

Proceedings
Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
May 21, 2024

The Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Circuit courtroom. At the call to order the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call showed commissioners Nykanen and Bourdeau absent.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried to approve the minutes of the 04/21/2024 regular meeting.

Public comment: Norman Pestka and Rosie Riverter spoke on the need for a rural hospital. John Wallace introduced himself as a forest ranger from the Ottawa forest district in Ontonagon, Kenton and Bergland.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried on a 5-0 roll call vote to approve the agenda with the removal of #7 McMillan Township turn lane and addition of #7 park invoice from John Wilmes.

By motion of Store supported by Nousiainen and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve payment to John Wilmes in the amount of \$3,248.00 for park maintenance.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION 2024-06

IN OPPOSITION TO THE FY 2025 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION BUDGET FOR THE REDUCTION OF OPERATIONAL FUNDING TO THE MICHIGAN CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AND THE ELIMINATION OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE MICHIGAN AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM (MAEAP)

WHEREAS, Ontonagon County, at the southwest end of the "Copper Country," has an economy that was once heavily resource-based (mining and forestry) but today is more tourism-oriented. The county is third largest in land area in Michigan and has nearly the lowest population density. The county's economic welfare is intimately tied to its natural resources from 54.5 miles of Lake Superior shoreline in the North to the Ottawa National Forest in the South. Within the county are 1,200 miles of free-running streams and rivers, over 100 waterfalls and 41 lakes.

WHEREAS, preliminary results of the Western U.P. Tourism Economic Impact Analysis by the U-M ECONOMIC GROWTH INSTITUTE show that Tourism contributes about \$360 million annually to the local economy in the Western Upper Peninsula. Visitors typically spend four days in the area with the accompanying economic impacts for accommodations and services.

WHEREAS, Michigan's largest state park in landmass, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, with 60,000 acres, most in Ontonagon County, is one of the few large wilderness areas remaining in the Midwest. Miles of wild rivers and streams, secluded lakes, virgin timber, wildlife, waterfalls lake shore & recreation make this a destination and an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. For the history buffs, Keweenaw National Historical Park has multiple heritage sites in Ontonagon County including: Adventure Mining Company, Greenland; Old Victoria, Rockland; Ontonagon County Historical Society (Museum), Ontonagon; Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, Ontonagon.

WHEREAS, Ontonagon County has over 130 miles of ATV/ORV trails ready to be explored! Most of these trails are well-marked and easy to navigate and allow access to the back-county. In 2023 outdoor recreation vehicle manufacturer Polaris began a first-global electric ATV trail circuit, including four charging stations at strategic locations around the county. For the more physically oriented, there are 34 scenic trails to hike, bike, trail run, ski, snowshoe, or explore other outdoor activities in the Ontonagon area including a portion of the North Country Trail that runs from North Dakota to Vermont.

WHEREAS, Ontonagon County, with 27,000 acres of land in agriculture, listed a marked value of products sold at \$3 million. The largest percentage of farms comprises 50-179 acres, with crops making up 81% of share of sales and livestock, poultry and products comprising 19%. (2017 Census of Agriculture) Showing promise in the area are small, diversified farms supplying smaller volumes of locally marketed produce, poultry and meat products. These farms often utilize hoop houses to extend the growing season and pasture for cost efficient livestock production

WHEREAS, comprehensive natural resource stewardship is critical to bring more visitors to the area and to encourage new families and businesses to consider this county in their plans for the future.

WHEREAS, on February 7, 2024, Governor Whitmer released her Executive Budget Recommendations for fiscal year 2025 which included under the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) recommended budget a \$1,000,000.00 (one million dollar) cut to Michigan Conservation District's operating budget.

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2025 Budget recommendation of MDARD also recommended the termination of the local Conservation District Technicians who administer the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program and replace them with 24 State employees.

WHEREAS, this recommendation undermines the local conservation delivery system led by local Conservation Districts such as the Ontonagon County Conservation District, using the voluntary, non-regulatory, educational approach used all across the state to address natural resources concerns at the local level.

WHEREAS, Michigan passed Public Act 297 of 1937 to establish Conservation District's as local units of State Government to work with landowners in every county to address natural resource concerns driven by a five member publicly elected Board of Directors. These Boards establish conservation priorities based on their local needs and voluntarily work with landowners to address critical natural resource concerns, the only organization that can do this on private land with the trust of the landowner.

