

Isabella County Board of Commissioners  
Special Board Meeting Minutes  
July 15, 2014

Call to Order

Roll Call was given will Commissioners Green, John Haupt, Roger Trudell, Jim Horton, Jim Moreno, Frances Lichtman, and David Ling

It was moved by Commissioner Lichtman and seconded by Commissioner Trudell to approve the agenda as presented.

Public Comment: None

**Consideration of Funding Recommendations:** Isabella County Administrator Margaret McAvoy reviewed the essential principles of effective Budgeting as suggested by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting. She shared the Financial Comparison Budget to the actual numbers of the General Fund for FY 2014/15. Fund balance graph looking from 2009 through 2013. The Administrator reviewed the strategic planning that was done in the last Goal Setting meeting in 2013 (handout).

The Administrator reviewed the document Recommended Funding Priorities (handout).

**1. Retirement:** The MERS retirement plan for the County is currently funded at 78%. Commissioner Horton asked for clarification that there are employees under the MERS Defined Benefit or Defined Contribution and if it is time to offer a window for early retirement. The administrator stated that early retirement is not always a savings to the County. Early retirement can be a great benefit to the employee, but not always to the County. Commissioner Ling asked how many employees are under the Defined Benefit plan vs Defined Contribution. The Administrator will contact MERS and find out how much the County will need to fund in order to be funded at 80%, 85% and 90%. She also announced that the representative for the MERS conference will be from Employers (BOC) and one representative from the employees (all employees whether in Defined Contribution or Defined Benefit plans)

**2. Wage classification system:** The current system is 19 years old and the salary structure has not been maintained in 19 years. The job descriptions are out of date and the salary scale is stagnant. In order to recruit and maintain the best and brightest employees the County must stay competitive in salaries for their employees. She requested that the Board give her authorization to put out a Request for Proposal to evaluate the salary scale and job descriptions.

Commissioner Lichtman asked what kind of references or what evaluation tools the company

uses. Commissioner Ling would like to see a price range showing that the employees in Isabella County are really being paid less than those in other Counties. The Administrator stated that there are 7 similar counties that were set in Arbitration Act 312. Commissioner Ling wonders why the Rye classification system is outdated and not that we have anyone in the wrong classification. The value in the Rye system is that it avoided the perception that it was not arbitrary and black and white. Sheriff Leo stated that his department is having difficulty even getting recruits fresh out of Police Academy because the salaries for the Deputies are less than other law enforcement agencies in the state. It was moved by Commissioner Trudell and seconded by Commissioner Horton to direct the Administrator to put out an RFP for a Salary evaluation. Motion Carried

**3. County Building:** The Administrator is requesting the Board allow a Request for Proposals in hiring an Architect to do studies on technology, security, ADA compliance, modify restrooms and return with recommendations. It was moved by Commissioner Trudell and seconded by Commissioner Moreno to put out an RFP for an architect to come in and look at the building and make recommendations for improvements. Motion Carried.

**4. Capital Improvement Fund, Vehicles:** The Administrator would like to implement a vehicle rotation plan. The Emergency Manager is using his personal vehicle for emergency responses. She is also planning to write a policy for replacement schedule. Commissioner Horton clarified that \$200,000 be used to replace the MRF vehicle and trailer, the response SUV, and 3 cars for the Sheriff's department with the funds coming from Payment in Lieu of taxes. A capital improvement fund for vehicles will be established to fund the policy for replacement schedule. Commissioner Ling stated he is uncomfortable with the funds coming from Payment in Lieu of taxes for this purpose. He believes the use of those funds were to offset the less tax base when the Tribe puts land into Trust and the Brehm fund which were defined at the time of the settlement of the Tribal Lawsuit. He believes the funds should be used for infrastructure. Commissioner Lichtman wondered if a policy should be written for future use of PILT funds and Brehm funds. Commissioner Ling and Lichtman agree that the funds were intended to be used in the future to offset the lack of tax base. They are suggesting the money come from the delinquent tax fund or the PA123 fund. The Administrator stated that she wanted the Commissioners to see the balance in the funds and offer the sources of where the funds can come from to pay for the five items. The Administrator suggested that the Commissioners agree on the 5 concepts and less with where the money will come from as that will come before the Board again. It was moved by Commissioner Lichtman and supported by Commissioner Horton to approve the creation of a vehicle rotation plan and the purchase of and Emergency Manager SUV Response vehicle, a pickup truck and trailer for MRF, and three cars for the Sheriff's Department to Commissioner Horton supports the use of funds that are "one time" for these items that are a "one time" purchase.

5. Building Improvement Fund: The Administrator would like to use current Unassigned Fund Balances to begin a building improvement fund based on a % of the value of each building. The Animal Shelter, Detox center, jail, unsecured detention, MRF, County Building, Court Building are all buildings owned by the County. Currently there is a plan in place for the Health Department, State Police building. It was move by Commissioner Trudell and seconded by Commissioner Lichtman to establish a building fund for ongoing expenses. It was moved by Commissioner Lichtman and seconded by Commissioner Trudell for the 5 items discussed today as well as rewriting the personnel and purchasing policies as the strategic plan for the County.

#### Public Comment

County Clerk Minde Lux stated how wonderful the budget process was and thanked the Administrator for such a good experience.

Sheriff Leo stated he as well was happy with his experience working with the Administrator on the Budget.

The Undersheriff and Register of Deeds, Karen Jackson, echoed the sentiment.

Adjournment by the Chair at 6:55pm