

MONTCALM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
Monday, January 9, 2023
4:00 PM

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Carr at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Pastor Paul Arnold offered invocation.

Members present at roll call: Commissioners Baker, Johnston, Petersen, Painter, Mahar, Carr and Kohn.
Members absent: None.

Others present: Kristen Millard, Brenda Taeter, Michelle Becker, Andrea Krause, Deb Ballard, Eric Smith, Armon Withey, Candis Thomas, Helen Kennedy, Kim Kuhn and Elisabeth Waldon.

Moved by Commissioner Johnston, supported by Commissioner Painter to approve the December 19, 2022, regular meeting minutes as written. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Johnston, supported by Commissioner Painter the January 3, 2023, Organizational Board minutes as written. Motion carried

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Painter to approve the agenda as presented with the addition of #1 under Old Business entitled *Animal Control*. Motion carried.

Public comments were offered. None were given.

Ryan Dreyer, Commission on Aging Director, provided the Board with a request to approve the MDOT FY 2023 Specialized Services Operating Assistance Program Project for mileage reimbursement in the amount of \$.29 per mile up to the amount of \$16,096. Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Baker to approve the MDOT FY 2023 Specialized Services Operating Assistance Program Project Authorization and allow for the proper signatures. Motion carried.

Andrea Krause, Prosecuting Attorney, was in attendance to inform the Board that Chris Hekman, Chief Assistant Prosecutor, has resigned effective 1/13/23. In her original request Ms. Krause was asking to keep Jason Evans working 1/3/23 – 1/13/23 at this current status. She informed the Board that authorization was received from Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, to have Mr. Evans work January 3rd thru today's date. Ms. Krause also informed the board that since submitting her request, Kristin Finkbeiner has also put in her notice that she will need to resign as well. Ms. Krause stated that it is very important to keep Mr. Evans working thru the end of this week until she can fill the positions she has posted.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Kohn to allow Jason Evans to continue his employment with the County at his current status. Motion carried.

Kristen Millard, County Clerk, was in attendance to request Candis Thomas be paid for 3 vacation days that were taken prior to her 6-month anniversary date. Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Johnston to pay Candis Thomas 24 hours of vacation time for November 28, 29 and 30, 2022. Motion carried.

Eric Smith, Emergency Services Director, was in attendance to present the Board with the October – December 2022 Emergency Services update. Mr. Smith was thanked for his report.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, informed the board that the by-laws for the Commission on Aging Executive Board need to be updated due to the number of commissioner appointed to their board being reduced down to one, from two. Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Painter to approve the By-Laws of the Executive Board for Montcalm County Commission on Aging as presented. Motion carried.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, presented the Board with the tentative agreement reached with the three branches of AFSCME Union. Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Mahar to approve the Tentative Agreement, dated December 20, 2022, with AFSCME for 2023 wage increases and a one-time ratification stipend. Motion carried.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, asked that discussion take place on how the Board would like to deal with the Juneteenth holiday this year since last year only court employees received the extra holiday. Chairman Carr stated that this may not be a battle that the Board wants to take on as the courts are ordered to be closed on Juneteenth and county employees aren't always paid what they should be comparatively, therefore another holiday could be a perk to the job.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, stated that she has reached out to the new Ionia County Administrator in hopes of staying consistent with Ionia County. No action was taken at this time.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, presented the Board with the budget review documents which included the revenue and expenditure reports. She stated that there is nothing alarming in the reports.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Kohn to approve warrant report number 01092023 in the amount of \$445,303.50. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Johnston to approve consent agenda items 10 through 12 and move stated action:

Controller	Resolution 2022-08, To Approve Settlement Agreement	Place on file
Controller	Amended Veteran's Affairs Advisory Board By-Laws	Place on file

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Baker, supported by Commissioner Johnston to place the December 20, 2022, Collective Bargaining Committee minutes on file. Motion carried.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, informed the Board that former Commissioner, Jeremy Miller, has indicated that he would be willing to continue to serve on the Eight-Cap Governing Board. Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Kohn to appoint Jeremy Miller to the Eight-Cap Governing Board, replacing Brenda Taeter, with a term to expire 12/31/2024. Motion carried.

