WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE MEETING

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 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, Jane Whitacre, Chris Arndt, and Scott Hansen; Connie Sobie, Ben Dawson, Logan Bailey, Melissa Ballard, Chris Garrison, Eric Daley, Chad Powers, Claudine Williams, Ethan Jacobs, Bill Hendrian, Barbara Rogers, and John Papranec.

The September 12, 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 Conie Sobie requested to add item 7. Intergovernmental Agreement for Planning and Zoning Services; add item 17a. Resolution to Amend Resolution #25-3-36 Authorizing DNR Trust Fund Application; add item 17b. Resolution Opposing House of Representatives' FY26 Budget Cuts to County Revenue Sharing; and remove item 11a. Health Insurance Report. Commissioner Barber moved to approve the agenda, as amended. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Haskell moved to approve the August 15, 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Limited Public Comment. Bill Hendrian, from Michigan State University discussed the proposed fiscal year 2025/26 budget reductions to MSU Extension Office. Barbara Rogers discussed 4-H and how they could raise funds for their programs.

The L4029 Equalization Report was presented. Commissioner Barber moved to recommend the approval of the L4029 Equalization Report to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Construction Code/Planning and Zoning Director Chris Garrison presented the Intergovernmental Agreement for Planning and Zoning Services contract and a Resolution to Approve Entering into Intergovernmental Agreements with Eaton County Townships for Planning and Zoning Services. Commissioner Barber motioned to not move forward with the agreement. Commissioner Droscha seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Technology Services Director Eric Daley provided a departmental update. Mr. Daley indicated the internet at Fox Park is now up and running and updated the Committee on the status of other Technology Projects.

A Technology Support Contract with Barry-Eaton District Health Department was presented. The new contract would take effect on October 1, 2025, and remain in effect for 12 months, automatically expiring at the end of the term. It may be reviewed within the 12 months from time to time and, upon mutual agreement, be changed to reflect changes and deletions in the scope of work. Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend approval of the contract to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Communication Director Logan Bailey provided a departmental update, discussing the County's social media, indicating the numbers remain steady month to month. Mr. Bailey indicated that an additional component to our County Website Hosting platform was installed and provides the County with accessibility reports that document website issues. He also discussed business uses for AI and creating a use policy for the County.

Deputy Administrator/Human Resources Director Ben Dawson presented the positions update. Mr. Dawson discussed the currently open positions and indicated that the monthly vacancy rate is 16.5%, with the annual vacancy rate at 13.55%. Commissioner Barber moved to fill recommended position. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Garrison withdrew his request for staff classification due to the committee's decision not to move forward with the Intergovernmental Agreement for Planning and Zoning Services.

Mr. Dawson presented a Letter of Understanding between the Eaton County Board of Commissioners and the Police Officers Association of Michigan. This letter addresses the issue of starting salaries and modifies the original agreement, allowing the starting salary to reflect the level of experience. Commissioner Barber moved to recommend the approval of the Letter of Understanding to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Mudry Seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dawson also presented a Letter of Understanding between the Eaton County Board of Commissioners, the Sheriff of Eaton County, and the Command Officers Association of Michigan (COAM) Eaton County Command Officers Association. This letter removes the requirement of an Associate's Degree for promotion purposes and replaces the requirement with at least 3 years or more of bargaining unit seniority. Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend approval of the Letter of Understanding to the Board of Commissioners as presented. Commissioner Mudry Seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The County has received the Blue Cross/Blue Sheild renewal rates and administration will present the rates next month. Mr. Dawson also provided an update on MERS, more information will be provided in the future.

Finance Director Melissa Ballard presented the Child Care Fund Report for July. There were no major changes from the prior month's report. Based on current estimate, the projected ending fund balance for September 30, 2025 is $1,639,092.

The monthly financial report for fiscal year 2024/25 was presented. Ms. Ballard indicated that revenues and expenses continue as budgeted.

Facilities Director Chad Powers provided a departmental update. Mr. Powers indicated his department is wrapping up various annual projects. He spoke about the aging infrastructure of the courthouse and other County buildings.

Mr. Dawson spoke about leases that the County holds. He stated that the lease terms vary widely. Administration is working on standardizing the leases and quantifying costs. Currently the county owns 14 heat-controlled buildings.

A Resolution to Approve 2024/2025 Budget Amendments was presented. Discussion held. Ms. Sobie requested that any additional budget amendments that the Controller's Office identifies before the Board of Commissioners meets on September 17, 2025, be allowed to be presented for the consideration of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend approval of the presented budget amendments and any amendments identified by the Controller's Office to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Droscha called for a brief recess at 10:53 a.m.

Chairperson Droscha reconvened the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

The County Purchasing Policy was presented. Discussion was held regarding updates to the Policy, which was last updated in 1999. Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend adoption of the policy to the Board of Commissioners, as presented. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bailey provided an update on the Opioid Settlement. Discussion held. There was a consensus to bring future opioid settlements to the Board of Commissioners.

Ethan Jacobs, Interim Parks Director, and Claudine Williams, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Development, requested to amend Resolution 25-3-36. The proposed amendment would allow the County to apply for a DNR Trust Fund Grant for up to $297,600, with a local match of 26% or $77,400. The project would allow for the acquisition of Lincoln Brick Expansion property. Commissioner Pearl-Wright moved to recommend approval of the amendment to the Board of Commissioners as presented. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Sobie presented a Resolution Opposing the House of Representatives' FY26 Budget Cuts to County Revenue Sharing. Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend approval of the resolution to the Board of Commissioners as presented. Commissioner Pearl-Wright seconded. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Sobie discussed the potential impacts of the State of Michigan shutdown on the County.

Commissioner Haskell moved to recommend approval of the payment of claims against the County in the amount of $293,795.26, immediate claims in the amount of $1,980,873.48, electronic claims in the amount of $12,803,832.21, and employee payroll in the amount of $1,784,320.27 to the Board of Commissioners as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Mudry. Motion carried unanimously.

The Resolution to Approve the 2025/2026 Eaton County Budget was presented. Ms. Sobie provided a detailed explanation of the resolution. Commissioner Holmes presented a motion to reduce the meeting per diem to $40.00 and remove the taxable mileage which would reduce the General Fund FY2025/26 Budget by $19,924. Commissioner Barber seconded. Discussion held. Commissioners Pearl-Wright and Mudry opposed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Barber moved to recommend the Resolution to Approve the 2025/2026 Eaton County Budget to the Board of Commissioners, as amended. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Motion carried.

Limited public comment. Chairperson Mott clarified comments to the media regarding MSU Extension, 4-H, and the County Fair and discussed how to move forward with the existing funding reductions. John Papranec discussed the need for increased County funding and indicated the County should look into legislative changes to allow a County Income Tax.

Chairperson Droscha adjourned the meeting at 12:51 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Ways and Means Committee will be held on Friday, October 10, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Commissioners Room of the Courthouse located at 1045 Independence Blvd., Charlotte, MI 48813.

Brian Droscha, Chairperson