

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE MEETING

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2021

9:00 A.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Blake Mulder, Terrance Augustine, Joe Brehler, Brian Droscha, Jim Mott and Jeanne Pearl-Wright.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Brian Lautzenheiser.

ALSO PRESENT: Commissioners Jeremy Whittum and Barbara Rogers; Jim Mills, Amy Etzel, Doug Lloyd, Adam Morris, Steve Barnett, John Fuentes and Connie Sobie.

The December 10, 2021, regular meeting of the Ways and Means Committee was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Chairman Mulder.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all.

Commissioner Augustine moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Mott seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Droscha moved to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2021, Ways and Means Committee meeting. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Jim Mills, 1303 Barrywood, Delta Township, spoke in regard to the Delta Township Corridor Improvement Authority and proposed tax capture and said he believes Eaton County Board of Commissioners should opt-out of the capture and negotiate different terms.

A request from Amy Etzel, on behalf of District Court Judges O'Neill and Morton to amend the posting of the Part-Time Attorney Magistrate to allow for non-attorney applicants was presented. Amy Etzel was present to discuss the request and cited the lack of applications and difficulty in attracting an attorney for that position. The statute requires a magistrate to reside within the judicial district (i.e, the county). Discussion held. There was no action taken.

Communication was provided from Tim Vandermark regarding the 2021 Equalization Studies (attached). Mr. Fuentes provided a brief update.

A tax sharing agreement with the Delta Township Corridor Improvement Authority and Delta Township was presented (attached). Mr. Fuentes provided an update on the CIA plan and reviewed the agreement. Discussion held. Commissioner Brehler moved to recommend approval of the Tax Sharing Agreement between Delta Township, the Delta Township Corridor Improvement Authority and Eaton County to the Board of Commissioners, subject to final review and approval by legal counsel. Commissioner Augustine seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

An update of the position vacancies was presented and discussed (attached). Commissioner Augustine moved to refill the position vacancies as presented. Commissioner Droscha seconded. Discussion held regarding adding the date of the vacancy to the update each month. Motion carried unanimously.

Controller Fuentes discussed the difficulty in hiring employees and retaining current employees. Mr. Fuentes discussed working with offices and elected officials to develop initiatives to improve employee recruitment and retention. There is a specific request from the Prosecutor's Office to allow flexibility for placement of current employees within a position's classification grade for existing employees when a new employee would be hired at a higher rate of pay. It is currently difficult to hire employees at entry level pay. Also, there are employees in the Prosecutor's Office who are exempt from earning overtime. The Prosecutor would like the flexibility to allow overtime for those positions when necessary, based on current staff vacancies. There was also a request from Equalization to allow for a modification to the accumulated leave time for a new employee. Discussion held. Prosecutor Lloyd was present to discuss his requests and provided detailed information regarding the hiring and retention concerns within his office. He is seeking the flexibility that was discussed. Mr. Fuentes would request the flexibility for a six month period for modifications to the policies that would assist in hiring and retention such as those discussed. Mr. Fuentes also requested to work with offices on identifying possible hiring and retention initiatives over the next few months and present a proposal to the Committee at a later date. Commissioner Droscha moved to allow the Controller the flexibility to modify an existing policy that affect hiring and retention for a period of six months. Commissioner Augustine seconded. Nay – Commissioner Brehler. Motion carried.

Chairman Mulder recessed the meeting at 10:40 a.m. for a five minute break.

Chairman Mulder reconvened the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

A defined benefit plan adoption agreement from Municipal Employees' Retirement System (MERS) was presented (attached). Mr. Fuentes explained the agreement is being amended to exclude other part-time employees. The amendment is to clarify those positions are not required to participate in the MERS pension system. Commissioner Augustine moved to recommend the adoption of the MERS defined benefit plan adoption agreement. Commissioner Droscha seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Annually the County reviews the weekly short-term disability rate, which is approved by the Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Fuentes is recommending a 2% increase to coincide with the cost of living increases from \$550 to \$565 per week. Commissioner Droscha moved to approve the weekly disability increase to \$565 per week maximum for 2022 disability claims. Commissioner Augustine seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The October Health Insurance Expenditure report was presented (attached). The report indicates an unfavorable variance of (\$109,394) compared to the budget projection for both the County and Health Department. The County's portion is an unfavorable variance of (\$85,123). The County's active employees' unfavorable variance is (\$137,129) and the retirees' unfavorable variance is (\$52,005).

An update of the Child Care Fund was presented and discussed (attached). The balance in the fund was set at \$150,000 based on previous direction from the committee. Transfers out were reduced by \$200,000 from both the General Fund and the Juvenile Millage Fund.

The Interim Agreement granting operational control of the Youth Facility to the Family Court would need to be renewed for 2022, as required by P.A. 409 of 1996. Discussion held. Commissioner Droscha moved to recommend approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Continuation of the Interim Agreement to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Mott seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fuentes provided an update to the Public Improvement project expense and an update of project schedules (attached). Steve Barnett was present to provide an update on the Johnson Controls energy and infrastructure program development.

Resolutions to authorize the County to participate in a partial settlement of the national prescription opiate litigation and authorizing participating in an intrastate agreement allocating settlement proceeds, along with the required forms for participation were presented for review (attached). Mr. Fuentes provided an update. Commissioner Droscha moved to recommend approval of the resolutions regarding the opiate litigation settlement to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Augustine seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget amendments were presented and discussed (attached). Commissioner Augustine moved to recommend approval of the 2021/22 budget amendments to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Droscha seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

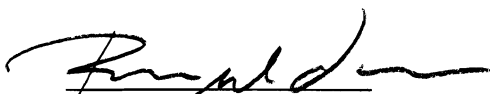
Commissioner Augustine moved to recommend approval of the payment of the claims against the County in the amount of \$308,378.58 and immediate claims in the amount of \$9,944,941.23 to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Droscha seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee reviewed the annual Controller's evaluation for 2021. The members of the Committee provided a favorable review. Discussion held. Chairman Mulder will complete the evaluation form on behalf of the Committee.

There was no Limited Public Comment.

Chairperson Mulder adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Way and Means Committee will be held in January 2022, at a date and time to be determined by the Board of Commissioners at its Organizational Meeting scheduled for January 3, 2022.


Chairman Blake Mulder