



MINUTES
Board of Commissioners Chambers
219 East Paw Paw Street

October 22, 2024

Commissioners

Gail Patterson-Gladney, District 1
Mike Chappell, District 2
Kurt Doroh, District 3
Richard Godfrey, District 4
Randall Peat, District 5
Tina Leary, District 6
Paul Schincariol, District 7

Board of Commissioners Meeting

1. Call to Order
On the above date the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 02:35 PM by Randall Peat, Chairman of the Board.
2. Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance / Prayer
Invocation given by Commissioner Doroh.
3. Roll Call
The roll was called by County Clerk Suzie Roehm with the following commissioners answering to their name and district: Gail Patterson-Gladney, Mike Chappell, Kurt Doroh, Richard Godfrey, Randall Peat, Tina Leary, Paul Schincariol.
4. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda
5. Approval of Agenda
All items on the agenda marked with '*' are part of the consent agenda. Commissioners or the public can request that items be removed from the consent agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried
6. Approval of Minutes

A. **October 8th, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried
7. Public Comment
8. Administrative Affairs

A. **Road Commission Re-Appointment - Nelson, W.
ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A60/10-22-2024
WHEREAS, Wayne Nelson is currently serving as a Van Buren County Road Commissioner, with his term expiring on December 31, 2024; and,
WHEREAS, Mr. Nelson has demonstrated significant leadership in the Road Commission, particularly in negotiating contracts with the Managing Director and fostering improved relationships with townships; and,
WHEREAS, Mr. Nelson's extensive background includes public service roles such as Van

Buren County Treasurer, City Mayor, and Treasurer for Almena Township and Hartford, along with contributions to non-profit boards and organizations; and,
WHEREAS, Mr. Nelson's educational background in Accounting and Finance from the University of Michigan, coupled with his practical experience in governmental roles, provides invaluable expertise to the Commission; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, hereby approve the reappointment of Wayne Nelson to the Van Buren County Road Commission for a six-year term, expiring December 31, 2030.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

B. ****Road Commission Re-Appointment - Askew, W.**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A61/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, Dr. W.C. Askew, Sr. has served on the Van Buren County Road Commission since 2013 and brings over 40 years of public service experience; and,
WHEREAS, Dr. Askew's leadership roles include serving as a former Berrien County Commissioner, Clerk of Benton Charter Township, and current board member of both the Van Buren County Road Commission and Public Works, contributing valuable expertise in infrastructure, grants, and budgets; and,
WHEREAS, in addition to his public service, Dr. Askew owns Shoreline Financial Services and is recognized as a respected community leader, receiving numerous awards for his business acumen and leadership; and,
WHEREAS, Dr. Askew's commitment to improving the county's infrastructure and his extensive experience in public service make him an ideal candidate for reappointment to the Van Buren County Road Commission; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, hereby approve the reappointment of Dr. W.C. Askew, Sr. to the Van Buren County Road Commission for a six-year term, expiring December 31, 2030.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

C. **Materials Management Planning Committee Appointments - Revised and EXPEDITED**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A62/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan mandates the creation of a Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC) to develop a regional Materials Management Plan (MMP); and,
WHEREAS, Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties have collaborated to establish a unified plan, with the MMPC consisting of 17 members, including 6 county appointees and 11 representatives from various sectors as required by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE); and,
WHEREAS, due to the lack of local facilities, some roles, such as the Materials Recovery Facility Operator, will be filled by entities outside of Michigan; and,
WHEREAS, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) has recommended final appointments based on experience, civic engagement, and regional service distribution after reviewing concerns raised by Berrien and Cass Counties; and,
WHEREAS, it is essential to finalize the MMPC appointments by the year-end deadline to begin the planning process, with final approval of the MMP requiring unanimous agreement from the Boards of Commissioners of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the recommended appointments to the MMPC by the SWMPC.

Motion by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

D. **Out of State Travel - Juvenile Courts - EXPEDITED**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A63/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the Juvenile Court requests approval for out-of-state travel for a team of four to attend the Enhanced Juvenile Justice Guidelines All-Sites conference in Portland, Oregon, from November 6-8, 2024; and,

WHEREAS, the conference, organized by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), offers training on best practices in juvenile justice and innovative approaches for working with youth and families; and,

WHEREAS, the team includes Judge Dufon, Diversion Officers Angela Smith and Mike Brewington, and Family Aide Madeline Gilbert, and NCJFCJ will cover travel expenses, including flights, hotel, meals, and transportation; and,

WHEREAS, some overtime may be incurred, but efforts will be made to minimize it through schedule adjustments; and,

WHEREAS, the Administrator has indicated that the base salary will remain the same, subject to any County-approved cost of living adjustment (COLA) in January 2026, and has recommended the Board consider a succession plan for either promoting from within or conducting a search to ensure a smooth transition when the contract expires; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the out-of-state travel request for the Juvenile Court team to attend the conference from November 6-8, 2024, in Portland, Oregon.

