

MONTCALM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026
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 Dennis Ross from Nevins Lake Church in Stanton offered invocation.

Members present at roll call: Commissioners Alexander, Johnston, Petersen, Johnson, Mahar, Carr and Murray. Members absent: None.

Others present: Kristen Millard, Brenda Taeter, Michelle Becker, Logan Bissell, Doug Gietzen, Autumn Pumford, Michaela Sattler, Thomas Ginster, Ashley Wakeley, Jeff Scoby and Elisabeth Waldon.

Moved by Commissioner Johnston, supported by Commissioner Murray to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Johnson, supported by Commissioner Mahar to approve the December 15, 2025, regular meeting minutes and January 2, 2026, Organizational Meeting minutes as written. Motion carried.

Public comments were offered. Jeff Hines "Joe Knight from the Vibe" Greenville, addressed the Board.

At 4:05 p.m. Logan Bissell, Central Dispatch Director, was in attendance to officially introduce himself to the Board and give the Board an update on Central Dispatch that included operational priorities, ongoing projects and system improvements. He stated that Central Dispatch is solid right now.

Mr. Bissell gave the Board statistics for Central Dispatch and explained how many different systems Dispatchers have to monitor and how much stress that can place on dispatchers. He stated that the call volume is steady and the complexity of calls are increasing due to technology. Mr. Bissell stated that Central Dispatch is fully staffed and he is ecstatic with how Montcalm County Central Dispatch functions. He stated that the radio replacement project is slowly moving forward and the next big upgrade is the phone system.

Mr. Bissell encouraged the Board to contact him with any questions or concerns as he wants an open line of communication.

At 4:12 p.m. Doug Gietzen, Maintenance Director, and Autumn Pumford, Animal Control Director, were in attendance to inform the Board that the architect used to draw up the addition to the Animal Control building will cost approximately \$325,000. The contractor Mr. Gietzen contacted approximately 1.5 years ago estimated the cost to be \$125,000. Mr. Gietzen would like to know how to proceed as the two estimates are so far apart.

Mr. Gietzen gave the board the possible options of building a weather-tight structure this year and finish interior walls and doors, etc. in next year's budget, or just do nothing. He stated that the blueprint was drawn up so that it could be pole barn construction or stick built.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, informed the Board that \$100,000 was approved in the 2026 budget. Commissioner Petersen suggested putting the project out for bids to find out exactly what the

project will actually cost. The consensus of the Board was to put the project out for bid to get an actual cost for the project.

At 4:20 p.m. Thomas Ginster, Prosecuting Attorney, was in attendance to request that the Board request legal opinion from the County's civil counsel whether the Crime Victim Rights Coordinator and Child Support Specialists in the Prosecutor's Office are employees exempt from the Collective Bargaining Agreement. He gave the Board statistics that showed a 30% increase in warrant requests.

Mr. Ginster stated that he has read the Collective Bargaining Agreement and Article 1.1 excludes all employees employed pursuant to state and federal grants. He stated that the Crime Victim's Rights Coordinator is funded entirely through the State Crime Victim's Rights Fund and the Child Support Specialist is partially funded through a federal grant. He stated that these positions wages under the average of other comparable counties and he warned the Board that he will probably be coming back to the Board to request another part-time support person due to the caseload. He expects to be able to fund this new position with forfeiture funds.

Commissioner Petersen questioned how long Betsy Hartley would remain under contract with the Prosecutors Office as she is working a cold case that she previously was working on her own without being employed by the County. Prosecutor Ginster stated that Ms. Hartley is a huge asset to his office and being an Assistant Prosecutor does give her more authority for the investigation.

Chairman Carr stated that he believes these employees are to remain in the AFSCME Union as this issue has been visited before and used the example of Teresa Good, who was the Crime Victims Right's employee, and also was the President of the AFSCME union.

Mr. Ginster stated that he has filed 2 forfeiture cases that would bring in \$500,000 in forfeiture funds. When asked how he felt things were going, Mr. Ginster stated that he is fully staffed and feels like he has gotten his sea-legs and things are going well.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Alexander to direct the Controller to request a legal opinion from the County's civil counsel whether the Crime Victim Rights Coordinator and Child Support Specialist in the prosecutor's office are employees exempt from the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Under discussion Chairman Carr stated that he cannot think of an answer that the county's civil counsel could come back with that would remove these employees from the AFSCME Union. The question has been asked in the past and AFSCME was not willing to release these positions.

Motion carried with Chairman Carr voting no.

At 4:40 p.m. Michaela Sattler, District Court, was in attendance to discuss the FY26 Michigan Veterans Treatment Court Grant. Ms. Sattler also addressed a misunderstanding she had regarding the County's electronic signature and grant routing process. She thanked Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, for her help and guidance and stated she does not foresee this issue occurring again.

Sheriff Mike Williams provided the Board with Amendment Five to the Canteen contract. There has been a 7 cent per meal increase. Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Johnson to accept the Canteen Amendment Five and allow for signatures. Motion carried.

