

FINANCE AND EQUALIZATION COMMITTEE MEETING

The Finance and Equalization Committee Meeting was called to order, in the Board Conference Room of the Oceana County Courthouse, by Chairperson Hardy on Thursday, July 8, 2021, at 10:12 a.m.

Roll was called. Present: Ms. Meyette, Mr. Walker, Mr. Morse, Mr. Erickson, Mr. Beggs, Mr. Christians, and Mr. Hardy.

Dr. Sobie, Oceana County Administrator; Ms. Coon, Oceana County Chief Deputy Clerk; Ms. Green, Weare Township Resident; Mr. Raffaelli, Shelby Township Supervisor; Mr. Gustafson, Pentwater Township resident; Ms. Nichols, Business Development Coordinator, The Right Place; Ms. Tuinstra, Executive Director, Dogwood Community Development; and Ms. Conroy, Pentwater Township resident and Village of Pentwater Planning Commissioner, were also present.

Moved by Mr. Beggs and seconded by Christians to approve the minutes from the June 24, 2021 meeting as presented.

Voice vote. Motion carried.

Moved by Mr. Erickson and seconded by Ms. Meyette to approve the agenda items as presented.

Voice vote. Motion carried.

There was no public comment on agenda items.

Dr. Sobie requested consideration of a proposed resolution establishing the Oceana County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA). He reminded the Board that this topic was first brought to their attention in early June. There is a 30-day stipulation for establishing a BRA once it has been presented to the Board and that date is July 10, 2021.

Ms. Green stated that she has a few questions rather than a public comment. The first is in reference to an earlier question she had regarding tax increment financing (TIF) money and reimbursement of administrative costs to the local municipality.

Ms. Nichols responded that she did research the statute with the Environment, Great Lakes & Energy department (EGLE) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the local municipality would not be able to directly charge for administrative fees at the submission of the plan. She indicated that while there is a possibility of reimbursing some administrative fees using TIF funds, the State does not recommend that. The focus of the BRA tool is to encourage development and additional fees may discourage projects.

She went on to explain that the purpose of having a County BRA is that it would limit additional administrative duties at the local level. The local municipalities would review a proposed plan, but that is a typical process for them. They would then pass on the plan to the County for a definitive action.

Ms. Green asked how an increase in taxable value as a result of a large BRA project would affect special assessments, for example in her township for fire and road millages, and who would receive the increase, the local municipality or the developer.

Ms. Nichols replied that during the review of a proposed development the BRA could determine how they would like the increase to be paid in the TIF.

Ms. Green asked if the BRA supersedes local zoning.

Ms. Nichols responded that the local municipality will determine if the zoning requirements are met during the review of the plan.

Ms. Green also asked why a draft resolution would be denied under FOIA.

Mr. Raffaelli noted that Shelby Township has been very supportive of the creation of a BRA. The township passed a resolution in support of the creation of the County BRA and he composed and submitted a letter of support on the township board's behalf that they would like read during the meeting.

He noted that a total of seven entities in the county have expressed support of the BRA and although that isn't the entire county, that constitutes 92% of the potential development opportunities.

Mr. Sobie read the letter.

Mr. Gustafson expressed support for the development of the County Brownfield Development Authority.

Ms. Meyette asked Ms. Nichols to list the mechanism where by State tax dollars come back to the County that Mr. Raffaelli spoke of. She asked if that would be through grants only.

Ms. Nichols responded that she believed Mr. Raffaelli was simply referring to all of the programs available to local municipalities that are working with BRA projects, whether they be zero interest loans or grants.

Ms. Meyette asked if townships would be precluded from applying for these grants if they do not have a BRA.

Ms. Nichols replied that the townships would have a stronger application if they were applying for grants as a BRA.

Ms. Meyette clarified that any jurisdiction that does not opt in to the BRA now can still do so later.

Mr. Walker provided an example of how a collaborative effort, such as a local and county BRA, can be very effective in getting a project approved. The City of Hart needed to build a waste water treatment plant and did not have the needed bonding authority so they asked the County to assist them. Together they were able to get the project approved.

Mr. Walker also provided a local example of redevelopment. Tannery Bay in Whitehall needed a great deal of decontamination as the tannery biproducts had been dumped into the lake. The project resulted in absolutely beautiful condos that have added millions of dollars to the City of Whitehall's SEV.

Mr. Walker noted that the Village of Rothbury has also submitted a letter of support for the creation of the BRA.

Ms. Nichols listed the jurisdictions that have already either passed a resolution to be part of a BRA or submitted a letter of support. Those are the villages of Rothbury, Hesperia, Pentwater and Shelby; the City of Hart; and the townships of Pentwater, Shelby and Ferry. She also reiterated that she is asking for the creation of a BRA as a tool to assist the communities and residents that have asked for the resources to redevelop our communities.

Ms. Meyette asked if the local municipalities could put something in their BRA bylaws that would disallow eminent domain. She also expressed concern that land could be sought after as brownfield development based on things other than market force.

Mr. Walker replied that he doesn't believe local jurisdictions can initiate the process of eminent domain to obtain property for a private development.

Ms. Tuinstra explained how a BRA could be beneficial to the community based on her past experiences with development projects. She explained how market forces are utilized in determining the viability of a project site. She also encouraged the Board to support this proposal and support the opportunities a BRA would bring to the community.

Ms. Meyette asked if property that the Land Bank takes ownership of will be considered for BRA funding opportunities.

Ms. Nichols responded that all Land Bank property automatically becomes brownfield.

Mr. Christians read a letter of support for a BRA from Dr. Lynne Cavazos, Pentwater Township Supervisor.

Mr. Beggs addressed a concern some have that Big Government could do a land grab using the BRA. He explained that because BRA projects are initiated by a non-government entity, a private developer, a businessperson, and go through township approval, then county approval, there is a layer of accountability for the local residents and local governments and that puts his mind at ease. He stated there is no doubt that Oceana County needs economic revitalization.

Mr. Morse expressed that he initially had reservations, as others did, but in doing his research he determined that a BRA could help build a vision so our county can flourish. It would be a tool to help the county work with developers to encourage economic growth. He also supports the resolution.

Dr. Sobie solicited consideration of a proposed resolution approving the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Child Care Budget.

Mr. Beggs asked if the increase in the budget is due to increased need of services or an increase of costs associated with placement.

Dr. Sobie replied that it is a combination of both.

Dr. Sobie and Mr. Morse facilitated discussion regarding consideration of a proposed resolution starting a Strategic Planning Initiative.

Dr. Sobie reported that initially the idea for a Strategic Planning Initiative was presented in 2018 and at that time it was expressed that neither a commissioner nor the county administrator should serve as the facilitator. He indicated that he spoke to the Ottawa County administrator, Mr. Alan Vanderberg, who has extensive experience as a strategic

planner and works with other entities in developing a strategic plan. He is very willing to come to Oceana County and help with a workshop for this process if the Board agrees.

Dr. Sobie did not read the claims for payment, however, the following was provided:

REVIEW OF CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT (>= \$1,000 and Other Noteworthy Expenditures)

Fund #	Dept. #	Dept. Name	Amount	Purpose
Special Revenue Funds				
249 - Building Department Fund			\$ 10,795.75	to Randy Miller for permits, residential plan reviews, and commercial plan reviews.
			\$ 7,799.55	to Richard Story for permits, residential plan reviews, and commercial plan reviews.
			\$ 3,132.25	to Randy Neuman for permits, residential plan reviews, and commercial plan reviews.
260 - Indigent Defense Fund			\$ 1,929.00	to Anna Rapa for court appointed attorney fees.
			\$ 3,812.00	to Hayes Law Office for court appointed attorney fees.
292 - Child Care Fund			\$ 1,895.00	to Allegan County Juvenile Court for out-of-home placement.
			\$ 1,699.20	to Fountain Hill Center for out-of-home placement.
General Fund				
101 - Board of Commissioners			\$ 1,500.00	to Joanne Clark for the employee appreciation picnic.
			\$ 1,180.00	to Pixel Graphics Studio for printing and binding county directory.
141 - Friend of the Court			\$ 1,080.00	to John Bulger for referee services.
			\$ 2,080.20	to MGT of America for FY 2021 CRP Billing Services.

228 - Data Processing	\$ 3,750.00	to Merit for annual internet service fee.
248 - General Services	\$ 10,000.00	to Reserve Account for postage.
261 - MSU Extension	\$ 27,693.00	to MSUE Business Office for the 3rd qtr assessment fee per agreement.
265 - Courthouse and Grounds	\$ 1,110.16	to Larson and Son for janitorial supplies and equipment purchases.
301 - Sheriff	\$ 2,012.52	to Huntington Bank for equipment purchases.
	\$ 7,778.21	to Wex Bank for fuel.
351 - Jail	\$ 1,823.12	to Gordon Food Service.
	\$ 2,847.22	to Correctional Recovery for medical billing services.
528 - Transfer Station	\$ 14,317.40	to American Classic Dumpster for removal of trash and recycling material.
	\$ 3,989.47	to Speedwrench Inc. for maintenance and repairs.
~ Total	\$ 112,224.05	

Administrator's Report *(written by Dr. Sobie)*

Administration

Our auditors were able to send a draft audit report for fiscal year 2020 that I submitted to the Municipal Security Rulemaking Board (MSRB). MSRB is a regulating entity that creates rules and policies for investment firms and banks. MSRB uses a "disclosure portal" that

requires the county to submit our annual audit report to promote transparency regarding the county's outstanding debt obligations. Upon receipt of the final audit later this month, I'll replace the draft audit submission.

We received a scheduled revenue sharing payment from the state in the amount of \$85,779. I recently closed out two of the Federal CARES Act grants from 2020 through the Michigan State Police that provided supplemental emergency funding for COVID-19 related expenditures for the Sheriff's Department and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. In October, I'll close out the third and final grant from this same program for the courts.

On July 14 at 8:00 a.m., an informational roundtable meeting will be held with local officials at the West Michigan Research Station (Oceana Dr.) to discuss the American Rescue Plan.

Last week, I received the "Assignment/Assumption Agreement" from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) for the Pentwater-Hart Bike Trail project. The agreement transfers the fiduciary responsible from the Community Foundation for Oceana County to the county in accordance with a board resolution adopted on January 28, 2021.

A vacancy has occurred in the maintenance department with our supervisor's position.

Veterans' Affairs

I received a notification from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency that the county has been awarded a County Veteran Service Fund grant in the amount of \$66,188. \$50,000 is the base award and \$16,818 is a per capita formula-based award.

Ms. Meyette asked if there would be a department head meeting soon.

Dr. Sobie responded there will be an elected official and department head meeting on July 21, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. He stated there are at least three issues on the agenda. Two of those issues are the fiscal year 2022 budget discussion and ARPA funding.

Public Comment

Ms. Conroy spoke on the need for high-speed internet access in our county and what the Village of Pentwater Planning Commission is planning to do to improve that. She expressed that she felt perhaps there is a need for a county-wide initiative for this issue.

Ms. Tuinstra expressed her support for the development of a strategic plan for Oceana County. She explained how strategic plans assist developers.

Dr. Sobie asked Ms. Tuinstra if they could meet to discuss the federal reporting obligations the County may have due to the dissolution of the county Housing Commission and the merger of the Housing Commission non-profit and Oceana's Home Partnership.

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Hardy adjourned the Finance and Equalization Committee meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully,

Melanie A. Coon
Oceana County Chief Deputy Clerk