

MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 24, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Monroe County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting in the City of Monroe on Tuesday, January 24, 2023. Chairman Mark Brant called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call by Deputy Clerk, Lisa Sanders, as follows:

PRESENT			ABSENT
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	David Swartout	Greg Moore, Jr.
Mark Brant	Randy Richardville	J. Henry Lievens	
Dawn Asper	David Vensel		

A quorum being present, the Board proceeded to conduct business.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Lievens led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. OPENING PRAYER

Deputy Clerk, Lisa Sanders led the Opening Prayer.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Swartout to approve the January 24, 2023 Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (01/10/2023 Organizational Meeting)

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to approve the minutes as presented for the January 10, 2023 Organizational Meeting and waive the reading thereof.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT—

1. Pastor Heather Boone, Oaks of Righteousness talked about the types of folks who come to the shelter. She feels that the shelter is a dumping ground for the mentally ill, substance abusers and those just released from jail. She said the shelter will have to close on or about February 17, 2023 without funding from the County. She also commented that there is a mental health crisis and no help is coming from the Monroe Community Mental Health Authority.

2. Kellie Vining, City of Monroe commented that there is a lack of feminine hygiene products and toiletries available at the Monroe County Jail. She said she witnessed this when she was there visiting in the past.
3. Sandy Libstorff is a nurse at Oaks and said she has served 16 years on the Monroe Community Mental Health Authority Board. There is a lack of access to care at Oaks.
4. Judy Green is a retired teacher who volunteers at Oaks. She said they have been begging for help from Monroe Community Mental Health Authority. Oaks has not received help in months.
5. Dori Hawkins-Freelain, Managing Director, MCRC, reminded everyone that with the storm tomorrow we are expecting 6-8 inches of snow. Please be safe around snowplows and be patient, cautious and careful when driving tomorrow.
6. Erika Brodie talked about illness, autism and mental illness from radiation poisoning. Wants the Board of Commissioners to spend \$2000 to do an independent study to confirm that what she is saying is factual. Wants them to look out for the health of the kids. She said over 40% of kids in the schools are mentally ill or autistic.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS, SPECIAL TRIBUTES & PRESENTATION—None

IX. FINANCE MATTERS

1. Payment of the 01/18/2023 Accounts Payable Current Claims Report in the amount of \$838,951.27

Motion by Commissioner Hoffman, supported by Commissioner Moore to confirm the 01/18/2023 Accounts Payable Current Claims payment as presented on the agenda for \$838,951.27.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	David Swartout		Greg Moore, Jr.	
Mark Brant	Randy Richardville	J. Henry Lievens			
Dawn Asper	David Vensel				

Motion carried.

2. Letter dated January 24, 2023 from Ms. Aundrea Armstrong, Deputy Administrator/Chief Financial Officer submitting the recommended Budget Calendar for development of the 2024-2025 County of Monroe Annual Line Item Budget.

Ms. Armstrong presented the Budget Calendar for development of the 2024-2025 County of Monroe Annual Line Item Budget.

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Swartout to accept the communication, place it on file, and approve the Budget Calendar for development of the 2024-2025 County of Monroe Annual Line Item Budget.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

X. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Non-Claims
 - a. Check Register dated 01/13/2023 in the amount of \$457,429.97
 - b. Check Register dated 01/20/2023 in the amount of \$609,909.56

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Asper to confirm the non-claims payments as presented on the agenda for the dates and amounts listed.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	David Swartout		Greg Moore, Jr.	
Mark Brant	Randy Richardville	J. Henry Lievens			
Dawn Asper	David Vensel				

Motion carried.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

Board Action:

1. Letter dated January 17, 2023 from Ms. Aundrea Armstrong, Deputy Administrator/Chief Financial Officer, requesting approval to fill the vacant Mental Health Coordinator position at Step 5 on the non-union wage schedule with funding from the 2023 1st District Court Mental Health grant budget.

Chairman Brant read the request into the record.

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to accept the communication, place it on file and approve the request to fill the vacant Mental Health Coordinator position at Step 5 on the non-union wage schedule with funding from the 2023 1st District Court Mental Health grant budget.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	David Swartout		Greg Moore, Jr.	
Mark Brant	Randy Richardville	J. Henry Lievens			
Dawn Asper	David Vensel				

Motion carried.

2. Letter dated December 29, 2022 from Mr. Michael Woolford, Equalization Director submitting the 2022 Monroe County Equalization Study. Click [here](#) for complete 2022 Equalization Study.

Mr. Woolford explained the study and answered questions.

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to accept the communication place the study on file.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

- 3. Letter dated January 18, 2023 from Mr. Jesse Stanford, Treasurer requesting approval for the Monroe County Land Bank Authority to submit a grant application in the amount of \$200,000 with no County matching funds for a Blight Elimination Grant to the State of Michigan Land Bank Authority along with a resolution of support.

Mr. Stanford explained the request.

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to accept the communication, place it on file and approve the request to submit a grant application for a Blight Elimination Grant in the amount of \$200,000 with no matching funds required and approve the accompanying resolution.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	David Swartout		Greg Moore, Jr.	
Mark Brant	Randy Richardville	J. Henry Lievens			
Dawn Asper	David Vensel				

Motion carried.

- 4. Letter dated January 18, 2023 from Mr. Jeff McBee, Community Planning & Engagement Director submitting a Summary of a Farmland/Open Space review/recommendation from the County Planner and to approve the application to the Farmland and Open Space Preservation program (part 361 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act) for property in Whiteford Township.

Chairman Brant read the recommendation into the record.

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to accept the communication along with the Summary of Farmland review/recommendation to approve the application to the Farmland and Open Space Preservation program for property in Whiteford Township, place on file and approve the recommendation of the County Planner.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

- 5. Letter dated January 24, 2023 from Mr. Mark Brant, Chairman, Board of Commissioners providing the 2023 Board of Commissioners Committee appointments.

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to accept the Chairman’s communication and place on file as a permanent record of the 2023 Committee appointments.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

XII. PUBLIC HEARINGS—None

XIII. OLD BUSINESS—None

XIV. NEW BUSINESS—

1. Commissioner Lievens would like to do a Resolution for Whiteford High School's football champions. Chairman Brant told him that per the new policy he will need to draft something for staff and he can arrange to present it to the team.

XV. PUBLIC COMMENT—

1. Holly Valade, London Twp. would like the Board to research the books that are in the Public School libraries in Monroe County. She said some of the books are very sexually and violence explicit. She read a very explicit excerpt from "The Lovely Bones". She wants a Resolution done to keep these types of books out of the Public School libraries.
2. Valerie Eby wants to know who orders these books, why are they being ordered and how do they advance public education.
3. Mrs. Holman read an explicit excerpt from "Looking for Alaska".
4. Christy Swantek Whitson read an explicit excerpt from "Water for Elephants".
5. Rebecca Turner, Program Manager, St. Joseph's Center of Hope (part of Catholic Charities) asked the Board to take the time to go to the agencies and see what these mothers are talking about. Become involved in the community.
6. Erika Brodie is in support of the other mothers who spoke about the books.

XVI. ANNOUNCEMENTS—

1. Copies of any Tributes or Certificates issued since the January 10, 2023 meeting: None

XVII. MEMBERS TIME

Commissioner Swartout—Congratulations to Sheriff Goodnough who was recognized for the work the Sheriff's Office is doing with the coalition on human trafficking. In addition, the Sheriff conducted a seminar for senior citizens regarding scams.

Commissioner Asper—With regard to the situation with the books, I will be working on a resolution, however, we have no jurisdiction over schools. We all need to stay in our lane but it seems they are out of their lane by allowing these books in the Public Schools. I know what the morals and ethics of this county are. Distributing pornography among minors is against the law. Thanks for being bold enough to come up and speak. Regarding Oaks, I have been there and I only volunteered there one time so that should tell you something. There are things that need to be addressed and I know that we will be able to resolve them. It will have to be done quickly.

Commissioner Hoffman—I echo what Dawn said and I'm on board with it. We need to get something done and we need to protect our kids. Good luck everyone with the snow tomorrow. We know the Road Commission will do a good job.

Commissioner Heinzerling—I also echo what Dawn said. I have children in Jefferson Middle School and I have a daughter at the High School. I will do what I can to address this situation in the schools. It's absolutely disturbing to say the least. Jefferson School Board is on board. I will follow up on that. I'm here for the kids.

Commissioner Vensel—I echo my fellow commissioners. I appreciate all of the public input that we received tonight. We have many challenges in this county and I will do my very best to be supportive.

Commissioner Lievens—Pass.

Commissioner Moore—Excused

Commissioner Richardville—Thank you to everyone who came and talked. I reached out to Julie Massengill regarding a couple of calls I received regarding feminine hygiene products at the jail and she explained how things work. She is taking steps to address it. He read his letter of resignation from the Monroe County Community Mental Health Authority Board into the record.

Michael Bosanac, Administrator/CFO—There's a handout on your desk entitled "Government at Work". It's something you can carry with you and help you answer questions of citizens. It will be posted to the website.

Commissioner Brant—Thank you, Commissioner Richardville for the time that you did serve on the CMH board. There are many citizens in the audience tonight. We encourage public comment and I'm glad everyone conducted themselves in a civil manner. We have a school board issue and a Community Mental Health (CMH) and we are not either. We cannot fund some things no matter what the situation. However, sometimes people do listen to what we have to say. More than likely, there will be some resolution that we will send to the school board and we have something else planned for CMH. I don't want you to think that you came here and we did not listen. CMH is a 12-member board that we make all the appointments for. We used to fund more of CMH but now it has been taken over by the state. The actual CMH board is still appointed by THIS Board. It's somewhat unusual that we fund \$1 million dollars a year for CMH and that is the only input we have. Every three years we appoint 4 members to the CMH board. March 31st is the end of the term for 4 sitting members. Mr. Richardville's resignation tonight means that we will be looking at 5 appointments to fill. It's going to be a no-nonsense process. We are going to reach out to the community. I'm asking you to help as well as my fellow Board members. We are going to advertise in the Monroe News and on our website that we are seeking qualified applicants. There will be a deadline for applications. I'm going to analyze all of the applicants and I hope I get 30 of them. I am going to appoint the 5 most qualified people, no matter who they are, to CMH. I don't know what the core problems are at CMH or why the service is lacking and possibly getting worse than it's ever been from a timeliness standpoint. I think with fresh, qualified individuals on the board that aren't going to do things because that's the way it's always been done, is going to be a good start. So reach out to people that you think would be good applicants for the position and have them fill out the application and send in a resume. We will have a process where those 5 positions will be filled.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT—Chairman Brant adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m. with no further business to conduct.