



# COUNTY OF OSCODA

Mr. Charles E. Varner, Jr, Chairman  
Ms. Jackie Bondar  
Mr. Joe Breugh

Mr. Tom McCauley, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Ted Handrich

Telephone (989) 826-1130

Fax Line (989) 826-1173

Oscoda County Government Center, 311 S. Morenci Ave, P.O. Box 399, Mio, MI 48647

## Official Minutes January 27, 2026

A Regular Meeting & Annual Organizational Meeting of the Oscoda County Board of Commissioner's was held on **Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.** open to the public and offered to join by teleconference and zoom; in compliance with Michigan Legislature requirements and as allowed by Public Act 228 of 2020, Open Meetings Act (Excerpt) Act 267 of 1976, MCL - Section 15.263, from the Oscoda County Courthouse Annex, 105 S. Court Street, Mio Michigan 48647.

### A. Call to Order

Commissioner Varner called today's "Public Meeting" to order at 10:00 a.m.

### B. Invocation and/or Pledge

Pledge to the Flag

### C. Roll Call of Board Members

Roll Call of Members:

Members Present:	Commissioners Breugh, Handrich, McCauley and Varner
Members Excused:	Commissioner Bondar
Public Present:	12
Public by Teleconference:	Unavailable
Zoom Participants:	Unavailable

### D. Approval of Agenda & Annual Organizational Meeting

The B.O.C approved the Agenda for **January 27, 2026**, as presented, with one addition to Unfinished Business/New Business.

Breugh/McCauley 2026-018 a motion to approve the agenda for **January 27, 2026**, B.O.C Regular Meeting, as presented, with one addition to Unfinished Business/New Business.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

### E. Approval of the Consent Calendar Items for January 27, 2026.

The B.O.C. approved the Consent Calendar Items for **January 27, 2026**.

McCauley/Handrich 2026-019 a motion to approve the Consent Calendar Items for **January 27, 2026**.

**Item #1** Unofficial Minutes for **January 13, 2026**, as presented.

**Item #2** Claims and Audit Docket for **January 27, 2026**, as received from the County Clerk's Office in the amount of **\$33,208.47**.

**Roll Call Vote:** Handrich, yes; McCauley, yes; Varner, yes; Breaugh, yes. **Motion Carried.**

F. Public Matters & Comments (Limited to three minutes per person)

N/A

G. Appointments:

- 1) Mr. Martin Osantowski, President AuSable Valley Engine and Tractor Club (AVETC) – Oscoda County Fairgrounds Discussion
  - o The Tractor Club requested a written agreement for Fairgrounds usage. Commissioner Breaugh noted a likely 5-year agreement made; Commissioner Varner confirmed that the Club's annual spring clean-up (valued at \$3,500) serves as in-kind payment for rent and storage.
  - o President Martin Osantowski reported oak wilt affecting trees near the arena. He also mentioned that the next site clean-up is set for the end of April 2026.
  - o The Tractor Club invited EMS/Officers to perform extrication demonstrations at the upcoming show.
  - o County Administrator Michelle Knepp and Maintenance Supervisor Rick Burton will draft a formal recommendation for the Board of Commissioners review and consideration.

H. Correspondence/Reports/Resolutions:

N/A

I. Unfinished Business/New Business:

- 1) Mr. Steve Defour, Oscoda County Drain Commissioner – Perry Lake Dam

McCauley/Handrich  
**2026-020** a motion to approve the quote from Mr. James T. Pawlowski, PE in the amount of \$500.00 to conduct an in-depth study on the Perry Lake Dam to determine the proposed top elevation to be paid out of the Gov Admin Drain Commission budget line 101-115-806.00, and so, amend the budget.

**Roll Call Vote:** McCauley, yes; Varner, yes; Breaugh, yes; Handrich, yes. **Motion Carried.**

- 2) Mr. Robert Stankiewicz, EMS Director – EMS Staffing

Handrich/McCauley  
**2026-021** a motion to acknowledge the hiring of Ms. Anna Nelson, as a part-time employee to fill the contingent EMT position, with a start date of Thursday, January 15, 2026, at a starting wage of \$18.30 per hour, not eligible for County benefits, and so, amend the budget.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

Breaugh/Handrich  
**2026-022** a motion to acknowledge the resignation from Mr. Michael Ohara, as a Contingent EMT position, effective Tuesday, January 27, 2026.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

McCauley/Breaugh  
**2026-023** a motion to acknowledge the resignation from Ms. Sandra Maples, as a Contingent EMT position, effective Tuesday, January 27, 2026.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

Breaugh/Handrich  
**2026-024** a motion to acknowledge the resignation from Ms. Memory Watson, as a Contingent EMT position, effective Tuesday, January 27, 2026.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

3) Sergeant Ryan Blair - Sheriff Department Staffing

Handrich/McCauley  
**2026-025** a motion to acknowledge the promotion of Deputy Norman LaBonte to the Sergeant position, with a starting wage of \$29.32 per hour, per the POAM Union contract, effective Sunday, January 11, 2026.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

4) Ms. Michelle Knepp, County Administrator – Government Center Flood Incident and Update

On Saturday, January 17, 2026, an equipment failure in the Oscoda County Government Center's fire suppression system caused widespread flooding and ceiling collapses. Damage was most severe in the County Administrator's, the Board of Commissioners Executive Secretary offices and the lobby. The Board of Commissioners room, and the offices of the Clerk, Treasurer, and Equalization departments were also affected.

- Servpro arrived within six hours to begin drying the building and performing "flood cuts" to drywall to prevent further damage.
- To protect sensitive vault data, Elected Officials and Department Heads chose to keep staff on-site rather than relocating. The building reopened to employees on Friday, January 23, 2026 and to the public on Monday, January 26, 2026.
- While the building is open, certain areas remain closed to researchers.
- Restoration and the use of temporary offices are expected to last 3–6 months.
- An ongoing investigation by insurance adjusters and engineers is currently underway to determine the specific cause of the system failure.

Breaugh/Handrich  
**2026-026** a motion to approve overtime hours for Mr. John Nelson and Ms. Angela Rizzardi for additional hours worked to get the Government Center building ready to be re-opened following the flood incident that occurred on Saturday, January 17, 2026.

**Roll Call Vote:** Varner, yes; Breaugh, yes; Handrich, yes; McCauley, yes. **Motion Carried.**

*Addition*

McCauley/Breaugh  
**2026-027** a motion to approve additional hours for Register of Deeds and Clerk staff for additional hours up to 5 hours per week for the week of January 26, 2026 and February 2, 2026, and so, amend the budget.

**Roll Call Vote:** McCauley, yes; Varner, yes; Breough, yes; Handrich, yes. **Motion Carried.**

Handrich/Breough  
**2026-028** a motion to approve the employees officed at the Government Center building to be paid for three 7-hour days for hours missed while the building was closed and relocating efforts were being conducted.

**Roll Call Vote:** Breough, yes; Handrich, yes; McCauley, yes; Varner, yes. **Motion Carried.**

5) Oscoda County Veterans Affairs Board – Board Member Appointment

Breough/Handrich  
**2026-029** a motion to appoint Jeremiah Sutton to the Oscoda County Veterans Board, filling the vacancy for the term ending December 31, 2027.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

6) Mr. Tom Pratt, Court Administrator – Trial Court Staffing

McCauley/Handrich  
**2026-030** a motion to acknowledge the hiring of Mr. Charles Black, as a part-time employee to fill Courthouse Security position, with a start date of Friday, January 23, 2026, at a starting wage of \$19.00 per hour, not eligible for County benefits, and so, amend the budget.

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

J. Financial:

1) Ms. Libby Marsh-Shephard, County Clerk – Jury Board

Handrich/McCauley  
**2026-031** a motion to allow Ms. Libby Marsh-Shephard, County Clerk to use the county credit card for supplies purchased through the United States Postal Service (USPS) up to \$5,000 to be paid out of the Jury Board budget.

**Roll Call Vote:** McCauley, yes; Varner, yes; Breough, yes; Handrich, yes. **Motion Carried.**

2) Acceptance of Sealed Bids

McCauley/Breough  
**2026-032** a motion to accept sealed bids for the Used 2017 Polaris 550 Adventure, VIN#SN1CEE BXHC724498, to be sold as is, and to be awarded to Mr. Scott Smith, in the amount of \$100.00 and for funds to be deposited into the 103 Sheriff Equipment budget, as requested.

**Roll Call Vote:** Varner, yes; Breough, yes; Handrich, yes; McCauley, yes. **Motion Carried.**

3) Mr. Robert Stankiewicz, EMS Director – EMS Equipment Payoff

Handrich/McCauley 2026-033 a motion to authorize Mr. Robert Stankiewicz, EMS Director to pay off the 2022 Demers F550 Type I MXP150 Ambulance, VIN# 1FDUF5HT5NDA24821 through Huntington National Bank in the amount of \$159,688.09, and so, amend the budget.

**Roll Call Vote:** Breagh, yes; Handrich, yes; McCauley, yes; Varner, yes. **Motion Carried.**

4) Mr. Robert Stankiewicz, EMS Director – EMS Equipment Purchase

Handrich/McCauley 2026-034 a motion to allow Mr. Robert Stankiewicz, EMS Director to accept the proposal from MacQueen Emergency and to sign a purchase agreement in the amount of \$309,878.00, to purchase a Type I Ford F350 4x4 diesel ambulance, to be financed with Huntington Bank, and so, amend the budget.

**Roll Call Vote:** Handrich, yes; McCauley, yes; Varner, yes; Breagh, yes. **Motion Carried.**

5) Ms. Michelle Knepp, County Administrator – Materials Management Planning Program Grant Agreement

Breagh/McCauley 2026-035 a motion to allow Ms. Michelle Knepp, County Administrator to enter into a grant agreement between Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) Materials Management Division and Oscoda County, with a project cost of \$74,109.50.

**Roll Call Vote:** McCauley, yes; Varner, yes; Breagh, yes; Handrich, yes. **Motion Carried.**

K. Public Comments (Limited to three minutes per person):

EMS Director Robert Stankiewicz reported on a recent emergency operation in a densely wooded, remote area. The rescue was successfully completed using the department's new off-road pickup truck. The incident served as a "proof of concept" for the vehicle, as its specialized capabilities were designed for rugged terrain and were essential for reaching the accident site and supporting the operation where standard ambulances could not maneuver.

Tri-Town Fire Chief Kevin Marino commended all personnel on-site during the flood incident at the Oscoda County Government Center on Saturday, January 17, 2026. He specifically highlighted the assistance of Maintenance Supervisor Rick Burton, noting his contributions were a "great asset" in managing the unfolding issues.

- Chief Marino reported a potential fire hazard involving the building's computer backup system during the flood, which was successfully mitigated; and
- To prevent future incidents, the Chief recommended the implementation of a Knox Box system which is a secure rapid-entry system for emergency responders; and
- Chief Marino requested a future meeting with the Board of Commissioners to discuss long-term planning, prevention strategies, and the implementation of updated fire safety procedures from a fire department standpoint.

Mr. Rob Pallarito, District Director for the Michigan 36th Senate District, reported that the Michigan budget process is underway. The legislature aims for a June 2026 completion to avoid delays and allow for the upcoming campaign cycle.

- He noted that it is a Governor election year and there are strong incentives for the state to finalize the budget in a timely manner to ensure government continuity.
- Kathy Schmaltz, State Representative's son passed away unexpectedly last week therefore the House is only scheduled for one session day this week due to an upcoming memorial service.
- Mr. Pallarito expressed sympathies on behalf of the Senate District Office regarding the flood damage sustained at the Oscoda County Government Center and offered his support to the county during the recovery.

L. Committee Reports:

Commissioner McCauley:

- Attended Greenwood Township Board Meeting
- Attended District Health Department #2 Meeting
  - The statewide septic code is being drafted. The state is asking the Health Departments to utilize the Michigan criteria for subsurface sewage proposals for non-residential septic systems.
- Attended Oscoda County Road Commission Meeting
  - Perry Lake Dam Discussion

Commissioner Breagh:

- Attended Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Meeting
- Attended Oscoda County Council on Aging Meeting
- Attended NE Michigan Consortium (Michigan Works) Meeting
- Attended Veterans Affairs Board Meeting

Commissioner Handrich:

- Reviewed Claims & Audit
- Attended Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Meeting
  - Welcomed new board member, Olivia Myers.
  - Changing meeting location to Big Creek Township instead of the District Library.
- Attended District Health Department #2 Meeting
- Attended M.O.A Landfill Authority Board Meeting

Commissioner Varner:

The flood incident that occurred on Saturday, January 17, 2026 at the Government Center building has resulted in the following changes:

- Office locations for employees have temporarily changed;
- The Board of Commissioner board meetings will be held in the Courthouse Annex building for approximately 3-6 months;
- The insurance agent, Engineers and Servpro were all onsite on day one of the incident;
- Clark Construction representative also came onsite to assess the damages and provide quotes.
- Attended Wellvance Executive Finance Committee Meeting
- Attended Wellvance Program Committee Meeting
- Attended Wellvance Buildings and Grounds/Facilities Committee Meeting
- Attended Community Mediation Services Board Meeting
- Attended Wellvance Board Meeting

- Eric Kurtz, CEO of Northern Michigan Regional Entity (NMRE) representative discussed the results of the community mental health lawsuit.
- Reviewed Claims & Audit
- Attended M.O.A Landfill Authority Board Meeting
- Reviewed M.O.A Landfill Claims & Account

M. Adjournment:

Handrich/McCauley a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 11:04 a.m.  
**2026-036**

4 yes: 0 no: **Motion Carried.**

The Board of Commissioners will hold their next scheduled "Regular B.O.C Meeting" on **Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.** held in the Board of Commissioners Boardroom.

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**Charles E Varner, Jr., Oscoda County  
Board of Commissioners Chairman**

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**Libby Marsh-Shephard, Oscoda County  
Clerk & Register of Deeds**