

August 15, 2023, Special Board Meeting

U-200

Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 8:00 a.m., Chairperson Mark Stauber called the meeting to order. The meeting was held in the Board of Commissioner's Room at the Iron County Courthouse. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken with the following members present: Chairperson Mark Stauber, Commissioners Ean Bruette, Jacob Conery and Mike Stafford. Absent: Commissioner Patti Peretto.

Also Present (employees of the County): Treasurer Melanie Camps, Deputy Treasurer Jenn Curtis, Deputy Equalization Director Julie Harp, 911 Director Ashley Schmidt, along with several dispatchers, Administrator Lynette Lorenz, Civil Counsel Steve Tinti and Clerk/Register Julie Kezerle.

**Approval of the Agenda: Moved by Stafford, supported by Conery, to approve the agenda.
Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.**

Public Comment (regarding Agenda Items Only):

Stauber called from public comment.

John Waldo, POAM and TPOAM union representative, who represents the Iron County Dispatchers, spoke in support of keeping Iron County Dispatch local and the positives of having dedicated employees in place that know the area. He encouraged the BOC to reach out to other counties who outsourced their dispatch services and asked the BOC to really consider keeping jobs local.

Tony Tomasoski was next to speak in support of keeping Central Dispatch local, on behalf of Fire Range Firefighter's Ass'n and also as an employee of a local municipality.

KayCee Smith, an employee of Central Dispatch for 7 years, spoke in support of keeping Central Dispatch local and said the services they provide are above and beyond, and also said the money appropriated to Central Dispatch has been lessened over the last few years and that millage overwhelmingly passed and will pass again in the future. The auditor at last week's meeting said the general fund balance is up and that the county is in good financial shape.

Kirsten Kapusta, an employee of Central Dispatch, also spoke in support of keeping Central Dispatch local. She stated that they are the contact for police departments after hours, and listed many other duties that the dispatchers do. They had a booth at the recent Iron County Fair and had many conversations with people at the fair and the outrage people portrayed at the closing of dispatch. She said once dispatch is gone, it's gone forever. She also questioned why the meeting was scheduled for 8:00 a.m.

Adrienne Cheatham, a mother of one of the dispatchers, also asked why the meeting was at 8:00 a.m. and asked about what grants are available. She also said we could "outsource" the BOC and find people who care.

Ann Brezek spoke in support of the dispatchers and also said the staff has lost trust in the BOC. She said if we get rid of keeping dispatch services local, we cannot go back.

911 Director Ashley Schmidt thanked the dispatchers that were able to attend the meeting and also thanked the community. She stated why local 911 services are important and asked the BOC to let them continue to answer these calls, that local knowledge makes a difference. She asked the BOC to listen to their constituents and to do the right thing.

Julie Harp, a tax payer and employee of Iron County, spoke in favor of keeping dispatch services local and the impact losing jobs would have on the county.

Lisa Woods, an employee of Central Dispatch, read a letter from Donna and Jon Ahlberg supporting keeping dispatch services local.

Stephanie Ackles, a resident of Crystal Falls Township, also spoke in support of keeping dispatch services local. She said everyone that works here, lives here and you cannot put a price on a life. She also said people would be willing to keep paying the millage.

Sharon Stockero spoke next, stating she was born and raised in Iron County and wanted to remind the BOC that they represent us.

Stauber called for public comment two more times, with no more public comments voiced.

New Business:

- a. DNR Trust Fund Grant Agreement.

Moved by Stafford, supported by Bruette, to move forward and accept the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Development Project Agreement and after civil counsel reviews the Agreement, authorize the Chairperson to sign the Agreement.

Roll call vote: Ayes: Bruette, Conery, Stafford, Stauber

Nays: None

Absent: Peretto

Motion carried.

- b. RFP for Dispatch Services.

Stauber said we don't want to end local dispatch services but said that we lost Gogebic County's dispatch services and we lost revenue. Yes, the audit was good, Stauber said, we just want to get all of the information to the people on what it would cost. He said it was a good thing we received the ARPA money for all of the repairs that were done to the courthouse, but that's a one-time thing.

Stafford also said he just wants to get all of the information to the people on the costs and have the data in front of us to make a decision.

Conery said it's a hard spot for all of us. People need to know all of the facts to make an educated decision. Maybe a millage increase would work.

Stafford then read a letter with regard to when we dispatched for Gogebic County, which raises a good question about keeping dispatching local. When asked who the letter was from, Stafford said the letter didn't say who it's from.

It was then moved by Stafford to put out an RFP for Dispatch Services. Stauber asked three times for support of the motion. With no support, the motion failed.

Motion to Adjourn: Moved by Bruette, supported by Conery, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 8:34 a.m.

Chairperson Mark Stauber

Clerk/Register Julie Kezerle