



# COUNTY OF OSCODA

Mr. Charles E. Varner, Jr, Chairman  
Ms. Jackie Bondar  
Ms. Libby Marsh

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 September 12, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Oscoda County Board of Commissioner’s was held on **Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.** “Open to the Public” and offered to join by Teleconference, from the Commissioner’s Boardroom, located at the Oscoda County Government Center Building, 311 S. Morenci Ave, Mio Michigan 48647.

### A. Call to Order

Commissioner Varner called today’s “Public Meeting” to order at 10:00 a.m.; including those joining the meeting by teleconference.

### B. Invocation and/or Pledge

Pledge to the Flag

### C. Roll Call of Board Members

Roll Call of Members:

Members Present: Commissioners McCauley, Varner, Handrich and Marsh  
Commissioner Bondar (remote attendance; voting not allowable per **Open Meetings Act MCL 15.261**)

Members Excused: N/A

Public Present: 10

Public by Teleconference: 7

Zoom Participants: 3

### D. Approval of Agenda

The B.O.C approved the Agenda for **September 12, 2023**, as presented, with one addition to Financial.

### E. Approval of the Consent Calendar Items for September 12, 2023.

The B.O.C. approved the Consent Calendar Items for **September 12, 2023.**  
**2023-245**

**Item #1** Unofficial Minutes for **August 22, 2023.**

**Item #2** Budget Amendments

**Treasurer:** a request to add a new budget line to the Emergency Management budget for Disaster Grant/Volunteer Expense 101.426.806.04.

**County Admin/HR:** a request to increase the Office Supplies budget line 101.172.729.00 in the amount of \$1,000.00, and so, amend the budget.

County Admin/HR: a request to increase the Equipment Non-Capital budget line 101.172.775.00 in the amount of \$800.00, and so, amend the budget.

Courthouse Grounds: a request to increase the budget line 101.265.977.01 in the amount of \$1,416.28, to cover the expense of removal and replacement of windows in the Courthouse Annex building, and so, amend the budget.

Health/Welfare: a request to increase the Health/Welfare budget line 101.600.832.00 in the amount of \$11,337.00, to be paid out of Contingency 101.890.965.00, and so, amend the budget.

**Item #3** General and Special Fund Budget Summary for **August 2023**.

**Item #4** Claims and Audit Docket for **September 12, 2023**, as received from the County Clerk's Office. Total Claims & Audit **\$78,683.18**.

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

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

N/A

G. Appointments:

- 1.) Ms. Diane Pelts, CEO of AuSable Valley CMHA – 2022 Annual Report Presentation, Lease Agreement Renewal, 2023 Services Report & County Appropriations Request for FY2024
  - County Appropriations Request for FY2024:
    - AVCMHA is requesting an annual appropriation of \$22,674.00, which remains the same as the previous year appropriation. The State has not released the rates for 2024, therefore they are moving forward on a continuation of their annual request. Once rates are released, we can prepare an amendment for 2024 appropriations.
  - 2022 Annual Report Presentation:
    - Goals in strategic planning: Community emersion and collaboration towards enhancement of crisis in emergency services, provision about patient therapy and other clinical services and assistance to community partners via expansion of secondary trauma initiatives.
    - Enhance community relations by implementing pilots to relieve first responders of crisis calls by assigning a full-time individual to work with 911 to incorporate staff to fill the need for mental health issues, to access the individual needs and hopefully eliminate to involvement of an officer/EMS to go onsite.
    - Shortages in workforces.
    - Since the pandemic the call rates have increased by approximately 100 more calls per month.
    - Possibility of establishing a mobile crisis care via Teams to support the mental health needs.
    - Working to place case workers inside of clinics throughout the counties in hopes of being able to provide support to the needs.
    - Raise community awareness, education and training relative to secondary trauma which often occurs with first responders, emergency service workers and therapist.
    - Distribution of over 250 Carter kits in Oscoda County, bridging the gap to provide for the needs of our community.
    - Training calendars are available and will be sent to the Board of Commissioners.
    - AVCMHA is looking into developing a wellness campus.
      - They recently toured the facility in Standish Michigan prison with the possibility of renovating the facility into a campus to be used for mental/physical health needs, juvenile detention, in-patient psychiatric hospital, Residency programs or

some sort of wellness campus. The condition of the building has been well maintained; however, it is a maximum-security prison, therefore it would take a tremendous amount of money to convert the facility, and it would take a collaboration of efforts with the State and Federal Government to make this happen as opposed to the amount of money that is being wasted by doing nothing. This is in the infancy stages.

