

On Thursday, September 26, 2019, at 8:00 a.m., Chairperson Patti Peretto called the meeting to order. The meeting was held in the Board of Commissioners Room of the Courthouse. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken with the following members present: Chairperson Patti Peretto, Commissioners Tim Aho, Ray Coates, Sharon Leonoff and Mike Stafford.

Also present: Sheriff Mark Valesano, Undersheriff Ryan Boehmke, Prosecutor Melissa Powell, Paternity/Child Support Clerk Kathleen Gill, Victim Advocate Amy Donati, Judge Donald S. Powell, Attorney Abbey Anderson, Construction Code Secretary Ana Valesano, Register of Deeds Accounting Clerk Matt Christensen, Treasurer Melanie Camps, Administrative Assistants Mary Dalpra and Lynette Lorenz, Chamber Alliance Executive Director Paul Schuytema, Equalization Director Amy Marinoff, Civil Counsel Steve Tinti and Clerk/Register Julie Kezerle.

Moved by Stafford, supported by Leonoff, to approve the agenda. Voice vote, motion carried.

Chairperson Peretto called for Public Comment.

Becky Waters, Superintendent at Forest Park, spoke on behalf of the ICECA. She stated that enrollment is up at Forest Park because of jobs and we shouldn't cut funding that brings jobs into the community. We have an opportunity to maintain what we have.

Jon Weirda also spoke on behalf of ICECA to show his support.

Peretto called for public comment two more times. No more comments voiced.

New Business:

A phone conference was made to MERS Regional Manager Tara Langham. Discussion was had regarding the report MERS sent over and the computed employer contributions. Explanation was given as to why the years are varying in cost. Once we get through the first four "big" years of payments, it will be fully funded and the payment significantly dips. We can look at extending these out, but will pay more in the end. Kind of like a mortgage on a home. The longer the loan is, the more you end up paying. Tara recommends that if we can, pay it now. But if we can't afford it, there are some option "B" scenarios. She can get us some figures for option B, but it will take approximately four weeks to get these figures.

There was discussion regarding Layoff Notices and Union Bumping Rights. Attorney Tinti said that when we have uncertainty with grant funded positions, and if the grant funding is not there, the County will not fund that position. We are going through a difficult budget process. It was moved by Aho, supported by Stafford, to authorize the administrative staff to send the appropriate layoff notices if any grant funded positions lose their funding. Roll call vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0, motion carried.

Next on the agenda was the 2020 Budget. Melissa Powell spoke on behalf of the Prosecutor's Office budget. She explained the criminal process and what it takes to issue warrants, etc. and all of the duties of the Prosecuting Attorney's office. She stated it's important to explain these duties for the budget process. She explained the history of Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys over the years in Iron County. It's hard to find someone to work as an Assistant Prosecutor part-time with no benefits. Michigan now has the MIDC (Michigan Indigent Defense Commission) factor. She explained how the indigent defense came about. She welcomes indigent defense and feels that the attorneys will now be filing more motions that require the Prosecutor or Assistant Prosecutor to be present. After explaining the need for an Assistant Prosecutor and her desire to have a full-time Assistant Prosecutor, she listed three options for the budget process:

- 1) Full-time Assistant Prosecuting Attorney at \$73,200 with benefits;
- 2) Part-time Assistant Prosecuting Attorney at \$36,600 with benefits; or,
- 3) Leave as is.

Judge Powell also explained the MIDC (Michigan Indigent Defense Commission).

Discussion was had by all of the commissioners on different ways to reduce the budget deficit of approximately \$300,000. Stafford suggested each department head look at their budgets and reduce them by 4%. Stafford also felt that the money given to MSU could be greatly reduced from \$31,000 to \$5,000. He stated that Dickinson County does not fund MSU and just gives \$5,000 to cover projects. Peretto said with our deficit, how can we justify \$31,000. Aho passed out his “proposed budget” which includes the department heads to reduce their budgets by 1.5%, reduces WUPPDR, reduces Fund 470 (appropriation to Courthouse Repair) along with other reductions and transfers from certain funds along with a transfer from the Budget Stabilization.

Leonoff stated that Chamber Alliance Executive Director Paul Schuytema does a great job. Doesn’t dispute that. All commissioners discussed WUPPDR, MSU and ICECA and the options of cuts.

Coates stated the salary of the Chamber Director is more than some of our elected officials. He stated we need to take care of our employees and MERS.

Aho stated we need to make tough decisions over the next four years because of the MERS contribution.

After a lot of discussion back and forth between the board members, Civil Counsel Tinti wanted to bring the board back to what we need to solve. Tinti said when our expenses are more than our revenue, the county needs to understand what the county is “required” to fund and what is “discretionary”. We don’t have enough money and everyone needs to understand that!

Aho mentioned about some “untruths” that had been stated about him regarding the ICECA. He said he has supported them.

The board set another Budget Meeting. Mary will put out an email to the department heads asking them to look at their budgets and make cuts and also ask them for more suggestions.

Announcements:

There will be a Budget Meeting on October 2, 2019, at 8:30 a.m.

Moved by Coates, supported by Stafford, to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Chairperson Patti Peretto

Clerk/Register Julie Kezerle