WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE MEETING

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025

9:00 A.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Brian Droscha, Brandon Haskell, Jeanne Pearl-Wright, Mark Mudry, Frank Holmes, and Keith Barber.

ALSO PRESENT: Commissioners Jim Mott, Scott Hansen, Jane Whitacre, and Nicole Christensen; Connie Sobie, Ben Dawson, Melissa Ballard, Eric Daley, Logan Bailey, Claudine Williams, Chad Powers, Tom Reich, Alex Zegarzewski, Marcus Service, Dairus Reynnet, Gina Johnson, and Andy Shaver.

The March 14, 2025 meeting of the Ways and Means Committee was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairperson Droscha.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all.

Controller/Administrator Connie Sobie requested to add one item to the agenda: item 19. Closed Session with legal counsel pursuant to 15.268 Section 1(h) of the Open Meetings Act. Commissioner Barber moved to approve the agenda, as amended. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Barber moved to approve the February 14, 2025 regular and closed session minutes. Commissioner Holmes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

State Representative Gina Johnson was present to discuss issues impacting Eaton County. Ms. Johnson discussed revenue sharing, the State of Michigan surplus, and the pending proposal for a reduction in the State Income Tax from 4.25% to 4.05%. Discussion held. Ms. Johnson also discussed the impacts of the County's financials in relationship to when the State would need to intervene.

No limited public comment.

Technology Services Director Eric Daley provided an update on the Technology Services Department. Mr. Daley indicated his team is in the final stages of a comprehensive Technology Audit performed by Dewpoint, Inc. This audit reviews compliance and policies and is required every three years for State of Michigan grant funding purposes. The final report is expected to be available in the 2nd quarter of 2025. Mr. Daley reported that he was contacted by AT&T about a substantial price increase for the County's analog telephone lines. Mr. Daley was able to meet with AT&T to discuss options for moving away from these antiquated lines. Mr. Daley also discussed various upcoming projects for his department.

Communications Director Logan Bailey provided an update on the County's communication efforts. He presented social media analytics and information about how the public is using the County's website. Mr. Bailey also spoke about his efforts to communicate information about the public safety millage. He discussed work in submitting applications for congressional discretionary funding for infrastructure and funding through the State of Michigan.

Deputy Administrator/Human Resources Director Ben Dawson presented the positions update. Mr. Dawson reiterated that the reclassification process for the fiscal year 2025/2026 budget has been put on hold unless it is part of a cost-saving measure for departmental budgets. Department heads and Elected

Officials are encouraged to submit ideas regarding cost-cutting measures. Mr. Dawson discussed the County's on-going retention issues and indicated the total vacancies across all County departments includes 51 open positions out of 417, which is a 12.3% vacancy. Commissioner Pearl-Wright moved to fill the position vacancies as presented. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dawson presented a request to create two position classifications in the Parks Department. If approved, the positions will be sent to a municipal consulting firm to evaluate the compensation structure, however this would not add any positions to the County's Position Allocation Listing until the evaluations are completed and presented to the Committee for review and approval. Discussion was held and Alex Zegarzawski, Parks Director, provided information about summer camps and the revenue that they bring in. Community grants were also discussed. It was also noted that the wages for the two positions will come from the Parks millage and not the County's general fund.

Mr. Zegarzewski delivered information about the construction at Crandell Park and stated that before any work can be started a Wetland Delineation evaluation has to be completed. Commissioner Haskell moved to send the request Parks' positions to a municipal consulting firm for evaluation. Seconded by Commissioner Pearl Wright. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dawson presented an update on the Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA) that became effective on February 21, 2025. A Resolution to Approve Technical and Structural Changes for Non-Union Employees was presented. Commissioner Mudry moved to recommend approval of the resolution to approve technical and structural changes for non-union employees to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance Director Melissa Ballard provided an update on the fiscal year 2023/24 audit. The report is expected to be issued on March 19th, 2025, and the County has received no findings on the audit at present. There will be a final update next month and the auditors will be available to present the reports and ask questions.

The Health Insurance Report was presented. Ms. Ballard provided an update on the health insurance fund for calendar year 2024 and indicated the final 2024 quarterly settlement was approximately $283,000.

