

THE BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 23, 2024

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, in the Frank Walterhouse Board of Commissioners Room, 448 Court Place, Government Center, Beulah, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bob Roelofs.

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

The invocation was given by Commissioner Roelofs and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda:

Motion by Nye, seconded by Warsecke, to approve the agenda as amended, adding Step 3 Grievance request as item E under Consent Calendar Approval. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Minutes:

Motion by Cunningham, seconded by Markey, to approve the regular session minutes of January 9, 2024, with clarification of Commissioner Jeannot statement regarding Almira Townships' letter regarding Headlee. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

9:04 a.m. Public Comment – None

ELECTED OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

Sheriff Rosa introduced Omar the new K-9 dog and Deputy Dumond his handler. He announced that he is seeking re-election for Sheriff of Benzie County. Undersheriff Hubers agreed to stay on as well. The timeline for 24-hour road patrol is the middle of May 2024.

Megan Garza, Maples Administrator, gave an update on the Maples. For the past 9 months every admission to The Maples has been a Benzie County resident or a loved one of a Benzie County resident. To date, our census year to date, is 97.5%, so we are staying full. I have a waiting list of 12 individuals, all Benzie County residents. The staff moral is great. Working on our emergency preparedness plan with Rebecca Hubers, Emergency Management. In August we had 20 contract staff members, as of today we have 6 contract staff members. Working on issues with the new generator.

Donald Shafer explained some of the issues with the generator.

Kelly Ottinger, Fund Development Director Benzie Senior Resources, was present to answer any questions regarding the written report that was provided.

FINANCE

Bills: Motion by Warsecke , seconded by Cunningham, to approve payment of the bills from January 5, 2024, through January 18, 2024, in the amount of \$614,718.14, as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

CONSENT CALENDAR APPROVAL

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The purpose of the consent calendar is to expedite business by grouping non-controversial items together to be dealt with by one Commission motion without discussion. Any member of the Commission or staff may ask that any item on the consent calendar be removed therefrom and placed elsewhere on the agenda for individual consideration by the Commission; and such requests will be respected. If an item is not removed from the consent calendar, the action noted in the minutes will approve the entire consent calendar.

The following actions as recommended on the amended Consent Calendar portion of the agenda were approved:

Commissioner Sauer removed item A.

- A. Removed from Consent Calendar.
- B. Consider approving copier lease and maintenance agreement for lower level: The Board of Commissioners accepts the proposal from Applied Solutions dated January 16, 2024, for a Ricoh IM C400F copy machine and authorizes the necessary five-year lease and maintenance agreements, in the monthly lease amount of \$74.00 and monthly maintenance cost of \$52.62, with funds available in the Central Dispatch Fund.
- C. Confirming and approval of SWAC Bylaws: The Board of Commissioners concurs with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee recommendation to amend the Committee Rules of Procedure, including a change to the committee's name to Material Management Advisory Committee and to align with Regional and State goals.
- D. Approval of Central Dispatch Advisory Committee Bylaws: The Board of Commissioners approves the Benzie County Central Dispatch Advisory Board Bylaws dated January 11, 2024, as recommended by the Central Dispatch Advisory Board.
- E. Step 3 Grievance: The Board of Commissioners designates the County Administrator to act on its behalf to hear and respond to the Step 3 Grievance for the Command Officers Associations of Michigan Corrections Command Unit involving Sergeant Kristi Seidelmann, Grievance #24-27.

Motion by Warsecke, seconded by Cunningham to adopt the Consent Calendar Items B through E, as amended. Roll call. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke
Nays: None Motion carried

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR:

Discussions was held regarding the campus cleaning contract.

