



MINUTES
Board of Commissioners Chambers
219 East Paw Paw Street

January 13, 2026

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 Kurt Doroh, 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. ****December 9th, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**
Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried
7. **Public Comment**
Emilly Hickmott, Conservation District, provided a hand-out of their annual report.
8. **Administrative Affairs**

A. ****Building Authority Appointment - Hunt, C.**
ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A1/1-13-2026
WHEREAS, Van Buren County continually accepts applications from residents interested in serving on local and regional boards, commissions, and advisory committees, and reviews such applications as vacancies arise or term near expiration; and,
WHEREAS, Chad Hunt has submitted a Committee Appointment Application requesting consideration for appointment to the Van Buren County Building Authority; and,
WHEREAS, Mr. Hunt's application includes the required background information, including

his current occupation, civic and organizational involvement, governmental service experience, and educational history, all of which are on file with Administration and meet the criteria for consideration; and,

WHEREAS, there is a current vacancy at the Building Authority for which Mr. Hunt's qualifications are suitable; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the appointment of Chad Hunt to the Building Authority for a three-year term, expiring on December 31, 2028.

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

B. ****Parks Commission Reappointment - Hickmott, E.**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A2/1-13-2025

WHEREAS, Van Buren County continually accepts applications from residents interested in serving on local and regional boards, commissions, and advisory committees, and reviews such applications as vacancies arise or term near expiration; and,

WHEREAS, Emily Hickmott has submitted a Committee Appointment Application expressing interest in serving on a county committee; and,

WHEREAS, the application submitted by Emily Hickmott includes the required background information, such as current occupation, civic and organizational involvement, governmental service experience, and educational history, demonstrating the insight, skills, and community engagement essential for service on a county board; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the appointment of Emily Hickmott to the Parks Commission for a three-year term ending December 31, 2028.

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

C. ****Land Preservation Appointment - Kiley, K.**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A3/1-13-2026

WHEREAS, Van Buren County continually accepts applications from residents interested in serving on local and regional boards, commissions, and advisory committees, and reviews such applications as vacancies arise or term near expiration; and,

WHEREAS, Kimberly Kiley, formerly known as Sinclair, has submitted a Committee Appointment Application requesting appointment to the Land Preservation Board; and,

WHEREAS, Ms. Kiley's background includes service as the Lawrence Township Treasurer, providing four years of governmental experience, in addition to a 20-year career as a private duty nurse, reflecting a long-standing commitment to public service and community caregiving; and,

WHEREAS, she is actively involved in multiple civic and community organizations, including the local Lions Club, senior services programming, and community supper initiatives, where she regularly contributes as a volunteer; and,

WHEREAS, Ms. Kiley has demonstrated a personal and professional commitment to farmland and natural resource preservation, a core mission of the Land Preservation Board, and her continued service supports long-term land conservation efforts within Van Buren County; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the appointment of Kimberly Kiley (Sinclair) to the Land Preservation Board for a three-year term ending December 31, 2028.

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

9. **Buildings and Grounds**

10. **Finance**

A. ****Claims**

CLAIMS RESOLUTION C1/1-13-2026

WHEREAS, claims in the amount of \$10,322,255.56 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 10,322,255.56 for the month of November 2025.

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

11. Labor, Negotiations, and Contracts

A. Police Officers Labor Council (POLC) - Command Bargaining Agreement - EXPEDITED

LABOR RESOLUTION L1/1-13-2026

WHEREAS, the County has concluded negotiations with Police Officers Labor Council (POLC) – Command bargaining unit, resulting in a Collective Bargaining Agreement for the 2026–2028 contract period; and,

WHEREAS, the Collective Bargaining Agreement has been reviewed, finalized, and ratified by the union and reflects mutually agreed-upon modifications that align with County operational priorities, current labor market conditions, and internal comparability objectives; and,

WHEREAS, the Agreement includes annual wage increases of 3% for each year from 2026 through 2028, clarification of contract language, and other adjustments intended to enhance contract consistency, equity, and administration; and,

WHEREAS, the financial impact of these changes has been reviewed by Administration and incorporated into the County's long-term budget planning; and,

WHEREAS, costs associated with the Agreement will be funded through the General Fund and, where applicable, through departmental grants and millages, depending on specific roles within the bargaining unit; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the County and POLC - Command for the term of January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028.

Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Paul Schincariol, Carried

B. AFSCME Union Agreement - EXPEDITED

LABOR RESOLUTION L2/1-13-2026

WHEREAS, the County has concluded negotiations with AFSCME, resulting in a Tentative Agreement for the 2026–2028 contract period for all units except Public Transit; and,

WHEREAS, the Tentative Agreement has been reviewed, finalized, and ratified by the union and reflects mutually agreed-upon modifications that align with County operational priorities, current labor market conditions, and internal comparability objectives; and,

WHEREAS, the Agreement includes annual wage increases of 3% for each year from 2026 through 2028, clarification of contract language, and other adjustments intended to enhance contract consistency, equity, and administration; and,

WHEREAS, the financial impact of these changes has been reviewed by Administration and incorporated into the County's long-term budget planning; and,

WHEREAS, costs associated with the Tentative Agreements will be funded through the General Fund and, where applicable, through departmental grants and millages, depending on specific roles within the bargaining unit; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the Tentative Agreement between the County and AFSCME, all units except for Public Transit, for the term of January 1, 2026, through December 31,

2028.

Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

C. Salary Exception - Family Division Referee EXPEDITED

LABOR RESOLUTION L3/1-13-2026

WHEREAS, The Family Division Referee position has been vacant since late September 2025, and the applicant pool has been very limited. The Court has identified a candidate whose qualifications exceed the minimum requirements for the position. The selected candidate graduated magna cum laude from Michigan State University College of Law and brings extensive experience in Michigan family law; and,

WHEREAS, The candidate's background includes multiple years of service as Chief Deputy Friend of the Court in another Michigan county, prior work as a Research Attorney for the Michigan Court of Appeals, and substantial experience with a Michigan legal services advocacy program. This combination of trial-level, appellate, and client-focused legal experience is uncommon and directly relevant to the duties of a Family Division Referee; and,

WHEREAS, The candidate's professional history and demonstrated commitment to serving families involved in the court system align closely with the needs of Van Buren County litigants. Given the length of the vacancy, the limited applicant pool, and the candidate's depth of experience, this appointment is expected to provide stability and long-term value to the Family Division; and,

WHEREAS, The request is to approve an expedited salary exception for the Family Division Referee at Range 18, Step D, which is \$102,591.11 annually, billed to 215.0-290.000-703.000 and 101.0-284.00-703.000. Some of these wages are subject to 66% reimbursement through the Cooperative Reimbursement Program through the FOC; and, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the expedited salary exception for the Family Division Referee at Range 18, Step D, which is \$102,591.11 annually, billed to 215.0-290.000-703.000 and 101.0-284.00-703.000.

Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Paul Schincariol, Carried

12. Public Transit

13. Veterans Services

14. Commissioner's Roundtable

15. Chairman's Update

16. Board Correspondence

A. Ingham County Resolution

B. Cass County Resolution

17. Closed Session

A. NCG Closed Session

Motion to enter into Closed Session pursuant to MCL 15.268(e) for Attorney-Client Privileged Discussion regarding NCG v Van Buren County litigation.

Motion by Randall Peat, Second by Paul Schincariol, Carried

Roll Call Vote: All Yes

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

Board returned to open session at 3:22 p.m.

Motion to approve the litigation and settlement strategy as recommended by counsel and authorize counsel to take action consistent with that litigation strategy in consolidated case MTT Docket No. 17-001737.

Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Paul Schincariol, Carried

18. Public Comment

19. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Motion by Randall Peat, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 03:25 PM.

Kurt Doroh, Chairperson

Suzie Roehm, County Clerk