Haadsma inquired if the State had to be on board with regards to the section of the trail through the wetlands.

Administrator/Controller Scott stated she had not spoken with Ms. Vickers from DEQ but that Road Commission Staff indicated they had an unofficial okay via email to go through the wetlands because that was the only alternative, so it looked like they were on board with the recent route.

B. New Business

1. Senior Services Grant Award for the Third Annual Marshall Area Senior Fair

Res. 36-2012

“Moved Comr. Camp Seifke, Supported by Comr. Dunn to approve the following: The Calhoun County Board of Commissioners does hereby acknowledge receipt and accept the award from the Marshall Community Foundation of \$750.00 to support the Third Annual Marshall Area Senior Fair.”

On a roll call vote, Yes -6, Excused – 1 (Todd). Motion CARRIED.

13. CITIZEN’S TIME

Senior Services Manager Carl Gibson thanked the Board for accepting the grant. He stated it supported the activity with the City of Marshall and Oaklawn Hospital and supported the Governors collaboration effort.

Matthew Hall, lifelong resident of Calhoun County, thanked the Board for displaying what open meetings should be. He stated there was a passion in the exchange that government has moved away from. He stated he had been attending Road Commission meetings but had stopped attending when the Commissioners stopped answering questions. He thanked the Board for not appointing Road Commissioner Vreeland to the task force, as he believed it would be inappropriate. He thanked the Board for appointing Road Commission Wildt, as staff appreciated him because he listened to their concerns. He thanked the Board for giving him a renewed hope in his organization. He thanked the Board for some hope that they may do something in the future that may make their road system better than it was today.

Jackie Breman stated she did not come to the meeting to cause dissent, but rather because she thought she might be of some help. She stated she felt insulted and unqualified after listening to the comments. She stated she was encouraged by two commissioners to come and get involved.

James Berry stated he was not a member of any of the parties relative to the Ott Preserve. He stated the new route is more invasive than any other proposed. He stated Doug Sofia of the Friends of the Ott was not in support of the alternate route and neither was he. He stated he tried to find the alternate route, but it was not marked. He stated when he went to look for the alternate route he had a verbal altercation with a man on a tractor about where the route was. He stated the property line is not posted and for everyone's safety, that should be done and asked that the Parks Trustees arrange for that.

14. COMMISSIONERS TIME

Comr. Camp Seifke thanked administration for their work on the Trailway through the Ott. She stated it was nice to know the county parks matter. She stated she looked forward to continued discussion.

Comr. Camp Seifke stated she looked forward to the process of the Road Commission Task Force.

Comr. Kale introduced Mr. Dick Sweet as a sharp entrepreneur out of Lee Township whom he is proud to have serving.

15. CLAIMS PAYABLE.

A. Claims Payable for March 9 through April 3, 2012 in the Amount of \$2,045,631.77

Res. 37-2012

“Moved Comr. Frisbie, supported by Comr. VanSickle to approve the following: Resolved the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners does hereby approve the Claims Payable Listing for March 8 through April 3, 2012 in the amount of \$2,045,631.77.”

On a roll call vote, Yes –6, Excused – 1 (Todd). Motion CARRIED

16. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comr. Haadmsa announced the Community Inclusive Recreation (CIR) auction was April 19 at the Battle Creek Country Club at 5:30. He stated tickets are \$50 and this was a very important fund raiser for CIR as they provide recreational opportunities to diverse parts of the community.

Comr. Kale announced the Albion Vision of Life was having a walleye dinner fundraiser from 5-7 at the Elks Lodge.

Comr. Kale stated on April 14 there would be a \$7 all you can eat spaghetti dinner fundraiser for the Albion Township Fire Department from 5-8.

17. CLOSED SESSION

Res. 38-2012

“Moved Comr. Haadmsa, supported by Comr. Camp Seifke to retire to closed session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation.”

On a roll call vote, Yes – 6, Excused 1 (Todd). Motion CARRIED

18. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m. at the call of the Chair.

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Chairman
Calhoun County Board of Commissioners

Clerk
Calhoun County Board of Commissioners