

**BRANCH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**JULY SESSION (SECOND DAY)**  
**July 22, 2019**

1/ The Board of Commissioners of the County of Branch met, pursuant to adjournment, in the Commissioners meeting room at the Courthouse, on Monday, July 22, 2019.

Chairman Gordon called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Present: Commissioners Ted Gordon, Leonard Kolcz, Don Vrablic, Randall Hazelbaker, and Terri Norris, County Clerk Teresa Kubasiak, Administrator Bud Norman.

Commissioner Hazelbaker led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2/ Motion by Commissioner Vrablic, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker, to suspend Board rules to add the appointment of the MIDC director to P3. MOTION CARRIED

3/ Motion by Commissioner Norris, seconded by Commissioner Vrablic, to approve the agenda, as amended. MOTION CARRIED.

4/ Motion by Commissioner Norris, seconded by Commissioner Vrablic, to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2019 Board meeting. MOTION CARRIED

**Public Comment:**

Treasurer Vrablic notified the Board that a new bank account was opened for Equalization, so they can start accepting credit cards.

5/ Motion by Commissioner Norris, seconded by Commissioner Vrablic, that the rate of pay for the Felony Clerk in the Prosecutor's office, will be the GELC Tier 2, Level 6, 5 year rate of \$15.97 per hour. MOTION CARRIED

6/ Motion by Commissioner Norris, seconded by Commissioner Vrablic, that the Child Support Coordinator be moved from SEIU 2 year level of \$14.11 to the GELC Level 7, 6 month level of \$14.12 per hour and be compensated for the difference from her transfer date until current in the amount \$11.28. MOTION CARRIED

7/ Motion by Commissioner Vrablic, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker, that the County hire Matt Glaser as the MIDC director with a salary of \$75,811.98. MOTION CARRIED Kolcz – no

8/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, that approval is given to go with Option 1 for the Site Location for the New Jail. MOTION CARRIED Norris - no

9/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, that approval is given to go with the current design for the New Jail, as presented. MOTION CARRIED Norris - no

10/ Motion by Commissioner Vrablic, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker, to approve the Bills and Accounts in the amount of \$438,031.89. MOTION CARRIED

11/ Motion by Commissioner Vrablic, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to approve the 2018 Audit report. MOTION CARRIED

12/ Motion by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Commissioner Norris, that approval is given to adopt a Resolution opposing any reduction in Funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

### **RESOLUTION # 2019-12**

**WHEREAS**, The Great Lakes are a critical resource for our nation, supporting the economy and a way of life in Michigan and the other seven states within the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes hold 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater and 90 percent of the United States' surface freshwater. This globally significant freshwater resource provides drinking water for more than 30 million people and directly supports 1.5 million jobs, generating \$62 billion in wages; and

**WHEREAS**, The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) provides essential funding to restore and protect the Great Lakes. This funding has supported long overdue efforts to clean up toxic pollution, reduce runoff from cities, industries, and farms, combat invasive species, and restore fish and wildlife habitat. Since 2010, the federal government has partnered with public and private entities and invested more than \$2 billion in over 2,900 projects throughout the region. Over its first six years, the GLRI has provided more than \$425 million for more than 500 projects in Michigan alone. The Brookings Institution has estimated that every dollar invested in the Great Lakes produces two dollars in long-term economic benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, GLRI projects are making a significant difference. They have restored more than 150,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat; opened up fish access to more than 3,400 miles of rivers; helped implement conservation programs on more than 1 million acres of farmland; and accelerated the cleanup of toxic hotspots. In Michigan, GLRI funding has been instrumental in removing invasive Phragmites along the shores of Green Bay, remediation and habitat restoration in the Menominee River, revitalizing Lake Michigan sturgeon populations, habitat restoration at Sea Gull Bar, and building fish passages around the lower dams of the Menominee River; and

**WHEREAS**, while a significant investment, past GLRI funding represents only a small portion of the amount needed to restore and protect the Great Lakes. Toxic algae blooms, beach closings, fish consumption advisories, and the presence of contaminated sediments continue to limit the recreational and commercial use of the Great Lakes; and

**WHEREAS**, any cuts to GLRI funding would jeopardize the momentum from over a decade of unprecedented regional cooperation. Draft federal budgets have proposed a 97 percent reduction in GLRI funding. These drastic cuts would be a short-sighted, short-term cost-saving measure with long-term adverse implications. Restoration efforts will only become more expensive and more difficult if they are not addressed now and in the coming years.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Branch County Board of Commissioners opposed any reduction of Federal Funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Kolcz, Vrablic, Hazelbaker, Gordon – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

13/ Motion by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Commissioner Norris, that approval is given to adopt a Resolution urging legislators to commence the process of revising the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill of 2003 and to allow negotiating lower drug prices and the importance of identical, less costly, drugs from Canada and elsewhere.

**RESOLUTION 2019-13**  
**MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL OF 2003**

**WHEREAS**, health care costs continue to rise for all Americans, and for most Americans these increases can be financially devastating and impact the health of the individual; and

**WHEREAS**, Medicare is the focus of many lawmakers who portray it as an “entitlement” program that costs the US Treasury too much money. Technically, “entitlement” may be the proper term; however, as used, it implies a negative connotation; and

**WHEREAS**, Medicare is an essential medical plan that millions of seniors and disabled individuals depend upon to maintain their health care and manage often costly conditions. Medicare is not a gift, as the term “entitlement” suggests. Many of the beneficiaries have worked their entire adult life and paid into the system in order to receive this crucial medical plan after retirement; and

**WHEREAS**, due to the spiraling costs largely associated with the price of prescription medications, our elected officials find themselves passing on increased costs to those who can least afford that increase, namely senior citizens and disabled individuals who are on Medicare’s Part D drug program; and

**WHEREAS**, when Congress enacted the Medicare Prescription Drug bill, they enacted a law that does allow Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for drug prices the way Medicaid and the Veterans Administration does; and

**WHEREAS**, one economist, Dean Baker, estimates that Medicare could have saved approximately \$332 billion dollars between 2006 and 2013 (approximately \$50 billion per year) had the Department of Health and Human Services been permitted to negotiate prices of drugs with the drug companies, as federal agencies do in other programs; and

**WHEREAS**, rising prescription drug costs have been the primary reason for the increase in health benefit costs; and

**WHEREAS**, the increasing cost of prescription drugs is a systemic problem that significantly affects the people of our state and our nation. It deserves non-partisan effort to correct; and

**WHEREAS**, balancing the budget on the backs of those who can least afford it, the elderly and disabled, shall not be allowed. Increases in premiums and inflated drug costs are unacceptable ways to deal with the flawed Medicare Prescription Drug bill; and

**WHEREAS**, the Medicare program must be preserved as it currently exists and to do so requires immediate and swift action to cut inflated and unnecessary costs, particularly in the area of prescription drug coverage; and

**WHEREAS**, revision of the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill of 2003 to allow for the negotiation of lower drug prices and the importation of identical, less costly, drugs from Canada and elsewhere is needed to rectify the high cost of drug prescriptions; and

**WHEREAS**, we cannot allow the previously approved bill to stand as adopted at the risk of having the Medicare program be the cause of a staggering increasing deficit which will require tax increases or cuts to the rest of the government, nor can we allow the continuance of price increases to our citizens which may cause many to contemplate discontinuing medically necessary drugs in order to pay their home related monthly bills (electric, heat, etc.) and/or have foot to eat; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Branch County Board of Commissioners goes on record urging our legislators to commence the process of revising the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill of 2003 to allow negotiating lower drug prices and the importation of identical, less costly, drugs from Canada and elsewhere; and

**NOW BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to our area Federal and State Legislators, the National Association of Counties, and the Michigan Association of Counties.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Kolcz, Vrablic, Hazelbaker, Gordon – 5

No – 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

14/ Motion by Commissioner Norris, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker to accept the 2018 Juvenile Court annual report and place it on file. **MOTION CARRIED**

15/ Motion by Commissioner Norris, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to accept the 2018 County Clerk annual report and place it on file. **MOTION CARRIED**

16/ Motion by Commissioner Vrablic, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker, to accept the 2018 Maple Lawn annual report and place it on file. **MOTION CARRIED**

17/ Motion by Commissioner Vrablic, seconded by Commissioner Norris to accept the 2018 Branch, Hillsdale, St. Joseph Community Health annual report and place it on file. **MOTION CARRIED**

Committee/Liaison Reports:

Norris – The next Public Health meeting is Thursday in Hillsdale.

Kolcz – Pines meets tomorrow and Veterans Affairs meets on Friday.

Hazelbaker – Entertainment Under the Stars is tomorrow night. The Farmers Market is Saturday from 9am – 1pm.

Vrablic – The Solid Waste Consortium met in Dowagiac and toured the Deerpark Tire Recycling Center.

Chairman’s Remarks:

They are still working on the HVAC issues at the COA building.

18/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Norris to adjourn at 4:28 pm. **MOTION CARRIED**

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Chairman

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Clerk