WHEREAS, Michigan Conservation Districts have been critically underfunded for decades. This has left many Conservation Districts without staff to implement programs or provide assistance. Because of this, Michigan Conservation Districts experience high employee turnover which undermines the success of programs and the ability to administer assistance to the public. At the same time, historically, for every \$1 state investment in Conservation Districts, \$4 is generated, making this a great return on tax dollar investment for the State!

WHEREAS, Michigan cannot effectively allocate federal funds from the Inflation Reduction Act and Title II of the Farm Bill due to the lack of funding provided by the State of Michigan. This leaves critical federal dollars on the table that is reallocated to other States that can deliver Farm Bill dollar more effectively

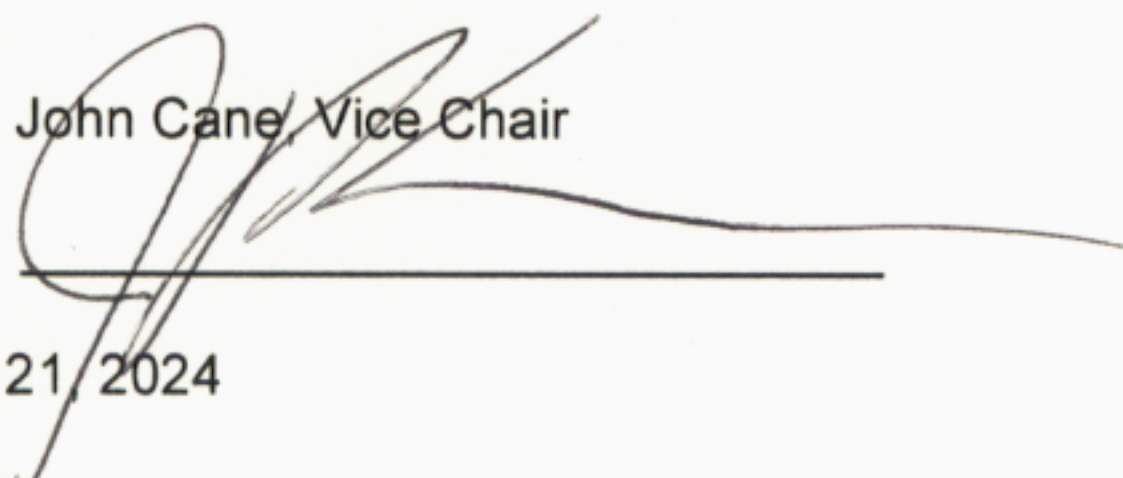
WHEREAS, the three (\$3) million total in state funding for each of the last three years is a far lower level of state support than any other state in the Great Lakes region. If the State funded Districts for \$13 million annually, it would provide about \$173,000 per district, allowing each district to hire a District Manager, a Conservation Planner, and provide employee benefits for all Conservation District employees.

THEREFORE, LET IT NOW BE RESOLVED, that the County of Ontonagon requests that the FY 2025 budget maintain the operational budget for Michigan Conservation District's at \$3,000,000.00 (three million dollars) and maintain the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) at its current capacity with local technicians employed by Conservation Districts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Ontonagon County implores the legislature to properly fund Michigan Conservation Districts and work with MDARD and the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) to find or develop a restricted funding source to provide Conservation District's with a year allocation of \$13,000,000.00 (thirteen million dollars)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be provided to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Senator Ed McBroom, Representative Greg Markkanen, as well as the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Director Tim Boring and Deputy Director Dathy Angerer and the Michigan Association of Counties.

Signed by: John Cane, Vice Chair

Signature: 

Date: May 21, 2024

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried to put Transit bus #115 up for sealed bids "as is".

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve quote from Northland Electric DS, Inc in the amount of \$1,208.00 to replace LED lights at the transit parking lot.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve the one year contract with CCMH and authorize the Transit Director to sign.

By motion of Store supported by Nousiainen and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve the purchase of a lawn mower for the Transit from Pat's Motor Sports in the amount of \$3,026.94.

By motion of Store supported by Nousiainen and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve the quote from Ruotsala Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$134,200.00 for doors, key fobs and wall at the courthouse.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried to update the Purchasing Policy in the general appropriations to read:

SECTION 4. PURCHASING

Various office supplies are available in central supply in accounting. Departments may purchase items in accordance with the purchasing policy if they are not available in central supply. Three quotes shall be obtained, when practical, for purchases over five hundred (\$500) dollars of any durable items, such as equipment, furniture and specialized projects. Quotes shall be submitted to the county clerk for county board approval before purchasing.