Sheriff Mike Williams also provided the Board with the 2026 Reynolds Township Police Protection agreement. Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Alexander to accept the Reynolds Township Police Protection Agreement and allow for signatures. Motion carried.

Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, provided the Board with the Montcalm County Parks Rental Fees for all of the parks. She would like the rental fees set before March 2nd, which is the date for reservations to begin for the 2026 park season, so she is asking for discussion on what the rates for 2026 would be. Ms. Taeter stated that she feels that Camp Ford Lincoln rates need to be looked at because it is rented out for the year within a week. She stated that she is renting a camp up north that would accommodate 30 people and paying \$2,500 for a weekend and our rates for Camp Ford Lincoln are only \$1,500 for a full week. Ms. Taeter stated that these rates have not been increased since 2021.

Commissioner Petersen suggested increasing rates to: \$2,000 weekly; \$1,000 for weekend; and \$500 per weekday.

Commissioner Mahar recommended that the park rates be visited every year to be sure we remain revenue neutral and there aren't such big jumps in fees moving forward.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Mahar to continue to the same rates for Krampe and McCarthy Parks but to increase the rates for Camp Ford Lincoln to \$2,000 for weekly, \$1,000 for a weekend and \$500 for weekdays. Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Johnson to approve warrant report numbers:

12182025 in the amount of \$767,141.48
12232025 in the amount of \$414,137.60
12302025 in the amount of \$68,817.16
01082026 in the amount of \$240,829.74
01122026 in the amount of \$569,895.22

Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Mahar to approve consent agenda items 9 through 11 and move stated action:

Controller	FY2026 Veterans Treatment Court Grant Agreement	Place on file
Controller	2026 Survey & Remonumentation Completion Report	Place on file
Controller	2026 Budget Review	Place on file

Motion carried.

Ms. Taeter informed the Board of the employee service awards event on February 3, 2026, at the Employee Luncheon.

Moved by Commissioner Murray, supported by Commissioner Petersen to approve and adopt **RESOLUTION 2025-15 A Resolution Recognizing Montabella Varsity Football Team's 2025 Season Accomplishments:**

WHEREAS, the Montabella Varsity Football Team finished their 2025 regular season with an outstanding record of 8-1, capturing a Conference Championship as well as a District Championship for a second year in a row; and

WHEREAS, the Montabella Mustangs then went on to win their first-ever Regional Championship Title, outlasting the Breckenridge Huskies and the Merrill Vandals; and

WHEREAS, the Montabella Mustangs defeated the Norway Knights in their first-ever State playoff game in the Division 1 – 8-man semifinals, taking them to the State Championship game, for the first time in school history, against the Martin Clippers; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Varsity Football Team from Montabella High School had 13 First Team All-Conference Players, 6 First Team All-Region Players, 4 All-State Players, and a Team Academic All-State Award with a GPA of 3.89; and

WHEREAS, Head Coach Tim Webb earned All-Region Coach of the Year and an All-State Coach Award, in just six years as Head Coach of the Mustangs, with he and Assistant Coach Jeff Mortensen earning local accolades as Best Offensive Coach and Best Defensive Coach;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED that the MONTCALM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS hereby commends the 2025 Montabella Varsity Football Team and Coaches on their many outstanding accomplishments and congratulate them on a very well-played and memorable season. All of Montcalm County is very proud of you!

Moved carried.

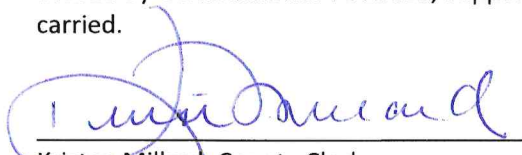
Brenda Taeter, Controller/Administrator, provided the Board with a draft copy of the new Montcalm County Parks Ordinance that the Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Commissioners Alexander, Mahar and Murray put together with pre-meeting assistance from Commissioner Johnston. The proposed Park Ordinance was sent to the county's legal counsel for review and he added his changes.

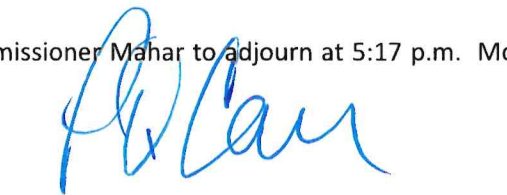
Discussion took place on the proposed ordinance and made suggestions for changes.

Commissioner Alexander addressed renting out McCarthy Park in its entirety and stated that the Ordinance does not address it. The Park Rules for McCarthy Park will need to be updated to not allow the rental of all three pavilions to one person, therefore Ms. Taeter will update those rules as well and bring them back to the Board for their approval, as well as changes to the Ordinance for a Public Hearing and the Board's final approval.

Public comments were offered. None were given.

Moved by Commissioner Petersen, supported by Commissioner Mahar to adjourn at 5:17 p.m. Motion carried.



Kristen Millard, County Clerk

Patrick Q. Carr, Chairman