Kalkaska County Board of Commissioners
Committee Meeting of The Whole Minutes
May 14, 2025
(UNAPPROVED)

The following meetings are held in Commissioner Chambers, Admin Building, 605 N Birch Street, Kalkaska, MI
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Judiciary and Public Safety, Health and Welfare, DPW, Personnel, Finance and County Affairs Committee Meetings of the Whole: 10:00 AM

Meeting called to order by Commissioner Fisher at 10:02 AM.

Roll call: Present Commissioners Robert Badlwin (arrived at 10:04 AM),Truman Bicum, David Comai, Kohn Fisher, Scott Matley, David Persons, Jeff sieting and County Clerk Deborah Hill. Also present County Administrator David Schaeffer.

(Commissioner Baldwiin left at 2:01 PM; Commissioner Bicum left at 1:38 PM; Commissioner Persons left at 2:20 PM.)

Pledge of Allegiance by all. **Invocation** by Commissioner Sieting.

Public Input:

Audience:

Jody Southwell: Addressed Committee, noted a member of Kalkaska Horse Project, concerns with new requests to the Horse Project with the tractor and grounds work; noted 30 plus years of involvement with Horse Project, noted tractor access/storage is essential, additional requests above what is already being provided by members increases inability for group to accommodate; noted decades of investments, volunteer hours, responsibility for utilities and noted appreciation for the prior years of working with the County to provide equine activities. Noted request to accommodate with the tractor storage at the horse barn and not to do the mowing or weed-whacking; noted appreciation for working with the County.

(Chair Fisher requested Admin Schaeffer provide the KHP contract)

Megan Nothelfer**:** Addressed Committee as President of the Fair Board/taxpayer; noted grave concerns with communication with County Administrator and Parks and Rec Director

ZOOM:

Andrew Dibble-Battlers Rep: Addressed Committee regarding concern with inability of contract with the Kaliseum; indicated he was late on payments but balance was paid; following their relocation to Gaylord the Kalkaska County Administrator contacted the Otsego County Administrator attempting to dissuade them from doing business with the Battlers; noted his concern he was advised that it was a county decision and concern with unprofessionalism of the County Administrator.

Megan Hacker-Battlers Rep: Addressed Committee noting frustration and concern with unprofessionalism with Parks and Rec Director and County Administrator notifying another county to deter their business; noted they had requested a meeting with the Board of Commissioners prior and were declined; noted she believed they could have resolved any matters.

Commissioner Bicum noted concern noting the individuals should have had appointments.

Documents shared by Nothelfer and Admin were provided to Board. Copy of recent contract sent to Nothelfer and license/resolution approval and letter from the County regarding payment agreement with Battlers. (Clerk to make copies if requested)

Chair Fisher called for County Administrator Schaeffer to address Committee:

County Administrator David Schaeffer**:**

Schaeffer addressed Committee noting several meetings for the next few weeks including hospital, data center initiative, 5-21 & 22-25 Admin and Deputy Admin to attend conference.

Judiciary & Public Safety:

Reefworks President Matt Rine: Rine addressed Committee regarding rep for energy companies (Rocklocker); noted work with potential data center, study for State of Michigan; looked at Kalkaska County due to volume of state land; 1500 acre needed; 5-8 years of development; work with data center developers; may provide education for employment opportunities; concerns include deforestation, natural resources needed.

Lengthy discussion, commissioners noted concerns with natural resources and forests. Rine noted increased technology, investment in community. Bicum noted prior Grand Vision statistics.

Consensus to Motion by Comai to authorize Chair Fisher too sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Rocklocker associated with the Data Center initiative as presented. Supported by Matley. Discussion; commissioners noted all the facts and work detail needed before authorizing including zoning, etc. **No opposition.**

Sheriff Whiteford presented: Whiteford noted Dispatch Open House this date at 4:30 PM; addressed Committee noting readdressing request for funds for elected officials 2025 $1.00/hour raise to mirror the other employees, the lump sum payment to elected for past request for average wage with comparison counties and the health insurance buyout payments per position/employee. Lengthy discussion.

Whiteford noted the health care buyout should be based on individual employee position, not relationship; noted savings should each qualify for county plan or buyout.

Admin Schaeffer noted the health insurance request has been to counsel several weeks ago and still no LOU back; noted recommendation to go forward with expecting LOU to be returned from counsel.

Consensus to Motion by Persons to credit the primary insured the 2025 health insurance buyout payments. Supported by Baldwin. Comai noted concern with funding and short fall of 2025 budget. Fisher noted matter should have been reviewed as for financials. **No opposition.** Matley noted need for Personnel Committee review with more in-depth reviews.

Whiteford noted the wage increases requested for elected is based on the amounts approved for other employees at 2025 not approved for the elected due to the wage review/increase; noting that the request for average wage for elected lump sum was requested from 2023 comparison counties in 2024 and 2023 and not approved until 2025. Noted unspent $390,000 allocation from Sheriff budget, elected did not pursue increases to average wage again until 2025; noted continued disparity with wage consideration. Whiteford noted need for elected wages to be competitive with comparison counties for future interest.