- A. Consider amending the campus cleaning contract to include the lower level expansion project: Motion by Sauer, seconded by Jeannot, that an amendment to the three-year contract with Start Fresh Cleaning, Kathy Helene, originally approved August 23, 2022, be approved to include additional space for cleaning services, with the new total monthly amount to reflect \$6,100, such amendment subject to approval by legal counsel, and that the Board Chair be authorized to sign, with funds available in the General Fund. Roll call. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

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Discussion regarding adopting a resolution to start the Headlee reset process: Motion by Jeannot, seconded by Nye, to adopt Resolution 2024-006 to Alter the Fixed Separate Tax Limitation and to Create a County Advisory Tax Limitation Committee. Roll call. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, and Warsecke Nays: Roelofs and Sauer Motion carried.

Discussion regarding affordable and missing middle housing and changes to payment in lieu of taxes laws. Motion by Jeannot, seconded by Cunningham, to adopt Resolution 2024-007 to Set Factors to be Considered for Requiring Payment of Additional Amount on a Service Charge Payable in Lieu of Taxes for Tax-Exempt Workforce Housing Projects. Roll call. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion regarding additional staffing for Corrections and consider adopting Jail Operations millage resolution to be placed on August 2024 ballot.: Sheriff Rosa, Undersheriff Hubers and Dan Smith, Jail Administrator were present to request two additional corrections officers which were recommended according to the staffing analysis conducted by the Michigan Department of Corrections. Discussion was held regarding their request and that the jail operating millage will be expiring and will need to be placed on the 2024 ballot if the Commissioners wish to go continue the millage. The millage request will be brought back at a later date.

Motion by Jeannot, seconded by Warsecke to authorize up to two additional corrections officers subject to funding. Roll call. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Consider authorizing ballot language for the August 2024 ballot related to 911 Surcharge Funds: Cory Ellis, 911 Director was present to answer any questions. Motion by Nye, seconded by Cunningham, to adopt Resolution 2024-005 submitting to a vote of the electorate reauthorization of the telephone surcharge for continuing enhanced emergency telephone services (911 Services), for placement on the August 2024 Primary Election ballot. Roll call. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

10:59 a.m. Break

11:07 a.m. Reconvene

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Motion by Warsecke, seconded by Cunningham, to approve the 2024 Commissioner Committee Appointments as amended. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Chair Roelofs attended the MAC Transportation and Infrastructure meeting, Veterans Affairs meeting, Board of Commissioners meeting on January 12, 2024, and Area Agency on Aging Corporate Compliance Committee meeting.

Comm Jeannot attended the Maples meeting, Platte Township meeting, Almira Township meeting, Northern Michigan Community Action Agency meeting, and EDC/BRA meeting. A written report was provided.

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Comm Cunningham attended the City of Frankfort and MSHDA workshop. Will be going to the Listening Session for NMC meeting at BACN today. A written report was provided.

Comm Nye attended the Village of Beulah meetings, Village of Beulah Informational meeting at Mills Community House regarding the sewer system, Benzonia Township meetings, Centra Wellness Board meetings, Board of Commissioners Organizational meeting, Village of Benzonia meeting, Economic Development Committee meeting, and MAC Health and Human Services meeting. A written report was provided.

Comm Markey attended Centra Wellness Network meeting, meeting with Senator Bumstead, meeting with State Representative Roth, Northern Regional Entity Substance Oversight Committee meeting, Homestead Township meeting, Centra Wellness Network Board meeting, Village of Honor meeting, Networks Northwest meeting, Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse meeting, and MAC Judicial and Public Safety meeting.

Comm Warsecke attended the Inland Township meeting, Conservation District meeting, and Benzie Transportation Authority meeting.

Comm Sauer attended the Ironman meeting, Road Commission meeting, Village of Thompsonville meeting, and Village of Elberta meeting. Wanted to give a thank you to Undersheriff Hubers. They had an issue with a homeless individual in Blaine township. A written report was provided.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – Katie Zeits

The Digital Equity Task Force meets regularly to talk about digital equity and what it means for Benzie County. They are working on a list to present to the board of what we should do to impact digital equity in Benzie County. There is a lot of funding for this coming down from the State and Federal level for digital equity.

Their office has been working on a lot of grant and ARPA reporting.

With the adoption of the Headlee resolution, our office will start to organize the groups that need to get together to make the appointments. It will come back to you to appoint the committee.

