

WORKING MEETING

September 9, 2021

Convened: 9:00 AM

Present: Commissioner Houtz, Commissioner Hazelbaker, Commissioner Stoll, Commissioner Matthew, Commissioner Kolcz via video conference call. County Clerk Teresa Kubasiak and Administrator Norman in Commissioners Boardroom

Also Present: Sheriff Pollack, Undersheriff Eichler, Don Reid-Daily Reporter, Jim Measel-WTVB, COA Director Amy Duff, Jean Ratkowski-911, Scott Walls-Complex Manager, Nancy Hutchins-Register of Deeds, Julie Waterbury-Treasurer, Mike Hard-Drain Commissioner, Matt Fosdick-IT Director, Rebecca Burns-DHA, Sean Watson, Theresa Fisher, Patrick Hudson, Mike Reen, John Lindsay, Aaron Stevens, Deb Lounds-Bowers, Elizabeth Girgey, via video conference call.

The order of the items to be addressed was changed to accommodate some of the outside participants. The agenda was approved, as amended.

PERSONNEL, PLANS & POLICY

(Commissioner Houtz)

Master Plan

County Planning Commission Chairman, Debbie Lounds-Bowers and Patrick Hudson of the Upjohn Institute presented the final draft of the proposed Branch County Master Plan. The Planning Commission, along with the Southcentral Michigan Planning Council have been working on the plan for nearly two years. They have included the most current information available. There was a question about the census numbers used. The Planning Commission will update those numbers. At their last meeting the Planning Commission unanimously voted to send the draft plan to the Board of Commissioners for authorization to distribute. The Administrator presented the process for final approval of the plan in order for it to take effect. A resolution should be passed to allow for the Board of Commissioners to give final approval of the Master Plan once all of the other requirements are met. The Committee recommends:

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ that authorization is given to the Planning Commission to distribute the draft 2021 Branch County Master Land Use Plan after the population corrections are made.

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ to approve the resolution authorizing the Board of Commissioners to give final approval of the 2021 Branch County Master Plan before it takes effect.

Workforce Development Board Membership Reappointments

A request was received from Michigan Works! – Southwest to approve the reappointment of three members to represent Branch County on the Workforce Development Board. The three members are Randall Hazelbaker, Chantel Paxton and David Sutherland. The new term would begin October 1, 2021, with an expiration of September 30, 2023. The Committee recommends:

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ to approve the appointment of Randall Hazelbaker, Chantel Paxton and David Sutherland to the Workforce Development Board, with their term expiring 09/30/2023.

Wage Range

The Administrator spoke about a wage proposal that he had presented to Elected Officials and Department Heads for input. The proposal gave the employer the option to offer a new hire the choice of starting employment at the standard wage scale which includes step increases or to start at the two year level and be frozen at that level for years 3 & 4, only receiving any cost of living increases. By the 5th year both wage scales would be at the same level. The Administrator noted the comments from the EO/DH meeting and the Committee. He will bring back some possible options after reviewing the comments.

Quarterly Personnel Review

The Administrator provided an update on personnel hires, since County Policy #37 took effect. The policy allows for Elected Officials or Department Heads to fill vacant positions without Board approval, unless a higher starting rate is requested.

911 Management/Payroll

The Administrator presented an organizational chart for 911. He is proposing that the two shift manager positions become non-union, as other management positions in the county. He is also proposing to make the Payroll Supervisor position a non-union position. He will bring back more information.

SHERIFF & PUBLIC SAFETY

(Commissioner Kolcz)

3G Decommissioning

Branch County 911 Central Dispatch wants to make the public aware that older style 3G cell phones (TracFone, flip phones, Jitterbug, etc.) will not be supported by wireless carriers. Beginning in January 2022, the various wireless carriers (ATT, Verizon, T-Mobile/Sprint) will start dropping the 3G phones off their networks. The phones will not be disabled from normal use but the user will not be able to dial 911 in an emergency.

Sheriff Report

The Sheriff stated that they have closed the jail to the public due to COVID. He also has several officers on quarantine leaving five road deputies.

HOUSE

(Commissioner Stoll)

Tire Recycling

Samantha Buterbaugh of Biz-Aid spoke about an upcoming tire recycling event set for Saturday, September 11, 2021 from 9am – noon at the human services building, 570 Marshall Rd. A previous event was held on August 28th and it was well received. She was asked about the facility grant she was going to apply for. Buterbaugh responded that a new facility would cost much more than anticipated so she was not moving forward. The new building owners have agreed to let her stay where she is until a new location can be found.

Jail Update

The construction is on schedule. The parking lot repaving is complete. They are finishing the interior and the Branch County Sheriff Department sign has been placed at the entrance to the building.

FINANCE

(Commissioner Matthew)

Motion by seconded by that authorization is given to approve the following items by Consent Agenda: Bills & Accounts, Budget Amendment-District Health Department, 2020 Annual Audit, renovations to the former Pines buildings.

Bills & Accounts

A listing of the Bills & Accounts was presented for review in the amount of \$397,383.84, payroll in the amount of \$1,286,155.22 and total taxes of \$336,330.00. The Committee Recommends:

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ to approve the Bills and Accounts in the amount of \$397,383.84, payroll in the amount of \$1,286,155.22 and total taxes of \$336,330.00.

Budget Amendment – District Health

The BHSJ District Health Department is requesting approval to amend their budget. They would like to increase #221-601-600.0000 Department Revenue \$899,199; decrease #221-601-665.0000 Inv. Int. \$2500; increase # 221-601-700.0000 Expenditures \$896,699. The Committee recommends:

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ to approve the District Health budget amendment, increasing Department Revenue \$899,199; decreasing Inv. Int \$2500; increasing Expenditures \$896,699, as presented.

Annual Audit

Aaron Stevens of Maner Costerisan presented the 2020 audit. The unrestricted funds are at 27%. The recommendation is 17%. The County improved total net position for governmental activities by \$1,370,289 and improved total net position for business type activities by \$370,474 for the year ended December 31, 2020. Overall the County is in good shape. The Committee recommends:

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ to accept the 2020 Annual Audit and place it on file.

FPBH Restructure

The Administrator stated that approximately \$80,000 is needed to renovate and relocate some departments to the former Pines buildings on Michigan Avenue. The Public Defender office is expected to receive funding to increase staff and the current location will not accommodate additional employees. The Public Defender's office and the EOC will be moved to the east building. The Juvenile Day Treatment program and the Psychological support office will be moved to the west building. The EOC storage will be moved to the current MIDC building on Chicago Street. The funds be taken from Capital Outlay. The Committee recommends:

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ to approve the \$80,000 for renovations to the former Pines buildings on Michigan Ave.

Ovid-Kinderhook Waste Water Treatment Facility Bonding Proposal

The Administrator and Drain Commissioner discussed a bonding proposal to be used for upgrades to the Ovid-Kinderhook Waste Water Treatment facility. Fleis & Vandenbrink submitted a proposal to the DPW for the project, which includes the scope of services, schedule and budget. The project cost is approximately \$3.8M and would take approximately two years to complete. It would be paid for over 10 years through user assessments however, funds are needed upfront to complete the project. The Administrator is recommending the use of the County's financial and legal bond counsel to initially fund the project. The current rates are attractive with the County's credit rating. The Committee recommends:

Motion by _____ seconded by _____ that authorization is given to proceed with the Ovid-Kinderhook Water Treatment Facility Bonding proposal, as presented.

