

The regular meeting of the Mason County Board of Commissioners was held at 9:00 a.m. in the Conference Room located at the Mason County Airport terminal.

The meeting was called to order by Chair J. Andersen

Roll call was taken. Present: N. Krieger, J. Hartley, S. Hull, J. Andersen, R. Bacon, G. Castonia, and L. Squires.

Absent: None

The invocation was given by L. Squires and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America followed.

Motion by G. Castonia and seconded by R. Bacon to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by S. Hull and seconded by N. Krieger to approve the minutes of the February 08, 2022 regular meeting. Motion carried.

Commissioner Andersen read a letter received from Andrea Large. Also noted, was a letter sent via email by John Wilson regarding the Brownfield subject to all Board members.

Public comments: Monica Schuyler, PM Township, Pennies from Heaven, appreciates the Board once again looking into the County's Brownfield guidelines. She additionally wished to thank the Board for looking into the broadband initiative study with Baker Tilly.

Sheriff Cole presented the 2021 Mason County Sheriff Office annual report. He notes a lot of firsts for 2021, including four outbreaks of covid-19 in the jail and with staff. He noted there were four fatal crashes involving seven individuals. He received the Richard H. Austin service award, was chosen as Sheriff of the Year, and was elected to be President of the State Sheriff's Association (last time a Mason County Sheriff was elected was 1938 to this position). Commissioner Squires thanked him for the excellent job and asked if any of the crashes that took place were related to marijuana. Commissioner Squires was informed that currently there is not a test on the market that can evaluate someone for THC during a traffic stop.

Motion by S. Hull and seconded by L. Squires to leave regular session and go into a public hearing regarding the Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Application. Motion carried.

Chair Andersen read a letter received from Adam Johnson, President of Safe Harbor Credit Union, in support of the grant application.

Marcia Hansen, Fair Board member and volunteer, is at a loss for words as this has been an ongoing dream. She has received several letters of interest regarding the support of this project. She thanked the Board for their support of this project as well.

Motion by S. Hull and seconded by N. Krieger to leave the public hearing and return to regular session. Motion carried.

Motion by N. Krieger and seconded by R. Bacon to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Larsen's Landscaping, LLC has agreed to provide mowing services at the Mason County Airport in 2022; and

WHEREAS, the County has been satisfied with the services provided by Larsen's Landscaping, LLC; and

WHEREAS, the Buildings, Planning, Drains, and Airport Committee recommends extending the contract with Larsen's Landscaping, LLC for one year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves extending the contract with Larsen's Landscaping, LLC for one year to provide grass mowing services and further directs it's Chair to sign the contract on its behalf.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) N. Krieger.

Motion by N. Krieger and seconded by R. Bacon to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, the roof at the Mason County Courthouse will be 31 years old this fall; and

WHEREAS, the Building, Planning, Drains and Airport Committee has sought bids and is recommending the low bid from MIHM Enterprises.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves the low bid of \$416,743.00 from MIHM Enterprises for the replacement of the roof at the Mason County Courthouse; funds to come from the Public Improvement Fund.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) N. Krieger.

Motion by Public Safety and Courts Chair G. Castonia and seconded by J. Hartley to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Animal Control Officer Colbrook has requested the purchase of a computer for the Animal Control Office; and

WHEREAS, the Public Safety and Courts Committee is recommending the purchase of the computer out of funds in the Equipment Replacement Fund.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason, approves the purchase of a computer for the Animal Control Office; funds to come from the Equipment Replacement Fund.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) G. Castonia.

Motion by Public Safety and Courts Chair G. Castonia and seconded by N. Krieger to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, the Mason County Board of Commissioners has approved a budget for implementing courthouse security; and

WHEREAS, Chief Judge Nellis and the Public Safety and Courts Committee is recommending approval of the attached policies for courthouse security.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves the attached policies for courthouse security.

Moved for your approval.

Commissioner Krieger noted that some counties have a bit of a tug of war between the Chief Judge and the Board regarding Courthouse security. It is beneficial that all entities be on board regarding moving forward with the Courthouse security and was happy that all are in agreement. Commissioner Hartley noted that all parties involved have supported the policies and the current policy that is starting up will be fluid and that changes will be made as needed.

Motion carried. (Signed) G. Castonia.

