

**CHEBOYGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
June 24, 2008**

The meeting was called to order in the Commissioners Room by Vice-Chairperson Pete Redmond at 9:30 a.m.

Roll called and a quorum present.

PRESENT: Commissioners Socha, Makima, Redmond, Mushlock, Page, Wallace and Bolinger

ABSENT: None

Commissioner Bolinger gave the invocation and Commissioner Wallace led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Socha stated that typically action is not taken at a Committee of the Whole meeting, however, there are two items on the agenda that require action.

Motion by Commissioner Makima, seconded by Commissioner Mushlock, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

CITIZENS COMMENTS – Dave Bills, taxpayer and Vietnam Vet, addressed the Board. Mr. Bills said he served a little over 4 years on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, having resigned recently because of actions taken by the Veterans' Director, i.e. taking the laptop computer with veteran information out of the county. He said he has heard many complaints from veterans and citizens of the county about the director and the committee.

Anna Marie Barnes, Committee Member of Operation CBOC (Cheboygan Based Outpatient Clinic), voiced her concerns regarding the activities of veterans' office and veterans committee. She posed five questions regarding activities of the veterans' director and other county officials. Ms. Barnes suggested hiring Art Bates, who stood in when the present director was out of town, as director. During her remarks, Chairperson Socha asked Ms. Barnes to refrain from personal attacks on persons not present. Administrator Overton requested a copy of the questions and he would answer them towards the end of this meeting. Ms. Barnes requested not only verbal answers, but written answers also.

SCHEDULED VISITORS/DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Emily Meyerson addressed the Board regarding the proposed surfacing of the Alpena to Cheboygan trail. Ms. Meyerson works with the Top of Michigan Trails Council and DNR on the trails. She said they continue to get great reviews on Gaylord to Mackinaw City trail from users in all seasons; and are now starting to work on the Alpena to Cheboygan Trail which runs 70 miles. Improvements would be similar to the Gaylord to Mackinaw City trail. She said the group is looking to gain a 5% local match, which would include a request of \$20,000 from each of the three counties. She provided facts regarding the proposed trail, a proposed resolution of support for the surfacing project, maps of the existing trailways, and hand out on economic benefits. Chairperson Socha said board action on this item would be at the July 8th Finance/Business meeting. Ms. Socha asked if the DNR received a copy of the board's prior resolution in support of keeping the trail along Mullett Lake opened. Clerk Tryban said she would check and if not would send a copy of the resolution to the DNR.

Chairman of the Soil Conservation Committee, Ben Bartlett, presented a report on the activities of the Cheboygan Conservation District. Recent activities included: participated in the Cheboygan River Watershed Summit; hosted waterfront property owners "Best Management Practices" workshop; held annual spring tree and small fruit sale, delivered nearly 12,500 seedlings across the country; and acted as a conduit for delivering hundreds of thousands of Farm Bill dollars to producers and landowners through the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program. Mr. Bartlett said a conservation district tour to showcase some of the on farm conservation practices that are facilitated is scheduled for September 19th.

Committee of the Whole Meeting – June 24, 2008

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Overton presented an Agreement for Bus Fuel between Cheboygan Area Schools and Straits Regional Ride as SRR Director Mike Couture could not be present. If approved this agreement would save approximately \$805.00 per month or roughly \$10,000 per year.

Motion by Commissioner Bolinger, seconded by Commissioner Redmond, to approve the bus fueling Agreement between Cheboygan Area Schools and Straits Regional Ride as written and authorize the County Administrator to sign. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

Friend of the Court Kevin Weller presented the FY 2009 Cooperative Reimbursement Contract Application to State of Michigan. He apologized for having to request approval at the Committee of the Whole meeting, as it was not received until June 11th and must be received by the State by July 7th, and for having only a Draft Copy available. He explained it is a draft, having reviewed it in detail with the Finance Director; a few line items appear to be allocated incorrectly and need to be shifted among line items. Mr. Weller said as in the past, once the application is approved, the contract allows the Friend of the Court to receive 66% of its funding from the State and 34% from the County. Discussion was held. Mr. Weller said he would put together an in depth presentation for the board at a later date.

Motion by Commissioner Redmond, seconded by Commissioner Bolinger, to accept the Friend of the Court's recommendation to approve the submission of the Friend of the Court Fiscal Year 2009 Cooperative Reimbursement Contract Application, as revised to request the maximum allowable allocation, to the State of Michigan, and authorize the Chairperson to sign. Motion carried with 7 yes, 0 no and 0 absent.

BOARD MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION – Commissioner Wallace reported that he and Commissioner Bolinger attended a Drug Court session in Mount Pleasant. Karen Osier, Stephanie Gordon and Dar McKinley also attended. Commissioners Bolinger and Wallace said it is a team effort, including treatment people, prosecutor, social workers, parole/probation, defense attorneys and judges, and is an effective tool in getting people back to work and reducing jail overcrowding. Both commissioners thanked the board for allowing attendance at this.

After a short break, Administrator Overton answered the questions relative to the Veterans matters posed by Anna Marie Barnes. Mr. Overton said the Veterans' Director did submit his resignation on June 13, 2008, however, it was more of a spur of the moment thing and he turned in his key. He said no evidence was found that any laws were broken or that funds were misused. There was a mistake made on a conference form. He said the Veterans' Director did work on June 17, 2008, which he as the County Administrator, authorized. A meeting was held on Friday with two members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the Veterans' Director, the County's Human Resource Director, Commissioner Makima and Administrator Overton present. The Veterans' Director did indicate that he intended to resign to relocate. His resignation was formally received on Monday, June 23, 2008, to be effective August 29, 2008 or sooner. Mr. Overton said that pursuant to State Statute the Veterans' Affairs Committee would make a recommendation for filling the vacancy. Ms. Barnes said if the county is financially responsible for this department, the county should be able to hire the director. She said she has attended every committee meeting since January and has watched many times where the director had overridden the decision of the committee. She said she is not proud of how the committee is being run. Tracy Heath, a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, said any money the Veteran's Director spent has been to help veterans in need, and the committee has reviewed all of the director's actions. Ms. Barnes was concerned with money spent on a gift and money spent to pay for a veteran's widow's cable bill. She said that money should go to veterans, not for these types of items. Discussion held on confidential information on a laptop computer versus on the county's server. Debbie Bills also addressed the committee noting that upon her husband's resignation from the committee he never received a letter of appreciation from the committee as cited in the minutes. Chairperson Socha said the county has invested in the veterans department, unlike many counties, and wants the veterans to be served.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – Commissioner Page advised that broadband committee has been having some troubles, and that one member of the executive committee wants to disband the

Committee of the Whole Meeting – June 24, 2008

committee. He's without incorporation and hiring a full time director this committee may not be able to survive. Discussion held on fiber optic cable connections from hospital to hospital and possible tying in with that. Commissioner Page also reported that slip cancellations have been up, and fuel sales down, at the County Marina. He said Tuscarora Township is proceeding with their marina development, and plan to approach the Waterways Commission to take over. He also reminded every of the upcoming Wanigan Race and the parade on Thursday evening.

Commissioner Makima said the Cheboygan Lions Club will once again have a pancake breakfast at Washington Park on the morning of the 4th of July.

Chairperson Socha expressed thanks for the input on the Veterans matters.

Motion by Commissioner Wallace, seconded by Commissioner Makima, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Mary Ellen Tryban
Cheboygan County Clerk/Register

Linda Socha
Chairperson