Under Old Business, Commissioner Petersen addressed the board regarding the Animal Control department and stated that all of the commissioners have received emails from the Animal Control staff, as well as constituents, and something need to happen today to rectify the situation.

Commissioner Petersen stated that he took it upon himself to reach out to Autumn Pumford, former Animal Control Officer, asking her what it would take for her to come back to Montcalm County. Ms. Pumford gave Commissioner Petersen a list of what would be required for her to come back, which he shared with the Board. Commissioner Petersen stated that he feels the Board would be remiss if not entertaining Ms. Pumford's requirements because things have not gone smoothly since she left in

October. He stated that he does not feel the Animal Control employees are being supported by the board or the leadership of the County.

Commission Petersen feels that the Animal Control Director position needs to be immediately filled, as well as a couple of Animal Control Officers. Commissioner Baker cautioned the Board at referring to Animal Control as an Animal Shelter because it is not a shelter, it is Animal Control.

Commissioner Johnston stated that he feels there needs to be at least 2 certified officers as soon as possible. Commissioner Mahar stated that he feels this is the biggest area of need and resources need to be put into the area of Animal Control.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, asked to address the issue. Ms. Taeter stated the following:

- Three rounds of interviews have been taken place trying to hire Animal Control Officers and a Director. The most recent applicant that she has interviewed has experience handling and training dogs. She would like to hire him as the Director immediately as he feels he can get certified quickly. He interviewed well and already has ideas for a new approach at Animal Control.
- She stated she has never spoken to any volunteers.
- The current Kennel Attendant has been working a lot of hours and has 2 part time kennel assistants out there now.
- She stated that she has personally offered to help at the Animal Control.
- The Controller's office has done all of the clerical work for Animal Control, so the allegations that upper management has not done anything to help Animal Control staff is not true.
- Ms. Taeter stated that the current Kennel Attendant needs someone out there to give her direction. Commissioner Petersen asked why the Controller isn't giving her the direction need and asked if the Kennel Attendant is going out picking up animals and doing duties that she is not certified to do. Ms. Taeter stated that she really couldn't answer that question.

Commissioner Petersen stated that Ms. Pumford would like:

- Wage between \$60,000 - \$70,0000
- A One-Year Severance Contract
- To allow the on-call Animal Control Officer to take the vehicle home
- The ability to hire her own staff
- Keep the current kennel attendants

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, stated that pay scale is too high for that position. She also stated that the gentleman she interviewed can start this week and isn't concerned about the pay scale. Commissioner Petersen stated that he understands the need to have a body at Animal Control, but the interviewee is not a certified Animal Control Officer.

Moved by Commissioner Baker, supported by Commissioner Kohn to allow the Controller/Administrator to hire an Animal Control Officer. Roll call vote: Ayes: Commissioners Baker and Kohn. Nays: Commissioners Johnston, Mahar, Painter, Petersen and Carr. Motion failed.

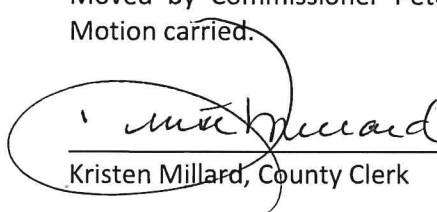
Moved by Commissioner Mahar, supported by Commissioner Baker to form a committee to meet with Autumn Pumford to negotiate rehiring Ms. Pumford. Commissioners Painter, Johnston, Petersen and Brenda Taeter will serve on the committee. The committee would have the approval of the full board to authorize an agreement. Motion failed.

Moved by Commissioner Johnston, supported by Commissioner Painter to offer Autumn Pumford the Veteran's Service Director wage scale, starting at \$60,128, include that the officer on-call has the ability to take a vehicle home, and offer a 3-month wage and health insurance coverage severance package. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Johnston to change the staffing summary for Animal Control to add an Animal Control Officer. Motion carried.

Public comments were offered. Commissioner Baker thanked the board for trying to solve the problem with Animal Control.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Johnston to adjourn at 5:52 p.m. Motion carried.



Kristen Millard, County Clerk



Patrick Q. Carr, Chairman