

BRANCH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARCH SESSION (SECOND DAY)
March 23, 2021

1/ The Board of Commissioners of the County of Branch met, pursuant to adjournment, via video conference call, on Tuesday, March 23, 2021.

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

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

Chief Deputy Clerk Christine Ransbottom and Administrator Bud Norman were present in the Boardroom at the Courthouse.

Commissioner Matthew led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

3/ Motion by Commissioner Kolcz, seconded by Commissioner Stoll, to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2021 Board meeting.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

4/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz seconded by Commissioner Houtz that approval is given for the Sheriff to fill a vacant Transport Officer position at the PAOM new hire rate of pay starting at \$15.706 per hour, 40 hours per week, with the new hire benefit package, effective immediately.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

5/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz seconded by Commissioner Kolcz that approval is given for Administration to hire an Administrative Assistant, at a Non-Union Level 8 starting rate of \$19.58 per hour, 40 hours per week, with the new hire benefit package.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

6/ Motion by Commissioner Kolcz seconded by Commissioner Matthew, for approval to hold a public meeting on April 30, 2021 at 2pm regarding the Airport Zoning Ordinance.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

7/ Motion by Commissioner Matthew seconded by Commissioner Stoll to approve the Bills and Accounts in the amount of \$159,106.46, Payroll in the amount of \$956,795.40 and Taxes in the amount of \$247,659.80.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Administrator Norman presented the bid results, grant coordination/timing and funding of the additional costs. The 911 Board met and are making their recommendations for the board to consider. 7 bids came in for the Safety Communications Project, the 911 board recommends going with the lowest bid, as well financial flexibility. Southern Michigan Bank and Trust, came in with the lowest rate with the true interest cost (TIC) of 0.889%. What is being funded for the project is 280 portables, 107 mobiles, 13 base stations, 148 pagers. The total requested was \$968,553 that is being recommended. Additional grant money would take the project out longer. Lastly, there were changes made to the system and radios that encountered extra charges. The administrator went through those changes with the board. With the changes the additional costs came to \$189,617.78. In 2016, Branch County had a surcharge increase from \$0.31 a device to \$0.42. What has been collected thus far has been \$222,625.00. It was recommended, to use that surcharge collection to cover the additional costs. The Board Recommends:

8/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Stoll, to go with 911 Board's recommendation and award Southern Michigan Bank and Trust the bonding for the Public Safety Communications Project.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

9/ Motion by Commissioner Stoll, seconded by Commissioner Kolcz, to go with 911 Board's recommendation and to stay on project schedule.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

10/ Motion by Commissioner Houtz, seconded by Commissioner Matthew, to go with 911 Boards recommendation to use the surplus collection to fund additional radio equipment and other costs.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:
Yes –Stoll, Kolcz, Matthew, Houtz, Hazelbaker, – 5
No – 0
MOTION CARRIED

11/ Motion by Commissioner Hazelbaker, seconded by Commissioner Stoll, to adopt Branch County’s Resolution in Support of Local Businesses.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:
Yes –Stoll, Kolcz, Matthew, Houtz, Hazelbaker, – 5
No – 0
MOTION CARRIED

**Branch County
Resolution No. 2021-03**

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

WHEREAS, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the Branch County Board of Commissioners recognizes that COVID-19 is having direct impacts on all County residents, impacts which include, but are not limited to, physical and mental health care difficulties, educational constraints, and financial strains; and

WHEREAS, the Branch County Board of Commissioners understands that many local businesses have suffered and continue to suffer economic harm due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Branch County Board of Commissioners furthermore recognizes that the local hospitality industry is being hit particularly hard with financial losses due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Branch County Board of Commissioners believes that the ability of County residents and visitors to patronize local restaurants, hotels, recreation venues, etc., contributes substantially to the overall well-being of the County; and

WHEREAS, the Branch County Board of Commissioners is aware of many options to support Branch County small businesses, such as ordering takeout food, making advance reservations, and purchasing gift cards.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Branch County Board of Commissioners encourages County residents to support local businesses at all times, but particularly during this global pandemic.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Governor Whitmer, our area Federal and State Legislators, and the Michigan Association of Counties.

Committee/ Liaison Reports:

Hazelbaker – Coldwater Chamber is still wanting to hold the Community Awards, which is typically in March. They will monitor things and are looking to hold it outside in August.

13/ Motion by Commissioner Kolcz, seconded by Commissioner Houtz, to adjourn at 4:54 pm.

Upon roll call vote the results were as follows:

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

No – 0

MOTION CARRIED

Chairman

Clerk