

January 24, 2014

APPROVED on 2/11/14

Proceedings of a Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Menominee and the State of Michigan were held in Courtroom B, Courthouse, Menominee, Michigan. (Originally scheduled to take place in the Administrator's office but moved to Courtroom B due to the number of public present for the meeting)

Chairman Meintz called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

A call of the roll indicated that the following Commissioners were present/absent:

Present: Coms. Hafeman, Krienke, Lang, Meintz, Nelson, Piche, Plutchak, and Schei.

Absent: Com. Furlong (excused).

Public Comment:

- Brian Neumeier – Commented that the board is going down a path they shouldn't. By their actions they are violating policies. He cited the Menominee County Personnel Manual and Bylaws.
- Bob Desjarlais – Commented that the board is here today to discuss a position and not a person. He also commented that when the Apportionment Committee met in 2011 the public commented that with a larger county board they would like to see a reduction in administrative staffing.
- John Anderson – Commented on the Republican Committee meetings leading into the Apportionment Committee meetings. The consensus of the people was to have 9 commissioners and they wanted to see less or no administration in the county.
- Gary Eichhorn – Thanked the board for having the courage to address what could be an issue here.
- Kenny Marks – Commented on the history of Menominee County, and discussed the lynch mob that took out the McDonald Brothers in 1881. He related it to today's meeting, and asked, who is going to be the lynch mob today?"

Moved by Com. Hafeman, seconded by Com. Plutchak to approve the agenda. Discussion ensued. Com. Lang made a statement regarding Robert's Rules and that you can't just call a special meeting because you feel like it. It has to be to discuss urgent matters. He wants to know what is so urgent that it can't wait until our regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday. Also, the explanation for the meeting has to be clear. The explanation on this agenda is very thin. He is requesting a legal opinion as to whether this is a legal meeting or not. He handed Com. Meintz a formal request for a legal opinion on this matter. Com. Meintz asked Prosecuting Attorney Dan Hass for his opinion if this is a legal meeting. Prosecutor Hass stated that he was not involved in the process of scheduling this meeting so he is not prepared to give a response.

Moved by Com. Schei, seconded by Com. Lang to amend the agenda to seek a legal counsel before we proceed with any of the action items on the agenda. Discussion ensued. Motion failed by a roll call vote 5-3 with Coms. Lang, Schei and Piche vote aye.

Roll call vote was taken on the original motion by Com. Hafeman to approve the agenda. Motion was approved 5-3 with Coms. Lang, Schei and Piche voted nay.