Bicum inquired if the budget supports the requests? Fisher noted need for a report of details of financial effects.

Baldwin noted approval of increases following union negotiations; noted need to retain employees; only approving a cost of living increase; need to review in Personnel Committee; more research needed.

Comai noted importance to keep increases relative to comparison counties used for all negotiations/wage increases.

Consensus to Motion by Baldwin to move the 2025 $1.00 increase for elected and lump sum request for 2024 average request made in early 2024 to match average be tabled to a Personnel Committee meeting of 3 next week. Supported by Matley. No opposition.

Whiteford requested if there were any questions regarding the elected stipends on the agenda; he could address after recess.

Discussion regarding wage request, if it is accurate for the average for 2025 from the date presented.

Chair called for meeting recess at 11:50 AM. Meeting reconvened at 12:46 PM.

Judiciary and Public Safety Con't:

Discussion; Chair confirmed review of wage matters from Sheriff request tabled to Personnel Committee.

Chair Fisher called for matter of Informational Update on stipends to Elected Officials. Schaeffer noted he was requested to provide. Fisher noted discussion at Board level regarding transition of Administration duties and continued payment of stipends; requested of Clerk as to status and for smooth transition Chair Fisher confirmed the stipends for Admin duties of the Clerk at $12,000 and IT Committee of $4,000.00.

Clerk Hill advised she was not aware the Board was expecting information from her on this, only knew the Administrator had it in his information, advised no one had advised her prior, that she could provide minutes and duties. Clerk Hill requested what meeting it was discussed at? Chair Fisher advised it was from phone calls and inquiries. Baldwin noted BOC decided to maintain Clerk in transition. Fisher noted need for a 'wind-down date'. Clerk requested when discussed with Board. Commissioner Persons advised it was in the Closed Session.

Chair Fisher noted Sheriff Stipends of $12,000.00 for Dispatch, $6,000.00 for IT Committee, $3,000.00 for oversight of Animal Control and $3,600.00 for personal vehicle allowance. Discussion regarding other Sheriff wages/benefits.

Health and Welfare:

Admin Schaeffer noted appointments for the 5-21-2025 Regular meeting include Kevin Hughes from DHD #10 for Annual Report and Janie McNabb from Networks Northwest for 2024 report.

County Affairs:

Admin Schaeffer requested presentation for County Affairs from Commissioner Baldwin regarding options for the County Road millage request.

Commissioner Baldwin noted recommendation for Board of Commissioners to conduct their own study, noted all Board agreed something was needed, noted he made 3 prior recommended options; noted he has reached out to entities who have built such facilities; need to provide options to Board for County Road. Baldwin noted need for report of what is needed but at less expense; if any cost it would be paid by Road Commission; noted BOC would be the ones asking questions; put some responsibility on the BOC for their own evaluation.

Discussion; Comai noted concern with BOC paying for further studies. Sieting noted concern with need for current requested cost of requested structure. Matley questioned why the BOC is overriding what the Road Commission responsibilities are and requesting. Admin Schaeffer noted his experience with government buildings; noted process involved; need for a joint venture with a set dollar amount. Bicum noted concern of spending more funds. Continued discussion regarding option 2 with communication with the County Road Commission.

Consensus to Motion by Matley for the BOC to consider the next steps with the Road Commission needs, option 2 as discussed, if the cost incurred by the Road Commission. Supported by Comai. Comai noted he would like to know what has already been spent by the Road Commission for the studies. **No opposition.**

Admin Schaeffer noted request for approval for continued work on Rugg Pond, noted he will provide final copies 5-21-25; noted many grant requirements. (Noted $1,000,000.00 grant received with others pending.) Baldwin noted 3-year project with no work to be done until all funding received. Noted numerous public meetings last year leading to this process with several state departments.

Consensus to Motion by Comai to approve the advertisement of the RFP/RFQ for Design Engineering Services with Rugg Pond. Supported by Bicum. No opposition.

<u>County Treasurer Valerie Tracey:</u> Tracey reported on status of Personal Property tax regarding Michigan Tax Tribunal decision with ANR PPT exemption request. Discussion regarding estimated tax returns to ANR from various county, townships and school taxes. Discussion. Chair Fisher noted counsel has been requested for assistance as to the process. Schaeffer noted information should not be disseminated until more specific information is known.

Consensus to Motion by Sieting to allow Chair Fisher to sign all documents associated with Final Decision from the ANR Michigan Tax Tribunal decision. Supported by Matley. No opposition. (Commissioner Bicum absent)

Personnel:

Consensus to Motion by Matley to approve Resolution 2025-12 COA Meal Driver and Custodial, one full-time position. Supported by Comai. Discussion regarding cost and benefits as full-time. **No opposition.**

Health and Welfare:

<u>Library Director John Roberts</u>: Roberts addressed Committee noting status of state funding; recent review/consideration of occupying a portion of the county grounds adjacent to the Kaliseum for the new Library; request a commissioner liaison to be appointed for a representative to the possible concept. Consensus for Commissioner Sieting to be BOC contact.

