



Manistee County Board of Commissioners

Manistee County Courthouse • 415 Third Street • Manistee, Michigan 49660

CHAIRPERSON
Jeffrey Dontz
VICE-CHAIRPERSON
Karen Goodman

Margaret Batzer
Mark Bergstrom
Pauline Jaquish
Gene Lagerquist
Richard Schmidt

CLERK
Jill Nowak
(231) 723-3331
CONTROLLER/ADMINISTRATOR
David A. Kieft, Jr.
(231) 398-3504

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

In accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders regarding shelter in place and social distancing to prevent further spread of COVID-19 and allowing public meetings to be conducted remotely, the meeting was conducted entirely remotely and live streamed using Zoom.

Friday, May 8, 2020
9:00 a.m.

Manistee County Courthouse & Government Center
Board of Commissioners Meeting Room

Minutes

Members Present: Jeff Dontz, Mark Bergstrom and Karen Goodman, Chairperson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Lisa Sagala, Interim County Administrator/Controller; Sheriff Ken Falk; Undersheriff Brain Gutowski; Rachel Nelson, County Treasurer; Rob Carson, County Planning Director; Bruce Schimke, Maintenance Supervisor; Susan Zielinski, Finance Officer; Pat Heins, Circuit Court Administrator; Connie Krusniak, Friend of the Court; Stacie Bytwork, Chamber of Commerce; Crystal Young, Chamber of Commerce; Scott Ward, President, West Shore Community College; Marc Miller, Economic Development Director; and Jill M. Nowak, Manistee County Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

NOTE – Items requiring Board Action are indicated in BOLD

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE LOCATION OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Discussion continued concerning the re-location of the Planning Department from current location on Third Street to the Gliks development on River Street in downtown Manistee.

Rob Carson, County Planning Director, stated that he had met with a West Shore Community College (WSCC) Representative and Gordon McClelland, County IT Contractor to discuss IT needs and infrastructure upgrades, including fiber and equipment that would be needed at the River Street location. Estimated costs include fiber at \$1,000 per month/\$12,000 annually, square foot rental of 2874 sq. ft. at \$10 per ft. x 12 months = \$34,488 annually, network equipment \$13,500, other miscellaneous equipment totaling \$13,500. Plus, one camera inside for office security at \$500, and the cost of moving approximately \$7,000. Mr. Carson estimated that costs for the move for the first year is \$75,740 and \$40,740 each year thereafter, for years 2-10 a total of \$366,660.

Commissioner Dontz stated that the Planning Department does not need 2900 square feet but rather approximately 1500 square feet as previously discussed. This would save money. Also, what are the costs for fiber, internet at the current building? These costs are quoted new but there are existing costs now that should offset some expenses at the new location. Mr. Carson said that for fiber to be ran across the street (from the courthouse to the Third Street building) is approximately \$3,000-\$4,000 and the current internet is wireless. Commissioner Bergstrom stated that the project is extremely expensive to move and it makes more sense to stay at the existing building which is owned by the County. The County would not have to pay for a move, pay rent and new expenses. It is obvious to stay in the existing building and make some improvements. Mr. Dontz indicated that making a footprint, technology and improved efficiencies are important. Commissioner Goodman stated that at this time with the pandemic, it is unknown what is going to happen in the future. Money might not be available and we also have to update the current building. Mr. Bergstrom would rather invest in the County's own building. Marc Miller, EDO, thanked and commended the Committee for their fiscal responsibility in considering all the information. Mr. Miller stressed the importance of bringing entities together which is an important concept and in one location for developers. If the Planning Department moves to this location, it would make one (1) stop shopping for developers with great benefits and smooth transitions. Thoughts about the cost of ownership of a building, upkeep and improvements at the current building possibly could be \$200,000 for ten (10) years. Scott Ward, WSCC, stated the space amounts are flexible as is lease length. WSCC wants all tenants to feel safe and secure. Why lease when you already own space? The County is not in the landlord/property business, which is costly. The lease on River Street would include all utilities except fiber and internet. Mr. Ward understands there is an interested third party for the building on Third Street which would get it back on the tax rolls. The college will be installing their own fiber. Is there an opportunity to dedicate some WSCC lines to the County, that is something that could be explored which would reduce costs? Whether the Planning Department moves to the River Street location or not, WSCC still looks forward to their continued relationship with the County. Commissioner Goodman stated and all agreed that more numbers and analysis is needed regarding keeping the existing building and renovating it in comparison to moving to the new location. Rob Carson was asked to analysis this with Gordon McLellan, Crystal Young, Rachel Nelson, Heather Vasquez and others that would be of assistance. Since this is time sensitive, the Committee would like to see this information presented at the May 19th County Board Meeting.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE EXECUTIVE ORDER #2020-77 AND PLANS MOVING FORWARD

Ms. Sagala referred to the Executive Order #2020-77, the Stay at Home Order is now extended through May 28, 2020. Order #2020-45 requires that the County create a Preparedness and Response Plan for the building, public and staff which the Library and Sheriff's Office will also be part of the plan as well as a Court Plan. How will the COVID-19 affect the County's budget? We don't know for how long this will go on so we have to tighten our belts. One way to reduce expenses is to reduce staff. Ms. Sagala will be meeting with departments with options that are available to employees such as layoff/furlough, using Paid Time Off (PTO) time, being off with no pay, are some of the options. (Appendix A) County employees have been kept on the payroll so they are accumulating PTO also. Workshare programs are also possible and Ms. Sagala will bring some information to the County Board Meeting on that program. However, this pandemic continues to be extended and revenue is being affected as well as revenue sharing. Steps have to be taken to reduce expenses. Each new Executive Order releases new businesses to re-open. The County can re-evaluate at each point. The evaluation of each office such as the layout of employees, making dividers, marking social distancing guidelines, wearing masks, employee screenings all are things that are being discussed and continued.

DISCUSSION REGARDING CONTROLLER/ADMINISTRATOR POSITION

Ms. Sagala was appointed Interim Controller/Administrator for 60 days. Ms. Sagala reported that the work load is manageable and she is delegating some duties to Staff. There are a lot of unknowns right now as to the new normal. MAC is providing guidance on Cares Act and FEMA grants. Ms. Sagala is researching grants that are devoted to local government but a lot of them are for the hardest hit areas. Ms. Sagala has ideas for the office as far as restructuring and streamlining some duties. Ms. Sagala was commended for her communication and decision making which has resulted in positive feedback.

OTHER ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sheriff Falk reported that he is considering the resumption of regular road patrol on June 7, 2020. There have been no Sheriff Deputies with COVID-19. The Department is down one (1) Corrections Officer and one (1) Road Patrol Deputy. Jail numbers are low as they are social distancing in jail also. Screening is done for COVID-19 but there has been no testing in the jail. Undersheriff Gutowski reported that the Jail Administrator Banicki has done a great job at the jail. The Jail has passed the Department of Corrections (DOC) Inspection which is very important because if not compliant, no inmates could be turned over to the DOC.

Jill Nowak, County Clerk reported that the May Special Election was administered this week without incident. There were a lot of changes that had to be made due to the COVID-19 Pandemic where the election was held primarily with Absent Voter Ballots. Ms. Nowak commended the local Clerks, Election Workers and her Staff for a job well done.

The meeting was adjourned at the Call of the Chair at 10:12 a.m.

Karen Goodman, Chairperson

Mark Bergstrom

Jeff Dontz

DRAFT

May 19, 2020

Dear [employee]

We regret to inform you that due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, it has become necessary for Manistee County to temporarily reduce its workforce. On May 07, 2020 Governor Whitmer signed a new Executive Order (2020-77) which continues the Stay Home, Stay Safe order until May 28, 2020.

You are being notified as of Monday, May 18, 2020 that there will not be work available for you, and this will last until Friday, May 31, 2020. We are hopeful to be able to restore you to your prior position with Manistee County on or about Monday, June 01, 2020.

We are offering you three options:

- 1. You can use your PTO to get through the next couple weeks. This will allow for you to continue to have a paycheck. And as this crisis subsides and if during the summer months you need time off, it is then that we will look at unpaid leave, or other arrangements.**
- 2. You can choose Un-paid leave for the next couple weeks. You will not have to use PTO and will not receive a paycheck.**
- 3. You can take a Lay-off (Furlough) which then allows you to apply for unemployment. In order to pursue this option, we recommend that you contact the Michigan unemployment department. (See Attached)**

Many employers, us included, are trying every way possible to keep staff viable during the worst of the crisis. Our Board has agreed to pay all **Health Insurance Benefits up front for 120 days**, to also pay any voluntary benefit payments for persons taking unpaid leave or layoffs. Manistee County will make payments for the identified staff up to 120 days, and we will work with you to develop a plan for payback once the crisis dissipates.

What do you do next?

Provide Administration in writing (e-mail works) your choice of the three options noted above. Please acknowledge you have read and understand the guidelines of this letter and that you agree. If you are taking lay-off or unpaid time and **do not want** the county to pay for your contributions of insurance etc... please clarify this in your e-mail when you notify Administration of your decision.

Regarding any Manistee County equipment, you may have in your possession, at your home. Please keep this equipment with you. You are not required to turn in your phone or laptops. However, you are not to log in to work using any device. Please keep all Manistee County equipment in safe keeping.

Thank you for your patience with Administrative Staff as we work through these issues. It is difficult as there is no roadmap, but our concerns for staff's well-being and lessening the impact of this health and economic crisis is important. Also remember other services that are out there to assist, including suspension of school loan payments, push back of income tax filings etc...

One last item we ask is if you or members of your family become ill please give Administration a call so we can track this. We are being asked to self-monitor our staff and knowing how people are doing will help. So, check in with us. Of course, we will hope that quarantines will keep you all well.

We sincerely apologize for the burden that this temporary layoff(furlough) places on you and your family. We are hopeful to be able to restore you to employment soon. Please keep us posted as to how we may best assist you during this time.

Best regards,

Manistee County Administration