Will need to look at the EMS/ALS millage and Commission on Aging millage for the November 2024 Ballot. The 911 Surcharge millage and the Jail Operation millage looking at the August 2024 ballot.

Will have the ARPA and Opioid back on the agenda, there are funds we can allocate, so will bring that back before the board for further discussion.

As for the Material Management Planning, we have been meeting with Grand Traverse County and Leelanau County regarding a regional plan. This will be coming to you in the future regarding a letter to the State stating we are participating in a regional plan.

Parole and Probation expansion kick off meeting this Wednesday. The remodel will start shortly thereafter.

Meeting with NMC today before their 3:00 p.m. meeting. Will report on that at the next meeting.

PRESENTATION OF CORRESPONDENCE

- Benzie Leelanau Health Department Agenda for January 24, 2024
- Letter from Almira Township regarding Headlee Reset Resolution

12:11 p.m. Public Comment

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Judge John Mead commented on the individual he will need to appoint for the Tax Allocation Committee. The Manistee County Clerk, who was appointed the same day as Tammy, has resigned. These County Clerks are under a lot of stress with the 9-day early voting.

12:14 p.m. Public Comment closed.

Motion by Warsecke, seconded by Cunningham, to adjourn at 12:14 p.m. Ayes: Cunningham, Jeannot, Markey, Nye, Roelofs, Sauer and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Bob Roelofs, Chair

Tammy Bowers, Benzie County Clerk

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2. Approve the regular session minutes of January 9, 2024, with clarification of Commissioner Jeannot statement regarding Almira Townships' letter regarding Headlee.
3. Approve payment of the bills from January 5, 2024, through January 18, 2024, in the amount of \$614,718.14, as presented.
4. Adopt the Consent Calendar Items B through E as amended.
5. That an amendment to the three-year contract with Start Fresh Cleaning, Kathy Helene, originally approved August 23, 2022, be approved to include additional space for cleaning services, with the new total monthly amount to reflect \$6,100, such amendment subject to approval by legal counsel, and that the Board Chair be authorized to sign, with funds available in the General Fund.
6. To adopt Resolution 2024-006 to Alter the Fixed Separate Tax Limitation and to Create a County Advisory Tax Limitation Committee.
7. To adopt Resolution 2024-007 to Set Factors to be Considered for Requiring Payment of Additional Amount on a Service Charge Payable in Lieu of Taxes for Tax-Exempt Workforce Housing Projects.
8. Authorize up to two additional corrections officers subject to funding.
9. To adopt Resolution 2024-005 submitting to a vote of the electorate reauthorization of the telephone surcharge for continuing enhanced emergency telephone services (911 Services), for placement on the August 2024 Primary Election ballot.
10. To approve the 2024 Commissioner Committee Appointments as amended.

