

IONIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 16, 2012

Committee-of-the-Whole

4:00 p.m.

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

Members present: Mason, Lower, Tiejema, Banks, Calley and Shattuck

Members absent: Vroman

Others present: Doug DeVries, Anthony Smit, Jim Valentine, Deb Thailson, Lacey Bull, Brenda Cowling-Cronk, Lynette Seiler, Diane Gross, Ken Bowen, Chad Shaw, Mark Novak, JoAnne Eakins, Joan Nummer, John Bush, Diane Adams, Monte Starkweather, Joe Cusack, Janae Cooper, Sug Pinnow, Sharyn Overton, Mari Droste, Janice Ransom, Don Ransom, Ray Voet, Kathleen Ruby, Barb Trierweiler, Dale and Nancy Miller, Walter Barnes, Ron Schafer, Lisa McCafferty, Christy Ray, Sallie Possehn, Kim Courtney, Stephanie Hurlbut and Tonda Rich

Approval of Agenda

A. Consideration of additional items

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda. Moved by Lower, supported by Tiejema, to approve the agenda. Motion carried by voice vote.

There was no Public Comment.

Unfinished Business

A. The Ionia County Board of Commissioners received a petition from county employees requesting that the Board authorize transferring the current County Pension Plan to Michigan Employee Retirement System (MERS). Commissioner Tiejema requested to hear comments from the employees.

Juvenile Court Referee, Monte Starkweather, addressed the Board, on behalf of the county employees. Starkweather, who has participated in the pension meetings, stated that the County's current Plan does not have 1) the survivor benefit and 2) the ability to retire at 60 years of age. In addition Starkweather referenced the cost comparison of the current pension holder and MERS, which shows a substantial savings if the pension plan were to be transferred to MERS.

Former county employee, Barb Trierweiler, listed examples stating there are options that many of the county employees may not even be aware of with their pension; for example, the County is charged \$250 each time an employee calls to inquire or get a statement of their pension. Trierweiler noted that MERS will not charge the County for this.

County employees Kim Courtney, Jim Valentine and John Bush also commented on the Plan.

Commissioners voiced concerns with changing to MERS, with one of those concerns being the risk of MERS increasing their fees once/if the County Pension is transferred to them. County Administrator, Stephanie Hurlbut, stated that the Ionia County Road Commission, who has their Pension Plan through MERS, had their fees increased substantially because the benefits were changed.

Ron Schafer, Prosecuting Attorney and also a member of the Pension Committee, requested the Board to make their decision at the next meeting. In closing, Schafer stated that if the Board decides to leave the County Pension Plan where it is, that improvements need to be made to the Plan.

New Business

A. Airport Annual Report

Airport Manager, Tony Smit, presented a power point presentation of the Airport. The presentation showed pictures of the newly painted historical hangar that the County purchased, as well as, the School of Missionary Aviation Technology. Smit listed the projects that have been completed and those that are currently being worked on.

B. Departmental Reports

Public Health – Public Health Officer, Lisa McCafferty, discussed her Agency Report for October 16, 2012 Board of Health Meeting and answered questions from the Board. (A copy of this report is on file in the Clerk's Office)

Sheriff's Department – Undersheriff Dale Miller discussed handouts showing comparisons of breath tests given from the different police agencies in and around the County. Miller also discussed the comparisons of the 2011 and 2012 Incident Reports and answered questions from the Board.

Commission on Aging – COA Director, Lynette Seiler and Mel Haga, COA Board, reported on the Commission on Aging. COA has assisted 1,666 individuals this year, which is a 16% increase from the year before. Haga further went on to discuss the Meals on Wheels Program, which is a demanding program. Seiler stated that when a meal is delivered, there is also a wellness check done on the client ensuring the client is fine. Other topics discussed were fundraisers and funding. (A copy of the Commission on Aging Report is on file in the Clerk's Office).

District Court – District Court Judge Ray Voet and Administrator, Sug Pinnow, discussed the specialty courts (Sobriety and Veterans Court) that are held in District Court and what the goals are for each type of court. Judge Voet further discussed the concurrent jurisdiction plan which the goal is to make the trial courts more of a unified court system.

Drain Commission – John Bush, Drain Commissioner, presented the Board with the 2012 Annual Drain Report and answered questions from the Board. (A copy of the 2012 Annual Drain Report is on file in the Clerk’s Office)

County Administrator’s Report

1) Brief update on the Community Corrections Program and Animal Care and Control.

Moved by Mason, supported by Lower, to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. Motion carried by voice vote.

Jack Shattuck, Chair

Tonda Rich, Clerk

Board Minutes approved on:
