

WEXFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting * Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m by Chairman Taylor

Roll Call: Present- Commissioners Joseph Hurlburt, Mike Musta, Ben Townsend, Mike Bengelink, Michael Bush, Julie Theobald, Gary Taylor, Judy Nichols, and Brian Potter.

**Commissioners Hurlburt, Musta, Theobald, and Potter appeared virtually, and were unable to vote on agenda items.

Absent- *None*.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda-None.

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION by Comm Nichols, seconded by Comm Bush to approve the agenda.

Roll Call: Motion passed unanimously.

Employee Recognition-

1. Mistine Stark-30 year Service Award
Mistine was not able to attend the meeting, but she will receive her award.

Presentation and Reports-

Michele Hoytenga, was excited to be appearing in person to give the Board an update on some legislative issues. One of her biggest priorities is the broadband expansion. This pandemic has shown us just how badly we need broadband in our areas.

Another item currently being discussed, is an energy bill. She is pushing for options with these bills, and it should be exciting to see what comes out.

This year, Ms. Hoytenga also is a part of the Oversight Committee, that is currently targeting the COVID situation. Should future shutdowns come, they are working at what they can do better in response.

Ms. Hoytenga also explained a Criminal Justice Reform bill that was recently passed that not everyone was happy about. Several agencies came forward with complaints, so a meeting was organized to discuss these issues. Because of that meeting, there will be changes coming forward. She was very happy with the communication that happened to get this resolved.

Ms. Hoytenga also briefly touched on a few other bills she is currently supporting. One being a health care package that would add some transparency with health care. An

example she used was insulin prices. She also noted a FOIA bill that would open FOIA up to the Governor and Legislature, as well as a Daylight Savings Bill.

One Commissioner had a question about a power company requesting our funding to put in broadband. Ms. Hoitenga was going to check into that.

Another Commissioner thanked her for her insulin cap support.

Kerry Baughman, Executive Director of NMCAA, touched briefly on their agency. They serve 10 counties and seek to address poverty concerns on a community level. Some of their programs include Meals on Wheels, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Early Childhood Services, COVID emergency rental assistance, and utility assistance. She also thanked Commissioner Nichols for her service on their Board. She then turned it over to Lisa Ritter.

Ms. Ritter took over to explain their Weatherization Program. She explained that these are upgrades made to existing homes now; they are not for new builds. They upgrade things like smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, furnaces, etc. There is currently a waitlist for Wexford County, but interested individuals can visit their website or call their office. To date, they have repaired 9 homes in Wexford County.

Public Comment- *None.*

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the March 17, 2021

MOTION by Comm Nichols, seconded by Comm Bush to approve the Consent Agenda.

Roll Call: Motion passed 5-0.

Agenda Items

1. Resolution 21-11 Extending Appreciation-Bob Scarbrough
MOTION by Comm Bengelink, seconded by Comm Bush to approve Resolution 21-11 Extending Appreciation for Robert Scarbrough's Dedicated Service.

Roll Call: Motion passed 5-0.

2. Resolution 21-12 Honoring E.S. Fawcett
MOTION by Comm Bengelink, seconded by Comm Bush In Honor and Appreciation of the Dedicated Service of Ephraim Stanley Fawcett.

Roll Call: Motion passed 5-0.

3. Reinstating Administrative Analyst Position-Equalization

MOTION by Comm Nichols, seconded by Comm Bush to approve the Equalization Department's request to add a full time Administrative Analyst to the 2021 Roster, with the necessary budget amendments submitted at a later date.

Joe Porterfield explained to the Board that this position was initially removed when the pandemic started. Field visits have since opened back up. He had thought he would be able to get through this year without filling this position, but with the loss of a 15 year employee he feels it is necessary to fill this position.

Roll Call: Motion approved unanimously.

4. Register of Deeds Purchase Order Request

MOTION by Comm Nichols, seconded by Comm Bush to approve the Register of Deeds purchase order request in the amount of \$6,620 for capital equipment.

One Commissioner questioned why this was being brought before the Board if this was already in budget. Administrator Koch explained that this was per the Purchasing Order policy. She does not have the authority to approve anything over \$5,000, and she didn't think the auditors would accept things like this if we didn't follow policy. Kristi Nottingham was asked to check with the auditors.

Roll Call: Motion approved unanimously.

5. Budget Amendment(s)- *None.*

Administrator's Report-

Administrator Koch was excited to be back at a Board meeting. She explained that the Federal ARP Funding that we are anticipating, still has not released guidelines on how to spend that money. We do have until 2024 to use that money, though, so there is lots of time to wait for the guidelines.

She also explained that the audit is currently happening. She noted that Kristi, Alaina, Joe, Norma, and herself have been doing a lot of running, but we are in good shape to wrap everything up.

She also briefly touched on the window installation, that started in the attic, and the aerial photography that has been delayed because of weather. She wanted to inform the Board of four other counties who have passed similar resolutions that the Board passed in December supporting local businesses, as well.

Correspondence- *None.*

Public Comments-

Joe Porterfield thanked the Board for their continued support. March was a very tough month for his office, and the Board has always given him what he needs.

Liaison Reports-

Comm Townsend attended a Networks Northwest meeting where they did discuss Great Lakes Power.

Board Comments

Comm Musta commented that being able to attend virtually, but not vote, is very frustrating. It is somewhat out of the Board's hands, but he wanted to see that discussed in the future.

Comm Townsend noted that there is currently a lot of strain at the courthouse, and he is praying for all.

Comm Bengelink agreed with Commissioner Townsend and read a quote from Thomas Jefferson.

Comm Theobald echoed Commissioner Musta's comments. She was there to represent her district. She also announced she will not be seeking re-election.

Comm Nichols stated she was sorry to hear Commissioner Theobald would not seek re-election. She stated she missed those who could not attend. She also offered prayers to Joe Porterfield and his staff.

Comm Hurlburt reflected back on the quote read by Commissioner Bengelink. He asked why are they here if they cannot vote. He noted that the courthouse was just shutdown, and that his first obligation is his family. He was not happy with not being able to vote.

Chairman's Comments

Comm Taylor gave credit to Kristi Nottingham and her office. Without them, we would not be receiving new windows. He asked Commissioner Nichols to become the liaison of the Area Agency on Aging, which she accepted. He announced that he would be the liaison of the Fair Board. He also announced that beginning the following day, the Finance Committee would be made up of Commissioner Musta, as chair still, Commissioner Potter, Commissioner Bengelink, and himself.


Adjourn

MOTION by Comm Bengelink, seconded by Comm Bush to adjourn at 4:40 p.m.

All in favor.



Gary Taylor, Chairperson



Alaina Nyman, County Clerk