

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

January 19, 2023

The Cass County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, January 19, 2023, in Commission Chambers.

Chair Jeremiah Jones called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Marchetti provided the Invocation. Commissioner Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ryan Laylin, James Lawrence, Joyce Locke, Jeremiah Jones, Mary Howie, Samuel Barrera, Roseann Marchetti and RJ Lee.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator Matthew Newton, Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow and Deputy Finance Director James Tito.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Visitors present introduced themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Attorney Peter Augustino, Milton Township property owner, addressed the board regarding the Milton Township Roundabout Project. Attorney Augustino provided board members with a two-page alternate plan.

Milton Township resident Richard Gerbeth requested that the Board of Commissioners intervene with the Road Commission Roundabout Project at Gumwood and Redfield Roads in Milton Township. The project that would take part of his property by eminent domain was unreasonable, according to Gerbeth.

Dick Gerbeth, son of Milton Township resident Richard Gerbeth explained that his parents purchased the property at Gumwood and Redfield 38 years ago. Since then, they have made it their paradise. He feared for their safety as the project would shift traffic closer to their home. He also commented on the stress, anxiety and depression the situation has caused.

Milton Township resident Jackie Pflug addressed the board regarding the Gumwood and Redfield Roundabout Project. She stated that she would lose part of her yard if the current

project moved forward. She asked the board to intervene as she believed the current proposal would cause a dangerous situation.

Milton Township resident Pat Gerbeth informed the board that she loved her home and did not want to lose it.

Joe Agostino addressed the board regarding the Gumwood and Redfield Roundabout Project. He informed board members that he had an engineering degree and he believed there were other options.

Milton Township resident and Cass District Library Board President Eileen Toney thanked the board members who attended the most recent library board meeting. She went on to explain that she received a written rebuttal after her comments at the January 5, 2023, Board of Commissioners Meeting. Ms. Toney went on to explain that all comments were not factual and that document was added to the complaint that was opened with the Michigan Attorney General.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Barrera moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the January 19, 2023, Cass County Board of Commissioner's Agenda. Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Laylin, to amend the agenda to remove M-7-23 from the Consent Agenda and place it as the first item under New Business. Motion to amend the agenda carried by voice vote. Motion to approve the agenda as amended carried by voice vote.

RECOGNITIONS

None.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Chair Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, that the following items be voted on at one time by roll call vote and be considered as a consent agenda by the Board of Commissioners:

(M-5-23) A motion to approve the Claims dated January 6, 2023

(M-6-23) A motion to approve the January 5, 2023 Board of Commissioner Regular Meeting Minutes.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (8): Commissioners Locke, Jones, Howie, Barrera, Marchetti, Lee, Laylin and Lawrence.

No (0): None.

The Consent Agenda carried by roll call vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Commissioners Jones and Marchetti shared Committee Reports.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Newton shared the Administrator's Report.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Finance Report was included in the packet.

COUNTY PARTNERS

Jake Young of the Cass County Conservation District shared updates from the district.

ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATE

Sheriff Behnke introduced Travis Brown and Sam Harris who begin the Police Academy on Monday, January 23, 2023, and are sponsored by the County. The Sheriff also thanked Maintenance Supervisor Dave Reiff for remedying a longtime issue in the jail.

Prosecutor Fitz informed board members his office acquired three new Prosecutors over the past year: Chief Assistant Mary Foster, Assistant Prosecutor Jim Miller and Assistant Prosecutor Aidan Traynor. Prosecutor Fitz planned to have the three attend the February 2, 2023, Board Meeting to be introduced to commissioners.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael announced the State randomly chose voting precincts within Cass County for audit from the November 2022 General Election. Clerk McMichael would share details once they were available. The audit, open to the public, must be completed by February 17, 2023.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

M-7-23

Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti to approve the 2023 Cass County Board of Commissioner Committees, Boards, and Commissioner Assignments.

Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Laylin, to amend the motion to remove Commissioner Jones and to insert Commissioner Lee to the Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health Substance Use Disorder Oversight Policy Board. Motion to amend carried by voice vote.

Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Laylin, to appoint Commissioner Jones to the Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency. Discussion followed. Motion to amend carried by voice vote.

Motion to approve the motion as amended carried by voice vote.

M-8-23

Commissioner Locke moved, seconded by Commissioner Laylin, to appoint Mary Howie to the Stone Lake Governmental Lake Board to a term ending 12/31/2024. Motion to carried by voice vote.

M-9-23

Commissioner Lawrence moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to appoint RJ Lee to the Shavehead Lake Governmental Lake Board to a term ending 12/31/2024. Motion carried by voice vote.

M-10-23

Commissioner Barrera moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to appoint Ryan Laylin to the Indian Lake Governmental Lake Board to a term ending 12/31/2024. Discussion followed. Motion carried by voice vote.

M-11-23

Commissioner Howie moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve FYE 2022 Budget Amendments as presented. Discussion followed. Motion carried by voice vote.

M-12-23

Vice-Chair Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve Letters of Understanding for the following Collective Bargaining Units:

- a. Patrol Sergeants
- b. Corrections Sergeants
- c. Patrol & Detectives
- d. Corrections & Clerks

Discussion followed. Motion carried by voice vote.

Discussion – Committee of the Whole

Commissioner Jones opened discussion on adding a Committee of the Whole. He suggested holding it prior to the regular board meeting. He also asked commissioners if they preferred to move standing committees into the Committee of the Whole. Discussion followed. Chair Jones instructed commissioners to email County Administrator Matt Newton their preferences for a date and time to hold the Committee of the Whole.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-Chair Laylin hoped all commissioners were enjoying themselves.

Commissioner Barrera stated the first two weeks were busy but great. He also thanked Richard Gerbeth and family for attending and speaking at the meeting.

Commissioner Marchetti provided information on the next Cass Area Artists Show in the County Building. She urged everyone to attend.

Commissioner Lee stated that the Cass District Library Board Meeting was insightful. He encouraged other commissioners to attend. He also pointed out his new baby girl who was in attendance.

Commissioner Lawrence was thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Commissioner Locke thanked everyone and stated that she looked forward to learning.

Commissioner Howie stated it had been a busy two weeks and that she was honored and humbled to sit in the Commissioner Chair.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Approved: _____
Date

Chair Jeremiah Jones

Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register