



MINUTES
Board of Commissioners Chambers
219 East Paw Paw Street

March 24, 2026

Commissioners

Gail Patterson-Gladney, District 1
Mike Chappell, District 2
Kurt Doroh, District 3
David DiStefano, District 4
Mike Toth, 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 02:35 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, Mike Toth, 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.
Commissioner Chappell requests that Item 8.D. be removed from the consent agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended.
Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried
6. **Approval of Minutes**

A. ****March 10, 2026 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**
Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried
7. **Public Comment**
8. **Administrative Affairs**

A. ****Specialty Court Grant Application**
ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A22/3-24-2026
WHEREAS, Van Buren County Specialty Courts respectfully requests approval to submit an application for funding through the Bureau of Justice Assistance to support and strengthen our Swift and Sure Sanction Probation Program; and,
WHEREAS, This program serves individuals who are at significant risk of incarceration and provides a structured, accountability-based alternative grounded in evidence-based practices. Through intensive supervision, frequent and randomized drug testing, graduated

sanctions, and coordinated access to treatment and housing supports, the program promotes behavior change while protecting public safety; and,
WHEREAS, Swift and Sure is designed to reduce pretrial recidivism, interrupt cycles of substance use and criminal behavior, and ensure consistent judicial oversight for participants who may otherwise pose a continued risk to the community; and,
WHEREAS, The proposed funding will support key personnel essential to program implementation and fidelity, including:

- 15% of a Case Management position
- 30% of a Program Assistant position
- 50% of a Drug Testing staff member; and,

WHEREAS, These roles are critical to daily operations and compliance with best practice standards. Responsibilities include validated risk and needs assessments, case planning and coordination, compliance monitoring, data tracking and reporting, participant engagement, and connection to treatment and stabilizing resources such as housing; and,
WHEREAS, Maintaining adequate staffing levels ensures timely responses to violations, consistent participant contact, and adherence to the swift and certain model that is central to the program's effectiveness; and,

WHEREAS, The grant application is for \$1,000,000. The Specialty Court Program operates on a reimbursement basis, meaning that program costs are initially incurred by the county and reimbursed following the submission and approval of eligible expenses. As such, the county's support in providing upfront funding is essential to ensure the program's continuity and effectiveness while awaiting reimbursement; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve Van Buren County Specialty Courts to submit a federal grant application in the amount of \$1,000,000 to support operations for the Swift and Sure Sanctions Probation Program.

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

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

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A23/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, Under the Lease Agreement dated February 25, 2014, between Van Buren County and the Van Buren Youth Fair Association, the Association is permitted to sublet the leased premises or any part thereof with written consent from the County; and,

WHEREAS, The Fair Association has negotiated a one-year sublease agreement with Vassar Farms for use of approximately 30 acres of tillable farmland beginning in Spring 2026 through December 31, 2026 in the amount of \$3,150.00; and,

WHEREAS, This portion of land, located in Hartford Township, is currently not in use during the off-season and would otherwise remain fallow. Authorizing the sublease supports beneficial agricultural use of the land, improves soil health through responsible cultivation, reduces weed and pest issues associated with unused acreage; and,

WHEREAS, Approval is time-sensitive, as spring planting must begin shortly to align with seasonal conditions. Delays could jeopardize the growing season; and,

WHEREAS, All income generated from the sublease will go directly to the Van Buren Youth Fair Association to support youth programming and maintenance of 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 2026 agricultural season.

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

C. ****Approval of Revised Van Buren County Planning Commission Bylaws**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A24/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, The Van Buren County Planning Commission recently reviewed and recommended revisions to its bylaws to improve operational efficiency and clarify several administrative provisions.; and,

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission approved the revised bylaws and is requesting final approval from the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners as required under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, Act 33 of 2008

WHEREAS, The most significant revision reduces the membership of the Planning Commission from eleven members to nine members. This change is intended to improve meeting attendance and ensure the Commission can more consistently achieve a quorum for conducting business; and,

WHEREAS, Additional revisions to the bylaws include minor clerical corrections, clarification of staff support roles, and updates to officer nomination language to improve clarity and consistency with current operating practices. The core purpose, authority, and responsibilities of the Planning Commission remain unchanged; and,

WHEREAS, The Planning Commission formally reviewed the revisions and recommended approval of the updated bylaws for adoption by the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, Reducing the Planning Commission membership from eleven to nine members will result in a small reduction in per diem and mileage reimbursement expenses associated with Planning Commission meetings. No additional financial impact to the County is anticipated; 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 David DiStefano, Second by Gail Patterson-Gladney, Carried