Motion by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

E. Out of State Travel - Probate Judge EXPEDITED

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A64/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, Probate Judge Metzger has requested approval for out-of-state travel to attend the National Probate Judges Conference in Gulf Shores, Alabama, from November 12-15, 2024; and,

WHEREAS, the conference will provide essential training and knowledge to support Judge Metzger's role as Probate Judge for Van Buren County, as well as offer opportunities to network with other Probate Judges nationwide; and,

WHEREAS, the cost of attending the conference is \$2,100.00, with funds allocated in the Probate Training and Travel Budget; and,

WHEREAS, due to time sensitivity, there is a request to expedite approval at this afternoon's Board of Commissioners meeting; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the out-of-state travel request for Judge Metzger to attend the National Probate Judges Conference from November 12-15, 2024, in Gulf Shores, Alabama.

Motion by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Second by Paul Schincariol, Carried

F. Out of State Travel - Prosecutors Office EXPEDITED

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A65/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the Michigan State Police (MSP) has requested approval for out-of-state travel to Cape Coral, Florida, for the training of four troopers; and,

WHEREAS, the funds for this training will come from the Drug Forfeiture account, which is under the management of the Prosecutor's Office, and there is an established arrangement between the Prosecutor and MSP to use these funds for MSP training purposes; and,

WHEREAS, although the Drug Forfeiture account is technically under the authority of the Prosecutor, Board of Commissioners approval is required to authorize the use of County funds for MSP training; and,

WHEREAS, MSP conducts such training annually, and this is their first request for out-of-state training for 2024; and,

WHEREAS, the necessary funds for this training have already been allocated in the Drug

Forfeiture account, ensuring there will be no additional financial impact on the County budget; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the out-of-state travel request for the Michigan State Police troopers to attend training in Cape Coral, Florida, using funds from the Drug Forfeiture account.

Motion by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

9. Buildings and Grounds

A. **2024 - 2025 Snow Removal Bids

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS RESOLUTION B18/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners requested sealed bids for the 2024 - 2025 seasonal snow removal services for the 2024-2025 season for 14 locations, and three bids were received; and,

WHEREAS, the Buildings & Grounds Director, John Small, reviewed all the snow removal bids that were submitted, and the following is his recommendation:

Company	Plow Location	Amount
Lawn Boys	South Haven – Courthouse	\$5,200.00
Lawn Boys	Paw Paw – Human Services East, Hazen St, B&G	\$6,300.00
Kusmack Lawncare	Paw Paw – Courthouse / Annex	\$8,000.00
Kusmack Lawncare	Paw Paw – Admin Building / Niles St. Lot	\$4,950.00
Kusmack Lawncare	Paw Paw – Sheriff's Lot	\$4,100.00
Mike Sullins INC.	Hartford – Animal Control and Gun Range	\$3,000.00
Lawn Boys	Museum Historical Society	\$1,200.00
Lawn Boys	Dept. of Human Services	\$14,000.00
Mike Sullins INC.	Health Department CR. 681	\$12,500.00
Kusmack Lawncare	Veterans Services Sidewalks	\$650.00
Kusmack Lawncare	Friend of the Court Sidewalks	\$650.00
Kusmack Lawncare	VBC 315 Kalamazoo Street	\$1,800.00
Mike Sullins INC.	Storage Building CR. 681	\$800.00
Total: \$63,150.00		

WHEREAS, the funds will be used from GL # 101.0-265.00-801.000 (Buildings and Grounds – Contracted Services), and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the snow removal bids for the 2024-2025 season as presented above by the Buildings & Grounds Director for the 2024 – 2025 season.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

10. Finance

A. **Claims

CLAIMS RESOLUTION C10/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, claims in the amount of \$8,117,379.45 were submitted and reviewed, and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve of the total claims in the amount of \$8,117,379.45 for the month of September 2024.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

B. **Equalization - 2024 Apportionment Report

FINANCE RESOLUTION F55/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, it is the statutory duty of the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, under P.A. 87 of the M.C.L.A. 46.1 at its annual session in October of each year to ascertain, determine and apportion such amounts as directed by 211.37 of the General Property Tax Law; and,

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners does hereby certify that the governing body of each taxing jurisdiction has reduced their millage as required in Sec. 24 (e) and Sec. 34 (d), General Property Tax Laws, and Article 9 of the State Constitution of 1963; and,

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners authorizes and direct that all 2024 property taxes in Van Buren County be spread as one total sum for each taxing unit; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners does hereby adopt the Van Buren County Tax Report of 2023 and the apportionment and millage of taxes to be spread in accordance with the statute in such case made and provided as evidence by exhibits attached hereto and made a part of; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that statement of the explanation of the Tax Rate for each separate tax in the various units is attached to the Tax receipt in accordance with Sec. 21.39 of the General Property Tax Law.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

C. ****2024 Drain and Lake Level Assessments**

FINANCE RESOLUTION F56/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the Drain and Lake Level Special Assessment Rolls for the year 2024 are dated, signed, and filed in the office of the County Clerk by the Van Buren County Drain Commissioner; and,