The Child Care Fund Report for fiscal year 2024/25 was presented. Ms. Ballard indicated the County has not received revenues relating to the Child Care Fund State Grant but is expected to in the near future. Ms. Ballard reported Community Based Treatment has officially resumed after a two-year hiatus due to staffing issues. Youth Services Director Jeremy Mulvany has worked tirelessly to restart the program.

The monthly financial report through February, 2025 was presented. Current financial data is consistent in comparison to the prior fiscal year. Ms. Ballard reported that there was approximately $700,000 more in expenses in comparison to the prior year, however she indicated there has been one pay period more than prior year.

Mr. Dawson provided a general overview on the federal funding freeze and changes in federal priorities, which is relevant for departments that depend on funds from a federal agency. Claudine Williams, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Development, discussed how the federal funding freeze will impact the grant for her department which is provided through the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency.

The public improvement report was presented. Facilities Director Chad Powers provided an update regarding projects for his department. Mr. Powers discussed the annual inspections of the County's buildings and indicated the County has passed all inspections. Mr. Powers also discussed preventative measures as well as projects that may qualify for grant funding. He is working with Claudine Williams and Logan Bailey to compile and submit the applications.

Chairperson Droscha called for a brief recess at 10:33 a.m.

Chairperson Droscha reconvened the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

A resolution to approve the County Clerk Election Security Grant Reimbursement under the Help America Vote Act was presented by County Clerk Diana Bosworth. The grant would reimburse the County for election security expenses in the amount of $2,248.24. Commissioner Barber moved to recommend the Resolution to Approve County Clerk Election Security Grant Reimbursement under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

A resolution to Authorize Application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Trust Fund Program for an Acquisition Grant was presented. Funds from this grant would be used to purchase up to 49 acres adjacent to Lincoln Brick Park for an expansion of the Lincoln Brick Park. The County would be responsible for a 25% match. Commissioner Pearl-Wright moved to recommend the approval of the resolution to the Board of Commissioners as presented. Commissioner Mudry seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

The 2024/2025 budget amendments were presented and discussed. Deputy Drain Commissioner Marcus Services was present to discuss the requested amendment for the Drain Commissioner's Office which would allow the Drain Office to utilize $17,500 of savings from vacant positions to professional services for drain soil erosion inspections and permitting provided by professional services. Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend approval of the budget amendments to the Board of Commissioners as presented. Commissioner Mudry seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Miscellaneous. Ms. Ballard discussed a Freedom of Information Act Request regarding pay rate information for specific administrative staff and Elected Officials that was responded with a system generated report. The system generated report contained inaccurate information was then disseminated on Facebook. The system combined employee rate codes that caused duplicate reporting of total salaries. She and the Controller apologized for the erroneous information that was distributed and indicated that corrections would be provided to the requestor as soon as practicable. Discussion held.

Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend approval of the payment of claims against the County in the amount of $401,984.71, immediate claims in the amount of $1,767,313.10, electronic claims in the amount of $6,524,540.23, and employee payroll in the amount of $1,908,879.89 to the Board of Commissioners as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Mudry. Commissioner Christensen requested that more details be added to the description of the payments made. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Preliminary personnel projections for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 were presented. Discussion held. Committee members requested information to analyze the potential impact of the passage of the Public Safety Millage which is on the ballot May 6, 2025.

Limited Public Comment. Andy Shaver spoke about Public Act 202 – Pension and OPEB reporting and its impact on municipal governments.

Commissioner Barber moved to enter into closed session at 12:14 p.m. pursuant to MCL 15.268 (1)(h) of the Open Meetings Act to discuss an attorney-client privileged letter from Cohl, Stoker & Toskey, P.C. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Roll Call Vote: Haskell – yes, Pearl-Wright – yes, Mudry – yes, Holmes – yes, Barber – yes, Droscha – yes. Motion carried.

The Committee resumed the open meeting at 12:56 p.m.

Commissioner Barber moved to recommend the review of a legal opinion from Cohl, Stoker and Toskey, P.C. to the Board of Commissioners. Seconded by Commissioner Haskell. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Droscha adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Ways and Means Committee will be held on Friday, April 11, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Commissioner Room of the Courthouse located at 1045 Independence Blvd., Charlotte, MI 48813.

Brian Droscha, Chairperson