

Ionia County Board of Commissioners
July 16, 2019
Committee-of-the-Whole
3:00 p.m.

The Chair called the meeting to order and led with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Invocation.

Members present: Chris Bredice, Scott Wirtz, Georgia Sharp, Larry Tiejema and David Hodges

Members absent: Jim Banks and Jack Shattuck

Others present: Jim Valentine, Chuck Minkley, Stan Hoskins, Elisabeth Walden, Mary Voet, Dorothy Pohl, Bob Dunton, Mike Blood, Rodney Wells, Paul Spitzley, Rod Steel, Gordon Love, Ken Bowen, Stephanie Fox and Janae Cooper

Approval of Agenda

The Chair noted the following changes to the Agenda: Move Item B. under New Business to Item A. under New Business (all other items move down by one). Moved by Bredice, supported by Wirtz to approve the amended Agenda. Motion carried by voice vote.

New Business

- A. Discussion on election of Road Commissioners -County Attorney, Gordon Love distributed a handout (on file in the Clerk's Office) and discussed the basic process of electing Road Commissioners versus appointing Road Commissioners. Chair Hodges would like equal representation around the county. Wirtz questioned splitting the County up into four quadrants. Currently there are five members appointed to six-year terms, staggered every two years. Wirtz stated that he would like to give the people a voice as to how the Board is spending their money. Sharp inquired as to how many counties have elected boards. Dorothy Pohl, Road Commissioner Director, gave the following statistics regarding Road Commission Boards: 47 are appointed, 34 are elected and 6 are county departments. If elected, the positions are partisan. Tiejema stated that the Board of Commissioners have made good decisions with their appointments with conducting interviews and determining who the best person is who is a resource for the county. The weakness of having an elected position is the possibly them having an agenda. Tiejema was not convinced that an election is the best way to go. Chair Hodges asked for the Commissioners and Pohl to email him with their opinions. Chair Hodges asked for comment. Bob Dunton stated that he comes with an open mind. Wirtz stated that he trusts the people. If someone is not doing their job, they get elected out. Bredice stated that being elected makes them accountable. Paul Spitzley

questioned if it would be harder to get road commissioners as running an election involves more work for the applicant. There is also concern that all interested parties may come from one area. Chuck Minkley stated that a person seeking an elected position may make promises to their area and not work as a whole. Pohl commented that she has been in this business for 35 years and has seen more problems with elected road commission positions versus appointed positions. Mike Blood commented that more transparency is needed and currently things are not being handled right; being elected makes one accountable. Attorney Gordon Love stated that the Board does not need to hold a public hearing unless the size of the Road Commission Board were to change, otherwise the Commissioners can do a resolution to change the Road Commissioners to elected positions. The filing deadline is not until next April to run for a partisan elected office. Bob Dunton stated that when he was the Boston Township Supervisor that he always found the Road Commission to be very cooperative. Chair Hodges stated that when you run for office you can have wonderful ideas and make promises until you find out about rules and budgets.

B. Departmental Reports

1. Jim Valentine, Central Dispatch Director, gave a report on Central Dispatch (report on file in the Clerk's Office). Valentine discussed a major capital improvement project, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Replacement Project. Valentine was able to provide the Board with certain examples as to how this would be helpful with statistical information.
2. Stan Hoskins, Emergency Manager, briefly discussed bullet points on his department regarding projects, trainings/events, schools and the mitigation plan. Hoskins was later joined by Ken Bowen, Health Officer to discuss the recent public health hazard determination in Belding caused by a fire at Kassouni Manufacturing Inc. (KMI) which caused a dangerous chlorine gas cloud over parts of Belding on June 22, 2019. KMI has ceased production at this time and is working to comply with Bowen's order. There are no reports of injuries at this time. (A full report, including photos as well as the order are on file in the Clerk's Office.)

- C. Bill Hendrian, MSU Extension Office, along with the Board discussed leasing the MSU Extension Building and moving the MSU Extension Office to the Administration Building or the Health Department building. Hendrian stated that they do not want to move but will do whatever is best for the County. The building is over 5,000 square foot and could be rented at \$13-15 per square foot. The matter will be discussed at a Facilities Meeting.

Chairperson's Report

Chair Hodges reminded everyone to keep working on the strategic plan and that he will look for an update at the last meeting in August. He thanked everyone for their hard work.

Commissioner's Reports

Sharp reminded everyone about the Meet and Greet at Olivera's on Thursday, July 18th for 5-8 p.m.

Adjournment

Moved by Wirtz, supported by Tiejema, to adjourn the meeting at 4:18 p.m. Motion carried by voice vote.

David Hodges, Chair

Janae K. Cooper, County Clerk

Minutes Approved on:
