



MINUTES
Board of Commissioners Chambers
219 East Paw Paw Street

October 14, 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 02:34 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 Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried
6. Approval of Minutes

A. **September 23rd, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried
7. Public Comment
8. Administrative Affairs

A. **Appointment to Van Buren County Mental Health Board (VBCMH) - Susan Barnes
ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A62/10-14-2025
WHEREAS, there is currently a vacancy on the Van Buren Community Mental Health (VBCMH) Board of Directors requiring appointment by the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners; and,
WHEREAS, the VBCMH Board has submitted a formal recommendation to appoint Susan Barnes to fill the vacant position, with a term commencing October 14, 2025, and ending

March 31, 2028; and,
 WHEREAS, Susan Barnes previously served on the VBCMh Board of Directors from 2007 to 2024, during which she demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication, including serving as Board Chairperson and as the VBCMh representative to the Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health (SWMBH) Board; and,
 WHEREAS, Ms. Barnes is a retired special education teacher who has expressed her willingness and availability to resume service on the VBCMh Board and has received full endorsement from the current Board; and,
 WHEREAS, Michigan law requires Community Mental Health Boards to include representation from individuals who are recipients or family members of recipients of mental health services, and also requires compliance with federal regulations restricting oversight of Medicaid funds by individuals on the federal exclusion list; and,
 WHEREAS, the appointment of Ms. Barnes maintains the Board's compliance with all applicable state and federal requirements regarding the composition and eligibility of Board members; and,
 WHEREAS, there is no financial impact to the County General Fund as VBCMh Board members receive only a per diem for meeting attendance, and the Board typically meets six times per year; and,
 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the appointment of Susan Barnes to the Van Buren Community Mental Health Board of Directors for a term beginning October 14, 2025, and ending March 31, 2028.

Motion by None, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

B. **Out-of-State Travel Request - Friend of the Court (FOC)

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A63/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, there has been a request for the Board to approve out-of-state travel for designated Friend of the Court (FOC) staff to attend the 2025 Midwest Border Training Workshop on November 18-19, 2025; and,
 WHEREAS, the Workshop will be held at the Das Dutchman Essenhaus Inn & Conference Center located at 240 US-20, Middlebury, Indiana 46540, and will focus on intergovernmental and interstate child support practices and procedures; and,
 WHEREAS, the Workshop will include participation and presentations from child support professionals representing the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, offering valuable and regionally specific training related to the unique complexities of interstate child support cases; and,
 WHEREAS, attendance at the training will support FOC staff in efficiently handling complex intergovernmental cases, promoting improved outcomes for Van Buren County families; and,
 WHEREAS, the individuals registered to attend include Veronica Stillson (Deputy FOC), Amanda Hoefle, and Abbie Jones-VanHeukelum (Interstate Case Manager); and,
 WHEREAS, all associated travel costs, including mileage and meals, are budgeted within existing departmental funds, and no hotel accommodation will be required; and,
 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the out-of-state travel request for FOC staff to attend the 2025 Midwest Border Training Workshop on November 18-19, 2025, in Middlebury, Indiana.

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

C. **Out-of-State Travel Request - Community Services Department

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A64/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, There has been a request for the Board to approve out-of-state travel for Lisa Ransler, Community Services Director, to attend the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) 2025 Annual Conference from Saturday, October 25 through Wednesday, October 29, 2025, in Tampa, Florida; and,

WHEREAS, the ICMA Annual Conference provides in-depth, real-world training on public sector leadership and governance, aligned with Van Buren County's priorities in areas such as civic engagement, grant management, economic development, opioid response, land preservation, and brownfield redevelopment; and,
WHEREAS, the sessions Ms. Ransler intends to attend will offer strategies for strengthening public trust, advancing equity, expanding grant readiness, and improving capacity to manage partnerships and complex challenges at the local level; and,
WHEREAS, conference content also includes youth engagement, alternative energy policy, materials management, housing, zoning, and parks and recreation planning; and,
WHEREAS, the total estimated cost of attendance is \$2,500, which includes airfare, lodging, registration, meals, and incidental expenses, and these costs will be charged to the Community Services Department's budget under GL lines 101.0-754.00-957.000 (Training & Lodging) and 101.0-754.00-861.001 (Travel & Mileage); and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the out-of-state travel request for Lisa Ransler, Community Services Director, to attend the ICMA 2025 Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida, from October 25 to October 29, 2025.

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

9. Buildings and Grounds

A. **Disposal/Auction of County Property - Sheriff's Office, Drone

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS RESOLUTION B16/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, there has been a request to approve the disposal of a drone that was purchased in 2018 for the purpose of field tracking, with the intent to use auction proceeds to reduce the cost of acquiring more practical replacement equipment; and,
WHEREAS, the current drone, originally purchased for \$19,582.20, requires 15 to 20 minutes for deployment, making it less suitable for urgent response and rapid deployment situations; and,
WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office has identified an opportunity to auction the existing drone with an expected return of approximately \$5,000, which will be applied toward the purchase of two smaller, faster-deploying drones that better meet operational needs; and,
WHEREAS, the estimated cost of the two replacement drones is \$27,000, with the balance of funding, after auction proceeds are applied, to be drawn from GL 207.0-301.00-980.00; and,
WHEREAS, the proposed auction will include a minimum bid requirement to ensure an appropriate return of value to the County; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the disposal of the existing drone through public auction and authorize the use of resulting proceeds toward the purchase of two new drones, with any additional funds required to be paid from GL 207.0-301.00-980.00.

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

B. **Disposal/Auction of County Property - Sheriff's Department Golf Cart

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS RESOLUTION B17/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office has submitted a request to dispose of a golf cart that is no longer practical or cost-effective to maintain; and,
WHEREAS, the golf cart was historically used for parades, fairs, and similar community events, but has since become underutilized and increasingly costly to repair and maintain; and,
WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office has determined it is no longer reasonable to continue investing in the upkeep of the unit; and,
WHEREAS, the disposal of the golf cart will result in no financial impact on the County,

and any proceeds from its sale will be returned to the Sheriff's Office budget; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the Sheriff's Office request to dispose of the golf cart.

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

C. ****2025 - 2026 Snow Removal Bids**

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS RESOLUTION B18/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Buildings & Grounds Department issued a request for sealed bids for snow removal services for the 2025–2026 winter season, covering 14 County-owned locations; and,
WHEREAS, five qualified bids were received and reviewed by the Buildings & Grounds Director in accordance with County procurement policies; and,
WHEREAS, the recommended bid selection reflects the most responsible and cost-effective proposal to ensure timely and reliable snow removal services for all designated County sites; and,
WHEREAS, the total cost for the 2025–2026 snow removal season is \$63,850, representing a modest 1% increase from the \$63,150 spent during the 2024–2025 season; and,
WHEREAS, snow removal services are essential for maintaining public safety and accessibility during winter months at County facilities; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the 2025–2026 snow removal bids as recommended by the Buildings & Grounds Director.

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

D. ****Holiday Lighting**

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS RESOLUTION B19/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Buildings & Grounds Department has submitted a request to install holiday lighting and decorations at various County facilities for the 2025 holiday season; and,
WHEREAS, in 2023, the Village of Paw Paw Downtown Development Authority generously donated holiday lights and decorations for use at the Courthouse and County Park, and these will be reused along with supplemental decorations provided by the County; and,
WHEREAS, the holiday decorations contribute to seasonal spirit and enhance the appearance of County facilities for residents and visitors during the winter months; and,
WHEREAS, the installation will be completed by Buildings & Grounds staff on a Saturday in late November or early December, with staff voluntarily donating their time to perform the work, resulting in no additional cost to the County; and,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve the installation of holiday lighting and decorations at County facilities for the 2025 holiday season.

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

10. Finance

A. ****Access and Visitation (AV) Grant Contract**

FINANCE RESOLUTION F47/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, Berrien County, Cass County, and Van Buren County have jointly been awarded grant funding from the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) under Contract No. SCAO-2026-051 in the amount of \$5,250.00; and,
WHEREAS, the grant supports services including supervised parenting time, parenting time mediation, and custody mediation to assist families involved in domestic relations

matters; and,

WHEREAS, Van Buren County is designated as the reporting agency and fiscal agent for this joint award and is responsible for managing the receipt and distribution of funds; and, WHEREAS, revenues will be recorded under GL 215.0-291.00-549.000 and expenditures under GL 215.0-291.00-801.000; and,

WHEREAS, the grant provides critical support to the 36th Circuit Court in meeting its obligations under Michigan law to promote the best interests of children through alternative dispute resolution and structured parenting time arrangements; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners approve AV Grant Contract No. SCAO-2026-051 between the State Court Administrative Office and the 36th Circuit Court, and authorize the Board Chair or designee to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board.

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

11. Labor, Negotiations, and Contracts
12. Public Transit
13. Veterans Services
14. Commissioner's Roundtable
 - MAC Conference
 - Veterans Standdown
 - National Meds Takeback
 - VBC Mental Health Authority
 - Public Transit Open House
15. Chairman's Update
 - By-laws update
16. Board Correspondence
 - A. Montcalm County Resolution
 - B. Crawford County Resolution
 - C. Genesee County Resolutions
 - D. Grand Traverse County
 - E. Out of County Resolutions — Budget Cuts
17. Closed Session

A. **Closed Session - Discuss Strategy Connected with the Negotiation of Collective Bargaining Agreements**

Motion to enter into closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(c) for strategy connected with negotiations of collective bargaining agreements.

Motion by Kurt Doroh, Second by David DiStefano, Carried

Roll Call Vote: All Yes

Board went into closed session at 2:50 p.m.

Board returned to open session at 4:12 p.m.

Motion to adopt the annual exemption option in establishing the public employer's share of total annual health insurance costs for the medical benefit plan coverage year January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026 in compliance with PA152.

LABOR RESOLUTION L12/10-14-2025

WHEREAS, 2011 Public Act 152 (the "Act") was passed by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor on September 24, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Act contains three options for complying with the requirements of the Act; and

WHEREAS, the three options are as follows:

1) Section 3 - "Hard Caps" Option-limits a public employer's total annual health care costs for employees based on coverage levels, as defined in the Act;

2) Section 4 - "80%/20%" Option-limits a public employer's share of total annual health care costs to not more than 80%. This option requires an annual majority vote of the governing body.

3) Section 8 - "Exemption" Option-a local unit of government, as defined in the Act, may exempt itself from the requirements of the Act by an annual 2/3 vote of the governing body;

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners has decided to adopt the annual Exemption option in establishing the public employer's share of total annual health insurance costs as its choice of compliance under the Act;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners elects to comply with the requirements of 2011 Public Act 152, the Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act, by adopting the annual Exemption option for the medical benefit plan coverage year (January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026).

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

Roll Call Vote: All Yes

18. **Public Comment**

19. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn

Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Paul Schincariol, Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 04:12 PM.

Randall Peat, Chairperson

Suzie Roehm, County Clerk