Marsh/Handrich  
**2023-246** a motion to approve and renew the AuSable Valley Community Mental Health Lease Agreement effective October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024, and authorize the Chair to sign.

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

McCauley/Handrich  
**2023-247** a motion to authorize the request for 2024 appropriation of funds in amount of \$22,674.00 to be made payable to AuSable Valley Community Mental Health and paid out of the Health/Welfare Mental Health budget line 101.600.832.00 for the 2024 calendar year.

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

#### H. Correspondence/Reports/Resolutions:

##### 1.) Ms. Ann Galbraith, County Clerk – Early Voting Plan Discussion

Informative requirements following the adoption of Proposal 0022-2 Article 2 Section 4 of the Michigan Constitution concerning election procedures:

- creating a nine-day early voting period;
- requiring voters to present photo identification or sign an affidavit when voting in person or applying for an absentee ballot;
- requiring that military and overseas ballots postmarked by election day are counted;
- providing voters with a right to request an absentee ballot;
- requiring the state to fund prepaid stamps and a tracking system for absentee ballots;
- requiring the state to fund a number of absentee ballots drop boxes;
- providing that local governments can accept charitable and in-kind donations to assist with running elections as long as donations are disclosed and are not from foreign entities; and
- providing that election officials are responsible for election audits, requiring election audits to be conducted in public, and requiring election results to be certified based on votes cast.

Proposal 2 also added constitutional language saying that "harassing, threatening, or intimidating conduct," as well as laws, regulations, and practices, that have "the intent or effect of denying, abridging, interfering with, or unreasonably burdening the fundamental right to vote" are prohibited.

Discussion:

- Oscoda County has entered into an Agreement to hold early voting in one central location which is Big Creek Township Hall. Ms. Ronda Mundt has agreed to be the coordinator for the event. All townships have agreed to the location.
- Ms. Jenny Cronkright has applied for an early voting grant in the amount of \$66,000, which was due by September 8, 2023. Information was received on August 4, 2023 and there was no guidance given from the State on what the grant covers, the approval or the amount of

funds available. The Clerk's have met and discussed what is involved, and a huge part of the cost was for training and staffing.

- Commissioner Varner requested a breakdown of cost by Townships.
- Commissioner Handrich asked, "How is the voting tracked from different townships so that people cannot go to multiple townships and their votes not be duplicated?"
  - Ms. Ann Galbraith explained the process that is being put into place to prevent this issue.
  - The Clerk's office is working through all of the criteria/requirements of this mandate, as well as the loopholes with the mandate.
  - Internet/security is a concern.
- Early Voting will run for nine consecutive days of staffing over 6 precincts.

Michigan is now required to offer nine days of early in-person voting prior to statewide and federal elections **only**. (Townships have **the option** of offering early voting for local elections.) The first election for which early voting will be in effect is Michigan's 2024 presidential primary, whose date has not yet been finalized.

[Public Act 81 of 2023](#) implements early voting requirements and processes. Under the bill, a township can choose to operate the nine days of early voting on its own. The law also spells out two other options, allowing townships to share costs, equipment and personnel and join with other municipalities or with the county to cooperatively accomplish this new requirement.

If a township joins other municipalities or the county, they must enter into either a municipal or county agreement to do so. County clerks must notify all municipal clerks in their county at least 155 days before the first regularly scheduled statewide or federal election in an even-numbered year whether the county clerk intends to conduct early voting. The clerk must notify the county clerk 150 days before the election whether the township will conduct early voting on its own or in a municipal agreement or a county agreement. In addition, a township can choose to conduct early voting on its own for a presidential primary, and still enter into a municipal or county agreement for the remaining statewide and federal elections to be held in that year, as well as any elections held during the following year, and any other elections covered by the agreement. The township could enter in such an agreement until April 15 of the year of the presidential primary, either through an amendment to an existing agreement that was in effect for the presidential primary, if all parties to that agreement agree, or through a new agreement.

