



NEWAYGO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
1087 NEWELL STREET, WHITE CLOUD, MI 49349

NOVEMBER 14, 2007

Meeting called to order by Chairman Adam Wright at 9:30 A.M.

Prayer by Newaygo County Clerk, Laurel J. Breuker.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Commissioner Bird.

PRESENT: Julia Bird; Patrick Gardner; Daniel Powell; Charles Trapp;
Robert VanBelzen; Adam Wright

ABSENT: Stanley Nieboer (excused)

CORRESPONDENCE: Newaygo County Clerk, Laurel J. Breuker, read correspondence received from the Office of Governor Jennifer Granholm expressing appreciation for receipt of the Board of Commissioners' Resolution #09-031-07 in support of prioritizing local public health services. Ms. Breuker also read correspondence received from Timothy Purcell requesting withdrawal of his application for appointment to the Newaygo County Department of Human Services Board.

07-488

MOTION BY POWELL, SECONDED BY GARDNER, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 14, 2007. AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

07-489

MOTION BY VANBELZEN, SECONDED BY TRAPP, TO APPROVE THE BOARD OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 24, 2007. AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

07-490

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY TRAPP, TO APPROVE THE BOARD OF COMMISSION MEETING CLOSED SESSION MINUTES OF OCTOBER 24, 2007. AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

Applicants, Dick England and Norman Knorr were interviewed for appointment to the Department of Human Services Board.

Michigan State University Extension Director, Kathryn Cummings, appeared before the Board to provide an update on the various activities associated with the MSU Extension office in Newaygo County. MSU Extension is part of a nation-wide network assisting individuals to improve lives through familial education in nutrition and poverty and also providing education in the areas of agricultural and natural resources, as well as community and economic development. Sources of

monetary support include county appropriations and local, state and federal grants. Current priority issues being addressed by MSU Extension include land use education, facilitating economic entrepreneurship in tourism, agriculture and child care, as well as addressing obesity with nutrition education.

COMMITTEE REPORT/PHYSICAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/GARDNER - No Report.

COMMITTEE REPORT/FINANCE/BIRD

07-483

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY VANBELZEN, TO APPROVE THE SEMI-MONTHLY DETAIL ANALYSIS DATED NOVEMBER 7, 2007, CHECK #39477 THROUGH CHECK #39712, FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$434,574.94. AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

07-484

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY TRAPP, TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE NEWAYGO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND THE NEWAYGO COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONER, TREASURER, CLERK, PROSECUTING ATTORNEY, AND REGISTER OF DEEDS AND TEAMSTERS LOCAL 214 FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2007 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2009. ROLL CALL VOTE: POWELL-NAY, NIEBOER-ABSENT, VANBELZEN-AYE, GARDNER-AYE, TRAPP-AYE, BIRD-AYE, WRIGHT-NAY. MOTION CARRIED.

(Commissioner Julia Bird requested her remarks, as set forth below, be included in the meeting minutes:

"While negotiations over this contract have been very long and frustrating, I believe the contract we have before us is as good as we will get. Neither side got everything they wanted, but I think that is a sign of compromise and negotiation. This is a fair contract to both management and the employees and I cannot justify spending additional money to end up with the same results or less. I believe continued negotiations or going to the point of enforcing the contract would not only cost additional taxpayer money, but cost the County on many intangible levels for a long period beyond this contract.")

(Commissioner Adam Wright requested his remarks expressed at the Finance Meeting be included in the meeting minutes:

It is important to begin my comments by pointing out that this board, and the administrative staff, have led the way in working to save county tax dollars and ensure that every dollar that is spent, is spent efficiently. Prior to our board being in place, this county had a long history of giving thousands of constituent's tax dollars to attorneys who battled with our employees when it came to contract negotiations. When we were elected to this board, it was a top priority for us to work collectively with various bargaining units throughout the county to ensure that money spent during contract negotiations could be used to benefit our employees and not line the

pockets of high priced attorneys. We have been very successful in this endeavor, saving the county thousands of dollars, with each and every bargaining unit, with the exception of the current bargaining unit and contract.

We have worked for over a year to enlighten the members of this union as to the state of the county financially and what our objectives have been when it came to requests by management. While I understand that we have asked for these employees to relinquish some very lucrative benefits, we've presented comparable offers that will ensure that our employees retain the high level of benefits that they have grown accustomed to. The objective of the county board and administration is to work proactively today to ensure our financial security in the future. I understand that it is difficult to sometimes see the forest through the trees, but it is important to make sure that we work as a team and make some difficult decisions now, so that county employees will have good jobs and great benefits for years to come while not overburdening the taxpayers of Newaygo County.

With that said, our objective of saving money and investing it back into our employees has not worked during these negotiations. From the beginning, the union bargaining team has been ill prepared; providing management with a two and a half page document full of demands, many of which came with no explanation or understanding of purpose. Throughout the months our management team worked tirelessly to accommodate our employees in this union. There were many proposals made to the union and tentative agreements reached; most of which were flat out rejected with the bargaining team returning to the table without any insight as to how their members would work with management to resolve the contract. The communication was clear; the union was opposed to most of what we offered and had no intention to work together to reach a deal.

Earlier this year, management was willing to provide our employees with retroactive pay as an incentive to, once and for all, settle this contract and move forward. The offer was soundly rejected by the union and we went back to the drawing board. Eventually management was notified that the union had filed for fact finding, a process in which an independent third party listens to facts presented by both sides and provides an opinion as to how they believe the contract should be settled. This forced the county to do what we had worked so hard to avoid, contacting our legal counsel to lead us through this process. We had worked for over a year to hammer out a deal that was in the best interests of our employees and the county's future, but now were forced to deal with the real issue of mounting legal fees. The contract that is before us today includes a provision that would grant union members retroactive pay, and cost the taxpayers of the county over \$25,000. At this point the county has been forced to already spend thousands of taxpayer dollars to begin the fact finding process. I cannot, in good conscience, support this plan.

As we are all painfully aware, Michigan's economy is terrible. Constituents in my district, and all over the county, are struggling to find work or struggling to make ends meet working one or in some instances two jobs. I cannot justify a vote in favor of this particular proposal to them. I cannot tell them that I supported a contract that gave thousands of their hard earned dollars to a union who, in my opinion, has not been engaged or driven to settle this contract. These people who are not employed by the county are crying out for a voice. The members of this board were elected to be that voice, and while there is nothing more that we would like to do than approve retroactive pay for our employees, we have to be mindful of the rest of the people in the county that provide the financial support for us to hold the various positions that we do.

I encourage the other members of this board to reject this proposal so that we can go back to the table and work collectively to reach an agreement that is in the best interest of everyone in our county.")

07-485

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY GARDNER, TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL'S JOB DESCRIPTION TO MML (MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE) FOR SCORING; MONEY TO COME FROM 249-371-818 (BUILDING SAFETY PERMITS-BUILDING DIVISION-CONSULTANT FEES). AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

07-477-1

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY TRAPP, TO APPROVE THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO THE BUILDING SAFETY & PERMITS DEPARTMENT; MONEY TO COME FROM 631-265-83-936 (BUILDING AND GROUNDS FUND-DBH BUILDING-BUILDING REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE). AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

07-478-1

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY POWELL, TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE NOVEMBER 2007 LEASE WITH THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO REFLECT THE EXCHANGE OF THE AREA IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE BUILDING FOR THE APPROXIMATE 942 SQUARE FEET VACATED BY THE BUILDING SAFETY & PERMITS DEPARTMENT. AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

07-479-1

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY TRAPP, TO APPROVE THE NEW RATE SCHEDULES AND STRUCTURE FOR ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL AND BUILDING PERMITS AS PROPOSED IN THE NOVEMBER 2007 DATED RATE CHANGES. NEW RATE CHANGES TO TAKE EFFECT JANUARY 1, 2008. AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

(Commissioner Julia Bird requested her remarks, as set forth below, be set forth in the meeting minutes:

"I am supporting the changes to the fee structure for building permits because I agree with the information brought forward by committee that

this is a necessary step towards the changes they have outlined to streamline the process, save money through improved efficiencies and increase customer service. It is my understanding that the intent of these fee changes is to be revenue neutral and help simplify the process of obtaining a permit.”)

07-486

MOTION BY BIRD, SECONDED BY VANBELZEN, TO AUTHORIZE THE ADMINISTRATOR TO CLOSE ALL NON-ESSENTIAL COUNTY DEPARTMENTS AND TO EXPEND AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$3,000.00 FOR THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY AND TO ALLOW AFFECTED EMPLOYEES THE AFTERNOON OF FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2007 OFF TO ATTEND. EMPLOYEES ELECTING NOT TO ATTEND THE PARTY MUST USE EITHER PTO OR VACATION TIME; MONEY TO COME FROM 701-2325 (TRUST AND AGENCY-DUE TO EMPLOYEES-VENDING MACHINES).

07-486-1

MOTION BY POWELL, SECONDED BY GARDNER, TO AMEND MOTION #07-486 TO ADD TO THE LANGUAGE AT THE END OF THE MOTION, "ALL MONIES EXPENDED ARE NOT TAXPAYER DOLLARS." AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

VOTE ON MOTION #07-486, AS AMENDED:

TO AUTHORIZE THE ADMINISTRATOR TO CLOSE ALL NON-ESSENTIAL COUNTY DEPARTMENTS AND TO EXPEND AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$3,000.00 FOR THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY AND TO ALLOW AFFECTED EMPLOYEES THE AFTERNOON OF FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2007 OFF TO ATTEND. EMPLOYEES ELECTING NOT TO ATTEND THE PARTY MUST USE EITHER PTO OR VACATION TIME; MONEY TO COME FROM 701-2325 (TRUST AND AGENCY-DUE TO EMPLOYEES-VENDING MACHINES). ALL MONIES EXPENDED ARE NOT TAXPAYER DOLLARS.

AYES-6, ABSENT-NIEBOER. MOTION CARRIED.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMITTEE REPORT/BIRD - The Health, Education & Human Services Committee meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMITTEE REPORT/GARDNER - The Public Safety/Judicial Committee meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMITTEE REPORT/WRIGHT - Provided an update from the Parks Commission meeting indicating the Parks Commission has appointed a Finance Committee to oversee the Parks finances, and the Parks Director evaluation has been completed.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT/LAKE - The Administrator provided the following informational items: 1) the Newaygo County Sheriff Department and City of Fremont will perform a trial run for e-tickets; 2) additional applications will be sought due to the withdrawal of one of the candidates for the Information Technology Director position; and 3) attended the MAC (Michigan Association of Counties) West Central Regional County sub-committee meeting with Commissioner VanBelzen.