WHEREAS, the total for the Drain and Lake Level Special Assessment Rolls is \$642,275.65 representing drain and lake level projects and maintenance work performed; and, WHEREAS, these Drains and Lake Level Special Assessment Rolls are to be spread on the various tax rolls of the appropriate townships, cities, villages in Van Buren County; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners hereby moves to accept the 2024 Drain and Lake Level Special Assessment Rolls totaling \$642,275.65 and authorizes the spread of the project special assessments to the various municipalities involved.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

D. ****Specialty Court Grants – Accept & Sign Contracts**

FINANCE RESOLUTION F57/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Circuit Court seeks approval to accept and sign the FY24-25 grant contracts awarded by the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) and other agencies to support the Specialty Court programs; and,

WHEREAS, the awarded grants include: Drug Treatment Court (\$160,000), Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program (\$190,000), Family Reunification Court (\$75,000), Sobriety Court (\$72,000), and Adult Mental Health Court (\$180,900), which provide crucial funding for case management, treatment services, peer support, legal defense, and drug testing; and,

WHEREAS, these state and federal grants, including a 4-year \$1,000,000 Adult Treatment Court Discretionary Grant, a 4-year \$899,996 National Community Courts Initiative Grant, and a 5-year \$2,000,000 SAMHSA Grant, will enable the Specialty Court program to expand its services, including mobile testing, peer support services, intensive treatment, staff education, and the addition of new positions; and, WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Corrections has awarded \$142,825 for pretrial

supervision, drug testing, electronic monitoring, and treatment programs, further supporting the efforts of the Specialty Court; and,
WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Courts and Specialty Courts Department understand that all services and positions funded by these grants will cease if grant funding is no longer available, and there is no expectation for county funding beyond the grant terms; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the acceptance of the FY24-25 Specialty Court program grants and authorize the signing of the associated contracts, whether in paper form or electronically.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

11. Labor, Negotiations, and Contracts

A. **County Administrator - Contract Extension

LABOR RESOLUTION L15/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the current contract for the County Administrator, John Faul, is set to expire on May 31, 2025, and the Administrator has proposed an extension of the contract effective January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026; and,

WHEREAS, the Administrator has identified several significant projects that are ongoing, including the New Covert Generating and Wayside tax litigations, the Palisades re-opening, reorganization of the Public Defender Office and Digital Information Department, implementation of ARPA-funded initiatives such as Broadband and the Youth Mental Health Initiative, as well as the Capital Improvements Plan and the Facilities Master Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Administrator's experience is also deemed essential for the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements expiring at the end of 2025 and for maintaining the progress within the Finance Department through two additional budget and audit cycles; and,

WHEREAS, in addition to the contract extension, the Administrator has proposed modifications including increasing the 457-plan contribution from 10% to 15%, aligning with the County's average for all bargaining and non-union groups, and raising the car and meal allowance from \$2,800 to \$5,000 due to increased travel and meeting costs; and,

WHEREAS, the Administrator has indicated that the base salary will remain the same, subject to any County-approved cost of living adjustment (COLA) in January 2026, and has recommended the Board consider a succession plan for either promoting from within or conducting a search to ensure a smooth transition when the contract expires; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the extension of the County Administrator, John Faul, effective January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

B. Salary Exception - IT Infrastructure Engineer EXPEDITED

LABOR RESOLUTION L16/10-22-2024

WHEREAS, the position of IT Infrastructure Engineer has been vacant since August 2024, following the promotion of the previous employee; and,

WHEREAS, the selected candidate for this position has 13 years of industry experience, including five years at Kent ISD and two years with the City of Kalamazoo, with expertise in managing firewalls, switches, VOIP systems, and server infrastructure; and,

WHEREAS, the candidate holds a bachelor's degree in computer science and has pursued master's level coursework in cybersecurity, bringing significant value and expertise to the

County; and,
WHEREAS, the candidate's experience and knowledge will provide an immediate asset to the County's IT Department and its infrastructure; and,
WHEREAS, the previous employee in this position was compensated at the R31 Step E level (\$82,397.45) on the Non-Union wage scale, and no budgetary adjustments are required to accommodate this request; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve an expedited salary exception for the IT Infrastructure Engineer position at the R31 Step E level of the Non-Union wage scale.

Motion by Richard Godfrey, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

12. Public Transit

13. Veterans Services

14. Commissioner's Roundtable

- MAC Conference
- Mental Health Facilities Tour
- Galati's Fire Fighter Fundraiser
- SW Michigan Planning Commission
- SW Michigan Community Action Agency
- Area Agency on Aging
- Road Commission Employee Recognition Luncheon
- Municipalities

15. Chairman's Update

- 2025 Salary Structure for Commissioners
- Monthly updates to Township Officials/Commissioner Business Cards
- 2nd meeting in December discussion

16. Board Correspondence

17. Closed Session

18. Public Comment

19. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 03:00 PM.

Randall Peat, Chairperson

Suzie Roehm, County Clerk

