

THE BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 30, 2023

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners met in a special meeting on Monday, October 30, 2023, in the Frank Waltherhouse Board of Commissioners Room, 448 Court Place, Government Center, Beulah, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Roelofs at 5:30 p.m.

Present were: Commissioners Cunningham Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke

The invocation was given by Commissioner Roelofs followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda: Motion by Warsecke, seconded by Markey, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Purpose of this meeting: Discussions regarding a Benzie County Headlee Reset ~~Election~~ Ballot Proposal:

Parties present from local municipalities that provided representation in the discussion:

Almira: Mark Roper, Supervisor

Benzonia: Jason Barnard, Supervisor; Karen Burns, Treasurer

Blaine: Cindy Sauer, Treasurer; Chuck Beale, Trustee

Crystal Lake: Amy Ferris, Supervisor

Homestead: Tia Kurina-Cooley, Supervisor

Inland: David Davis, Supervisor; Rose Wirth, Clerk

Lake: Jeff Johnson, Supervisor; Maryanne Goodman, Treasurer

Platte: Alison Michalak, Clerk

Weldon: Ron Hitesman, Supervisor; Sally Bobek, Treasurer

Northwest Education Service (formally known as Traverse Bay Area ISD): Matt Olson, Assistant Superintendent

Katie Zeits, County Administrator, ~~what~~ went over the Benzie County's General Operating Millage and Headlee Rollback presentation and provided charts showing how the millage has rolled back since 2019 and the revenue lost with the rollback. The Headlee Reset Election consists of going out to the voters and asking that the millages be put back to the original value of 5.29 for the county, 1.21 for the townships, and .27 for the Northwest Education Services (ISD). We would ask the community to allow us to levy up to that amount, but it doesn't mean that we must levy that amount but would put the mechanism in place to allow it. Discussion was held regarding how the townships feel about it, is it a need in your township, do you see it as need for the County, what are the pros for it, what are the cons for it, and how you feel as a township regarding moving forward or not at this time?

Some of the townships feel this has been needed for years and are glad that the conversation has started. Some feel that their township would not levy an additional amount but realized that it is a need for the county. This would allow bundling of some of the special millages, bringing them back into the general fund and doing away with the special millages. It was discussed how some of the voters like to pick which millages they support, vote for, and want their money to go specifically to that millage. There is a need to get the information to the voters on what the Headlee Reset means and help relieve any trust issues.

Matt Olson stated that the .27 millage for the ISD could not be restored without a five-county consensus. Benzie County on its own cannot restore the .27 for the ISD, as part of this package.

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Leelanau, Grand Traverse, Antrim, Kalkaska, and Benzie would have to do a separate issue all at the same time, and we are not prepared at this time to do this.

It was the consensus with the participants from tonight's meeting that they will take this information back to their boards for discussion. A sample resolution was provided for the townships to review. The Guide to Property Taxes, Proposal A, & Headlee Amendment booklet were available for the township to take and hand out. If this is supported by a majority of the townships, then a County Advisory Tax Limitation Committee, which consists of the County Treasurer, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee of the County Commissioners, ISD Superintendent or their representative, a resident of a municipality within the county who would be selected by the Probate Judge, a member who is not officially connected with or employed by any local government and shall be selected by the Board of Commissioners, a member who is a township supervisors who will be selected by the majority of the township supervisors, will be appointed. Once the County Advisory Tax Limitation Committee is formed, they must meet within 10 days to start conversations regarding the Headlee Reset. This committee would bring their recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. If the Board of Commissioners agrees to the recommendation, they would adopt a resolution to have it placed on the ballot to be voted on in 2024.

7:06 p.m. Public Input - None

Motion by Warsecke, seconded by Cunningham, to adjourn this special meeting at 7:07 p.m. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Bob Roelofs – Chair

Tammy Bowers, Benzie County Clerk