

**BRANCH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DECEMBER SESSION (FIRST DAY)
December 8, 2020**

1/ The Board of Commissioners of the County of Branch met, pursuant to adjournment, on Tuesday, December 8, 2020.

Chairman Norris called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm via video conference call.

Present: Commissioners Terri Norris, Jon Houtz, Tom Matthew, Leonard Kolcz and Randall Hazelbaker via video conference call.

County Clerk Teresa Kubasiak and Administrator Bud Norman were present in the Boardroom at the Courthouse.

Commissioner Kolcz led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to approve the agenda.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Commissioner Kolcz noted a correction to the spelling of Michael Odren on item 17 of the November 24, 2020 minutes.

3/ Motion by Commissioner Kolcz, seconded by Commissioner Matthew, to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2020 Board meeting, as amended.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

4/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker, that approval is given to hire a full time Deputy Probate Register at the Union rate of \$15.11 per hour, with the new hire benefit package, effective immediately.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

At 4:05pm Chairman Norris opened the Public Hearing for the 2021 General Fund budget. There were no comments and the hearing was closed at 4:06pm.

5/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, that the County go with the Hard Cap health insurance option for 2021.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

6/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Matthew, that the responsibility of Emergency Management be moved from the 911 Director to the County Administrator.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

7/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker, that approval is given to hire a contracted part-time audit assistant at a rate not to exceed \$12,882.64 per year.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

8/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, that the Resolution to Authorize Declaration of the State of Emergency for the County of Branch be approved as presented.

2020-09

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE DECLARATION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR THE COUNTY OF BRANCH

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, the County of Branch, Michigan was informed that in response to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, a state of emergency was declared by the Governor of the State of Michigan and a national state of emergency was declared by the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Branch County Emergency Operations Center was virtually activated on March 16, 2020, in support of Public Health; acquiring resources, providing public information and incident management support to deal with the pandemic. The Emergency Operations Center remains ready to assist and may be partially or fully activated consistent with the Emergency Operations Plan which has been functioning since March 16, 2020 as necessary; and

WHEREAS, continued widespread outbreak within the County of Branch could hinder and/or cease most daily operations within the entire County and overwhelm, Emergency Medical Services, Hospitals and Urgent Cares; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the requirements placed on the local health department personnel (including, but not limited to, education, enforcement, contact tracing, planning, testing and vaccination deployment) additional staff, volunteers, services and supplies/equipment may be needed to continue to protect public health; and

WHEREAS, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) rules and orders exist requiring, or advising of, preventative measures to be in place to protect public health, including limitations on gatherings and use of remote technologies; and

WHEREAS, public bodies within Branch County have complied with orders or have voluntarily elected to meet virtually and may elect to continue such practice under this Declaration to protect public health consistent with the Open Meetings Act as amended; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of a current State of Michigan declared State of Emergency, it is necessary to declare a local State of Emergency. Accordingly, be advised that Tim Miner, Emergency Management coordinator will provide liaison and coordination with State and Federal authorities for assistance related to this disaster and in accordance with Section 14 of Act 390, P.A. 1976, as amended, he is directed to transmit this request to the Emergency Management Division, Department of State Police, by the most expeditious means.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Branch County Board of Commissioners, in accordance with Section 10 of 1976 PA 390, as amended, and the Open Meetings Act, as amended, hereby declares that a “local state of emergency” exists within our jurisdiction as of December 8, 2020, and that local resources and funding are being utilized to the fullest possible extent, and the Emergency Operations Plan will be partially or fully implemented as this pandemic necessitates.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Declaration will expire on December 31, 2021, unless otherwise extended or retracted by the Board of Commissioners.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

9/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Matthew, that approval is given for the Circuit Court Judge to hire a full time Court Administrator at the M2 non-union management level of \$47,458 per year with new hire benefits.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Consent Agenda:

approve the Bills and Accounts in the amount of \$134,088.23.

approve the line item transfer of \$6500 from #101-351-977.0000 to #101-351-775.0000 for the Sheriff Department.

10/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, that authorization is given to approve the following items by Consent Agenda: Bills & Accounts, Line Item Transfer Requests-Sheriff.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

11/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to approve a 20% increase for the Assistant 911 Director while she is acting as interim 911-Director, retroactive to October 1, 2020.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

12/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to pay the invoice for the 911 consulting services from the General Fund.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

13/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to confirm to MERS how the retirement plans are administered, effective 01/01/2021.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

14/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Matthew, to adopt the 2021 General Fund budget.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

15/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to nominate and appoint Julie Waterbury, Treasurer Elect, to fill an expiring position, currently held by the County Treasurer, on the Building Authority with the new term expiring on 12/31/2024.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

16/ Motion by Commissioner Matthew, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to approve the farmland application #832 submitted by Paul & Nicole Pridgeon for the property located at 787 Phillip Rd in California Township and that the application be forwarded to the State.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

17/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Hazelbaker to go into closed session to discuss the attorney/client privileged letter dated 12/08/2020.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

Yes – Norris, Matthew, Kolcz, Hazelbaker, Houtz – 5

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into closed session at 4:57 pm and returned to open session at 5:24 pm.

18/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Kolcz, to adjourn at 5:25 pm.

Chairman

Clerk