

**CASS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING**

**November 3, 2022**

The Cass County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, November 3, 2022, in Commission Chambers.

Chair Dyes called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Jones provided the Invocation. Commissioner Marchetti introduced Bella Rentfrow, a student at Edwardsburg Public Schools. Bella then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael called roll:

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator Matthew Newton, Finance Director Jennifer Rentfrow and Clerk/Register Monica McMichael.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Administrator Matthew Newton provided a brief overview of the Michigan Community Development Block Grant CDBG Fund, a no interest loan program. Cass County received \$91,607.50 and the City of Dowagiac would Administrator the program again in 2023. Chair Dyes opened the public hearing at 5:08 p.m.. Ontwa Township Supervisor Jerry Marchetti asked for information the township could share with residents. There was no other public comment. Chair Dyes closed the hearing at 5:09 p.m.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

Visitors present introduced themselves.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Penn Township resident Matt Harrington spoke on behalf of Donnell Lake residents. He addressed the marijuana farms in Penn Township. He commented on the problematic odor and informed the commissioners of an error in a publication for a township meeting. He asked the County Planning Commission to rescind their approval of the Penn Township Zoning Amendments that were submitted March 24, 2021, regarding Adult-Use Recreational Marihuana.

Sheila Wittis, Penn Township resident, addressed the nuisance of marijuana farms with unlimited outdoor grows and no setbacks. Ms. Wittis also asked the board to rescind the Planning Commission's approval of the Penn Township Zoning Amendments regarding the Adult-Use Recreational Marihuana.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commission Laylin moved, seconded by Commissioner Marchetti, to approve the November 3, 2022, Cass County Board of Commissioner's Agenda with the removal of R-211-22 and R-212-22. Discussion followed. Motion to approve the amended agenda carried by voice vote.

### **RECOGNITIONS**

None.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

None.

### **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-208-22)** A motion to approve Claims dated October 27, 2022.

**(M-209-22)** Motion to approve the October 20, 2022 Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes.

The Vice Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (7): Commissioners Laylin, File, Marchetti, Dyes, Benjamin, Grice and Jones.

No (0): None.

The Consent Agenda carried by roll call vote.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Commissioners Laylin, Marchetti and Jones shared Committee Reports.

### **APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Commissioner Marchetti announced that the Appointments Committee would meet the following week. There were two openings on the Woodlands Board.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Newton shared the Administrator's Report.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT**

Animal Control Director Ron Butts spoke on behalf of the Sheriff's Office. He announced that Christmas for the Animals would take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 3, 2022. Animal Control was in need of dog food, cat litter, bleach and laundry soap.

### **COUNTY PARTNERS**

None.

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATE**

Treasurer Hope Anderson announced the second no minimum bid tax sale was held and resulted in eight of the nine parcels selling. Unfortunately, all parcels sold below the minimum bid. That would require Treasurer Anderson to charge back the local tax units.

Mrs. Anderson went on to announce that the Cass County Land Bank Authority received a \$200,000 blight elimination grant. She also informed the board that Cass County residents could apply up to \$25,000 for energy efficiency items through the MI-Hope program.

Clerk/Register Monica McMichael reminded everyone of the November General Election to take place next Tuesday, November 8, 2022. She announced all polling locations would be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. The polling location for LaGrange Township moved from the Township Hall to the Central Cass Fire Department, 23201 M 60, Cassopolis. She also thanked the County Sheriff's Office, Village of Cassopolis, City of Dowagiac Police Department and Ontwa/Edwardsburg Police Department for checking on precincts regularly. Clerk McMichael also informed commissioners election results would be posted online at [www.electionreporting.com](http://www.electionreporting.com) after 10:00 p.m.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**R-210-22**

Commissioner Marchetti moved, seconded by Commissioner Benjamin, to authorize the following resolution:

**A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE 2022 EMERGENCY REPAIR LOAN PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Cass County Board of Commissioners established an Emergency Repair Loan Program utilizing Community Development Block Grant funding through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation; and

WHEREAS, Program Income of more than \$35,000.00 per year must be expensed upon continued Emergency Repair Loan activities or be returned to the State of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, Program Income for 2021-2022 was \$91,607.50; and

WHEREAS, R-166-21 authorized the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Dowagiac to administer the Emergency Repair Loan Program; and

WHEREAS, Section 3 of the Memorandum of Understanding provided for an automatic extension if continued funding is available for proceeding program years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Cass County Board of Commissioners to authorize \$91,607.50 in CDBG Funding be utilized in continuation of the Emergency Repair Loan Program for 2022-2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, pursuant to the adopted Memorandum of Understanding, the City of Dowagiac shall be authorized to administer the Emergency Repair Loan Program for 2022-2023, in coordination with the County as specified under the terms of the MOU.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call roll:

Yes (7): Commissioners File, Dyes, Marchetti, Benjamin, Grice, Jones and Laylin.

No (0): None.

Resolution R-210-22 carried by roll call vote.

**CLOSED SESSION**

None.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Jones commented on the large number of blighted properties in the county.

Commissioner File verified that motion M-212-22 would appear on the next board meeting agenda.

Chair Dyes thanked Vice-Chair Grice for handling the last board meeting while he was out of town at another meeting.

Commissioner File stated the Trunk or Treat at Lawless Park was a huge success!

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Benjamin moved, seconded by Commissioner Laylin, to adjourn. Motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Skip Dyes

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