

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING**

**April 15, 2021**

The Cass County Board of Commissioners met for their Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2021 in Commissioner Chambers. Due to COVID-19 concerns, all public participation was offered via Zoom.

Chair Dyes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Commissioner File provided the Invocation.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ryan Laylin, Annie File, Skip Dyes, Roseann Marchetti, Mike Grice and Jeremiah Jones.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Robert Benjamin.

STAFF PRESENT: County Administrator Jeff Carmen and Clerk/Register Monica McMichael.

**PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Items Only)**

None.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to approve the April 15, 2021 Cass County Board of Commissioner's Agenda with the removal of Motion M-70-21. Motion carried by voice vote.

**RECOGNITIONS**

None.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Administrator Carmen and Chair Dyes thanked retiring Veteran Services Officer Tom Green for twelve years of service. They then presented Mr. Green and Veteran Agent Rose Green with certificates of appreciation.

Change of Responsibilities Ceremony: Administrator Carmen presented Tom Green with the American Flag that flew over the County Building under Green's tenure. Mr. Green then offered incoming Veteran Services Agent Karee Krouse a new flag that will fly over the County Building from the next day forward.

Director Tami Stewart presented the Equalization Annual Report. She informed board members that the county was assessed and equalized. Overall, the assessed and taxable property values increased countywide.

Southwestern Michigan College President Dr. Joseph Odenwald shared information on the SMC Guarantee. The newly announced scholarship is set to begin in the fall of 2021 and will provide \$1,000 for new in-district students and \$600 for new out-of-district students.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice Chair Grice 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-63-21)** A motion to approve Claims dated April 2, 2021.

**(M-64-21)** A motion to approve the April 1, 2021 Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (6): Commissioners Laylin, File, Dyes, Marchetti, Grice and Jones.

No (0): None.

Absent (1): Commissioner Benjamin

The Consent Agenda carried by roll call vote.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Commissioners File and Marchetti offered Committee Reports.

### **APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Marchetti stated that the Appointments Committee had received many online applications.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Carmen presented the Administrator's Report.

## **FINANCE REPORT**

The Finance Report was included in the board packet.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE**

Sheriff Behnke provided a Public Safety Update.

## **COUNTY PARTNERS**

None.

## **ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATE**

Judge Dobrich offered an update from the Courts. She explained the courts were aware of mental health issues in the jail. The courts planned to work with Woodlands to discuss remedies.

Treasurer Hope Anderson provided an update from the County Treasurer's Office that detailed a win in the courts regarding the case with "2 Crooked Creek". She added that the 2021 forfeitures and foreclosures were complete. The foreclosures in 2021 totaled 26 parcels, none of which were occupied.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael informed commissioners of the May 4th Special Election. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Voters who reside in the Edwardsburg School District, Jefferson Township and Porter Township have proposals on the ballot.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **R-65-21**

Commissioner Grice moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the following resolution:

EAS, the Equalization Department has examined the assessment rolls of the 15 Townships and 2 Cities within Cass County to determine whether the real and personal property in the respective Townships and Cities has been equally and uniformly assessed; and

WHEREAS, based on this examination and studies it conducted, the Equalization Department has prepared and presented to the County Board of Commissioners the attached 2021

Equalization Report; and

WHEREAS, said Equalization Report presents recommended County equalized valuation for each of the 15 Townships and 2 Cities within the County; and

WHEREAS, the recommended County equalized valuations were determined by adding to, or Deducting from, the assessed valuations of taxable property in the 15 Townships and 2 Cities within the County, the amount necessary to arrive at the appropriate proportion of true cash value.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cass County Board of Commissioners Accepts and adopts the recommended County equalized valuations presented in the 2021 Equalization Report prepared by the Cass County Equalization Department for a total 2021 Equalized valuation of real and personal property of \$3,349,125,388 with the breakdown of equalization valuation by property classification as follows:

Agricultural Real Property \$ 536,176,200  
Commercial Real Property \$ 105,268,400  
Industrial Real Property \$ 52,534,100  
Residential Real Property \$ 2,375,811,412  
Developmental Real Property \$ 0  
Total Real Property \$ 3,069,790,112  
Total Personal Property \$ 279,335,276  
Total Real and Personal Property \$ 3,349,125,388

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cass County Board Chairperson and the County Clerk of the Board of Commissioners are authorized to sign the report; further, that the County Administrator and the Equalization Director are authorized to represent Cass County at both Preliminary and Final State Equalization sessions, if deemed necessary.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (6): Commissioners File, Dyes, Marchetti, Grice, Jones and Laylin.

No (0): None.

Absent (1): Commissioner Benjamin

Resolution R-65-21 carried by roll call vote.

**R-66-21**

Commissioner Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner File, to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Historic Courthouse Committee undertook a Request for Qualifications for professional services to assist with Evaluation, Programming, Planning, Cost and Options analysis and invited five firms to respond; and

WHEREAS, following reviews of the proposals received and formal interviews with three firms and a presentation at the April 1, 2021 Board of Commissioners Meeting, the Committee recommends proceeding with Intersect Studio whose office is located in Kalamazoo; and

WHEREAS, this project was anticipated and provided for in the FY 2021 Budget in the Public Improvement Fund.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Cass County Board of Commissioners, pending review and approval by Counsel, authorizes the engagement of Intersect Studio at a fee not to exceed \$98,400 to complete a scope of services including all Meetings, with Departments, the County Clerk and Treasurer and Commissioners individually and as a group and also interested Community Groups as defined by the Committee.

Discussion followed.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (6): Commissioners Dyes, Marchetti, Grice, Jones, Laylin and File.

No (0): None.

Absent (1): Commissioner Benjamin.

Resolution R-66-21 carried by roll call vote.

**M-67-21**

Commissioner File moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the amended Grant Policy. Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-68-21**

Commissioner Jones moved, seconded by Commissioner File, to rescind the Cass County Family and Medical Leave Policy adopted on August 5, 1993 and last amended on July 9, 1998. Cass County is required to follow the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act and all changes to Federal Law as enacted. Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-69-21**

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to approve quarterly budget adjustments. Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-71-21**

Commissioner File moved, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to appoint Brandi Crawford to the Solid Waste Planning Commission to a two-year term expiring June 1, 2023. Motion carried by voice vote.

**M-72-21**

Commissioner Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Grice, to appoint Bruce Campbell to the Cass County Parks Board to an unexpired term ending January 1, 2023. Motion carried by voice vote.

**R-73-21**

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner File, to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Section 4 of the Current County of Cass Wage and Salary Administration Policy (3/17/05) provides that the County Administrator may approve Step level hiring at the midpoint of Paygrades; and

WHEREAS, The County is currently conducting a classification and compensation system evaluation, likely to change a variety of Position Grades: and

WHEREAS, In a number of recent cases there have been no Qualified Applicants for County Positions either internal from County Service or external from the community, or applicants have been unwilling to accept the midpoint range in the Grade and Step.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that thru December 31, 2021 the County Administrator is Authorized to make "full use" of the compensation schedule when a Department Head or Elected Official determines it is necessary and in the County's interest to attract and maintain an acceptable level of talent. And further, in every instance of such use, the Administrator will notify the Board of Commissioners by providing a copy of the County Employee Status Change Form together with a Memorandum explaining the necessity.

Discussion followed.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (6): Commissioners Marchetti, Grice, Jones, Laylin, File and Dyes.

No (0): None.

Absent (1): Commissioner Benjamin.

Resolution R-73-21 carried by roll call vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Rex Pomranka informed commissioners he would attend the Hazardous Waste Collection to collect electronics and any item with metal. He also stated he would accept refrigerators and other items containing freon.

**CLOSED SESSION**

None.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Grice moved, seconded by Commissioner Jones, to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dwight Dyes, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monica McMichael, Clerk/Register