Motion by J. Hartley and seconded by G. Castonia to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Sheriff Cole is requesting authorization to purchase seventeen tactical protective vests from the Equipment Replacement Fund; and

WHEREAS, the Public Safety and Courts Committee is recommending the purchase of these vests from the Equipment Replacement Fund.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves the purchase of seventeen tactical protective vests from the Equipment Replacement Fund.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) J. Hartley.

Motion by J. Hartley and seconded by G. Castonia to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, the Mason County Board of Commissioners has approved implementing courthouse security; and

WHEREAS, Public Safety and Courts Committee is recommending approval of the purchase of a walk through metal detector, two wand metal detectors, and a x-ray machine from the Equipment Replacement Fund.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves the purchase of a walk through metal detector, two wand metal detectors, and a x-ray machine; funds to come from the Equipment Replacement Fund.

Moved for your approval.

Commissioner Krieger inquired of the cost of the x-ray unit from one of the Public Safety and Courts Committee members as it was not listed and was informed that it would be approximately \$17,000.00.

Motion carried. (Signed) J. Hartley.

Motion by L. Squires and seconded by S. Hull to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Mason County Emergency Management Coordinator is seeking authorization to sell and dispose of the attached surplus county assets; and

WHEREAS, the Public Safety and Courts Committee is recommending board approval of this request.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason authorizes Mason County Emergency Management Coordinator to dispose of the attached surplus County assets.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) L. Squires.

Motion by Buildings, Planning, Drains, and Airport Committee Chair S. Hull and seconded by R. Bacon to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

The Finance, Personnel, and Rules Committee has audited the County’s claims dated

February 03, 2022 totaling \$384,570.28; and
February 17, 2022 totaling \$755,294.15; and

The Finance, Personnel, and Rules Committee found these claims to be in order and asks the Board to approve these claims.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) J. Andersen, R. Bacon, S. Hull.

Motion by Buildings, Planning, Drains, and Airport Committee Chair S. Hull and seconded by R. Bacon to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Larsen’s Landscaping, LLC has agreed to provide mowing services at the Mason County Airport in 2022; and

WHEREAS, the County has been satisfied with the services provided by Larsen’s Landscaping, LLC; and

WHEREAS, the Buildings, Planning, Drains, and Airport Committee recommends extending the contract with Larsen’s Landscaping, LLC for one year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves extending the contract with Larsen’s Landscaping, LLC for one year to provide grass mowing services and further directs it’s Chair to sign the contract on its behalf.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) S. Hull.

Motion by Buildings, Planning, Drains, and Airport Committee Chair S. Hull and seconded by L. Squires to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Mason County Board of Commissioners supports the submission of an application titled, “Mason County Fairgrounds Arena Building“ to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for the development of a covered horse arena at the Mason County Fairgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the proposed application is supported by the Community’s 5-Year Approved Parks and Recreation Plan; and

WHEREAS, Mason County is hereby making a financial commitment to the project in the amount of \$1,745,300 matching funds, in cash and/or force account.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Mason County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes submission of a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Application for \$300,000.00, and further resolves to make available its financial obligation amount of \$1,745,300.00 (85.3%) of a total \$2,045,300.00 project cost, during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Commissioner Castonia had questions regarding the resolution as it states it was a covered horse arena. He was informed that in the off-season, the addition of the covered horse arena could be utilized by other sporting entities.

Commissioner Hartley said his sister shows in AQHA shows and it was noted that a covered arena would be appealing and draw more interest from the east side of the State. Additionally, he feels there would be economic benefit for the community.

AYES: Krieger, Castonia, Hartley, Squires, Hull, Bacon, and Andersen.

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

MOTION APPROVED.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, that the foregoing is a Resolution duly made and passed by the Mason County Board of Commissioners at their regular meeting held on March 8, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in Mason County with a quorum present.

Clerk Cheryl Kelly

Dated:_____

Moved for your consideration.

Motion carried. (Signed) S. Hull.

Motion by Buildings, Planning, Drains, and Airport Committee Chair S. Hull and seconded by R. Bacon to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Mason County has applied for a 2022 Medical Marihuana Operation and Oversight Grant; and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan has awarded a grant in the amount of \$5,145.00 to the County of Mason.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves accepting a 2022 Medical Marihuana Operation and Oversight Grant and authorizes Mason County Administrator Knizacky to sign it on their behalf.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) S. Hull.

Motion by R. Bacon and seconded by S. Hull to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, the Finance, Personnel, & Rules Committee has reviewed the transfers for March 09, 2021.

THEREFORE, we, your Finance, Personnel, & Rules Committee, request your approval of the following transfers:

Road Patrol	\$181,950.00
Indigent Defense	\$ 38,375.00
Jail Operations	\$162,000.00
Law Library	\$ 2,500.00

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) R. Bacon, S. Hull, J. Andersen.

Motion by R. Bacon and seconded S. Hull to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, the City of Ludington has requested that the County eliminate the current local brownfield guidelines related to infrastructure, revolving loans and contingency; and

WHEREAS, the Finance, Personnel, and Rules Committee is recommending that the Board of Commissioners maintain the current brownfield guidelines but explore with the City of Ludington ways that the guidelines can be modified for housing projects.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves of the recommendation to maintain the current local brownfield guidelines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board directs the Board Chair and County Administrator to meet with the Ludington Mayor and City Manager to explore ways to modify the guidelines related to housing projects.

Commissioner Squires feels this is a major issue and that the Cities/Townships need to come together to reduce guidelines. He noted that PM and Amber are in favor of the rule changes, as well as Scottville. He feels this reduces the ability for development and he is not in favor of the current resolution as presented. Commissioner Castonia agreed with Commissioner Squires and noted that one set of rules does not fit all and there has to be give and take. He also is against the resolution the way it is written. Commissioner Hartley presented to his jurisdictions, noting he did his best to present the Brownfield guidelines. He was asked to relax the policies.

Chair Andersen has spent an extensive amount of time and has had discussion with several entities regarding affordable housing. Removal of the rules will affect all projects. The subject of affordable housing will take all to come together to address housing in the County, which has a 40% poverty rate. She provided historical information on 19 Brownfield projects that the County has supported, some of which were not completed. The majority of these projects have been housing projects but costs to purchase these units range from \$300,000 to \$500,000. Abandoning the rules does not address the elephant in the room, which is affordable housing, which is the greatest need in the community. The County has always worked with the City of Ludington, PM Township, and Scottville regarding all projects and the rules have addressed their needs.

Commissioner Krieger agrees with everyone regarding the need for affordable housing. Noting that these changes have nothing to do with the Laura Street property as the developer knew the rules regarding the extent of the project from last August. He feels this is a manufactured crisis of the need to get rid of the guidelines and he notes that tax dollars should not be spent for any developer to have financial gains. He feels these rules are not hampering economic development. Tax dollars should not be used for private expenses and added to our already distressed community. He feels that the rules are set as guidelines for developers to know what to expect and that the Board is the ultimate approving body and that most other counties do not have guidelines, but feels there is a benefit to having these guidelines in place so developers know what the rules are upfront. These are reflective of what the predecessor boards wanted to do to protect tax-paying dollars. He is in favor of economic development but not the ability to use public tax dollars for infrastructure costs.

Commissioner Squires commended the dialogue between the Board. He and Commissioner Hartley are supportive of an amendment to address affordable housing needs.

Commissioner Bacon was also supportive of affordable housing but noted the need to have guidelines available as there is value in the guidelines. He wished to know the dollar amount the City of Ludington will make on water and sewer fees that is anticipated once this project is completed.

Motion was made by L. Squires and seconded by J. Hartley to send the resolution back to the Finance, Personnel & Rules committee for review and amend and look at change/strongly recommend to increase affordable housing development in the Brownfield rules. Motion carried.

Roll Call: AYES: Castonia, Hartley, Squires, Hull, Bacon, Krieger, Andersen.
NAYS: None.

Motion by R. Bacon and seconded by N. Krieger to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Mason County applied for a grant to be used for education, communication, and outreach regarding the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act; and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan has awarded the county a grant for \$5,145.00; and

WHEREAS, the Finance, Personnel, & Rules Committee is recommending approval of the attached letter of agreement with the District Health Department #10 to provide the education, communication, and outreach services required under the grant.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves the letter of agreement with the District Health Department #10 to provide the education, communication, and outreach services and directs the Board Chair to sign said letter on their behalf.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) R. Bacon.

Motion by Board Chair J. Andersen and seconded by S. Hull to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, the Mason-Lake Conservation District has worked cooperatively with the Conservation Districts from Manistee and Oceana Counties to develop a program for the proper disposal of household hazardous waste for the residents in Mason County; and

WHEREAS, the Buildings, Planning, Drains, and Airport Committee is recommending the approval of the attached agreement for services.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves the attached Agreement for Services between Mason County and Mason-Lake, Manistee and Oceana Conservation Districts and further directs the County Chair to sign said agreement.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) J. Andersen.

Motion by Board Chair J. Andersen and seconded by S. Hull to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, there is one position on the West Michigan Community Mental Health System Board with a term that expires on March 31, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Mary Alway has expressed interest in being reappointed to this position.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Ms. Mary Alway be reappointed to the one position on the West Michigan Community Mental Health System Board for a term expiring March 31, 2025.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) J. Andersen.

Motion by Board Chair J. Andersen and seconded by R. Bacon to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, severe weather, in the form of thunderstorms, wind storms, heavy rain, flooding, and tornados, are a threat to the safety and welfare of all Michigan citizens; and

WHEREAS, each year, flooding and rising waters kill more people in the United States than any other thunderstorm related hazard; and

WHEREAS, in June of 2021 heavy rain fell causing massive flooding in homes, streets, and freeways throughout metropolitan Detroit and also caused other notable issues throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, all individuals are encouraged to be aware of the warning signs of severe weather and follow proper safety and emergency procedures; and,

WHEREAS, Mason County is fortunate to have many natural resources for our citizens and visitors to enjoy, but all should be aware of the warning signs of severe weather and proper safety and emergency procedures since there can be 25 – 40 days of thunderstorm activity each year; and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division is promoting a Severe Weather Awareness Week to educate the public about the dangers of severe weather events and the precautions that can be taken to save lives and protect families.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Mason County urges all county residents to educate themselves and prepare for severe weather and declares March 20 – March 26, 2022 as Severe Weather Awareness Week in Mason County.

Moved for your approval.

Motion carried. (Signed) J. Andersen.

Motion by Board Chair J. Andersen and seconded by N. Krieger to approve the following resolution:

HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, a citizens group hired Aspen Wireless to perform a Feasibility Study and financial estimates related to a county wide broadband project; and

WHEREAS, the citizens group has asked the Board of Commissioners to consider doing a county wide broadband project based on this Feasibility Study and financial estimates; and

WHEREAS, the Building, Planning, Drains and Airport Committee feels it is prudent to get an independent analysis of the Feasibility Study and financial estimates and requested bids from firms to perform the analysis; and

WHEREAS, the Building, Planning, Drains and Airport Committee received one bid of \$6,250.00 from Baker Tilly US, LLP.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mason approves the bid of \$6,250.00 from Baker Tilly US, LLP; funds to come from contingency.

Moved for your approval.

Commissioner Hartley feels this is money well spent, especially for the price, as it is much less than expected. Commissioner Krieger noted it was half of what he expected.

Motion carried. (Signed) J. Andersen.

The monthly Treasurer’s Reports for February 2022 were included in the agenda packet.

Clerk Kelly presented the Clerk’s report for January and February. Clerk Kelly noted that petition packets are available in the office for various elected openings for the August ballot. The Courts are keeping the office busy at this time, as well as the upcoming May 3, 2022 Special Election that has various proposals on it.

Public Comment: Mitch Foster, Ludington, was surprised that Administrator Knizacky responded to his email while he is out on vacation. He appreciates the conversation to address the rules. Affordability was also a concern of his, as it has taken him 2.5 years to find a house to purchase. He looks forward to the continued work and thanks the Board for their efforts.

Jim Newkirk, City of Scottville, also related to the issue of affordable housing due to his current living situation. Scottville is looking to change the narrative related to many issues, especially blight issues. He feels that the Brownfield needs are different for every jurisdiction and a once size does not fit all.

Paddy Baker, Victory Township-retired Mason County Magistrate, noted that the Brownfield discussion was very interesting, as well as encouraging to hear. She thanked the Board for the passing of the resolution for the horse arena roof project as she has many memories working with the fairgrounds over the past 30 years.

Jody Maloney, PM Township, noted that there is definitely a need for low income housing.

With no other business the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.

CHERYL KELLY, COUNTY CLERK

JANET S. ANDERSEN, BOARD CHAIR