D. ****Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) Appointment of Mary Hosley**

Motion to move this item to the next regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Motion by Mike Chappell, Second by Tina Leary, Carried

E. **Out of State Travel Request- Sheriff's Office EXPEDITED**

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS RESOLUTION A25/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, The Sheriff's Office has requested out of state travel for Detective Chris Orr to attend AX400 Advanced Mobile Data Analysis training in McLean, VA, April 7-9, 2026; and, WHEREAS, AX400 Advanced Mobile Data Analysis is a specialized digital forensics course that trains examiners to conduct deep-level analysis of mobile device data beyond basic extraction, including artifact validation, deleted data recovery, timeline reconstruction, and advanced application analysis; and,

WHEREAS, The course strengthens an examiner's ability to interpret raw file system data, correlate communications and location artifacts, and produce clear, court-defensible forensic reports; and,

WHEREAS, Sending a digital forensic examiner detective will enhance the Sheriff's Office's ability to uncover critical evidence in complex investigations such as ICAC, narcotics, and violent crimes; and,

WHEREAS, The training improves case turnaround time, reduces reliance on outside labs, and increases the accuracy and reliability of digital evidence presented in court; and,

WHEREAS, Attendance builds long-term in-house expertise, strengthens prosecutorial outcomes, and improves the agency's overall investigative capability; and,

WHEREAS, The cost of lodging is only \$650, and there are adequate funds to cover the cost; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve out of state travel for Detective Chris Orr to attend AX400 Advanced Mobile Data Analysis training in McLean, VA, April 7-9, 2026.

Motion by Mike Toth, Second by Mike Chappell, Carried

9. Buildings and Grounds

10. Finance

A. **Claims

CLAIMS RESOLUTION C4/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, claims in the amount of \$4,073,786.51 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 \$4,073,786.51 for the month of February 2026.

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

B. **RAPID DNA Technology Acceptance of Grant and Authorization for Board Chair Signature

FINANCE RESOLUTION F16/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, The Van Buren County Sheriff's Office has been working for the last 2 years to acquire RAPID DNA technology; and, WHEREAS, We have been notified that the application was successful, and that the funding will be awarded following the appropriate acceptance paperwork; and, WHEREAS, The grant (acquired through Congressionally Directed Spending) will support the implementation of RAPID DNA technology in the amount of \$576,000; and, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, accept the awarded grant and authorize the Board Chair to sign all required grant documents upon receipt.

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

C. **FY 2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant Packet

FINANCE RESOLUTION F17/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through the Michigan State Police, has allocated the 2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) funds to assist local governments in preparing for all hazards and improving emergency management capabilities; and, WHEREAS, the 2025 EMPG grant allocation to Van Buren County is \$8,908.00, which represents 8.498% of the salary and fringe benefits of the County's Emergency Program Manager (Coordinator); and, WHEREAS, the acceptance of this grant will assist the County in meeting the financial obligations related to the Emergency Management Program while enhancing the County's ability to respond to emergencies and disasters; and, WHEREAS, it is required that the Board Chair, as the Chief Elected Official, sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Board of Commissioners; and, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the acceptance of the 2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) in the amount of \$8,908.00 and authorizes the Board Chair to sign the grant agreement.

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

D. **Applied Innovations Copier Lease Renewal

FINANCE RESOLUTION F18/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, The County's five-year copier lease agreement with Applied Innovations is

expiring. The proposed agreement would renew the lease for an additional five-year term and replace all existing copier equipment with new models.; and,
WHEREAS, The agreement includes full maintenance coverage for all devices and locks in the current per-page printing rates for the duration of the contract. The agreement covers nine copiers in total, including:

- seven located within Court offices
- two located in the Prosecuting Attorney's Office; and,

WHEREAS, The renewal ensures continued support, maintenance, and replacement of aging equipment while maintaining the County's existing per-page printing costs for the next five years; and,

WHEREAS, Under the current lease agreement, the County pays \$1,135.00 per month for the copier equipment; and,

WHEREAS, Printing costs are billed separately each month based on total page counts. These costs are charged back to the departments utilizing the devices; and,

WHEREAS, The proposed lease renewal would increase the equipment cost to \$1,395.31 per month, with printing costs continuing to be billed monthly based on page usage. The per-page printing rates would remain unchanged from the current agreement:

- Black & White: \$0.0049 per page
- Color: \$0.05 per page

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve to discuss the proposed copier lease renewal.

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

E. ****Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) FY 26-27 Application Approval**
FINANCE RESOLUTION F19/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, CDS is an annual program where local units of government can apply for funds to implement high-impact public projects. This is sponsored by Senator Gary Peters, who is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee; and,

WHEREAS, This request would fall under the Homeland Security Subcommittee, which has a specific program for 911/EOCs; and,

WHEREAS, 911 Dispatch is a critical component of emergency response infrastructure, handling crises efficiently and coordinating resources. Emergency Operations Centers provide a single site where all the necessary resources can be together during large-scale emergencies such as natural disasters or a widespread incident; and,

WHEREAS, With the start-up of Palisades, a fully operational 911/EOC is essential because not only is it required in order for the nuclear power plant to operate, it will connect various agencies (Public Safety, Fire, Medical, etc), support logistics, and strategic planning; and,

WHEREAS, Supporting the construction of a 911 Dispatch/EOC in Van Buren County in conjunction with the restart of the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant is a high-impact and sound investment in public safety, national security, and regional energy resilience; and,

WHEREAS, It will enhance emergency response capabilities, ensure that the local community is better prepared for potential nuclear emergencies, and help ensure the successful operation of the plant. This aligns with both federal homeland security objectives and the safety of the public, making it a compelling case for funding under the CDS program; and,

WHEREAS, We are developing updated cost estimates, but the projections from previous studies, taking into account inflation, show an approximate cost of \$10,000,000. We already have County-controlled land on which to site the Center; and,

WHEREAS, We are requesting \$3,000,000 from the CDS program. Other contributions will be made up of County distributions from General Fund Balance and potential partners like the State, Private contributions and Foundations; and,

WHEREAS, If there are differences remaining, a General Obligation Bond could be issued to be paid from captured increased tax revenue from the Palisades restart; and,

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

Commissioners, approve the submission of an application for Congressional Directed Spending in the amount of \$3,000,000 for the purpose of constructing a new 911 Dispatch/Emergency Operations Center (911/EOC).

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

11. Labor, Negotiations, and Contracts

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

LABOR RESOLUTION L10/3-24-2026

WHEREAS, This is a renewal, 10/1/26 - 9/30/27, of the existing MIDC Grant that funds the Office of the Public Defender. This is the third operating after separating from Allegan County and is basically an as-is renewal request that takes into consideration increased personnel costs and possibly Juvenile Lifer cases; and,

WHEREAS, The Office is led by the Chief Public Defender and Assistant Chief Public Defender. Notably, we have continued to decrease reliance on roster attorneys that are now utilized for conflict cases.; and,

WHEREAS, We are funded for 10 Assistant Public Defenders to handle the normal case load. At this point we have 8 attorneys with 2 more positions to be filled this year; and,

WHEREAS, Staff support includes 3 Legal Specialists, Social Worker, Investigator, and Office Manager. We are still in pursuit to becoming all in-house except for conflict cases; and,

WHEREAS, MIDC is requiring that the Grant Applications be submitted a month earlier, by March 27, 2026. The reason for this is for them to have more time to review all applications in hopes they are approved the first time at the MIDC Board of Commissioners meeting in June; and,

WHEREAS, The total grant will be approximately \$3,100,000 and requires a County maintenance effort of \$308,000, which will be budgeted. An approximation of the grant has been given because, with the date to submit the grant application being moved up, we are still waiting for some further information. That approximation is based on last year's budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we, the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, approve the submission of the FY 26-27 Michigan Indigent Defense Commission annual grant application, and, because submission and acceptance of the Grant is processed through the State digital portal, authorize the County Administrator to sign the required documents to submit the application and accept the Grant upon State approval.

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

12. Public Transit

13. Veterans Services

14. Commissioner's Roundtable

- Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area
- Cass County Data Center
- Jury Duty
- Van Buren/Cass Health Department
- Solar Farm
- Area Agency on Aging
- Legislative Conference

- SW Michigan Behavioral Health Authority
- Market One

15. Chairman's Update

16. Board Correspondence

17. Closed Session

18. Public Comment

19. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Motion by David DiStefano, Second by Tina Leary, Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 02:58 PM.

Kurt Doroh, Chairperson

Suzie Roehm, County Clerk