

THE BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 26, 2019

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Tuesday, February 26, 2019, in the Frank F. Walterhouse Board Room, 448 Court Place, Government Center, Beulah, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gary Sauer.

Present were: Commissioners Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke

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

Agenda:

Motion by Roelofs, seconded by Warsecke, to approve the agenda as amended, adding Airport Authority under Committee Appointments. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Minutes:

Motion by Jeannot, seconded by Roelofs, to approve the regular session minutes of February 12, 2019 as corrected. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

9:04 a.m. Public Input

Mike Ross, Benzonia Township, stated that he has been a resident of Beulah since 1961; acknowledges Coury Carland for his service on this board. Benzonia Township has been a Democratic seat since 2006. Here today to encourage you in the spirit of goodwill to strongly consider a Democratic candidate for Coury's replacement.

Jim Dulzo, Chair of the Benzie County Democratic Party and stated that Coury has done a wonderful job. Hope you will very strongly consider filling his seat with a Democrat; he stated that at the last election, there were several partisan positions and six were won by Democrats in Benzonia Township. He asks to please appoint a Democrat to this position and keep the seat as it is.

Annie Browning stated that she values diversity; a lot of diverse opinions are a good thing; asking questions; a lot you can learn from diversity. I trust that you will make a good decision.

9:11 a.m. Public Input Closed

ELECTED OFFICIALS & DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

Tom King, EMS, provided a monthly ambulance service report; stated that he has met with the Benzie Bus regarding a possible solution to our maintenance issues; our vehicles are in good shape.

Tom Longanbach, Equalization Director, stated that back in 2014 this board decided to keep the auditing of Principal Residence Exemptions in the county, rather than turn over to the state; the current resolution expires this year and he is asking to adopt a new resolution for 5 years.

Motion by Warsecke, seconded by Roelofs, to adopt resolution 2019-006, Election to Audit Homeowner's Principal Residence Exemptions as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

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Doug Durand, Benzie Senior Resources, provided his monthly report; they are receiving another 125 emergency boxes for our home delivered meals due to the number of days we have been closed due to the weather; the agency has been very busy even with the closed days. March for Meals event, gives the board members the opportunity to ride along.

Motion by Farrell, seconded by Warsecke, to adopt the Proclamation Proclaiming March 2019 as the 17th Annual March for Meals Month, authorizing the Chairman to sign. Roll call. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Jennifer Berkey, MSUE, says thank you to the Benzie County Staff that assisted in their move to another office, especially to Rick Morris and Frank Post, and two trustees, Gavin and Guy. Last month they held their annual Orchard and Vineyard Show with 20 Benzie County growers were present. The Hops and Barley conference will be coming up. She says thank you to Linda Farrell for asking to meet with us as our liaison; Caitlyn Lorenz is working hard on school grants for health & wellness.

Animal Control Report for January 2019 received.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Comm Jeannot reported that on February 15, 2019 he attended the EDC meeting and they continue to work on broadband expansion in the county. The AES contract expires March 19, 2019. Continues to be impressed with the Building Authority and how they are handling items – Comstock Construction will be submitting a new completion date. The Building Authority records will be transferred to the County Treasurer's Office for safekeeping and to allow for better access to those records. The Building Authority is continuing to seek legal counsel. NMCAA will have a site at the Inland Township Hall for tax preparation.

Comm Roelofs attended the Village of Lake Ann meeting and they are having some infrastructure concerns, they have received a substantial grant for guardrail and maintenance. EMS is doing well. He will; be riding on the Ice Breaking in St. Ignace and has been rescheduled for the time of the MAC conference. The TPOAM union has transferred over to the FOP bargaining unit – met last week for negotiations -- nothing has been settled.

Comm Taylor attended the Land Bank on February 2 and they had planted trees at the old junk yard, but with the snow they are not sure how they will do; they spoke about a possible foreclosure in Thompsonville; MALB Summit at Crystal Mountain; BSR it is interesting, that when cancelled, they don't get paid, they have to use earned time off; Platte River School -- they did a walk through with a contractor and comparing cost estimates; the Start Group for the Building Trade and Head Start program is in there.

Comm Warsecke reported that he attended the Inland and Colfax Township meetings: Inland switched to Attorney Figura for legal counsel; Benzie Bus – Eugene Allen will be stepping down in April; attended the State of the State as a guest of Representative O'Malley – it was a great day.

Comm Farrell stated that she attended Centra Wellness on February 14 and they are working to improve the interaction with Veterans for services; had a discussion as to whether Substance Abuse money can be used for MIDC; everyone was sorry to hear that Coury will be leaving Centra Wellness

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and the Board of Commissioners. Attended the Board Retreat for Centra Wellness in Manistee. February 19 attended the City of Frankfort and will go to Crystal Lake Township tonight. Frankfort will be doing street curbing this summer. There is a meeting on March 14 at Frankfort City Hall regarding Crystal Lake/Frankfort Workforce Housing. Frankfort is considering a wireless tower on the Frankfort water tower. Met with the MSUE staff and they gave her an overview of all of their services and was very impressed with what they do.

Comm Sauer reported on the Road Commission audit – there is concern with the legacy MERS costs, they are at 41% funded at this time; their MTF (Michigan Transportation Funds) have increased. The Local Road Committee recommended that they use Elmer's for all A & B projects. The Maples are at 96% occupancy and they have temporary alarms systems until the new locks are installed. The new dryers arrived on the 21st. He attended the MERS session that was presented to the employees here – was a very good discussion; there was some talk about the MERS 457 fund. Village of Elberta Clerk, Becky Addis, has resigned and they are working on the budgets. Attended Representative O'Malley and Senator Vander Wall coffee hours last week.

10:00 a.m. PUBLIC HEARING – 11 people present

John Rothhaar, Betsie Valley Trail, reported that they are looking to repair the section of trail from Beulah to County Farm Road to help get people onto the trail and off the street. No money is being asked for, but they need the county to be the applicant. These are competitive grant programs and if awarded, will improve the trail, but not pave it.

Motion by Roelofs, seconded by Farrell, to open Public Hearing. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Comm Jeannot inquired if they have the matching funds available to them? Mr. Rothhaar stated yes, they do have the funds through the Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail.

Motion by Farrell, seconded by Roelofs, to close the Public Hearing. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion by Jeannot, seconded by Farrell, to adopt resolution 2019-004 Submission of Application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for Reconstruction of the Betsie Valley Trail from Beulah to County Farm Road, authorizing the chairman to sign. Roll call. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Motion by Farrell, seconded by Jeannot, to adopt resolution 2019-005 Submission of Application to the DNR Recreation Passport Program for Reconstruction of the Betsie Valley Trail from Beulah to County Farm Road, authorizing the chairman to sign. Roll call. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- February 20, 2019 Administrator Update Report presented.
- Have received a letter from the DHHS requesting to extend their current contract for their use of space with a conference room as well.

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- Received a letter from the Little River Band that they will be holding an Opioid Symposium on April 4, 2019 – if any commissioners are interested in attending, please let him know.

FINANCE

Bills: Motion by Warsecke, seconded by Farrell, to approve payment of the bills from February 13, 2019 thru February 26, 2019 in the amount of \$271,651.11, as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Michelle Thompson, County Treasurer, directs the board to the report she presented, mainly to the fact that the DTRF is currently cash flowing the General Fund.

10:27 a.m. Break

10:32 a.m. Reconvene

Brian Childs, Benzie Central Schools Bond Issue

Mr. Childs stated that he is a 2nd year board president; May 7 they are asking for approval of a bond issue for \$47 million dollars; this would build a new elementary school on the main campus; a new bus garage on the main campus; renovations to nearly every building; updates to the middle and high schools. If this millage passes, they will close down Crystal Lake Elementary.

How will the millage work? Currently 1.6 mill being taken to retire a debt used to build the auditorium, middle school addition and Lake Ann Elementary, which expires in 2020. Then we have a 0.9 mill sinking fund that the voters approved two years ago to help keep us moving along. The new millage will be a total of 3 mill to the taxpayers = renew 1.6; will not levy the .9 so a .5 savings, but then levy the .5, for a total of 3 mill. The board would then have to vote to not levy the .9 mill for the next 8 years – that is the commitment from the current board and current superintendent.

This millage will be for 30 years.

Chairman Sauer questions that we are going from a 10 year to a 30-year millage. Would like the public to be aware of this increase. Appreciate that you have the option to not levy per year.

Comm Taylor asked if there was some way to do a portion of these items and have them phased in. Yes it will be. Mr. Childs stated that they do have a construction manager on board.

Comm Taylor asked if there was concern about the roofs being replaced now, and in 15 years or so we then have to replace them again. Mr. Childs indicated that this will always be an issue every 20 years.

Comm Jeannot asked when Platte River was closed, the message was that is cheaper to close down from an operating perspective rather than significant repairs as compared to Crystal Lake. Then two years later we are talking about closing that school and building a new facility over on the campus.

Was there any discussion when Platte River was closed about where we are now with the closing of Crystal Lake. Mr. Childs responded that closing Platte River was based on our current budget at that time and we were reaching the 5% budget threshold. Ultimately knowing that we wanted to build a new elementary school. Platte River and Crystal Lake are already within the 65-year life span with their age. Mr. Childs spoke regarding a Community Group of about 30 people and they have round-table discussions about building what is needed. The group came up with this, not the school board.

Comm Jeannot asked how you reconcile that with a declining student population. Mr. Childs responded that in our ISD, the only district with increasing population is Kingsley.

Only Crystal Lake students will be moved to the new elementary on the campus.

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It is a trust factor that the sinking fund will not be re-instituted. Any documentation to tell future boards that there is no plan to institute the sinking fund? Don't know what kind of paper trail we could leave – a Resolution maybe.

Comm Farrell inquired regarding changing the ballot language for the sinking fund – Mr. Childs stated that they are told by Treasury what they ballot language will be.

Mr. Childs stated that the Community Group was open to anyone that wanted to show up. Mr. Olson put it out on social media, info sent home with kids, he indicated that all taxpayers were notified of the group meeting.

Comm Roelofs asked if it fails, where does the board stand? Will have to go back to the drawing board and scale it down. The sinking fund had helped us out. If we want our kids to compete in today's markets, we need to provide them the best opportunities.

Karen Korolenko, Veterans Affairs Presentation – Ms. Korolenko stated that she is the Co-Chair of the Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) Task Force. Jennifer Smeltzer is also present and also serves as Co-Chair of the Committee. Service would be for Mason, Benzie, Manistee and Lake County veterans. They ask for a letter of support for the CBOC – because it would service the Benzie County Veterans as well. At this time, veterans travel about 100 miles for medical services. Currently those four counties have about 7,500 veterans. Ms. Smeltzer stated that ideally, they would like a Resolution.

The VA will say where and what will be. They will also decide if it will be a new building or an existing building.

This matter will be rescheduled for the March 12, 2019 Board meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Consent: Motion by Jeannot, seconded by Roelofs, to approve items 1-6 of the February 12, 2019 Committee of the Whole Consent Calendar as presented. Roll call. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Solid Waste: Interview to be scheduled with the one applicant.

Airport Authority: Motion by Farrell, seconded by Roelofs, to appoint Coury Carland to the Airport Authority with a term ending December 31, 2019. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS: Both items handled earlier.

PRESENTATION OF CORRESPONDENCE

- Veterans Affairs minutes of January 14, 2019 received.
- Road Commission minutes of January 31, 2019 received.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

11:32 a.m. Public Input – None

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Motion by Roelofs, seconded by Warsecke, to adjourn at 11:33 a.m. Ayes: Farrell, Jeannot, Roelofs, Sauer, Taylor and Warsecke Nays: None Motion carried.

Gary G. Sauer, Chair

Dawn Olney, Benzie County Clerk

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1. Approved the agenda as amended.
2. Approved the regular session minutes of February 12, 2019 as corrected.
3. Adopted resolution 2019-006, Election to Audit Homeowner's Principal Residence Exemptions as presented.
4. Adopted the Proclamation Proclaiming March 2019 as the 17th Annual March for Meals Month, authorizing the Chairman to sign.
5. Public Hearing held regarding applications for Betsie Valley Trail.
6. Adopted resolution 2019-004 Submission of Application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for Reconstruction of the Betsie Valley Trail from Beulah to County Farm Road, authorizing the chairman to sign.
7. Adopted resolution 2019-005 Submission of Application to the DNR Recreation Passport Program for Reconstruction of the Betsie Valley Trail from Beulah to County Farm Road, authorizing the chairman to sign.
8. Approved payment of the bills from February 13, 2019 thru February 26, 2019 in the amount of \$271,651.11, as presented.
9. Approved items 1-6 of the February 12, 2019 Committee of the Whole Consent Calendar as presented.
10. Appointed Coury Carland to the Airport Authority with a term ending December 31, 2019.