APPROVED
PROCEEDINGS OF THE OTTAWA COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
APRIL SESSION – FIRST DAY

The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, April 14, 2015, at 1:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Chair.

Mr. Holtvluwer pronounced the invocation.

The Clerk/Register led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present at roll call: Messrs. Visser, Baumann, Disselkoen, Dannenberg, Haverdink, Van Dam, Holtvluwer, DeJong, Kuyers, Bergman, Fenske. (11)

Public Comments and Communications from County Staff

1. 2015 State of the County Address, Alan G. Vanderberg, County Administrator

State of the County 2015

Each year I am honored to present the State of the County Address and this year marks out the eleventh annual report during my tenure. Thank you, Chair Baumann, Vice-Chair DeJong and the Board of Commissioners for this opportunity once again.

Like many counties across the state and nation, our vision is to make Ottawa County the place of choice for living, working and playing. Ottawa County continues to excel as a leader among local governments in Michigan and a place which attracts businesses, residents and visitors.

Live

- Quality schools
- Natural features like Lake Michigan
- Low crime rates
- Friendly people
- Small-town feel
- Economic health

These are just a few reasons why 276,292 people choose to call Ottawa County home. Ottawa remains the eighth most populous county in Michigan and is poised to overtake Ingham at seventh within three years. People gravitate to the area. From 2010 to 2014 Ottawa was the fastest growing county in the state at 4.7% and over half of our population growth resulted from migration to our area.

Ottawa County is proud to rank as Michigan's Healthiest County again in 2015, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Since the rankings began in 2010, Ottawa County has clinched this top spot three of the six years and ranked second the remaining three. Health contributes to the sustained economic, social and environmental health of the County. It's important to recognize the Ottawa Department of Public Health and our partners including hospitals, health care providers and community clinics who work together to identify and address health issues.

The Ottawa County Sheriff's Office works tirelessly to keep residents safe. Since 2006, total crime has dropped an impressive 30%. Last year, a major milestone was met with a somber celebration. Alongside the Prosecutor and the Court, the Sheriff's Cold Case team closed the book on the 1987 murders of Rick and Gail Brink. Justice was served when their killer was found guilty in March of 2014. Drug related crimes, however, continue to be a concern. In response, the Sheriff's Office is active in the West Michigan Enforcement Team, also known as WEMET. WEMET uses a multi-jurisdictional approach to investigate narcotics trafficking. Additionally, adult and juvenile drug offenders may participate in a Drug Court operated by 20th Judicial Circuit and Probate Courts which reduces drug associated crime, effectively treats addicts and restores families.

Ottawa County once again formally asked residents their opinion of a wide variety of county issues in the Citizen Survey conducted through EPIC-MRA. Overall, 73% of respondents said that Ottawa County is headed in the right direction and 76% rated Ottawa County's provision of services positively. To again, bring accolades to the work of our law enforcement agencies, 99% of residents indicated feeling safe in their neighborhoods. Ottawa County residents were asked about their perception of the tax burden with 67% reporting that their county property taxes were about right.

It shouldn't be surprising that the majority of residents are comfortable with their tax burden. The Ottawa County general property tax levy stands at 3.6 mills, the fifth lowest among the 83 counties in the state. When additional county millages are factored, Ottawa County stands as the second lowest statewide.

Work

We understand that residents work hard to earn every dollar. Residents of Ottawa County can count on us to use the property tax dollars they pay wisely. In fact, the Board takes $6.7 million less in property taxes than allowed by the Headlee cap. Through financing tools, including the Solid Waste Clean-up Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, Stabilization Fund, Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund and Equipment Pool, the County saves tax payers another six million dollars. Careful cost allocation programs charge $1.3 million in indirect costs and $1.5 million in IT overhead appropriately to state and federal grants, keeping local dollars available for other services. Several state actions last year fared well for residents. Thanks to legislative advocacy of the Board, GCSI and MAC, the state returned $939,998 of revenue sharing back to Ottawa County this year. Michigan voters approved the creation of an authority to collect and distribute State Use Tax dollars to local units of government, replacing personal property tax revenue. A legacy of prudent financial leadership has also rendered Ottawa County's Other Post Employment Benefit liability very low compared to other county and city governments at $596,839.

