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

MINUTES
Board of Commissioners Chambers
219 East Paw Paw Street

April 22, 2025

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 01:51 PM by Randall Peat, 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, Randall Peat, Tina Leary, Paul Schincariol.

4. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda
   Remove Item 8.A.

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 Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

6. Approval of Minutes

   A. **April 10th, 2025 Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes
      Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

7. Public Comment

8. Administrative Affairs

   A. **Resignation of County Representative to the Van Buren County Remonumentation Program
      This item was removed from the agenda.

9. Buildings and Grounds

10. Finance

A. **Equalization Report: 2025

FINANCE RESOLUTION F17/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, MCL 211.34(1) requires the county board of commissioners to meet in April each year to determine county equalized valuations; which equalization shall be completed and submitted along with the tabular statement required by Section 5 of Act No. 44 of the Public Acts of 1911, as amended no later than May 1 of each year; and,
WHEREAS, the assessment rolls of the various assessment jurisdictions have been reviewed by the various local Boards of Review throughout the County of Van Buren and submitted to your Equalization Department in the appropriate timely manner; and,
WHEREAS, those assessment rolls have been audited and balanced by your Equalization Department in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and the guidelines of the State Tax Commission; the results of such being listed on the attached equalization report and on the prescribed Michigan Department of Treasury Form L-4024 (County Equalization Directors Report of County Equalization); and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the County Equalized Valuations as indicated within the attached equalization report a cumulative total for Real Property of $6,193,344,515 (Six Billion, One Hundred Ninety Three Million, Three Hundred Forty Four Thousand, Five Hundred Fifteen Dollars) and a cumulative total for Personal Property of $648,629,400 (Six Hundred Forty Eight Million, Six Hundred Twenty Nine Thousand, Four Hundred Dollars). The combined total of Real and Personal Property of the Cities and Townships in Van Buren County is 6,841,973,915 (Six Billion, Eight Hundred Forty-One Million, Nine Hundred Seventy-Three Thousand, Nine Hundred Fifteen Dollars).

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

B. **Claims

CLAIMS RESOLUTION C4/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, claims in the amount of $2,893,137.93 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 $2,893,137,93 for the month of March 2025.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

C. Strategic Facilities Fund Transfer

FINANCE RESOLUTION F18/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, the County has established a Strategic Facilities Fund to address long-term facility needs in accordance with adopted budget policies; and,
WHEREAS, said policies require that funds transferred into or expended from the Strategic Facilities Fund must be authorized by a resolution adopted by a roll call two-thirds vote of the full Board of Commissioners, and such funds must be used solely for strategic facility investments; and,
WHEREAS, the County maintains a budgetary goal of preserving a 30% fund balance in the General Fund, and at the conclusion of the previous fiscal year's audit, the fund balance exceeded this threshold; and,
WHEREAS, Finance recommends, and it is consistent with established fiscal policy, that $400,000.00 of the excess General Fund balance be transferred to the Strategic Facilities Fund to align with the Board's priority of planning for infrastructure improvements and long-term facility maintenance; and,
WHEREAS, this transfer supports the County's commitment to proactive capital planning and ensures that funds are reserved for future facility
improvements and infrastructure needs; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the transfer of $400,000.00 from the General Fund to the Strategic Facilities Fund.

Motion by Paul Schincariol, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried
Roll Call Vote: All Yes

D. Budget Stabilization Fund Transfer

FINANCE RESOLUTION F19/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, the Budget Stabilization Fund is governed by the Michigan Budget Stabilization Act (Public Act 30 of 1978), which allows counties to establish and maintain a reserve fund to be used for operational needs during periods of revenue shortfalls or unanticipated expenditures; and,
WHEREAS, in accordance with the County's fiscal policy, the Budget Stabilization Fund must maintain a minimum balance of 5% and no more than 20% of the most recent General Fund budget or the average of the last five adjusted budgets, whichever is less; and,
WHEREAS, Fiscal Year 2024 marked the first instance since 2019 where a significant transfer ($715,000) was required to maintain compliance with the Budget Stabilization Act, bringing the fund to 7.5% of General Fund expenditures; and,
WHEREAS, Finance recommends a proactive annual transfer strategy to avoid large one-time corrections in future years and maintain the fund within a target range of 7.5% to 8% of General Fund expenditures; and,
WHEREAS, the proposed transfer of $100,000 from the General Fund to the Budget Stabilization Fund aligns with these goals and ensures continued compliance with State law and prudent fiscal management practices; and,
WHEREAS, all transfers into or out of the Budget Stabilization Fund require a resolution adopted by a roll call two-thirds vote of the full Board of Commissioners and may only be used for operational needs as permitted by law; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the transfer of $100,000 from the General Fund to the Budget Stabilization Fund.

Motion by Paul Schincariol, Second by Tina Leary, Carried
Roll Call Vote: All Yes

E. **Disposal of Excess Equipment

FINANCE RESOLUTION F20/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office has identified various items of excess property that are no longer in use or cost-effective to repair, including equipment formerly used by the drain/work crew and several outdated computer monitors; and,
WHEREAS, the majority of the equipment has been retained only for spare parts and is no longer functional or economically viable to maintain or refurbish; and,
WHEREAS, the County's IT Department has reviewed the computer monitors and determined they are too outdated for repurposing within County operations; and,
WHEREAS, it is the recommendation of the Sheriff's Office to dispose of these items through Biddergy, an online auction platform regularly used by the County for the public sale of obsolete or surplus property; and,
WHEREAS, the disposal of these assets is consistent with the County's property management policies and ensures efficient use of County resources and space; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the disposal of excess equipment and outdated technology from the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office through Biddergy.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

F. **Purchase of Patrol/Rescue Boat for Inland Lakes

FINANCE RESOLUTION F21/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office operates a marine patrol division responsible for patrolling and responding to incidents on the County's inland lakes; and,
WHEREAS, the current Rescue/Patrol boat has become unreliable and is in frequent need of repair, impacting the department's ability to provide timely and effective water-based emergency response; and,
WHEREAS, in addition to the need for a new vessel, a second operational boat within the department's fleet requires a replacement motor to remain fully functional and mission-ready; and,
WHEREAS, the proposed purchase includes one new Rescue/Patrol boat and one new boat motor to maintain a fleet of two reliable, operational inland watercraft; and,
WHEREAS, the acquisition of this equipment ensures continued readiness and public safety presence on the County's waterways; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the purchase of one Rescue/Patrol boat and one replacement boat motor for an amount not to exceed $38,000 to be paid from Public Safety Funds 207.0-301.00-981.000.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

G. **Revolving Loan Fund - Pushard Welding Amendment

FINANCE RESOLUTION F22/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, Pushard Welding, a recipient of a Van Buren County Revolving Loan Fund loan, has experienced prolonged financial hardship stemming from the economic disruptions caused by the 2020 pandemic, which disproportionately affected their primary customer base within the hospitality industry; and,
WHEREAS, the business manufactures stainless steel kitchen equipment, furniture, and fixtures, and due to reduced industry demand and predatory financial dealings, has struggled to meet its debt obligations, resulting in significant operational and personnel changes; and,
WHEREAS, Market One, under the direction of the Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), has collaborated with the County's legal counsel, Miller Johnson, to draft an amended loan agreement intended to provide Pushard Welding with more sustainable loan terms; and,
WHEREAS, the proposed amendment restructures the current principal balance of $36,177.61 into a new seven-year note at an interest rate of 4%, with the condition that if all scheduled payments are made, accrued interest in the amount of $4,302.11 (or the amount accrued at the time of closing) will be forgiven; and,
WHEREAS, the EDC Board supports this amendment to preserve local business, stabilize loan repayment, and protect the County's investment; and,
WHEREAS, it is recommended that the Board of Commissioners approve the amendment to the loan agreement and authorize the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board to execute all necessary documentation on behalf of Van Buren County; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the amendment of Pushard Welding's Revolving Loan Fund agreement to a seven-year, 4% interest note with the possibility of interest forgiveness upon full compliance and authorize the Chair to sign the amended agreement and related documents on behalf of Van Buren County.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

H. **Revolving Loan Fund - Jeremiah Smith Enterprises, LLC, Doing Business As (DBA) Coin Express Laundry

FINANCE RESOLUTION F23/4-22-2025
WHEREAS, Van Buren County Economic Development administers a Revolving Loan Fund within the County for making loans available to promote growth and expansion; and,
WHEREAS, Jeremiah Smith Enterprises, LLC dba Coin Express Laundry in Hartford, MI has submitted a request for a loan in the amount of $35,000 to purchase a commercial sized washing machine; and,
WHEREAS, the proposed loan is consistent with the community development plan of Van Buren County, as the loan will promote the creation of private sector jobs for low to moderate income individuals; and,
WHEREAS, at least 51% of the beneficiaries of the proposed beneficiaries of the loan will be low- and moderate-income persons; and,
WHEREAS, there will be no loan proceeds provided prior to a formal grant award, completion of the environmental review procedures and formal, written authorization to incur costs has been provided by CDBG Project Manager; and,
WHEREAS, Randall Peat, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners, is authorized to sign the Part 2 Application and all attachments, the Grant Agreement and all amendments, and the Grant Payment Requests; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the recommendation of the Economic Development Corporation for the approval of a loan to Jeremiah Smith Enterprises, LLC dba Coin Express Laundry.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

11. Labor, Negotiations, and Contracts

A. **Office of the Public Defender - Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (MIDC) Annual Grant Application

LABOR RESOLUTION L7/4-22-2025
WHEREAS, the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (MIDC), created under Public Act 93 of 2013, provides financial support to counties for the provision of constitutionally mandated legal representation for indigent criminal defendants; and,
WHEREAS, Van Buren County has successfully transitioned to an independent Office of the Public Defender, no longer operating in partnership with Allegan County, and this transition has improved access to quality defense services for indigent citizens of the County; and,
WHEREAS, the County's Public Defender Office is currently staffed by the Chief Public Defender, Assistant Chief Public Defender, five Assistant Public Defenders (with two additional bar exam candidates), and is supported by a Social Worker, Office Manager, two Legal Specialists, and a receptionist, with additional positions budgeted as the Office continues to grow; and,
WHEREAS, the MIDC grant for Fiscal Year 2025–2026 covers the period of October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, and totals $3,525,770.11, requiring a county maintenance of effort of $310,000, which has been included in the County's budget planning; and,
WHEREAS, submission and acceptance of the grant are conducted through the State of Michigan's digital grant management portal and require timely authorization and execution of application materials; and,
WHEREAS, it is recommended that the County Administrator be authorized to submit the grant application and accept the grant award upon approval by the State to ensure timely and efficient processing; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the submission of the Fiscal Year 2025–2026 MIDC grant application in the amount of $3,525,770.11 with a County maintenance of effort of $310,000.00, authorize the County Administrator to execute and submit all required

documentation through the State digital portal and accept the grant upon approval by the State of Michigan.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

12. Public Transit

13. Veterans Services

A. FY 2026 MVAA Grant Request - EXPEDITED

VETERANS SERVICES RESOLUTION V1/4-22-2025

WHEREAS, Veterans Services is required to submit the Fiscal Year 2026 Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) grant application no later than May 1, 2025, in order to secure continued funding for essential programming for veterans residing in Van Buren County; and,

WHEREAS, Veterans Services is requesting that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners authorize Chairperson Randy Peat to sign all necessary documentation to facilitate the timely submission of the FY2026 MVAA grant application on behalf of the Board; and,

WHEREAS, Veterans Services also seeks pre-approval from the Board for the funding strategy included in the FY2026 grant request to ensure continuity of core programming and alignment with state expectations; and,

WHEREAS, the FY2025 MVAA grant funded multiple initiatives totaling $91,093.00, including:

Dental Program $55,000.00
Advertising and Promotion $12,493.00
Emergency Relief $10,000.00
Emotional Service Animal $13,600.00
Total: $91,093.00

WHEREAS, for FY2026, the County has been pre-approved for a reduced grant amount of $58,410.00, representing a decrease of approximately $32,683.00; and,

WHEREAS, the FY2026 grant request will continue to support and strengthen the most utilized and impactful services within the program, with proposed funding allocated as follows:

Dental Program $50,000.00
Emergency Relief $8,410.00
Total: $58,410.00

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approves the submission of the FY2026 MVAA Grant request and for the Board Chair to sign on the board's behalf.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

14. Commissioner's Roundtable

- Market One
- Farm Bureau Meeting
- Emergency Preparedness
- SW Michigan Action Agency
- Remonumentation
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission

15. Chairman's Update

16. Board Correspondence

17. Closed Session

18. Public Comment

19. Adjournment
    Motion to adjourn.
    Motion by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Second by David DiStefano, Carried

    The meeting was adjourned at 02:12 PM.

Randall Peat, Chairperson

Suzie Roehm, County Clerk