

## WEXFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting \* Wednesday, August 3, 2016

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Leslie Housler.

Roll call: Present – Commissioners Michael MacCready, Leslie Housler, Robert Hilty, Mark Howie, Gideon Mitchell, Julie Theobald, Gary Taylor, John Fuscone, and Bill Goodwill.

Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Additions/Deletions to the Agenda –**

Jail Budget Amended – *Added Budget* - Transfer funds from the Unrestricted Tax Fund to the Jail Fund – 463; *Added-* 5. Estimate of Funds Needed;

### **Approval of the Agenda**

**MOTION** by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Theobald to approve the agenda, as amended.

All in favor.

### **Employee Recognition**

1. 10-year Service Award, Katherine Todd, Probate Court  
Chairman Housler read the 10 year service award for Ms. Todd. She was not present to accept the award, but it will be given to her.

### **Presentations and Reports** - None

### **Public Comments**

Robert Swanson, 401 W. Main, Manton, stated that the current dispatcher perform many duties outside of their normal duties. He pointed out additional staffing from the department responds with EMS when situations arise. He ask that the Board keep dispatch in the Cadillac area and have more studies done.

### **Consent Agenda**

1. Approval of the July 20, 2016, Regular Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of the July 27, 2016, Special Meeting Minutes
3. Approval of the Appointments to the Department of Veterans Services  
**MOTION** by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Goodwill to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

All in favor.

### **Agenda Items**

1. Curfew Monitor Program Agreement

**MOTION by Comm Theobald, seconded by Comm Taylor to approve the Curfew Monitor Program Agreement between State of Michigan, Department of Corrections and Wexford County Community Corrections for the period of October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017, as presented.**

**Roll call: Motion approved unanimously.**

2. 911 Dispatch Discussion

Board members questioned whether or not there would be ongoing cost if they decided to send dispatch outside the County. Adm. Jordan explained that it will be dependent on which way the county decided to go. Jackie Haag from MSP-Gaylord said that currently they are in only one county, Otsego; however, they cover many other municipalities. Bob Olson, MSP Public Safety Communications, came forward to provide some answers to a few questions and provided the Board with his professional background. Gaylord post has 800 MHz system and those not on that system would have to upgrading. A board member ask what ongoing maintenance cost the County would be responsible for. Ms. Haag explained it would depend on what type of enhancements the County is looking for. It was pointed out by Mr. Olson that the Sheriff's Department is currently on the 800 MHz system and it will not cost the county anything to transport law enforcement dispatching over to Gaylord. However, high-band is different because it is not connected to Gaylord's network. Other options that would be looked at include studies and testing for those who do not have the 800 MHz. If all public safety services in the County would go to the 800 MHz there would be no cost for connectivity; however, there would be a cost to replace the high-band system to the 800 MHz which could be purchased at State rates.

Board members discussed having a meeting with Tel-Rad, Mr. Olson, and EMS people to see what we have and the cost that may be involved including retained annual cost, cost of connectivity and what is the upgrade cost before we can connect.

Board members then touched on the County providing dispatch services for the City of Cadillac. It was pointed out that the contract the County has with the City is non transferrable with a 12 month cut off.

Mr. Olson felt it was important to take a look at the County's system, look at what it would take to go on to the MSP system, look at the coverages of both to make sure the County gets the best for their areas. After the study, they would come back to provide some answers to questions raised at the meeting.

After further discussion, the following motion was made.

**MOTION by Comm Howie, seconded by Comm Taylor to request that we request the State of Michigan perform a study to determine what the cost is to convert our system to 800 MHz system and/or to tie**

**the Gaylord dispatch to our existing fire dispatch system and provide capital cost estimates.**

Adm. Jordan touched on the study performed earlier by Plante Moran. Ms. Haag recommended getting input from fire departments in the County as well as information from the current dispatch. She also pointed out that currently only law enforcement and North Flight are connect to 800 MHz. The County has the right to send dispatch where ever they want.

**MOTION by Comm Mitchell, seconded by Comm MacCready asked to call the question.**

**All in favor.**

Roll call on initial motion: **Roll call: Motion approved unanimously.**

3. Budget Amendment (*Added*)

**MOTION by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Theobald to approve the budget amendment, as presented.**

		Credit	Debit
615.000.999.00	Unrestricted Treasurer Fund Transfer-out		\$50,098
615.000.001.00	Money Market	\$50,098	
463.000.001.00	Money Market		\$50,098
463.000.699.04	Jail Project-Transfer in	\$50,098	

The balance of county funds needed for the jail project is \$300,098. The County will be receiving \$250,000 escrow money from the landfill that will go towards the county's balance due. The balance of \$50,098 will come from Unrestricted Tax Fund.

**Roll call: Motion approved unanimously.**

4. Committee of the Whole - None

5. Estimate of Funds Needed – Jail Project (*Added*)

**MOTION by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Theobald to approve the payment for “Estimate of Funds Needed” on the jail project.**

This documents must be in place before the closing scheduled on August 17, 2016.

**Roll call: Motion approved unanimously.**

**Administrator’s Report** – Board Members received a written report from Adm. Jordan.

**Correspondence**

Cash/Investment Report / 4/01/2016 to 6/30/2016 – Jayne Stanton, County Treasurer.

**Public Comments**

Gary Finstrom, County Sheriff, appeared before the Board to touch on the 911 Dispatch. He believes the Board has already made up their mind on the future of dispatch. Sometime ago the Board voted to keep dispatch in Wexford County. A committee was formed to look at the two proposals: County Department or Authority. However, now the Board is looking at Gaylord MSP as another option. He does not believe the figures provided to the Board by Plante Moran are accurate. Former boards have opted to not updated dispatch equipment. Sheriff Finstrom believes if the 911 plan was rewritten and updated and if an authority or county department was implemented and the needed equipment upgrades are installed through purchased and cost shared, a surcharge increase will be supported by our community, central dispatch will remain in the county and the desired reduction in the General Fund budget will occur.

Fred Osborn, 103 Barbara Street, noted that the City residents passed the 911 surcharge and was surprised at how close it was. He agrees with Sheriff Finstrom that the fire chiefs would stand behind and support a surcharge if our dispatch stayed local under the County's control. He questions the figures the County Board was looking at as to expenditures to keep dispatch local or sending it to Gaylord. He also said that the 800 MHz system will not work inside the city, but high-band works great. He urged the board to look at putting the surcharge on the ballot again to keep dispatch local.

Jason Longstreet, 8446 Valley Forge Drive, is a dispatcher for the County and a fire fighter for his township. He asked if Wexford County would make sure all fire department would get 800 MHz radios. He questioned how the county got to the point to get rid of dispatch. He would like to see dispatch stay local.

**Liaison Reports** - None

**Board Comment**

Comm Fuscone believes 911 dispatch should stay local. He does not support transferring 911 dispatch out of the County.

Comm Goodwill does not believe decisions have already been made by the Board on 911. The Board should look at all alternatives before decisions are made. The Board needs to look at costs to maintain dispatch locally as well as other options.

Comm MacCready agrees with Sheriff Finstrom. He believe the consensus was to keep dispatch local. He does not believe the Board is listening to their community. The County's budget is to supply services to the County.

Comm Howie believes the surcharge for dispatch is really a tax increase. We are talking about gathering information to see the cost benefit ratio. Capitol cost may be very large and the County would not be able to afford it. He disagrees with taking more money out of the tax payers. He supports further studies need to be done before an informed decision can be made.

Comm Mitchell stated that back in 2012 he initiated the conversation with Meceola. Back then he was looking for information because the dispatch equipment was so old. He questioned the fact that some people may be losing their jobs and Gaylord may not be able to dispatch as well as they are able to do locally. He does not believe that is true. There may be some people who will lose their jobs, but no job is secure. There are many questions to be answered, but he appreciates the passion brought forward tonight.

Comm Theobald stated that no decisions have been made yet regarding dispatch. The Board will continue to gather more information. She appreciates all who came and addressed the Board. She wants to get the best for all and not just for some.

**Chairman's Comments**

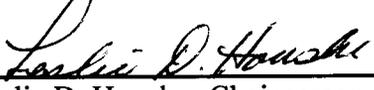
Comm Housler believes it is unjust to say that the Board has made up their minds. If there may be a savings of over \$3 million dollars over a 5 year period, the Board needs to look further into how to handle dispatch. The Board needs to look at options to provide cost savings to the tax payers. When the Board voted on looking at two options, Authority or a County Department, Gaylord was not in the mix. More information needs to be gathered before decisions can be made by the Board. The Board owes the tax payers to find the best way to save dollars.

**Adjourn**

**MOTION** by Comm Taylor, seconded by Comm Howie to adjourn at

**7:50 p.m.**

**All in favor.**

  
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Leslie D. Housler, Chairperson  
Consensus

  
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Elaine L. Richardson, County Clerk