All this adds up to a strong financial position. Ottawa County holds two triple A credit ratings. These top scores allow Ottawa County plus its local units of government to borrow money for capital improvement projects with lower interest rates, saving taxpayer dollars. For example, the Holland Area Waste Water Treatment Plant Expansion is estimated to save the member local units over $300,000.

Ottawa County finances continue to look positive in the future. Excluding value under appeal, property tax value was budgeted to increase 4% in 2015 and we believe that is still a good estimate. If accurate, the 2015 taxable value will exceed the 2009 pre-recession peak. This is especially significant as many counties are not expected to return to prerecession levels until 2020 or beyond.

Ottawa County's strong financial condition plus residents with ingenuity, entrepreneurial spirits and strong work ethics continue to attract business development and expansion to the area. The County's Gross Domestic Product increased 3.4%. The Holland-Grand Haven area was ranked 29th in the nation for "Best Performing Large Cities" last year by the Milken Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan economic think tank. The area ranked 2nd in the nation for short-term job growth, measured using job growth from August 2013 through August 2014. The annual 2014 unemployment rate decreased from 6.7% to 4.7%. The February 2015 jobless rate dropped to 3.7 percent, second lowest in the state according to the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget. While good news, this can also pose a challenge finding skilled workers, underscoring the need to continued training and education programs.

The Grand Rapids metropolitan area had the 9th fastest growing economy in the US in 2014 and the 69th fastest growing economy among the 300 largest metropolitan areas in the world, according to a study released by the Brookings Institution. This fortune spills into Ottawa County in many ways including a strong real estate market. Hudsonville was ranked as the healthiest housing market in Michigan by SmartAsset, a research firm that specializes in personal finance analysis. Zeeland was ranked second in Michigan. Residential value comprises 70% of the County tax base. Single family home construction was down 3% at the close of 2014, however multi-family residential homes increased 116% and non-residential construction increased by 7%. Affordable housing continues to be a challenge in Ottawa County. Business, government and non-profit leaders convened at two well-attended Housing Next forums last year to discuss the issue. In 2015 the group intends to develop and implement strategies for solutions.

Last year Ottawa County officially launched the Great Lakes Ag-Tech Business Incubator after a feasibility study in 2012 and successful pilot programs in 2013. The Incubator, a non-profit corporation, helps farmers and entrepreneurs turn their ag-tech machine, equipment, software ideas and inventions into businesses. Most farmers are intuitive, can-do individuals who have innate abilities to solve farm problems with ingenious mechanical inventions. These inventions are often foundations for thriving businesses which will create permanent jobs and generate capital investment in our County. Advocacy efforts were able to secure a $500,000 state pledge for the project.

During 2014, the consolidation of the Ottawa County Economic Development Office with Lakeshore Advantage was successfully completed. The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners further supported

this effort through an economic development funding challenge, pledging one dollar for every four dollars raised for new businesses, up to $55,000.

In 2014, a 13-member Groundwater Task Force was appointed to review and approve the Phase II Study, which will assess the current and future sustainability of the county's groundwater supply. The task force is comprised of a broad cross-section of the community including Ottawa County Commissioners, local unit of government supervisors, farmers, well-drillers, private-sector engineers, groundwater scientists and local business representatives. MSU's Institute of Water Resources began the work on phase II in September. Activities include extensive field testing and compiling data from a wide-range of sources including 450 wells in the county. The data obtained from these efforts are being utilized as inputs for state-of-the-art 3-D computer models. The computer models will then generate simulations of the county's geology with unprecedented detail and accuracy as well as produce data outputs regarding the many attributes of the county's groundwater system such as recharge, runoff, volume and other characteristics. The study will be completed in July 2017.

To enable residents to conduct business with Ottawa County even easier and to improve efficiency of County Employees, we continue to expand our online presence. Residents can and do find a wealth of information online. Last year, an average of 2,450 people visited miOttawa.org each day, compared to about 675 daily a decade ago. The menu of services now offered online has gone from ten in 2005 to 75 available today. Online transactions accounted to $1.26 million in revenue last year, up 25% from 2013. The County Website earned the seventh spot in the nation from the Center for Digital Government. The Digital Counties Survey award highlights the best among county government portals. Ottawa County's social media presence continues strong and compliments the county website. Social networking is an effective means to engage citizens and drive web traffic back to miOttawa for service. To date, over 10,000 people are connected to a County department via Facebook or Twitter. We will continue to use miOttawa.org, the social networks and additional digital communication to inform, to connect with citizens and to drive actions.

Ottawa County held its first ever Technology Forum in 2014 providing 106 local professionals an opportunity to hear from government and private sector technology leaders and visionaries. David Behen, the State's Director of the Department of Technology, Management and Budget, kicked-off the day with a look at the State of Information Technology in Michigan. Other speakers provided their vision of the future of technology and its impact. The 2015 forum is scheduled for May 8 and we have renamed the event, the Innovation and Technology Conference.

The County continues to embrace a culture of innovation and creativity. Fifty employees are participating in the training series conducted by the New North Center for Design in Holland which will enable them to think and apply innovative tools and processes. Another 13 employees attended the Michigan LEAN Consortium events held here in Ottawa County. We also established the Innovation Fund to enhance and grow creativity in the County organization and its employees. The Innovation Fund will be used to strategically invest in ideas, specifically covering various technical or other start-up costs. The

desired outcome is to improve organizational processes and systems so that a return on investment is recognized, either in lower operating costs or increased revenues.

A total of 973 Ottawa County Employees and Ottawa County Road Commission Employees have now completed the Ottawa Way Customer Service training. We will continue to offer the training two times annually to equip new hires and those who missed the first round of the Ottawa Way. Quarterly Outstanding Customer Service Awards were initiated last year and we are consistently surprised and delighted with the number and content of the nominations. Nearly 60 customers each quarter have taken the time to nominate an employee for the honor, speaking volumes about the success of the Customer Service in Ottawa County.

We continue to explore and develop opportunities to collaborate with governmental partners which lower cost while maintaining or improving services for residents. Last year, the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office expanded to the northern area, contracting with Spring Lake and Ferrysburg for policing services, saving those municipalities approximately $300,000 per year. This was accomplished despite no cuts in staff, in patrols or in other services to the area. The County's Innovation and Technology Services division is working with the intermediate school district and board of public works department to create interconnecting fiber networks which will improve the ability to share services in the future such as web hosting, telephony and more. We continue to provide assessing for the City of Grand Haven and Crockery Township, financial services for both the Village and Township of Spring Lake, and to all local units we offer a reverse purchasing module and leadership trainings via Ottawa County Human Resources.

Human Resources is leading the Career Development component which includes the three legged stool approach to hiring and training. A total of 838 employees completed the Kolbe Index and 678 have now completed the initial training. In 2014, two County employees were certified to administer Kolbe, and began running the program in house for employee development and hiring. The DiSC assessment continues to be a core piece in our leadership training program. A total of 815 employees have completed the DiSC Behavioral Assessment and training. EQ-I 2.0, an emotional intelligence assessment, was also added to the three legged stool. HR has become certified to administer the assessment and a total of 70 employees have taken the EQ-I 2.0. This emotional intelligence assessment further expands the affective leg of the stool reducing the possibility for a bad-fit employee and the cost associated with a misaligned hire. Training has begun on how managers can effectively use this tool. Human Resources and Performance Improvement are creating a data collection form that will provide a baseline for future performance indicators. With internal staff certified in these assessments, the organization is now equipped to blend each tool's benefit into the daily culture of Ottawa County with greater flexibility. Many of these departments are already utilizing their results in the areas of leadership, communication, understanding style differences and team building.

In 2014 the Human Resources department also conducted a Wage & Classification Study that included all positions in the County. A total of 315 different positions were compared both internally and externally. The results of the study indicated that, on average, Ottawa County employees are at 103% of the mean on wages and have superior benefit packages than comparable counties. This study is

periodically done to confirm equity across departments and to ensure Ottawa County remains a robust competitor for attracting and retaining a strong workforce.

The Ottawa County Health Management Plan remained on a successful course last year. We continue to offer three health plan choices, with the majority of employees electing the High Deductible Health (HSA) Plan. The total increase to our Health Insurance Premiums, spread across all three plans, for 2015 was less than 1.5%. The rate for a family with health, dental and vision coverage remains lower today compared to five years ago for both Ottawa County and employees. In an effort to continue on the successful path, changes to the Health Management Plan will offer more options and opportunities to improve health.

Regionalization swept over West Michigan as it did the rest of the state in 2014. Governor Snyder unveiled his Regional Prosperity Plan in which the state was divided into ten districts for delivery of services. The Grand Valley Metro Council was chosen to lead the 13 county West Michigan Prosperity Alliance division of this effort. The Metro Council Executive Director John Weiss was selected to oversee this effort and chairs a board of over 30 members that represents over 300 government, workforce development, higher education, and economic development organizations. The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Board organized and conducted a process that resulted in ranking regional projects over the 13 County area. The Muskegon Port - Barge initiative was ranked as the top regional objective and a combined water quality initiative of the Grand Valley Metro Council, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council and West Michigan Regional Shoreline Development Commission ranked second.

Governor Snyder also mandated that state departments will deliver services in the ten County regional construct. Most have complied. Some of these changes, such as the reorganization of MDOT into this new configuration had a seemless, unnoticed effect on county government. Other regional implementations have created stress. Ottawa County and six others were required to create a new regional organization for the processing of Medicaid payments and other functions which resulted in creation of the Lakeshore Regional Partners. This, along with major long-term systemic State General Fund disbursement inequities and unintended consequences of Medicaid Expansion, have combined to create the perfect storm in Community Mental Health funding which has caused Ottawa to enact significant and painful cuts in personnel and services. Governor Snyder similarly mandated that there will be no more single County Workforce Development Boards and we have been in the midst of a difficult process to create a regional board and job training service delivery system. The next year will be interesting as the State creates combination of its Department of Community Health and Department of Human Services into a single mega-department. What that means for service delivery at the local level should be unveiled soon. Rumblings of regionalization change in the Public Health arena have also gotten our attention though nothing specific has been proposed as of yet.

Play

Ottawa County is a place to play for both residents and visitors alike. The Tulip Time Festival, Coast Guard Festival plus other events like the County Fair, Hudsonville Fair and Tulipanes Latino Film Festival attract nearly a million people each year. Ottawa County's natural beauty is also alluring. Holland and

Grand Haven State Parks are among Michigan's top attractions. Holland State Park ranks second with approximately 1.9 million visitors each year while Grand Haven State Park ranks fifth with 1.5 million visitors. Grand Haven even received accolades from USA Today and the Lansing State Journal last year as a top beach destination.

Our very own Ottawa County North Beach, Kirk Park, Rosy Mound, Olive Shores and Tunnel Park, attract tourists as well and sold 18,492 daily permits and 718 annual permits to non-residents in 2014. Over the past five years, County Park revenue generated from summer lakeshore operations, winter activities and year-round reservations has increased 37% totaling more than $500,000 in 2014. Park land acquisition has slowed over the past several years as the department edges toward its goal of approximately 7,000 acres. Instead, the department is focusing on improvements and opportunities on existing lands such as the extensive work underway at Grand Ravines Park in Jenison. Other major projects last year included paving a key stretch of the Macatawa Greenway Trail through Upper Macatawa Natural Area, creating a breathtaking ceremonial trellis at Pine Bend Park's Weaver House and completing the Historic Ottawa Beach Walkway. Ottawa County Parks is skilled at leveraging tax dollars to secure regional and state grants, earning over a $1 million toward 2014 projects. This was up from $200,000 in 2013. Park leaders anticipate about $700,000 in public grants and private donations for 2015.

Stay

It is clear. Ottawa County has a lot going for it. We stand on the shoulders of great leaders in Ottawa County who have built a strong government organization and a thriving economic region in a geographic location rich in beautiful, natural resources. But we are faced with an ugly challenge. I have listened to the CEOs of some of West Michigan's top business leaders state that an inability to attract and retain global talent and create diverse teams in the future could lead to the relocation of corporate headquarters or company divisions to areas such as Chicago. Talent can be homegrown in some cases, but the competition to lure global talent is happening and it will only intensify. The future prosperity of West Michigan hinges upon eliminating racism and discrimination. We must pursue and welcome diversity, including the full range of human differences, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, ability and more. Our vision is that Ottawa County is the location of choice to live, work and play. We will fail unless we also create an Ottawa County where all people want to ***stay***.

The mission of the Cultural Intelligence Initiative of Ottawa County is to promote an environment where all employees, residents and visitors are valued and welcome. We believe our employees can make an enormous difference. Last year we embarked upon a training partnership with the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance. To date, 507 Ottawa County employees have participated in the Racial Equity Training. These will continue until all staff have been reached. The training builds understanding; shows how we can work to eliminate the impacts of unintentional bias; and focuses on solutions for diversity challenges. During this year, we will further enlist the support of the alliance to explore where bias exists within our organization and how it can be eliminated.

Theodore Roosevelt dealt with similar issues as new waves of immigrants from Western Europe experienced discrimination from the well-established population. During this time he said, “This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live in, unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live in.” Likewise, Ottawa County will not be a good place for any of us to live in, unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.

It is an honor to serve as County Administrator for the Board of Commissioners and the citizens of this great county. The year 2014 was a great term and I look forward to an ever better term in 2015.

Thank you.

B/C 15-074 Mr. Bergman moved to approve the agenda of today as presented. The motion passed.

B/C 15-075 Mr. DeJong moved to approve the following Consent Resolutions:

1. To approve the Minutes of the March 24, 2015 Board of Commissioners Meeting and March 24, 2015 Board of Commissioners Work Session.

2. To receive for information the Correspondence Log.

3. To approve the general claims in the amount of $3,975,185.93 as presented by the summary report for March 16, 2015 through April 3, 2015.

4. To receive for information the Ottawa County Clerk/Register of Deeds Office 2014 Annual Report.

The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. DeJong, Visser, Van Dam, Holtvluwer, Bergman, Disselkoen, Haverdink, Kuyers, Dannenberg, Fenske, Baumann. (11)

B/C 15-076 Mr. Kuyers moved to approve and authorize the Board Chairperson and Clerk/Register to sign the Resolution authorizing submittal of the grant application to the Transportation Alternatives Program through the Michigan Department of Transportation. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Haverdink, Holtvluwer, Disselkoen, Kuyers, Bergman, Van Dam, DeJong, Fenske, Dannenberg, Visser, Baumann. (11)

B/C 15-077 Mr. Kuyers moved to receive bids for the Grand Ravines Site Construction Project and accept the low bid from Denny’s Excavating in the amount of $897,331.30 with funding from the Parks and Recreation budget plus donations. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Kuyers, Holtvluwer, Visser, Dannenberg, Bergman, Disselkoen, Haverdink, Van Dam, DeJong, Fenske, Baumann. (11)

B/C 15-078 Mr. Kuyers moved to receive bids for the Grand Ravines Barn Restoration Project and approve the bid from Barn Cats, LLC in the amount of $71,865 with funding from the Parks and Recreation budget plus donations. The motion passed as shown by the following votes: Yeas: Messrs. Visser, Fenske, Disselkoen, Dannenberg, Haverdink, Van Dam, Holtvluwer, DeJong, Kuyers, Bergman, Baumann. (11)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Ottawa County Clerk/Register of Deeds Office 2014 Annual Report – The 2014 Ottawa County Clerk/Register of Deeds Annual Report was presented by Justin Roebuck, Clerk/Register; Sherri Sayles, Chief Deputy Clerk; Rachel Sanchez, Chief Deputy Register; Steven Daitch, Elections Coordinator; Tami McCoy, Case Records Technician II; Nicole Poel-Skofic, Case Records Technician II.

The Administrator's report was presented.

Several Commissioners commented on meetings attended and future meetings to be held.

B/C 15-079 Mr. Bergman moved to adjourn at 2:29 p.m. subject to the call of the Chair. The motion passed.

JUSTIN F. ROEBUCK, Clerk/Register
Of the Board of Commissioners

JOSEPH BAUMANN, Chairman
Of the Board of Commissioners