Township clerks must provide voters notice of their early voting site within 45 days of the election (if offering with the county, the county clerk may also provide the notice to all electors in the county).

#### I. Unfinished Business/New Business:

- 1.) Mr. Christopher Fuhr, Motor Pool Supervisor – Dispose of Motor Pool Vehicle

McCauley/Handrich      a motion to authorize the disposal of a Motor Pool vehicle; 2000 Chevrolet  
**2023-248**                      C1500 Silverado Pickup, VIN# 1GCEC14V0YE359405, as requested and  
authorize the Clerk's office to release the title.

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

2.) Historical Commission - Increase of Hours

Marsh/McCauley  
**2023-249** a motion to authorize Mr. Cody Rossen to work up to an additional 5 hours per week, as needed through the remainder of the 2023 calendar year, and so, amend the budget.

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

3.) Ms. Brenna Kirkpatrick, Court Administrator – District Civil Clerk Position

Handrich/Marsh  
**2023-250** a motion to acknowledge the hiring of Ms. Heather Blundell, as a full-time non-union employee to fill the position of District Civil Clerk Position, with a hire date of August 24, 2023, working a standard 35 hours per week at a starting wage of \$16.11 per hour, and eligible for County benefits.

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

4.) Mr. John Mattson, EMS Director – Staffing Changes

Marsh/Handrich  
**2023-251** a motion to acknowledge the change in status of Ms. Lisa Thompson who is moving from a full-time employee to a contingent Paramedic employee, with an effective date of September 5, 2023, and a starting wage of \$18.06 per hour, to be paid out of Contingent EMT Shifts budget line 210.651.704.10, and not eligible for County benefits.

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

J. Financial:

1.) FY2023 Secure Rural Schools – Amendment to allocation of Title I, II & III Funds

Marsh/Handrich  
**2023-252** a motion to receive a payment and to re-allocate the State payment from the Forest Service and commit to 80% of the payment to Title I Schools, 5% of the payment for Title II Federal Projects and 15% of the payment to Title III County Projects as recommended and authorize the County Treasurer to sign and re-submit the Michigan Election Form for Oscoda County before the deadline of September 25, 2023.

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

2.) Ms. Brenna Kirkpatrick, Court Administrator – Second Amendment to the Clean Slate Legislature; Set Aside Overtime Pay Motion

Marsh/McCauley  
**2023-253** a motion to authorize permission to the Circuit and District Court staff to work additional hours and/or overtime hours as needed, effective June 13, 2023 through November 30, 2023, not to exceed of which the State offering reimbursement to cover overtime cost associated with the “Clean Slate Legislature” requirements, as requested to be submitted with the review and approval of County Admin/Human Resources Director.

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

3.) Michigan Supreme Court – Judges Salaries

McCauley/Marsh  
**2023-254** a motion to increase the Trial Court budget line Probate Judge 101.130.702.01 in the amount of \$843.80 to allow for the 2% salary increase, governed by the State Supreme Court administrative office during the 2023 calendar year, and effective on October 1, 2023, and in accordance with Public Act 31 of 2016, and so, amend the budget.

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

4.) Termination of MSP Rental Agreement

Handrich/McCauley  
**2023-255** a motion to authorize a thirty-day written notice of termination to be submitted to the State of Michigan of the existing Rental Agreement between Oscoda County and the State of Michigan effective Sunday, October 15, 2023 and to adjust the rent for the partial month of October 2023 to fifty (50%) percent of the current rental rate which would be One Hundred dollars and 16/100 (\$100.16) for the partial month of occupancy, and authorize the Chair to sign.

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

Addition

5.) Commissioner Handrich - Compensation for Training the EDC Director

Handrich/McCauley  
**2023-256** a motion to authorize Ms. Rene Welser, BOC Executive Secretary to work up to an additional 5 hours per week for training purposes to the new EDC Director, at the current hourly rate of \$17.51 per hour and paid out of EDC Contracted Services budget line 101.728.806.00, effective date beginning August 28, 2023 through September 30,2023.

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

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

Mr. Jimmy Vance, Oscoda County Park Manager – Park Update:

- During a recent inspection of the County Park performed by Consumers Energy. Per Consumers requirements, they stated that it is mandatory to perform a lottery or something equivalent. This is the first time that this has been done in quite some time. Therefore, a lottery was held for all sites which included approximately 50 applicants that submitted. The names were drawn and the process was handled fairly, however; there are some angry campers.
- Beginning next year, there will be a requirement of \$50 application fee (non-refundable). He has done some research with other campgrounds to see what their application fee requirements were, and found the same.
- Unfortunate that Consumers is mandating the lottery process.
- Accomplishments at the Park

- Highland Lumber has delivered the lumber to begin work on the first set of stairs the waterway
- Submitted the first reimbursement request in the amount of \$9,000.00 to the Forestry Service for the three electric lots.
- Announcement of new arrival of baby girl!

Commissioners Marsh and Varner expressed her appreciation to Mr. Jimmy Vance, Park Manager for all that is being done to improve the County Park.

Ms. Ann Galbraith, County Clerk:

- Place Christmas Lights on tree outside of the Courthouse Government Center. They will be given to Mr. Joe Breough to be hung.
- Consumers Power is holding a dam meeting on September 12, 2023 via Zoom and another one on October 30, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. held at the Mio AuSable School Auditorium.

Ms. Norma Duprey, Comins Township (Public attendance):

- In regards to the Sheriff Department Building:
  - Question: Has this been added to the local newspaper to raise awareness in the community? Answer: Commissioner Varner responded by stating that ads have been placed in the local newspaper and explained how federal funds are being utilized to re-build as well as a bond to make up for the remainder of the necessary funds without going to the public for funding.

L. Committee Reports:

Commissioner Varner:

- Dennis Kauffman Memorial Airport – Tree Obstruction:
  - Marking trees;
  - Funding for tree removal;
  - Will be attending an in-person MAP meeting on October 11, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. in Lansing, MI;
  - Upset with the State; due to in-person attendance being required, when the MDOT Aeronautics team will be joining the meeting virtually;
  - Will be obtaining bids for tree obstruction removal (County liability);
  - Conference Call with Ms. Stephanie Ward and Ms. Rene Welser regarding the MDOT issues.
- Attended Substance Abuse Meeting
- Attended ASVCMH Meeting
- Attended NEMSCA Board Meeting

Commissioner McCauley:

- Attended District Health Department Meeting
  - New Covid variant, RSV and Flu viruses are on the rise.
- Received correspondence from Mr. Brian Bury, Natural River Review Board
  - Will be viewing property near the river to determine eligibility according to Natural River Review Board.
  - Plans to attend a meeting on October 5, 2023 which is when the Natural River Review Board will hold a vote.

Commissioner Marsh:

- Courthouse Annex Building Improvements:
  - Windows have been installed;

- A tree in memory of Mr. Barry Schantz was recently replaced along with a memory plaque that was mounted off of the ground and looks very nice;
- Grass is growing well next to ramp at the Courthouse, looks very nice;
- Tree removal – working with community service.
- Steiner Museum Update:
  - Working on the grounds and inventory;
  - Phase 1 of building addition;
  - 2024 Budget Planning to be presented to the upcoming board meeting.
- Requested Ms. Michelle Knepp to work with IT to develop remote access to Dropbox for the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Ann Galbraith complimented Commissioner Marsh and all of the helpers on the clean-up work that has been done at the Steiner Museum.

Commissioner Handrich:

- Attended Comins Township Meeting
  - Rejected the medical marijuana dispensary at the recent meeting.

Commissioner Bondar:

- Lost cell services and was unable to give report.

M. Adjournment:

Handrich/McCauley a motion to adjourn today’s meeting at 11:50 a.m.  
**2023-257**

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

The B.O.C will hold their “Regular B.O.C Meeting” scheduled for **Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.** held in the **B.O.C Boardroom or join the meeting by Teleconference** by dialing 989-826-1163 (Pin#353).

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

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**Ann Galbraith, Oscoda County  
 Clerk & Register of Deeds**