

EATON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 29, 2026

The Eaton County Board of Commissioners met in special session at the County facilities, in the City of Charlotte, Thursday, January 29, 2026, including the availability of virtual attendance by the public.

Chairman Mott called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Mott gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was given by all.

Roll call. Commissioners present: Andy Shaver, Chris Arndt, Brandon Haskell, Jeanne Pearl-Wright, Jane M. Whitacre, Mark Mudry, Kyle Jones, Brian Droscha, Scott Hansen, Nicole Christensen, Jim Mott, Frank Holmes, Keith Barber. Commissioners absent: Jason Peek and Jacob Toomey.

Commissioner Droscha moved the approval of the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Haskell. Motion carried unanimously.

Public comment: There were no public comments.

Commissioner Shaver moved to enter closed session at 6:04 p.m. pursuant to MCL 15.268 Section 8 (h) to discuss material exempt from disclosure by statute, more particularly the written legal opinion of our attorney which is exempted from disclosure under MCL 15.243(1)(g). Seconded by Commissioner Droscha. Roll call vote. Ayes: Commissioners Shaver, Arndt, Haskell, Pearl-Wright, Whitacre, Mudry, Jones, Droscha, Hansen, Christensen, Holmes, Barber, and Mott. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

Regular session resumed at 6:26 p.m.

Deputy Controller/Administrator Ben Dawson presented the Proposed Public Defender Office Interim Stabilization Plan and Employment Agreements. Discussion held.

Commissioner Shaver moved the approval of Resolution Acknowledging and Accepting Public Defender's Office Potential Conflict of Interest Disclosures. Seconded by Commissioner Whitacre. Motion set aside.

Commissioner Shaver moved the approval of proposed Public Defender Office Interim Stabilization Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Pearl-Wright. Motion carried unanimously. (On file)

Commissioner Whitacre moved the approval of #26-1-12 proposed employment agreements for the Eaton County Public Defender's Office. Seconded by Commissioner Haskell. Motion carried unanimously. (On file)

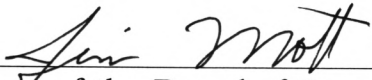
Commissioner Arndt renewed the motion to approve #26-1-13 Resolution Acknowledging and Accepting Public Defender's Office Potential Conflict of Interest Disclosures. Seconded by Commissioner Droscha. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously. (On File)

Commissioner Arndt moved the approval of #26-1-14 Resolution to Approve Temporary Override of Economic Policy for Temporary Employment Agreements with Public Defender's Office Employees. Seconded by Commissioner Droscha. Discussion held. Motion carried unanimously. (On file)

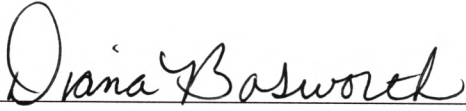
Commissioner Droscha moved the approval of #26-1-15 Resolution to Approve 2025/2026 Budget Amendment. Seconded by Commissioner Pearl-Wright. Motion carried unanimously. (On file)

Public Comment was offered by Eaton County resident Jerry Fraizer.

Chairman Mott adjourned the meeting to Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.



Chairman of the Board of Commissioners



Clerk of the Board of Commissioners

EATON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

JANUARY 29, 2026

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

Commissioner Whitacre moved the approval of the following resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Haskell.

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has determined that it is the County's interest to enter into employment agreements for the Public Defender' Office; and

WHEREAS, the attached agreement has been developed and reviewed by County legal counsel; and

WHEREAS, the Ways and Means Committee has reviewed and recommended approval of the attached three year employment agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners approves the employment agreement with Connie L. Sobie; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners or his designee is authorized to sign the agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

EATON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

JANUARY 29, 2026

**RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING AND ACCEPTING PUBLIC DEFENDER'S
OFFICE POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

Commissioner Arndt moved the approval of the following resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Droscha.

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has determined that it is the County's interest to enter into employment agreements for the Public Defender's Office; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the potential conflicts of interest provided, specifically for the agreements with staff from the Newburg Law Firm and acknowledge the safeguards in place to address the appearance of a conflict of interest; and

WHEREAS, if any other vacancies occur within the Public Defender's Office in the next 12 months those roles may be filled using the same temporary employment agreements; and

WHEREAS, should said hirings require a disclosure of potential conflict, the Board of Commissioners authorizes the Chairperson of the Board and the Controller/Administrator to evaluate and approve such disclosures upon the signed employment agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners acknowledges and accepts the Public Defender's Office potential conflict of interest disclosures.

EATON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

JANUARY 29, 2026

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE TEMPORARY OVERRIDE OF ECONOMIC
POLICY FOR TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS WITH PUBLIC
DEFENDER'S OFFICE EMPLOYEES**

Commissioner Arndt moved the approval of the following resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Droscha.

WHEREAS, the Eaton County Board of Commissioners has reviewed the 12-month strategic stabilization plan for the Public Defender's Office, and identifies the need for immediate assistance in the administration of and operation of the department; and

WHEREAS, the Eaton County Board of Commissioners authorizes the Controller/Administrator to utilize temporary employment agreements to fill open positions within the Public Defender's Office; and

WHEREAS, these temporary employment agreements may include a temporary override of certain fringe benefits which would then be paid as a taxable stipend in lieu of the benefit; and

WHEREAS, these temporary employment agreements and the treatment of their pay are subject to coordination and authorization with the Michigan Indigent Defense Counsel and the Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the Board hereby authorizes the Controller/Administrator to work with legal counsel to develop employment agreements that meet the County's needs and include an exemption for pay treatment under the Eaton County Board of Commissioners' Policy Handbook as described above and outlined below:

- ARTICLE 1. INSURANCE, Section 3, Health Care Savings Program.
- ARTICLE 4. RETIREMENT.
- ARTICLE 5. LONGEVITY.
- ARTICLE 7. ANNUAL LEAVE.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners authorizes the Controller/Administrator to implement the above changes specifically in reference to temporarily overriding the select sections of the Policy Handbook for current and future vacancies in the Public Defender's Office over the next 12 months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners or their designee be authorized to sign any necessary documents. Motion carried unanimously.

EATON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**JANUARY 29, 2026****RESOLUTION TO APPROVE 2025/2026 BUDGET AMENDMENTS**

Commissioner Droscha moved the approval of the following resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Pearl-Wright.

WHEREAS, the Eaton County 2025/2026 Appropriations Act of September 17, 2025, states that any amendment to increase a salary and/or a Capital Outlay line-item in excess of \$5,000.00 or any amendment to increase the total budget of any fund or department in excess of \$5,000.00 shall be amended by the Board of Commissioners, except that any amendment to decrease the General Fund Contingency shall be approved by the Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, such amendments are needed in order to comply with the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act of 1978, P.A. 621.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the following budget amendments be approved and added to the 2025/2026 Eaton County Budget:

SPECIAL REVENUE FUND BUDGET AMENDMENTS**INDIGENT DEFENSE - 260**

Increase	Salaries	\$	75,000
Decrease	Fringe Benefits	\$	75,000

To amend total budget for the 12-month contract for interim Public Defender employees, for the addition of a Discovery Coordinator position and an Administrator position for the Public Defenders' Office and to amend the 2025/2026 position allocation listing. Motion carried unanimously.