Discussion regarding benefits of location near the schools, out of heavy traffic areas, potential for better parking and increased use; review possibilities with existing grounds.
Commissioner Baldwin left meeting.

DPW and Parks and Recreation:

Admin Schaeffer noted recommendation to take the Recycle Center area off the market, noted ReMax email communications **Consensus to Motion by Sieting to authorize Chair Fisher to fully execute documentation associated with terminating the Recycle Center Real Estate Agreement with ReMax. Supported by Matley.** Discussion, Sieting noted for discussion as option for full board, not sure all information needed is available. **No Opposition.** (Commissioners Baldwin, Bicum and Comai absent)

Consensus to Motion by Sieting to authorize Chair Fisher to sign the proposal with RRS not to exceed $9,965 to complete the EGLE required Materials Management Work Plan prior to Tuesday 9-30-2025 deadline to ensure compliance with the changes to Public Act 115. Supported by Matley. Discussion regarding less cost than other vendors. Admin Schaeffer noted process for meetings and presentation to Board; noting possibility of need for Materials Management Plan location for recycle center area as a drop site. Sieting noted discontent with MMP Plan/involvement. **No opposition**.
(Commissioner Comai returned)

<u>Parks and Recreation Director Williams</u>: Williams reported on status of events; noted some decrease in use of facility with break in seasonal changes; noted sand volleyball beginning and other upcoming events.
(Commissioner Persons left meeting at 2:20 PM)
Commissioner Matley noted concerns with Log Lake opening and Log Lake Caretaker position. Williams noted little interest.

Consensus to Motion by Sieting for BOC to authorize Chair Fisher to fully execute the All-American Circus Agreement. Supported by Comai. No opposition. (4/3 Commissioners absent)

Consensus to Motion by Sieting to authorize the Chair Fisher to fully execute the Small-Town Outlaws Agreement. Supported by Comai. No opposition. (4/3 Commissioners absent)

Consensus to Motion by Sieting for Chair Fisher to fully execute the Courtesy Driving School Agreement. Supported by Matley. No opposition. (4/3 Commissioners absent)

Consensus to Motion by Sieting to authorize Chair Fisher to fully execute the Fair Board Agreement. Supported by Matley. Discussion; Chair noted it appears there is not an agreement; Sieting noted there needs to be a specific conversation on a different day. Comai noted need for a DPW meeting to address issues and address concerns; noted need to be able to use the Civic Center; noted concern with multiple issues after decades. Admin Schaeffer noted prior meeting matters were resolved; reported no word back from FAIR; noted FAIR Board members going outside of the Admin/Parks and Rec Director. Williams noted he had been working with all of the user groups and FAIR has been extremely difficult without response; noted the FAIR refused to meet with him. Admin Schaeffer noted Board must tell any user groups to defer to Williams or Schaeffer, chain of command must be followed. Matley noted no issues since he had been here; Admin noted there were no contracts prior. **Motion and Support withdrawn.**

Consensus to Motion by Sieting to set a Special DPW Meeting to address the FAIR agreement on 5-16-2025. Supported by Comai. No opposition. (4/3 Commissioners absent)

County Affairs Con't:

Zoning Admin Gayenell Gentelia: addressed Committee regarding Planning Commission need for the approval of the County GIS information for Zoning. **Consensus to Motion by Sieting to allow Networks Northwest for County GIS information with waiver of fees for intergovernmental use with completion of restrictions to use. Supported by Comai. No opposition.** (4/3 Commissioners absent)

Consensus to Motion by Sieting to approve recommendations from County Affairs for Planning Commission proposed change to Zoning. Supported by Matley. No opposition. (4/3 Commissioners absent) BOC requested to communicate with Gentelia before the 5-21-25 meeting if questions.

Finance:

Consensus to Motion by Sieting to pay the Post Approved Bills of $1,036,695.03 less $7,437.50; General Fund Bills of $380,298.55; Payroll #8 of $218,635.53; Payroll #9 of $222,500.17; Commissioners Per-Diem ($1,250.00) and Salary ($3,340.00) for a total of $4,590.00. Supported by Comai. No opposition. (4/3 Commissioners absent)

Discussion regarding Resolution for Chief Deputy Treasurer; noted if was prepared in 2024 it may need to be done in 2025. **Chair noted it may be addressed at 5-21-2025 if necessary.**

Public Input:

ZOOM:

Annie Wallace: none

Audience:

Sheriff Whiteford: noted reminder for Dispatch move by the end of the month; noted need to be involved if the tower is sold/moved to not interfere with Dispatch communications.

Motion by Sieting to adjourn at 3:13 PM. Supported by Comai. 4 yeas. 0 nays. 3 absent. **Carried**.

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Respectfully Submitted:

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Deborah Hill, Kalkaska County Clerk and Clerk of Board of Commissioners	Kohn Fisher, Chair of Kalkaska County Board of Commissioners

These minutes are not official until they are approved at the next Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting.