

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING**

**February 16, 2023**

The County Board of Commissioners met in regular session Thursday, February 16th, 2023 in the Board of Commissioners Chambers.

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Lawrence provided the Invocation. Vice-Chair Laylin led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Chief Deputy Clerk/Register Heather Harding called roll:

Commissioners Present (8): Ryan Laylin, James Lawrence, Joyce Locke, Jeremiah Jones, Mary Howie, Samuel Barrera, Roseann Marchetti and RJ Lee.

Commissioners Absent (0): None.

STAFF PRESENT: County Administrator Matthew Newton and Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

Visitors introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Visitors spoke at public comment.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Locke moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the Cass County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Agenda for February 16th, 2023, with the addition of motion M-30-23. Motion carried by voice vote.

**RECOGNITIONS**

There were none.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Dr. Iryna V. Lendel presented on the State of Cass County's Economy & Housing.

Cass County Treasurer Hope Anderson presented the Cass County Land Bank report.

## **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-21-23**

Motion to approve Claims dated February 3, 2023.

### **M-22-23**

Motion to approve the February 2, 2023, Cass County Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting minutes.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

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

No (0): None.

The consent agenda passed by roll call vote.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Commissioners Lawrence, Jones, Howie and Marchetti offered committee reports.

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

County Administrator Matthew Newton offered the Administrator's Report. He brought attention to the Board that the Financial Report was left off the agenda. Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow informed the board the financial report was in the board packet.

## **COUNTY PARTNERS**

Jake Young gave an update on the Cass County Conservation District.

Brad Paquette, 37<sup>th</sup> District State Representative, offered an update from Lansing.

## **ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATE**

Chief Judge Carol Bealor offered information about the opioid settlement and grants.

Sheriff Behnke reminded all present about the upcoming rabies vaccination clinic.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **R-23-23**

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Laylin, to approve resolution R-23-23:

### **A RESOLUTION TO ENDORSE FEBRUARY AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, February is National Black History month; and

**WHEREAS**, Cass County is home to more than 51,000 residents and more than 4,000 are African Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, Cass County was home to several 'stations' on the Underground Railroad from 1830-1860, and over 1,500 freedom seekers passed through this area on their way to Canada, helped by Quaker and Free Black communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in the 1840's and 1850's many Free Black families arrived here, bought land, and established thriving farms, assisted by Cass County's Quaker Community, and many descendants of those families still reside in Cass County; and

**WHEREAS**, Underground Railroad Days is an annual festival that celebrates the story and the legacy of the Underground Railroad in Cass County; and

**WHEREAS**, Our African American brothers and sisters are part of our modern story as leaders and important members of our county community.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the Cass County Board of Commissioners to uphold and endorse February as Black History Month and encourage all members of the Community to participate in events surrounding Black History Month and to celebrate this important part of our heritage in Cass County.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

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

No (0): None.

Resolution R-23-23 passed by roll call vote.

### **M-24-23**

Commissioner Lee moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Laylin, to approve LOU Animal Control. Discussion followed. Motion carried by voice vote.

### **R-25-23**

Vice-Chair Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve resolution R-25-23:

#### **A RESOLUTION HONORING THE MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

**WHEREAS**, Michigan's 83 county governments play a central role in the proper delivery of, and oversight for, critical public services for the state's approximately 10 million residents; and

**WHEREAS**, Michigan county governments are led by Boards of Commissioners, who are elected from their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Association of Supervisors of Michigan was formed by representatives of 16 counties on Feb. 1, 1898, in the Senate chamber of the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing; and

**WHEREAS**, the association's name was changed to the Michigan Association of Counties on July 17, 1969; and

**WHEREAS**, the Michigan Association of Counties is the oldest association representing local governments in Michigan; and

**WHEREAS**, 48 of Michigan's 83 counties have had at least one of their commissioners (or supervisors prior to 1968) serve as president of the association's Board of Directors; and

**WHEREAS**, the association created the Michigan Counties Workers' Compensation Fund in 1979 to help county members provide workplace safety and injury insurance services to its employees; and

**WHEREAS**, the association created the Michigan Association of Counties Service Corporation in 1986 to partner with service providers to help counties save money on everything from health insurance to telecommunications services; and

**WHEREAS**, the association hosts two major conferences every year to bring together county leaders for briefings on trending public policy issues and to hear from state newsmakers and others; and

**WHEREAS**, the association’s advocacy work in Lansing and beyond has advanced the interests of county governments and the residents they serve; and

**WHEREAS**, no fewer than five association presidents have served or are serving in the Michigan Legislature in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a testament to the culture of public service inculcated by the association.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Cass County Board of Commissioners to commend and honor the Michigan Association of Counties on its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

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

No (0): None.

Resolution R-25-23 passed by roll call vote.

**M-26-23**

Commissioner Howie moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve revised Van Buren/Cass District Board of Health Bylaws. Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-27-23**

Commissioner Barrera moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the purchase of 2 Chevrolet Tahoe vehicles and the necessary equipment for the Sheriff Patrol Division at a price not to exceed \$111,066.00. Discussion followed. Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-28-23**

Commissioner Lawrence moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the below-listed budgets for the Basic Grant Funding for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year.

<b>Account #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
101-000-539.092			\$50,000.00
292-662-801.702	Court Wrap-Around	\$ 5,020.00	
292-662-801.703	Basic Grant-Counseling	\$47,140.00	
	Total:	\$52,160.00	\$52,160.00

Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-29-23**

Vice-Chair Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to offer support for letter from Robert Parrish concerning the protection of the night sky over Dr. Lawless International Dark Sky Park. Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-30-23**

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Laylin, to approve engagement letter with the law firm Clark Hill. Discussion followed. Commissioner Howie moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to amend the motion to add under the requirements section: “Any charges need to be preapproved by the Board of Commissioners.”

Commissioner Barrera asked if the motion could be tabled. Chair Jones asked Commissioner Lee for guidance regarding procedure in tabling the motion. Commissioner Lee offered next steps.

Vice-Chair Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Lee, to table motion M-30-23.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

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

No (0): None.

The motion to table M-30-23 carried by roll call vote.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Barrera, Laylin, Marchetti, Lee and Howie made board member comments/announcements.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeremiah Jones, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Heather Harding, Chief Deputy Clerk