Art Jeannot
Commissioner Report
January 23, 2024

- **12/14- Maples**
 - At Commissioner Sauer's request I attended this meeting.
 - Occupancy rate was at 98% with the last 8 admittances being from Benzie County. They have reduced the number of beds available for rehabilitation to accommodate more long-term care residences. There is a greater demand for long care from Benzie County residences then rehabilitation.
 - They continue to reduce the need for contract nurses and CNAs by hiring locally. Currently the only contract positions are CNAs. This has impacted the income statement positively.
 - Generator has failed and is out of warranty. The cost for a leased unit is \$15k a month. They hope to correct this in the next 30 days.
 - Maples has been certified as a PAC (Positive Approach to Care) facility. They are the first in the region to obtain this designation and helps with marketing the facility.
- **1/2- Platte Township**
 - Members of the WBJPC plan on attending an upcoming conference regarding new zoning laws.
 - Mary Pitcher has been assigned as the "zoning enforcement officer."
 - Modest compensation increases were approved for the elected township officials and members of the ZBA.
 - Passed a resolution supporting a Headlee Reset request.
- **1/4- Lake Township**
 - On going discussions to improve the non-motorized boat landing at the end of Lake MI Drive. Improvements include a dock, ADA compliment kayak rack and improved site work. Becker and Rayder are the paid consultants.
- **1/8- Almira Township**
 - Declined to approve Headlee resolution. A letter will be sent to county administration.
 - Approved request from Benzie County Sheriff office to store boat.
- **1/18- NMCAA**
 - This was my first meeting after being elected chair.
 - The tax preparation program (VITA) is underway. Citizens can access this program at BACN or Benzie Senior Resources. In addition, support can be accessed on line at getyourrefund.org/nmcaa or myfreetaxes.com
 - Tonya Schroka has resigned as the Benzie County Consumer Sector.
- **1/19- EDC/BRA**
 - Dan Barcheski was elected Chair, Betsie Evans was elected Vice Chair and Katie Zeits was elected Secretary.
 - We were updated on broadband efforts by Cherry Capital. A copy of the report should be in your packet.
 - Mitch Shapiro updated us on the *Digital Equity* Initiative. This will be an effort to offer training on the use of the internet for citizens requesting it. This is in its planning stages. Benzie County is one of 3 Counties in the SOM to pilot it.
 - We will be receiving our first payment from the SOM to reimburse the cost of Brownfield expenses regarding the True North project in Honor. Katie can speak to this.

- **Other –**

- I attended a meeting with the Benzie County Road Commission on December 14th. The purpose was to support Cherry Capital Communications request for a reduction in fees related to fiber placement to bring broadband internet to our County. I believe an equitable settlement was arrived at.
- At the request of Commissioner Markey and Chip Johnson, I arranged a discussion with Representative Roth to discuss a health care bill being co-sponsored by Representative Roth, VanderWall and Coffia.
- Dick Taylor asked for help to get an extension from the State of MI on the \$5.2M grant to rebuild lake front protection at the Point Betsie Lighthouse. We met with Representative Roth. We used this meeting to discuss additional funding for this project.



23 Jan 2024 Commissioner Cunningham

County

- 12 Jan MAC Environmental Regulatory, planning session. I encourage people to visit: <http://micounties.org> Podcast **83**, that provides a look at the news, introduced bills, stories and trends related to **Michigan's 83 counties** from Keweenaw to Monroe, Chippewa to Benzie. Recently posted: Ax MI Tax <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpMj6MxUK74>
- 16 Jan Frankfort City Council, MSHDA workshop shared, Frankfort housing efforts being used as an example for others to follow.
- CLkTwp, Airport Manager discussion, Dick Bayer, current Airport Manager was present. Bruce Walton, Road Commission, presented and said, "We didn't spend all 2023 and 2022 funds and prioritized needs.
- 17 Jan BoC Agenda Review
- 19 Jan EDC/BRA, I will update as needed.

Community

NOTE: 23 Jan 24, NMC Listening Session, 3pm, BACN, and 6:30pm Weldon Twp Hall

City of Frankfort Planning Commission

City of Frankfort & MSHDA workshop. Mayor Holwerda and Superintendent Josh Mills provided a housing update: In December 2023 Governor Whitmer signed laws to encourage attainable and affordable housing. Frankfort wrote a resolution using the laws when leveraging, PILTS on Main Street and city owned property. Attending guests ; Amy Hovey, Chief Exec Officer, MI State Housing Development Authority/Tony Lentych, Chief Housing Investment Officer, MSHDA.

Rhonda Nye
District IV – Benzonia Township
Commissioner Report
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December 12 & January 10 – Village of Beulah

- Approved resolution proposing amended water and sewer rates to be effective 1/1/2024.
- Approved various contracts in regard to sewer project.
- Approved RV Park Rules 2024 - camper complaint process clarified and specifies what would cause expulsion from park and what amount of fees would be refunded if that occurred.
- To address the subletting issue the seasonal RV Park is transitioning to weekly/nightly rentals giving first priority to last year's guests, then to waitlist, then to new guests.
- Cold Creek Spoils Removal Bid awarded to Kerby's Backhoe, this cost is split with Benzonia Township.

January 9 – Village of Beulah Informational Meeting at Mill's Community House

- Representatives from Baker Tilly and Gozling Dzubek shared information regarding the ACO, required upgrades to sewer system, and finance options to cover costs.
- Application for a USDA loan will be made, loan forgiveness portion of this funding unknown at this time.
- Approximately a 12 million dollar project. A 2 million dollar EGLE Clean Water Grant has been awarded.

December 13 & January 10 – Benzonia Township

- New Trustee, David Gardner, appointed to Township Board and WBJPC.
- Betsy Taylor appointed as new member of township ZBA.
- Approved Site work for new Township Fire Barn which will begin this Winter, construction in the Spring. Drawings presented. Total package currently at 800k.

December 14 & January 11 – Centra Wellness Board

- Discussion regarding CCBHC's, Centra Wellness position is that they do not make fiscal sense; data being compiled at the region to support the BHH model.
- Presentation given by the Manistee Friendship Center – offer opportunities for food, classes and services.
- Opioid funding received from Benzie County appreciated.

January 2 – Organizational Meeting

January 8 – Village of Benzonia

- Approved MDOT Act 51 Non-Motorized Spending Resolution.
- February 10 Winterfest Fireworks approved behind Family Fare.
- Capital Improvement Plan will span 6 years and will be updated annually; grant funds available from the MEDC to help cover costs.
- Cottage Pros will work on ice rink as weather permits, this is a volunteer effort and greatly appreciated by the village.

January 19 – Economic Development Committee

- Chair – Dan Barcheski, Vice Chair – Betsy Evans, Secretary – Katie Zeits
- Discussion regarding Community Development Coordinator position, discussion to be continued at next meeting.
- Broadband Project, including partnerships and digital equity efforts updated.

January 22 – MAC Health & Human Services

- Presentation by Yarrow Brown – Housing North
- Legislative Update:
 - Medicaid inmate exclusion policy reform discussed – ‘re-entry waiver’ proposed which would reinstate Medicaid benefit 30 days prior to release from jail.
 - Road funding at a significant funding shortfall.
 - Ax My Tax Ballot Proposal – if ballot language approved 380k signatures needed.
 - Statewide Septic Code still being discussed, mandatory five year inspection appears unrealistic especially considering staffing issues.

Tammy Bowers

From: Gary Sauer
Sent: Saturday, January 20, 2024 4:27 PM
To: Tammy Bowers
Subject: Commissioner Report

Thanks to Commissioner Jeannot for attending the Maples meeting in my place.

1-3-4-9-2024 Township meetings. All township's did normal business. Weldon voted to not pursue Headlee override.

1-9-2024 Ironman

Will be no major changes to the race. September 15 is the date. One Elberta council member stated he was always impressed that the village was cleaner after the Ironman left.

1-11-2024 Road Commission

Demolition of the Platte River will begin shortly. Approached by State Police to use Bearcat to breach walls. This unfortunately will not be able to be viewed by the public. Liability wise but am hopeful they will film, no guarantees. Good winter so far very little overtime and good supply of road salt.

1-16-2024 Village of Thompsonville

Public hearing for Parks and Recreation plan. Some written responses good ideas on where to go, looking for grants in the future to make some a reality. Water bids have come back system is old and they must update. Two new wells required, same company will install water meters. Tank needs painting inside and out, increase in water rates from \$47 to \$60 for approximately 2 years till adjustments can be made by usage. New well house is in project. Hopefully this final will be approved at the next meeting all looks good. DPW worker has received his CDL and now DPW is staffed instead of just one employee.

1-18-2024 Village of Elberta

Closing out of water and sewer project. Some funds left over will do a small project to help village with water and sewer. DPW employee will work on CDL. Concerns at Life Saving building where fisherman drive out of lot to fish. Will consider large rocks to curb issue. Ironman is already applying for permits will most likely be last year, Village has been happy with results of this.

Gary Sauer
Commissioner District 7

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