Moved by Com. Hafeman, seconded by Com. Plutchak to discuss and/or act on the Administrative Assistant Position. Discussion ensued. Com. Hafeman discussed the Apportionment Committee that met in 2011 to reorganize the size of the county board to 9 members. They did it with the intent to reduce the size of administration and to put more power into the hands of the county commissioners. She feels that the commissioners have now had a full year to get their feet wet and understand the job of commissioner. Com. Plutchak wants to know how much money the county would be saving by eliminating the Administrative Assistant position. Com. Meintz stated that he went to the redistricting meetings and there were an overwhelming number of people there that wanted to see a 9 member board, and they wanted to see the board more active in administration. Com. Lang stated that he thinks everyone is trying to rewrite history. He stated that he also attended some of the Apportionment Committee meetings, and he thought the main reason behind increasing the size of the county board was to help eliminate the opportunity of a small faction from being able to run the board. He also would like to know exactly why we are here. Is it discipline, or financial? Com. Hafeman stated that it has nothing to do with disciplining an employee. She stated that we have very hard working employees. She feels with a 9 member board we are administration heavy. Com. Nelson commented that the Administrative assistant's salary is around \$43,000 and with benefits it is around \$72,000. He also commented about the open meetings act and holding a special meeting. Com. Meintz stated that we are going to be facing some heavy issues coming up this year with our short funding in our retirement. He was at the MTA meeting last night and there were a lot of questions about it. Com. Schei stated that the reason he ran for office was to do what was best for Menominee County. He questions the way the board is going about this. We are looking at pennies instead of dollars. We set the budget already and if we want to change something, we should be doing it during the upcoming budget process. He is not in favor of doing anything with this position at all at this point. Com. Lang commented on the email from Brian to the commissioners that makes a strong case to keep the administrative assistant position. Com. Piche stated "that he is not happy to have to say this, but let's bring some honesty and truth to this meeting. Com. Hafeman and others I believe are using reason to skirt around the facts that they have been unhappy with the Administrator and the Assistant for not following our directives." He would recommend that the commissioners work harder to address their dissatisfactions. Com. Plutchak stated that he just looks at the \$72,000 and that is a lot of money for one position. He figures you could hire 3 people for that amount. That money could be used elsewhere that is needed, like MERS. Com. Schei commented about the hiring freeze that is currently in place, and what would we be doing if the position was eliminated. Com. Nelson believes that the Administrator could be doing a lot more, and some of the commissioners could be attending meetings instead of him. He discussed the additional cost the county will be dealing with this year in regards to MERS and health insurance. Also we will have less revenue this year. Com. Plutchak asked about the staffing in Delta and Dickinson Counties. Com. Meintz asked what the commissioners think about the dollar value attached to this position. Com. Schei commented that was something that was established by a previous board and not this one. If this is a money issue then we need to look at it in the committee structure that we have. Com. Nelson commented that he wanted to make cuts in the budget, but did not receive the support of the Finance Committee. Com. Lang commented that in the last few days we racked up almost a \$1,000 in special meetings. Com. Plutchak asked about the thought of making this position a part-time position to save some money. Com. Lang commented that we had tried that in the past and it did not work because of the large amount of duties we were asking the person to perform. Com. Hafeman also commented on the idea of making this a part-time position. Com. Lang thinks that Brian Bousley should have some input in this matter. Com. Plutchak commented that you can eliminate a lot of employees because of technology. Com. Meintz commented that even if we look at a part-time position the board would need to eliminate this current position and create a part-time position.

Com. Nelson said we should talk to Dan Hass, but he feels it is an at will position so the board can reduce the hours if they want. Com. Plutchak thinks we need to seek legal counsel to see if we can reduce this position and also discuss it with Brian, but he knows that Brian is going to fight to keep the position. Com. Hafeman stated she would like to see this position eliminated as such, and then go to a part-time secretary position. Com. Plutchak commented that we could not fill the position because of the hiring freeze. Com. Lang asked why this position is a target. He hopes there is nothing political about this. Com. Krienke feels that we can address this particular situation at any time. He suggests that we should address the hiring freeze first so that we can have a backup plan to follow it up. Com. Hafeman wanted to make a motion to seek legal counsel for the purpose of altering this position to part-time. It was moved by Com. Hafeman, seconded by Com. Plutchak to seek legal counsel for the purpose of altering the Administrative Assistant position from full-time to part-time. Com. Lang asked if we needed a motion to ask for legal counsel. Com. Hafeman then asked if we actually need a motion. Com. Meintz stated we do not need a motion to just talk to Dan and Brian about this. Com. Hafeman rescinded her motion, and Com. Plutchak rescinded his support. Com. Piche commented that he is beginning to see how government doesn't work so well. "I find this a little humorous. You are willing to spend more money to do different functions yet you tell everyone you're trying to save money. I am sorry, I am seeing it as a bit of a game." "You're not willing to use reason from certain ones that try to explain. You decide we're going to do this and bang bang you get on the phone and try to create the consensus. That's not the way it should be done." He feels that things need to move a little slower and make sure things are done right, and that is not happening with this board.

Moved by Com. Hafeman, seconded by Com. Plutchak to table her original motion regarding the Administrative Assistant Position so that more research can be done. Motion was approved 7-1, Com. Lang voted nay.

Public Comment:

- Bob Desjarlais – Commented that the board changed its discussion from eliminating this position to making it part-time position. It upsets him that the board was chicken to take up the motion that was on the floor to eliminate the position. He also feels that Brian Bousley has not been fulfilling his job.

Moved by Com. Nelson, seconded by Com. Schei to adjourn at 2:31 p.m. Motion was approved 8-0.

Charlie Meintz, Chairman

Marc Kleiman, County Clerk