By motion of Store supported by Nousiainen and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve the quote from Window Outfitters to replace all of the windows in the courthouse for a cost not to exceed \$90 727.45.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried to appoint Al Warren and Donald Chastan to the Landbank Board for 3-year terms to expire in June 2027.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve opting out of the designated assessor as presented by the Equalization Director and authorize commissioners to sign.

By motion of Store supported by Nousiainen and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve the quote from AXON for 7 tasers in the amount of \$13,004.32.

By motion of Store supported by Nousiainen and carried on a 3-0 roll call vote to approve payment of the following:

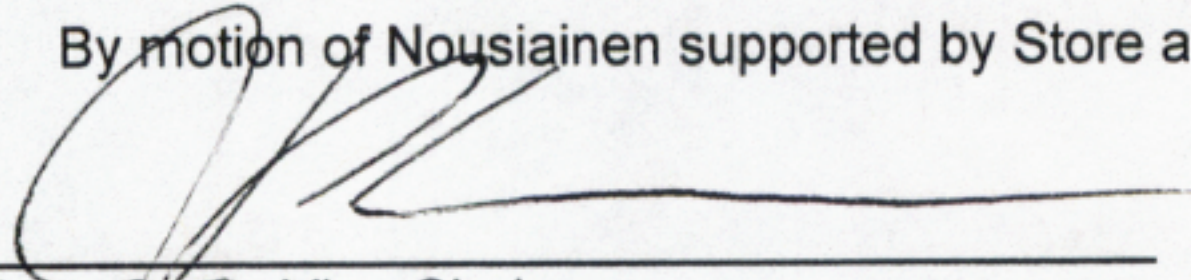
(101) General Fund \$59,919.50, (210) SONCO \$0.00, (211) OCAP Fund \$0.00, (215) FOC Fund \$0.00, (251) Land Bank Fund \$250.00 (256) ROD Automation Fund \$750.00, (257) Veteran's Van Fund \$0.00, (259) CAA Fund \$30,000.00, (260) Indigent Defense Fund \$0.00, (261) 911 Service Fund \$583.12, (263) CPL Fund \$270.89 (269) Law Library Fund \$3,267.38, (280) Senior Citizens Fund \$51,477.00, (288) Public Transit Fund \$11,102.18, (292) PCCF \$795.25 & (525) Foreclosure Fund \$0.00 totaling \$158,415.32.

Prepaid bills from 04/11/2024 – 05/15/2024 (101) General Fund \$121,663.79, (251) Land Bank Fund \$0.00, (253) 911 Equipment Fund \$5,000.00, (260) MIDC Fund \$21,771.74, (261) 911 Service Fund \$406.53, (263) CPL Fund \$680.00, (264) Corrections Officer Training Fund \$0.00, (269) Law Library Fund \$0.00, (271) Library Board Fund \$0.00, (288) Transit Fund \$34,317.39 (292) PCCF \$322.67, (296) VSO Fund \$0.00, (525) Foreclosure Fund \$2,818.42. Total prepaids \$186,980.54.

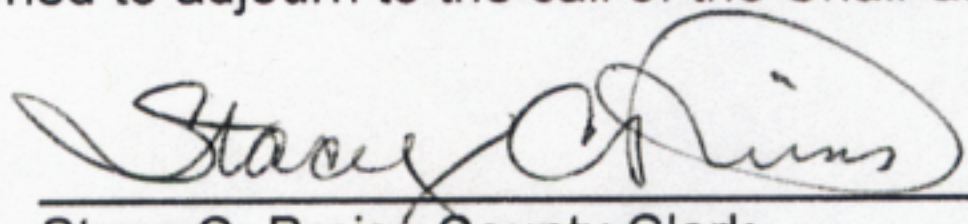
Payroll periods ending 04/12/2024, 04/26/2024 & 05/10/2024 (101) General Fund \$210,271.73, (260) MIDC Fund \$583.76 (261) 911 Service Fund \$3,096.67, (288) Transit Fund \$36,713.27, (292) PCCF \$2,003.02. Total payroll \$252,668.45.

- Committee reports
- Department Head reports
- Other business
- Agenda requests: none
- Public comment: Norman Pestka, Marlene Broemer and Rosie Riveter spoke on rural healthcare

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried to adjourn to the call of the Chair at 5:18 p.m.



John Cane, Vice-Chair



Stacy C. Preiss County Clerk

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Proceedings
Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
June 18, 2024

The Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Circuit courtroom. At the call to order the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call showed all commissioners present.

By motion of Nousiainen supported by Store and carried to approve the minutes of the 05/21/2024 regular meeting.

Public comment: none