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

August 12, 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 03:03 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

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 Kurt Doroh, Carried

6. Approval of Minutes

   A. **July 22nd, 2025 Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes
      Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

7. Public Comment

8. Administrative Affairs

   A. **Memorandum of Understanding - Digital Information Departments and Western Michigan University
      ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A48/8-12-2025
      WHEREAS, the shared Digital Information Departments of Van Buren County and St. Joseph County have jointly developed foundational digital infrastructure to support local government service delivery across Southwest Michigan; and,
      WHEREAS, many local units of government in the region face significant barriers in accessing resources, talent, and tools necessary to engage with emerging technologies

including artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, digital communications, and community development; and,

WHEREAS, Western Michigan University's School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) and its Center for Excellence and Research in Public Service (CERPS) possess faculty expertise, student engagement channels, and applied research capabilities that complement and strengthen the mission of the shared Digital Information Departments; and,

WHEREAS, a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed to formalize a collaborative partnership among the shared Digital Information Departments and Western Michigan University through a structure known as the Digital Innovation Collaborative Exchange (DICE); and,

WHEREAS, this MOU outlines commitments including access to regional stakeholders for student interviews and data collection, hosting and supervision of student interns, sharing of datasets and digital tools, participation in panel discussions, organization of student competitions, attendance at quarterly planning meetings, and pursuit of joint grant opportunities; and,

WHEREAS, the partnership will provide valuable experiential learning opportunities for students, support capacity building in regional local governments, and promote innovation in public service delivery without any financial impact on the County; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the shared Digital Information Departments (Van Buren County and St. Joseph County) and Western Michigan University and hereby forward this request to the August 12, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting for formal adoption and authorize the Digital Information Director to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

B. Authority to Apply for MSHDA MI Neighborhood Program Housing Rehabilitation Grant - EXPEDITED

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A49/8-12-2025

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION OF A MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY (MSHDA) MI NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) APPLICATION

WHEREAS, Van Buren County has received a Funding Designation Memorandum from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) for the MI Neighborhood CDBG Program to support a countywide Homeowner Rehabilitation Program; and

WHEREAS, the County is eligible and has been invited to apply for $472,000 in CDBG funds, consisting of $400,000 for homeowner rehabilitation activities benefiting low and moderate-income households and $72,000 for eligible administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, the CDBG program requires the adoption of an Authorizing Resolution identifying the officials authorized to execute grant-related documents and assume responsibility for compliance with all applicable regulations;

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

1. Identifies Proposed Project and Funding Request - Van Buren County is requesting CDBG funding to launch a Housing Rehabilitation Program serving all four cities, seven villages, and 18 townships of the county. The program will assist eligible low- and moderate-income homeowners in owner-occupied single-family homes with urgent health and safety hazards, structural deficiencies, and accessibility barriers. Improvements may include code updates, aging-in-place modifications, energy-efficiency upgrades, and exterior repairs with the goal of improving living conditions, preserving affordable housing stock, revitalizing neighborhoods, and supporting public health and stability.
2. Commits to Funding and Compliance - The County is requesting $472,000 in CDBG funds, $400,000 for homeowner rehabilitation activities and $72,000 for eligible administrative costs. No matching funds are required. The County commits to complying

with all applicable federal, state, and local program, administrative, and financial requirements.
3. Certifies Consistency with the County's Community Development Plan - The Board affirms that the proposed project is consistent with the County's community development objectives as described in its CDBG application.
4. Affirms Purpose of Activities and Beneficiaries – All activities will be undertaken for the purpose of providing and improving permanent residential structures, which upon completion will be occupied by low- or moderate-income households.
5. Acknowledges Pre-Award Restrictions - No project costs, whether CDBG or non-CDBG, will be incurred prior to a formal grant award, completion of required environmental review procedures, and receipt of written authorization from MSHDA to incur costs.
6. Authorizes Submission of Application - The County Commission hereby confirms that John Faul, County Administrator, is authorized to submit the Michigan CDBG application and all required attachments to MSHDA.
7. Designates Authorized Officials - John Faul, County Administrator, is hereby designated as the authorized Certifying Officer and is authorized to sign the Application and all attachments, the Grant Agreement and all amendments, Grant Payment Requests, and serve as Environmental Review Certifying Officer.
8. Agrees to Compliance Requirements - The County will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and program requirements for the CDBG Program, including those outlined in the CDBG Policy Manual, HUD regulations, and the Grant Agreement.
9. Schedules Required Public Hearing - The Board hereby schedules a public hearing for August 26, 2025 at 12:50 PM at 219 E Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079, Suite 202 to afford citizens an opportunity to examine and submit comments on the proposed CDBG application, in compliance with program requirements.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Motion by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Second by David DiStefano, Carried

9. Buildings and Grounds

A. **Lease Renewal - Dept. Health & Human Services

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS RESOLUTION B13/8-12-2025

WHEREAS, the County of Van Buren has continuously leased the premises located at 5710 CR 681, Hartford, MI 49057, to the State of Michigan, Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) since January 1, 1991; and,
WHEREAS, the original lease expired December 31, 2010, but was extended through December 31, 2015, and subsequently renewed through two additional five-year extensions, with the current term set to expire December 31, 2025; and,
WHEREAS, the proposed lease renewal will commence on January 1, 2026, and continue through December 31, 2035, with two optional five-year renewal terms extending through December 31, 2045; and,
WHEREAS, under the renewed lease agreement, three material modifications have been made, including: (1) removal of space formerly utilized by Safe Harbor from the leased premises; (2) elimination of janitorial services previously provided by the County; and (3) the inclusion of a lump-sum charge of $90,000 for interior painting during the first year of the lease; and,
WHEREAS, the rental consideration for the term of the lease shall be as follows:
• From January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2030, annual rent of Three Hundred Twenty Thousand Nine Hundred Forty-Seven and 92/100 dollars ($320,947.92), payable monthly at Twenty-Six Thousand Seven Hundred Forty-Five and 66/100 dollars ($26,745.66); and,
• From January 1, 2031, through December 31, 2035, annual rent of Three Hundred Thirty-

Seven Thousand One Hundred Seventy-One and 68/100 dollars ($337,171.68), payable monthly at Twenty-Eight Thousand Ninety-Seven and 64/100 dollars ($28,097.64); and,
WHEREAS, if the Lessee exercises the first five-year renewal option (January 1, 2036, through December 31, 2040), rent shall be Three Hundred Fifty-Four Thousand One Hundred and 80/100 dollars ($354,100.80) annually, payable monthly at Twenty-Nine Thousand Five Hundred Eight and 40/100 dollars ($29,508.40); and,
WHEREAS, if the Lessee exercises the second five-year renewal option (January 1, 2041, through December 31, 2045), rent shall be Three Hundred Seventy-One Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty-Five and 28/100 dollars ($371,735.28) annually, payable monthly at Thirty Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy-Seven and 94/100 dollars ($30,977.94); and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the Lease Renewal with the Department of Health & Human Services for the property located at 5710 CR 681, Hartford, Michigan.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

10. Finance

A. **Engagement Letter and Agreement with Maner Costerisan

FINANCE RESOLUTION F38/8-12-2025

WHEREAS, the request is for approval of the Engagement Letter and Agreement with Maner Costerisan, the company that does the required financial auditing for the county; and,
WHEREAS, the county has been using Maner Costerisan for audit services and the previous agreement has expired. This agreement is for services starting immediately through the next three years; and,
WHEREAS, the engagement provides preliminary estimates which maintain the 2025 rate at the 2024 level with a modest 3% annual increase thereafter; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the three-year agreement with Maner Costerisan, and for the Board Chair to sign the related documents.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

B. **Agreement Extension - Van Buren County and Market One

FINANCE RESOLUTION F39/8-12-2025

WHEREAS, Van Buren County entered into an agreement in 2022 with Market One (formerly Market Van Buren) to provide economic development services on behalf of the County to local businesses and municipalities; and,
WHEREAS, the original agreement was effective through September 30, 2025, and included an option to extend the agreement for an additional three-year term ending September 30, 2028, upon a written agreement of both parties; and,
WHEREAS, the County and Market One have mutually expressed their intent to extend the agreement for the optional three-year term in accordance with the provisions of the original 2022 agreement; and,
WHEREAS, the agreement extension shall apply all terms of the original contract to the extended period and authorize continued delivery of strategic economic development services on behalf of Van Buren County; and,
WHEREAS, the following annual compensation shall be provided to Market One during the extension period:
• October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026: Two Hundred Six Thousand Sixty and 00/100 dollars ($206,060.00);
• October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027: Two Hundred Eight Thousand One Hundred Twenty-One and 00/100 dollars ($208,121.00);
• October 1, 2027 – September 30, 2028: Two Hundred Ten Thousand Two Hundred Two

and 00/100 dollars ($210,202.00); and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the extension of the agreement with Market One for an additional three years, through September 30, 2028, pursuant to the terms of the 2022 agreement.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

C. Michigan Access and Visitation (AV) Grant Application - EXPEDITED

FINANCE RESOLUTION F40/8-12-2025

WHEREAS, the Michigan Access and Visitation grant program provides federal funding to assist with supervised parenting time and other related services that support the access and visitation needs of separated or divorced parents; and,
WHEREAS, the Michigan Access and Visitation Application for Fiscal Year 2026 was released on July 31, 2025, with a submission deadline of August 15, 2025, and an expedited signature is requested to ensure timely submission; and,
WHEREAS, Van Buren County has historically partnered with Cass and Berrien Counties in a joint application to maximize available funding and efficiently allocate resources across the three counties; and,
WHEREAS, this collaborative approach recognizes the varying levels of expenditure among the counties and supports equitable access to supervised parenting time services within the region; and,
WHEREAS, this is a non-competitive grant allocation based on population, and there is no financial impact to the County's general fund; and,
WHEREAS, the grant revenues and expenditures will be accounted for under GL Numbers 215.0-291.00-549.000 (Revenue) and 215.0-291.00-801.000 (Expenditure); and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, hereby approve the submission of the Michigan Access and Visitation Application for Fiscal Year 2026, with Van Buren County acting as the lead applicant and Berrien and Cass Counties as co-signatories.

Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Tina Leary, Carried

11. Labor, Negotiations, and Contracts

A. **Kennel Worker - Transition from Part-Time to Full Time

LABOR RESOLUTION L11/8-12-2025

WHEREAS, there is a critical staffing need in the Animal Control Office due to increased workload and continued operational demands including animal intake, cleaning, euthanasia, call responses, and general animal care; and,
WHEREAS, converting the current Part-Time Kennel position to Full-Time is necessary to maintain operational efficiency and reduce ongoing overtime costs currently incurred due to staff shortages; and,
WHEREAS, this position is classified as an AFSCME General Unit, Range 21 (R21), and the Union has been notified and advised of the proposed conversion; and,
WHEREAS, the budgetary impact for the remainder of the current fiscal year will be absorbed entirely by the Sheriff Public Safety Fund (Fund 207), with no financial impact to the County's General Fund; and,
WHEREAS, funding for the full-time position has been requested and included in the General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2025–2026; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the conversion of the Part-Time Kennel Worker position to Full-Time status.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Kurt Doroh, Carried

12. Public Transit

13. Veterans Services

14. Commissioner's Roundtable

- CARES Program/Heart Attack Rate
- Veteran's Boat Parade
- SWMBHA
- Palisades
- EDC

15. Chairman's Update

- Passed Palisades Drill
- Strategic Planning

16. Board Correspondence

A. Genesee County

17. Closed Session

18. Public Comment

- Emilly Hickmott and Kim Sinclair/Conservation District Budget increase request.

19. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.
Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Tina Leary, Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 03:38 AM.

Randall Peat, Chairperson

Suzie Roehm, County Clerk