



MINUTES
Board of Commissioners Chambers
219 East Paw Paw Street

April 10, 2025

Commissioners

Gail Patterson-Gladney, District 1
Mike Chappell, District 2
Kurt Doroh, District 3
David DiStefano, 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 02:40 PM by Paul Schincariol, Vice-Chairman of the Board.
2. Recital of the Pledge of Allegiance / Prayer
Invocation 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, David DiStefano, Tina Leary, Paul Schincariol. Commissioner Randall Peat absent and excused.
4. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda
Delete Item: 17.A. Closed Session
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 amended.
Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried
6. Approval of Minutes

A. **March 25th, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried
7. Public Comment
8. Administrative Affairs

A. **Proclamation of Appreciation - Pastor Buck
ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A26/4-10-2025
WHEREAS, Pastor Edward Thomas "E.T." Buck was born on April 12, 1925, in Brandywine, Mississippi, to his loving parents, Israel Buck and Hattie Spencer Buck, and was raised alongside his four brothers and five sisters; and,
WHEREAS, as a young man, E.T. Buck exhibited a strong work ethic, holding positions as a logger and at a box factory in Port Gibson, Mississippi, before moving to Hammond, Indiana, in 1958, where he met Rosetta Crutcher and together, they raised their four sons, James, Paul, Marvin, and Calvin Buck; and,

WHEREAS, after relocating to Michigan, E.T. Buck dedicated himself to factory work before beginning a fulfilling career working alongside children in 2015, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the development and education of young minds; and,
WHEREAS, Pastor Buck accepted his calling to preach the Gospel in 1979 and has since remained a steadfast spiritual leader, inspiring countless individuals with his wisdom, faith, and guidance; and,
WHEREAS, his passion for community service is evident in his role as a volunteer with the Tri-County Head Start through the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program, where, at the remarkable age of 98, he continues to positively influence the lives of over 650 preschool children, earning the affectionate title of "Grandpa Buck"; and,
WHEREAS, Pastor Buck's dedication to service has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Older Adult Volunteer of the Year Award from the Region 4 Area Agency on Aging, which honors individuals aged 65 and older who actively contribute to making their communities better places to live; and,
WHEREAS, on February 23, 2024, Pastor Buck was further honored by the Black History Leadership Society during the Celebrate Black History program at Covert Public Schools, recognizing his invaluable contributions to the community and naming him their Honoree for 2025; and,
WHEREAS, through his tireless volunteerism, compassionate mentorship, and steadfast dedication to his faith, Pastor Buck serves as a beacon of inspiration, proving that age is not a barrier to making a difference and that every act of kindness leaves a lasting impact; and
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, with deep appreciation and respect, honor Pastor E.T. Buck for his extraordinary commitment to his community, his unwavering faith, and his lifelong service to others. His legacy of love, mentorship, and dedication will continue to inspire generations to come.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

B. ****Approval of Van Buren County Planning Commission Updated By-Laws**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A27/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Planning Commission conducted a comprehensive review of its bylaws to ensure compliance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, MCL 125.3801 et seq.) and current best practices for public governance; and,
WHEREAS, the revised bylaws provide significant updates in several critical areas, including the addition of explicit provisions for defining, disclosing, and managing conflicts of interest among Commission members to promote transparency and ethical governance; and,
WHEREAS, revisions to membership terms and limits are designed to enhance continuity, institutional knowledge, and effective decision-making while supporting regular turnover for fresh perspectives; and,
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission clarified the duties of the Planning Director, including responsibilities related to meeting records, budget management, and overall administrative support to the Commission; and,
WHEREAS, meeting procedures were updated to align with state legal requirements, including clarification of quorum definitions, scheduling procedures, and the conditions under which executive sessions may be held; and,
WHEREAS, responsibilities of the Commission officers, including the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary, were more clearly defined to improve accountability and operational effectiveness; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the updated Van Buren County Planning Commission Bylaws as recommended by the Planning Commission.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

C. ****Appointments to the Van Buren County Planning Commission**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A28/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Planning Commission plays a vital role in guiding land use decisions, development policy, and planning initiatives in accordance with the County's master plan and zoning ordinances; and,

WHEREAS, the continued involvement of knowledgeable and experienced members is essential to the successful implementation of strategic growth and land use objectives within the County; and,

WHEREAS, Tom Motycka and Will Pugsley have served as members of the Van Buren County Planning Commission and have demonstrated a strong commitment to responsible planning practices and community development; and,

WHEREAS, their service has contributed to the stability and institutional knowledge of the Commission, and both individuals have expressed a willingness to continue their service to the County in this capacity; and,

WHEREAS, the current terms of Tom Motycka and Will Pugsley are set to expire, and their reappointment will ensure continuity and support the effectiveness of the Planning Commission's ongoing work; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the reappointment of Tom Motycka and Will Pugsley to the Van Buren County Planning Commission for new terms expiring on April 1, 2028.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

D. ****Out-of-State Travel Request - Juvenile Court**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A29/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, there has been a request from the Family Division of the Van Buren County Court to permit out-of-state travel for the purpose of visiting two residential treatment programs operated by Rite of Passage in Queen Creek, Arizona; and,

WHEREAS, the invitation includes participation by the Family Division Presiding Judge, Referee, Probation Officer Supervisor, and a Probation Officer, to gain a firsthand understanding of the services, treatment protocols, and operations of the Desert Lilly facility for girls and Canyon State Academy for boys; and,

WHEREAS, Rite of Passage has agreed to cover airfare, lodging, some meals, and local transportation expenses for the duration of the visit, scheduled from April 23 to April 25, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the only financial impact to the County will be minimal, limited to incidental meal expenses, if any, and mileage reimbursement from Paw Paw to the airport, ensuring fiscal responsibility while supporting informed decision-making for youth placements; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the out-of-state travel request for the Family Division Presiding Judge, Referee, Probation Officer Supervisor, and a Probation Officer to visit the Rite of Passage residential treatment programs in Queen Creek, Arizona, from April 23 to April 25, 2025.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

9. **Buildings and Grounds**

A. ****Approval of Van Buren Youth Fair Association's sublease with Vassar Farms**

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS RESOLUTION B6/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, under the terms of the Lease Agreement dated February 25, 2014, between Van Buren County and the Van Buren Youth Fair Association, the Association may sublease any portion of the leased premises with written consent from the County; and,

WHEREAS, the Van Buren Youth Fair Association has negotiated a one-year sublease

with Vassar Farms for the use of approximately 30 acres of tillable land located within the fairground's property in Hartford Township, for the 2025 agricultural season beginning in Spring 2025 and ending December 31, 2025; and,
WHEREAS, the land in question is currently unused during the fairgrounds' off-season and would otherwise remain fallow, while the proposed sublease promotes beneficial agricultural use, enhances soil health, reduces weed and pest problems, and supports local food production; and,
WHEREAS, approval is time-sensitive due to the upcoming spring planting season, and delay could compromise the effective use of the land for cultivation in 2025; and,
WHEREAS, all income generated from this sublease will be retained by the Van Buren Youth Fair Association to support youth programming and the ongoing maintenance and operation of the fairground facilities; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the Van Buren Youth Fair Association's sublease of approximately 30 acres of fairground property to Vassar Farms for the 2025 agricultural season.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

10. Finance

A. **Friend of the Court (FOC) Contract with MGT Impact Solutions

FINANCE RESOLUTION F14/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Friend of the Court (FOC) participates in the federal Title IV-D program, which allows for reimbursement of up to 66% of eligible expenses associated with the administration of child support enforcement activities; and,
WHEREAS, MGT Impact Solutions has provided billing and consulting services to the FOC for several years, including preparation and submission of the annual Title IV-D Cooperative Reimbursement Program application, monthly invoicing of reimbursable expenses, assistance in identifying eligible costs, audit support, and extensive technical assistance with the EGrAMS reporting system; and,
WHEREAS, MGT's professional support ensures the accurate and timely recovery of federal funds and has consistently delivered value-added services critical to the ongoing operation and financial efficiency of the FOC's Title IV-D program; and,
WHEREAS, despite years of consistent pricing, MGT has proposed an increase in the quarterly contract rate from \$1,750 to \$2,250, beginning in June 2025, with funds allocated from account 215.0-290.00-801.000; and,
WHEREAS, the services provided by MGT are essential to the continued participation in and compliance with the Title IV-D Cooperative Reimbursement Program and could not be reasonably performed in-house without additional staffing or expertise; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the contract between the Van Buren County Friend of the Court and MGT Impact Solutions for Title IV-D billing and consulting services at a quarterly rate of \$2,250 beginning June 2025, and authorize the Board Chairperson to sign the agreement on behalf of the County.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

B. **Acceptance of Van Buren Great Start Collaborative Partner Grant - Specialty Ct.

FINANCE RESOLUTION F15/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Specialty Courts provide client-centered, holistic services that promote long-term recovery and well-being for participating families; and,
WHEREAS, Specialty Courts have been awarded a mini-grant in the amount of \$4,550.00 through the Great Start Collaborative, titled the "Healthy Living Incentive" initiative, which

supports programming centered on education, nutrition, and community engagement for court participants and their families; and,
WHEREAS, the initiative includes key activities such as cooking classes for parents, car seat safety checks, nutritional support, and family engagement events including a local movie theater rental, carnival-themed picnic, and family story time at the local library; and,
WHEREAS, the funds will be used for supplies and events that directly benefit Specialty Court participants and their children, promoting healthy family habits and positive developmental outcomes, and equipping parents with resources that support their children's academic, emotional, and physical success; and,
WHEREAS, the total proposed budget includes \$2,500 for cooking class supplies, \$500.00 for food boxes, \$300.00 for movie theater rental, \$300.00 for picnic activities, \$450.00 for family story time, and \$500 for gift baskets, all fully covered by the grant with no County match required; and,
WHEREAS, there is no financial burden to Van Buren County, and all grant proceeds will be used solely to support the goals and objectives of this initiative; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, accept the Great Start Collaborative Partnership Grant in the amount of \$4,550 to support the Healthy Living Incentive initiative.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

C. ****Hazen Street Brownfield Redevelopment Plan - Paw Paw Village**

FINANCE RESOLUTION F16/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (the "Authority"), in accordance with the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act, Act 381 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1996, as amended ("Act 381"), has recommended for approval the Hazen Street Brownfield Redevelopment Plan (the "Plan") for property located in the Village of Paw Paw, described as tax parcel number 80-47-581-033-03; and,
WHEREAS, the Plan supports a proposed \$30.3 million mixed-income housing development by DDO Paw Paw, LLC, including 66 multifamily rental units and 52 single-family residential lots, to be constructed in phases over five years, beginning Spring 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the development includes public and private infrastructure improvements to support long-term residential growth and aligns with the 2024 Van Buren County Housing Target Market Analysis and the Michigan Statewide Housing Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Plan includes eligible activities to be reimbursed using Tax Increment Financing (TIF), estimated at \$9.9 million over a 17-year capture period, with no bonds or County debt required; and,

WHEREAS, eligible activities include site preparation, housing construction, infrastructure improvements, rent loss subsidy, plan implementation,

interest, and contributions to the Local and State Brownfield Revolving Loan Funds; and,

WHEREAS, the Authority has requested, and the Board supports, a waiver of the current Reimbursement Policy to permit a simple interest rate of 4.5% on reimbursable expenses due to current economic conditions; and,

WHEREAS, proper notice of the public hearing on the Plan was provided in accordance with the requirements of Act 381, including publication in a newspaper of general circulation in Van Buren County and direct notification to all taxing jurisdictions that levy property taxes on the eligible property, as required by Section 13(13); and,

WHEREAS, the Plan has been reviewed and is found to be in conformance with applicable county plans, including the Van Buren County Target Market Analysis and the Michigan Statewide Housing Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Authority's approval is contingent upon inclusion of project phasing in the Development and Reimbursement Agreement to ensure all income-qualified multifamily units are completed in Phase 1, and MSHDA approval is obtained prior to reimbursement disbursement; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of

Commissioners:

1. Approves the Hazen Street Brownfield Redevelopment Plan, including use of tax increment financing for eligible housing development activities under Act 381, as amended, and subject to the conditions outlined above.
 2. Authorizes a waiver of the Brownfield Authority Reimbursement Policy to permit a 4.5% simple interest rate on eligible reimbursable costs identified in the plan, due to current economic conditions, including rising interest rates and increased project financing costs.
 3. Acknowledges that project phasing requirements and MSHDA approval shall be included in the final Development and Reimbursement Agreement to ensure timely construction of income-qualified multifamily units.
 4. Authorizes the Authority to submit the Plan to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) for review and approval of school tax capture, pursuant to Section 13b(4)(b) of Act 381.
 5. Finds the Plan constitutes a public purpose, complies with the requirements of Act 381, and aligns with the County's development and housing strategies.
- This resolution shall take immediate effect upon its adoption.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

11. Labor, Negotiations, and Contracts

12. Public Transit

A. ****Reappointment to the Van Buren Public Transit Local Advisory Council (LAC) - Sherry Bennet**

TRANSIT RESOLUTION T4/4-10-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren Public Transit Local Advisory Council (LAC) provides critical input and guidance on public transportation needs and services within the County, particularly as they relate to seniors and individuals with disabilities; and, WHEREAS, Sherry Bennet has served as a dedicated member of the LAC for numerous years, contributing her insight and support to the mission of accessible and effective public transit throughout Van Buren County; and, WHEREAS, Ms. Bennet's previous four-year term expired on July 1, 2024, and her continued service would provide continuity and institutional knowledge to the LAC; and, NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the reappointment of Sherry Bennet to the Van Buren Public Transit Local Advisory Council for a four-year term to expire July 1, 2028.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

13. Veterans Services

14. Commissioner's Roundtable

- Speaker Series in South Haven
- MAC Conference updates
- Department of Mental Health financial concerns/Ax my Tax
- Farm Bureau meet and greet

15. Chairman's Update

16. Board Correspondence

17. Closed Session

A. Attorney Client Privileged Discussion - Litigation Regarding NCG v Van Buren County

This item was removed from the agenda.

18. Public Comment

- Steve Iott - Hazen Street Brownfield Redevelopment Plan concerns

19. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 03:15 PM.

Paul Schincariol, Vice-Chairperson

Suzie Roehm, County Clerk