

MECOSTA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MORNING SESSION – 10:00 A.M.

April 1, 2021

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER & QUORUM:

Marilynn Bradstrom _____
District 1

William Routley _____
District 7

Jerrilynn Strong _____
District 2

Linda Howard _____
District 3

Ray Steinke _____
District 4

Tom O'Neil _____
District 5

Wendy Nystrom _____
District 6

2. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Board Minutes – March 18, 2021

**4. PUBLIC MATTERS & COMMENTS:
(5 MINUTES PER PERSON LIMIT)**

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

6. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Employment Agreement/Administrator
2. Request for Permission to Submit Grant Request
3. Sobriety/Treatment Court Request to fill vacancy

7. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Pre-approved Bills: \$538,502.14
Non-approved Bills: \$53,362.16

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

9. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

**10. PUBLIC MATTERS & COMMENTS:
(5 MINUTES PER PERSON LIMIT)**

11. COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Mecosta County Park Commission Minutes – February 16, 2021
2. Mecosta-Osceola DHHS Minutes – February 23, 2021
3. Mecosta County DHHS Minutes – February 23, 2021
4. District Health #10 Minutes – February 26, 2021
5. Mecosta-Osceola DHHS Minutes – March 23, 2021
6. Mecosta County DHHS Minutes – March 23, 2021

12. MINUTES & REPORTS:

1. Building and Zoning – March 18, 2021
2. Drain Commission – March 10, 2021
3. EMS – March 18, 2021
4. Personnel Committee – March 18, 2021
5. Finance

13. RESOLUTIONS:

1. Berrien County Resolution - B2103185
2. Tuscola County Resolution 2021-05
3. Hillsdale County Resolution #21-035
4. Cheboygan County Resolution 2021-06
5. Cheboygan County Resolution 2021-07

14. MISCELLANEOUS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

15. ADJOURNMENT:

SCHEDULED APPEARANCE

10:15 – Shari Spoelman – 2020 MSU Annual Report

MECOSTA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**MARCH 18, 2021****UNAPPROVED**

Chair Marilynn Bradstrom called the afternoon session of the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners to order at 3:00 P.M. in Conference Room F of the County Services Building with access to the public via Zoom. All those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Commissioners present on roll call: Marilynn Bradstrom, Jerrilynn Strong, Linda Howard, Ray Steinke, Tom O'Neil, Wendy Nystrom and William Routley.

Others present: Paul Bullock, County Administrator and Marcee Purcell, Mecosta County Clerk.

REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AGENDA – ADDITIONS:

R. Steinke moved to approve the Agenda with additions to New Business 6.6 – Resolution #2021-07 Declaration of State of Emergency and 6.7 – Resolution #2021-08 Approving Parks submission of DNR Trust Fund Grant Application. J. Strong seconded; motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

J. Strong moved to approve the March 4, 2021 Board Minutes as presented. W. Nystrom seconded; motion carried.

PUBLIC MATTERS & COMMENTS:

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:**6.1 BROWER PARK – TRUST FUND GRANT**

Jeff Abel – Parks Superintendent – appeared before the Board to review the proposed Trust Fund Grant for Brower Park shallow water area. Jeff noted the total cost of the project will be \$402,000, but Parks only responsible for 30%. This project will improve the ADA accessibility to the boat launch facility.

W. Routley moved to approve submission of the Brower Park – DNR Trust Fund Grant by the Mecosta County Parks Commission. R. Steinke seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

6.2 LOCAL 911 SURCHARGE AMOUNT

Megan Erickson – appeared before the Board via Zoom regarding an increase in the 911 surcharge to \$3.00/month, effective July 1, 2021.

W. Routley moved to adopt and place on file Mecosta County Resolution #2021-06 – Establishing Local 911 Surcharge for July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; and authorized the County Clerk and Dispatch Director to sign and submit the proper paperwork to the MSP 911 Administrative Office. L. Howard seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

6.3 WHEATLAND FESTIVAL FUNDRAISER – COA

J. Strong moved to approve COA's request to organize and participate with a food wagon, to benefit the Meals on Wheels Program, at the annual Wheatland Festival September 9 – 12, 2021. W. Nystrom seconded; motion carried.

SCHEDULED APPEARANCE:

Karla Miller – Mecosta County Drain Commissioner – appeared before the Board to present the 2020 Annual Report. Karla gave highlights of projects that were completed throughout the year.

J. Strong moved to adopt and place on file the 2020 Mecosta County Drain Commissioner Annual Report. L. Howard seconded; motion carried.

6.4 MDOT 2021 VAN PURCHASE – COA

W. Routley moved to approve Cynthia Mallory's request to purchase a new van with funding through the MDOT FY 2021 grant and authorized the Chair to sign. J. Strong seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

6.5 DRAIN FEES AND RULE REVISION – DRAIN COMMISSIONER

Karla Miller, Drain Commissioner, appeared before the Board to request approval to hire an Engineer to revise the outdated Subdivision Drainage Rules/Storm Water Design Criteria and increase Permit, Review and Inspection Fees. L. Howard so moved. R. Steinke seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

6.6 MECOSTA COUNTY RESOLUTION #2021-07 - DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY

Paul Bullock appeared before the Board and presented Mecosta County Resolution #2021-07 – Declaration of a State of Emergency for the County of Mecosta. The purpose of this resolution is to allow public bodies within the County the option of continuing to hold virtual or hybrid meetings and remain in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

R. Steinke moved to adopt and place on file Mecosta County Resolution #2021-07 – Declaration of a State of Emergency for the County of Mecosta. W. Nystrom seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

**6.7 MECOSTA COUNTY RESOLUTION #2021-08 - APPROVING PARKS
SUBMISSION OF DNR TRUST FUND GRANT APPLICATION “BROWER
PARK WATER ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS”**

This resolution goes along with New Business 6.1, which approves the Mecosta County Parks submission of a DNR Trust Fund Grant application.

J. Strong moved to adopt and place on file Mecosta County Resolution #2021-08 Approving Parks Submission of DNR Trust Fund Grant Application “Brower Park Water Access Improvements”. W. Nystrom seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Software Request Prosecutor’s Office – Prosecutor

R. Steinke moved to approve a request from the Prosecutor to begin the purchasing process for the Karpel system, at a cost of \$54,125 for the 1st year and \$6,725 in year 2, with funding to come from Stimulus Relief Funds if appropriate. J. Strong seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

Administrator Agreement – Administrator

R. Steinke moved that a 3-year extension of the Administrator’s Employment Agreement be placed on the April 1st Board Agenda for action, with a recommendation for approval. W. Nystrom seconded; motion carried.

Other Business:

None

Listed Bills:

R. Steinke moved to pay the pre-approved vouchers in the amount of \$472,720.32 and approve and pay non-approved vouchers in the amount of \$57,275.94. W. Routley seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

W. Routley reported attending Planning and Zoning Meeting, Drain Committee, Area Agency on Aging/Proposal Review, Central Dispatch Meeting, Finance Committee, COA Meeting, Personnel Committee and today’s Commission Meeting.

Personnel Committee:

Sheriff requested to bring in a 15-year law enforcement veteran to the Sheriff’s office at the 3-year step, per the previously approved Letter of Understanding. The Committee approved the request.

L. Howard reported attending Wheatland Township Meeting, Human Services Collaborative Meeting, Drain Committee, Building & Zoning Committee and today’s Commission Meeting.

Building & Zoning:

L. Howard moved to approve a request that the Administrator be authorized to approve the early termination of the Rental Inspection Contract with the City of Big Rapids as requested. J. Strong seconded; motion carried.

T. O'Neil reported attending Mecosta Township Meeting, Austin Township Meeting, Drain Committee, District 10 Health Meeting, Building & Zoning Committee, EMS Committee and today's Commission Meeting.

W. Nystrom reported attending 2 Big Rapids Social Equity Initiative Meetings, Drain Committee, Wise Board Meeting, Human Services Collaborative Meeting, City of Big Rapids Meeting, Building & Zoning Committee, Personnel Committee and today's Commission Meeting.

J. Strong reported attending Road Commission Meeting, Finance Committee, Martiny Township Meeting, Sheridan Township Meeting, Personnel Committee, EMS Committee, COA Meeting and today's Commission Meeting.

EMS:

J. Strong moved to approve the February 2021 write-offs of \$91,175.84, non-contractual write-offs of \$472.54 and collections write-offs of \$7,932.44. R. Steinke seconded; motion carried.

J. Strong moved that Mr. Ladd be authorized to accept the demo ambulance proposal from Kodiak Emergency Vehicles for \$209,886, sign the contract and process the down payment of \$20,988.60. R. Steinke seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

J. Strong moved that a Letter of Understanding be offered to the Union bringing the regular part-time EMTs into MERS eligibility. R. Steinke seconded; roll call vote: 7 yeas, 0 nays; motion carried.

J. Strong moved to approve Mr. Ladd's request to convert 1 part-time EMT position to full-time to assist with the current challenges of filling slots. R. Steinke seconded; motion carried.

J. Strong moved to approve Mr. Schroeder's request to split the inter-op project order for the Homeland Security Grant to bring the total purchase under the amount already approved. R. Steinke seconded; motion carried.

R. Steinke reported attending Millbrook Township Meeting, Hinton Township Meeting, LEPT Meeting, Aetna Township Meeting, Deerfield Township Meeting, Finance Committee, MOTA Meeting, EMS Committee and today's Commission Meeting.

M. Bradstrom reported attending Dragon Executive Meeting, Finance Committee, Parks Meeting, City/County/Township/Ferris Meeting, Colfax Township Meeting and today's Commission Meeting.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Paul Bullock reported on the following:

- Parks Commission on Tuesday adopted a resolution to request filing a petition with Unemployment Insurance Agency to be recognized as a seasonal employer. Requesting authorization to submit that application to UIA, on behalf of the County, requesting Mecosta County Parks be declared a seasonal employer. J. Strong so moved. W. Routley seconded; motion carried.
- Newaygo County wants to know if there's interest in a WMCMA Meeting in July at an outside venue? Yes, Board is interested.
- Regarding the Contract with the City for inspections –do we want to bill for 9 days over what was just billed? No bill.

PUBLIC MATTERS & COMMENTS:

None

MISCELLANEOUS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

COMMUNICATIONS, MINUTES & REPORTS, RESOLUTIONS:

J. Strong moved to accept and place on file Communications #1-2, Minutes & Reports #1-3 and Resolutions #1-3. W. Nystrom seconded; motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

R. Steinke adjourned to the next regular scheduled meeting or call of the Chair at 4:01 P.M.



Marcee M. Purcell, Mecosta County Clerk and
Clerk for the Board of Commissioners

Marilynn Bradstrom, Chair
Mecosta County Board of Commissioners

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT: AMENDED

THIS AGREEMENT, amended entered into this 1st day of April 2021, by and between the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners (hereinafter referred to as the County) and Paul E. Bullock (hereinafter referred to as the Employee).

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the County requires the services of a County Controller/Administrator to assist the Board of Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, the Employee desires to provide such services;

NOW THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the mutual covenants hereinafter contained, IT IS HEREBY AGREED by and between the parties as follows:

1. **Employment** The Employee is hereby employed as the County Controller/Administrator to the Board of Commissioners effective January 1st, 1996.
2. **Duties** The Employee shall perform all duties as outlined in the attached Job Description.
3. **Compensation** The Employee shall be compensated for his services on a bi-weekly basis, based upon a yearly salary for 2019, 2020, and 2021, as established in the annual Salary Resolution. In the event of termination of employment, the Employee shall be paid pro-rated to the effective date of his termination.
4. **Benefits** The Employee shall receive insurance and other economic fringe benefits, equal to or greater than those provided for under the Mecosta County Personnel Policy.
5. **Employee's Best Efforts** The Employee agrees that at all times he will faithfully and to the best of his ability, experience, and talents, perform all the duties that may be required of him. The Employee shall report to the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners and/or such other representatives as may be designated by the County.
6. **Compliance With the Law** The Employee shall perform all of his respective duties and obligations in complete compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, laws, ordinances, rules and regulation, and shall adhere to all policies and procedures adopted by the County.
7. **Modification of Agreement** Modifications, amendments or waivers of any provision of this Agreement may be made only by the formal resolution of the County, and shall be reduced to writing and signed by the parties hereto.
8. **Disregarding Titles** The titles of the paragraphs set forth in this Agreement are inserted for convenience or reference only and shall be disregarded when construing or interpreting any of the provisions of this Agreement.
9. **Complete Agreement** This Agreement constitutes the complete Agreement concerning the employment arrangement between the parties and shall, as of the effective date hereof,

supersede any and all prior agreements, oral or written, between the parties, if any. It is understood and agreed that this Agreement shall supersede and take precedence over any other document, handbook, benefit plan or other material which could otherwise be construed as being contractual in nature, whether in existence prior to, currently, or subsequent to the execution of this Agreement, unless such other document, handbook, plan or material is made expressly applicable to the Employee by the formal resolution of the County. It is further understood that no County personnel has the authority to enter into any employment agreement with the Employee for any specified period of time, or to make any agreement contrary to the provisions herein, except when the same is approved by the County through a formal resolution.

10. **Return of Property** Upon termination of employment, the Employee shall return all documents, correspondence, files, papers or property of any kind, in all type or nature pertaining to the County, which the Employee may have in his possession or control, and to sign a statement verifying return of such property.
11. **Agreement Term** The term of this agreement shall be for a period of approximately three year(s) commencing July 31, 2021. The Employee shall be notified at least one hundred and twenty days prior to the termination of this Agreement that this contract will be extended or terminated. If no action is taken prior to that one hundred and twenty day period, this contract will automatically be renewed for one more year. Prior to July 1st of any year The Board of Commissioners may offer to extend the agreement term for a period not to exceed three years from the following July 31st.
12. **At Will Termination** Should the Employee be terminated for any reason other than just cause, the Employee shall be entitled to one (1) month severance pay for each year of service, not to exceed nine (9) months in total.
13. **Invalid Provisions** If any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid, the remainder of the Agreement shall not be affected thereby, except where the invalidity of the provision would result in the illegality and/or unenforceability of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement on the this 1st day of April 2021.

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

Witness

Marilynn Bradstrom, Chairperson
Mecosta County Board of Commissioners

Witness

Paul E. Bullock
Controller/Administrator
Mecosta County, Michigan



COUNTY OF MECOSTA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
400 ELM STREET, BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307
Phone (231) 796-2505 Fax (231) 592-0121
www.mecostacounty.org

Marilynn Bradstrom
District #1

Jerrilynn Strong
District #2

Linda Howard
District #3

Raymond Steinke
District #4

Tom O'Neil
District #5

Wendy Nystrom
District #6

William Routley
District #7

Paul E. Bullock
Controller/Administrator

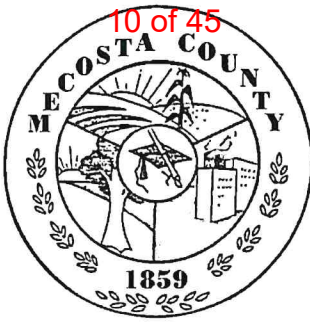
To: Mecosta County Board of Commissioners

From: Paul E. Bullock, Administrator *PJB*

Date: March 25, 2021

Re: Request for Permission to Submit Grant Request

The Dragon Trail Committee is looking at a variety of potential funding sources (grants) for the continuing trail project. Newaygo County is acting as the requestor for most of these. However, one of these is the Mecosta County Community Foundation. I am requesting permission to submit a grant request of up to \$20,000, for trail construction, to the Foundation for their consideration.



COUNTY OF MECOSTA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
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District #6

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District #7

Paul E. Bullock
Controller/Administrator

To: Mecosta County Board of Commissioners

From: Paul E. Bullock, Administrator *PAB*

Date: March 25, 2021

Re: Sobriety/Treatment Court Request to fill vacancy

I am requesting, on behalf of the Court, approval to fill a pending vacancy in the part time Field Service Worker position. The current FSW has accepted full time employment elsewhere.

Park Commission Meeting

February 16, 2021

5:00 PM – Virtual

Meeting called to order at 5:00

Roll Call

Members Present: Mrs. Bradstrom, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Hatkowski, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Miller, Mr. O’Neil, Mr. Roels, Mr. Stanek, Mr. Stratton, and Mr. Vogel. **Others Present:** Jeff Abel - Superintendent, Erin Bean - Operations Manager

Approval of Agenda - Add number 12 under Finance: Brower Shallow Water Channel. Mrs. Bradstrom moved, seconded by Mr. Vogel to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Minutes of January 19th Park Commission Meeting – Mr. Griffith moved, seconded by Mr. Vogel to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Public Comment: None.

Reports and Updates

Superintendent’s Updates - The Superintendent updated the Commission on 18 current and completed projects.

Michigan Muskie Alliance Meeting – Conversations with the president of the Michigan Muskie Alliance are continuing after the organization contacted us about possible partnerships in raising Muskie in the Paris Park ponds. With the failure of dams near midland there is some opportunity for additional stocking in our region. Limited funding may be available to assist with making the ponds usable again.

People’s Choice – List of accolades earned through the People’s Choice Awards were sent out to Park Commission members. The Superintendent takes great pride in the awards and appreciates the recognition, and is especially proud of the Honorable Mention for the second time as best place to work in Mecosta County.

Water Testing Notice – We received a notice in the last week that our Nitrate tests for Tubb’s Mainland and Tubb’s Island were not accepted through the Health Department. We will have to post a violation notice until we can take the tests this season when the park opens in late March or early April. Once the results come in, we will be able to remove the violation notices.

Brower Park Dragon Trail Parking Area – I have met with a contractor on site at Brower who is evaluating the trees in the section where the parking lot will be installed. The contractor wants to evaluate if it would be worthwhile to remove the trees, or if he would be able to include the removal in a full construction proposal to make it beneficial for him to complete the work.

Reservations Opening and Revenue Report – Early trends are showing an increase in reservations again this year. Vehicle Permit revenue is over \$3,000 YTD; last year at this time was \$165, which tells us that opening access for ice fishing and the Brower Loop of Michigan’s Dragon Trail are being utilized by the community and providing revenue to the parks.

Dragon Trail Updates – Construction, Fundraising, Marketing – This year’s build section for the Mecosta County Township Grant is out for bid at this time. Options to approve who will be building the trail (from Davis Bridge to Brower Park) in Task Order 3 will be coming soon for approval. March agenda will include final approval of a recommendation from the Dragon Trail Executive Committee.

Incident/Accident Reports – None to Report.

Correspondence – None to Report

Committee Actions

Masterplan

Millage Proposal Updates – Our Millage Proposal was approved by the County Commission to be on the ballot in May for a millage request to support day use activities in the parks.

Finance

Family Group Camp Lodge – Seating – Quotes were presented for six 12-foot cafeteria style folding tables. The Finance Committee's recommendation was to accept the quote from the lowest bidder with an upgrade to plywood structure for durability. Mr. Stanek moved, seconded by Mrs. Bradstrom, to adopt the Finance committee recommendation to purchase from Today's Classroom LLC. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Millage Resident Benefits/Discounts – Options for discounts to residents of Mecosta County which would be included as part of the millage proposal were discussed. It was determined to spend more time reviewing suggestions and making final decisions through a Committee of the Whole meeting as early as next week.

Vehicle Purchase – Mr. Stanek moved, seconded by Mrs. Bradstrom to approve the recommendation from the Finance Committee to accept the bid from MiDeal for a 2020 GMC Sierra 1500 4x4 for a base price of \$30,701, (MSRP \$40,595.00), with added accessories for a total of \$34,458. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

CVB – Dragon Pass – Mr. Stanek moved, seconded by Mr. Griffith to approve the Finance Committee's recommendation to accept the CVB 's proposal changes for the Dragon Pass as presented. Motion carried.

VOIP Phone Proposal - Netsmart proposal for new phone services in the administration office and parks was reviewed. Mr. Stanek moved, seconded by Mrs. Bradstrom to accept the recommendation from the Finance Committee to enter into the contract with Netsmart of a \$214.35 monthly fee and \$1409.60 initial setup . Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

IT Services Updates – Proposal – A proposal for general IT Services from Netsmart Plus of Applied Imaging was reviewed. The Finance Committee recommended to gather additional quotes so the Park Commission may make a determination on how to move forward.

Picnic Table Quote – Four quotes for new picnic tables were reviewed by the Finance Committee and a recommendation to purchase the tables from Jamestown Advanced Products was presented. Mr. Stanek moved, seconded by Mr. Griffith to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to approve the purchase from Jamestown Advanced Products at an amount of \$24,652 for 73 new tables. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Brower Spring 2021 Water Levels – Consumer's representative was contacted regarding a more significant draw down of the reservoir. Typical winter drawdown is 4-6 ft, we have been notified this winter the draw down will be to 10 feet. Water levels will stay down until it must begin to be re-filled to accomplish being back to normal operating level prior to Memorial Day. Our launches may not be usable by most visitors until a few weeks prior to Memorial Day, and it's possible that no one will be able to launch for the first few weeks of the season.

Administration Building Proposal and Renovation Plan – waiting on proposal from Prein & Newhof.

School Section Lake – Family Group Camp Septic Renovation – An update is being required to the tank for grey water from the Family Group Camp Lodge. The current proposal is to trench in a 2" pipe and pump the wastewater to the other drain field at the top of the hill, with a grease trap installed prior to the drain field. Permits will be required from Mecosta County

Drain Commission and EGLE. Mr. Stanek moved seconded by Mrs. Bradstrom to accept the recommendation from the Finance Committee to move forward with the quote from Security Septic for \$9,582.00 + permits. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

School Section Lake – Campground Expansion Proposal - waiting on proposal from Prein & Newhof.

Brower Park Shallow Water Launch & Parking proposal – The commission recommends that the grant proposal from Prein & Newhof be sent to the Building and Grounds Committee. Finalized proposal would need to be approved at the March commission meeting and then move forward to the County Commission at their second March meeting.

Personnel

Drug Testing Process – After much discussion, a recommendation has been made to keep our Drug Free Workplace Policy in effect but consider the possibility of removing drug testing requirement as a condition of employment. Drug tests would still be required following a work-related injury or accident. Park Commission recommends sending issue to the Personnel Committee who will bring a recommendation to the next Park Commission meeting.

Assistant Operations Manager Position - Our goal is to have an employee in the position by the end of the week.

Financial

Financial Report – Rev & Expenses, Cash Spreadsheet, and Year-to-Year reports were reviewed.

Approval of Bills – Mr. Stanek made a motion, seconded by Mr. O’Neil, to accept the bills as presented for a total of \$93,729.09. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Public Comment* (general comments): None

Other Business:

Next Meeting is March 16th at the County Services Building in Big Rapids or Zoom.

Meeting of the Whole, Personnel Committee Meeting, Building and Grounds Committee Meetings will be scheduled within the next few days.

Adjournment at 5:59.

Mecosta-Osceola County Department of Health & Human Services**Joint Board Meeting Minutes**

February 23, 2021

PERSONS PRESENT:

Carolyn Curtin, Osceola County Chairman
Janice Covey, Mecosta County Chairman
Susan Haut, Mecosta Vice-Chair
Glenn Bluhm, Osceola County Vice-Chair
Carole Edstrom, Osceola County Board Member
Jan McBrien, Mecosta County Board Member
Sally Momany, Osceola County Commissioner
Jennifer Schmidt, Acting-Director
Wendy Nystrom, Mecosta County Commissioner

The Meeting was called to order by Ms. Curtin at 9:04 am via teleconference.

Minutes from the January 26, 2021 meeting were reviewed and motion to approve made by Ms. Covey with support by Ms. McBrien. Motion Carried.

The Agenda was reviewed and motion to approve by Ms. McBrien. Supported by Ms. Covey. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Nystrom stated the COVID-19 protocols continue at Mecosta County Commissioner meetings.

LOCAL OFFICE ISSUES/Directors Report:

Acting-Director, Jennifer Schmidt, updated the Boards on:

- Vaccinating of frontline employees is in progress. Coordinating with the Health Department on the readiness of the vaccines.
- Local staffing transitions and assignments. Director position for Mecosta-Osceola County DHHS posted to NEOGOV.
- Elizabeth Hertel is the new MDHHS Director. Ms. Hertel replaces Robert Gordon who resigned. Stacey Bladen temporarily takes over the Director role in the Children Services Administration.
- May 1st is the new Back to Work-site date for State Employees.
- New daily online Health screen checklist for State Employees.
- Children's Services is piloting Needs Assessment for neglect cases in residential placements.
- Assistance Payments unit currently is short staffed on the account of staff transitions and medical leaves. However, metric benchmarks continue to be achieved.

MCSSA:

- Ms. Covey stated the recent Listen and Learn presentation on Human Trafficking was insightful.
- MCSSA/MCSCET Legislative Virtual Conference is March 11, 2021.



2021 MCSSA
legislative conference

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Curtin at 9:34 a.m. with support from Ms. Edstrom. The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Jennifer Schmidt, Acting-Director
Secretary to the Board

Carolyn Curtin, Osceola County Chairman

Janice Covey, Mecosta County Chairman

Mecosta-Osceola County DHHS

Board Minutes

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Darren Hengesbach, Recording Secretary

Mecosta County Department of Health & Human Services

Board Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2021

PERSONS PRESENT: Janice Covey, Mecosta County Chairman
Jan McBrien, Member
Susan Haut, Vice-Chairman
Wendy Nystrom, Mecosta County Commission
Jennifer Schmidt, Acting-Director

The Meeting was called to order by Ms. Covey at 9:35 am via teleconference.

Minutes from the January 26, 2021 meeting were reviewed and motion to approve made by Ms. McBrien with support by Ms. Haut. Motion Carried.

The Agenda reviewed and motion to approve by Ms. McBrien, Supported and Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Ms. Nystrom stated a few of the County Commissioners received vaccinations.

FISCAL:

A. Financial Report:

The January Financial Report reviewed. A motion to approve was made by Ms. McBrien. Supported by Ms. Haut. Motion Carried. (Ms. Covey praised the excellent report preparedness by Eileen Tucker)

COUNTY SPECIFIC BUSINESS:

Please see Joint-Meeting minutes

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Covey at 9:46 a.m. with support by Ms. Haut. The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 10:00 am.

Jennifer Schmidt, Acting Director
Secretary to the Board

Janice Covey, Chairman

Darren Hengesbach, Recording Secretary



BOARD OF HEALTH

Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2021

Forward/Handout: Copy of email from Dr. Jennifer Morse with analysis of communicable disease. Document forwarded after meeting materials were sent. Copies distributed to those attending meeting in person.

I. **Call to Order:** Jim Maike, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

II. **Roll Call**

Members Present – In Person: Jim Maike, Judy Nichols, Tom O’Neil, Richard Schmidt, Ray Steinke, Hubert Zuiderveen

Members – Online: Ron Bacon, Robert Baldwin*, Betty Dermeyer, Paul Erickson, Pauline Jaquish, Bryan Kolk, Nick Krieger, Phil Lewis, Dawn Martin, Martha Meyette, Roger Ouwinga, Shelley Pinkelman, Gary Taylor

**During roll, Robert Baldwin announced he will be the regular member and Dave Comai will be the alternate for Kalkaska County*

Member Excused: James Sweet

Alternate – Online: Dave Comai

Staff – In-Person: Kevin Hughes

Staff – Online: Jane Drake, Christine Lopez, Dr. Jennifer Morse

III. **Approval of the Agenda.** Motion by Ray Steinke, seconded by Hubert Zuiderveen, to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried.

IV. **Approval of the Meeting Minutes.** Motion by Ray Steinke, seconded by Judy Nichols, to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2021, meeting. Motion carried.

V. **Public Comment:** None

VI. **Committee Reports**

A. Executive Committee. No report.

B. Finance Committee. Did not meet. Christine Lopez, Administrative Services Director, reviewed the financial report for January 31, 2021. The balance sheet showed a total fund balance of \$7.5 million. Total revenues for the month were almost \$1.6 million, with expenses slightly higher and just over \$1.6 million. Lopez said almost \$400 thousand had not been received from billings for the COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

1. *Approve Accounts Payable and Payroll.* Motion by Richard Schmidt, seconded by Ray Steinke, to approve the January accounts payable and payroll total of \$1,584,260.60.

Roll Call Vote

Ron Bacon	Yes	Nick Krieger	Yes	Roger Ouwinga	Yes
Robert Baldwin	Yes	Phil Lewis	Yes	Shelly Pinkelman	Yes
Dave Comai	Yes	Jim Maike	Yes	Richard Schmidt	Yes
Betty Dermeyer	Yes	Dawn Martin	Yes	Ray Steinke	Yes
Paul Erickson	Yes	Martha Meyette	Yes	Gary Taylor	Yes
Pauline Jaquish	Yes	Judy Nichols	Yes	Hubert Zuiderveen	Yes
Bryan Kolk	Yes	Tom O’Neil	Yes		

Motion carried.

- C. Personnel Committee: No report. Kevin Hughes advised the Board a Personnel Committee meeting will be scheduled in early March. He said he had matters to present to the Committee for action at the March 26 full board meeting.
- D. Legislative Committee. Kevin Hughes reported on House Bill 4049. He said the bill would create criteria for schools to open or close. It would also remove authority on school closures from the State and assign it to the local health departments.

VII. Administrative Reports

- A. Medical Director. Dr. Jennifer Morse shared an analysis she completed on trends in communicable disease reports from 2019 to 2020 in the 19 counties she serves as the Medical Director for the local health districts. According to the analysis, reports of all 70 communicable diseases not including influenza declined by 52.1% during the period in the 19 counties. State totals for the same disease reports and period showed an overall decline of 32.7%.

Morse said the declines could be due to less congregating and fewer gatherings due to State emergency orders, and implementation of the use of protective equipment and social distancing to prevent the spread of disease.

- B. Health Officer. Kevin Hughes reported the number of COVID-19 cases in the DHD#10 jurisdiction began to decline. In addition, the rate of positivity from COVID-19 tests also decreased. He summarized the report of COVID-19 vaccines included with the meeting materials. He noted as of the day before the Board meeting, the total number of the vaccine doses administered was just over 33 thousand.

He said the vaccine waitlists for priority groups such as first responders and teachers were just about finished. Plans were in place to begin vaccinating the next prioritized group of food processing employees and seasonal agricultural workers. He explained the State required that 75% of the vaccine doses allotted were to be used for the population aged 65 years and older.

Hughes provided other updates:

- PFAS contamination in Oceana County. Water filters being provided to affected residents.
- Oral health screening bill proposed by Rep. VanSingel and recently passed. Will not go into effect until funding is available.
- The financial audit report will be presented at the March meeting along with an amended budget.

Other questions about vaccines being administered, priority groups, virus variants, and reactions were discussed by Hughes and Dr. Morse.

VIII. Other Business

Jim Maike called on members to voice comments or other questions.

IX. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Friday, March 26, at 10:00 a.m.

X. Adjournment

Jim Maike adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Jim Maike, Chair

Date

Judy Nichols, Secretary

Date

Mecosta-Osceola County Department of Health & Human Services

Joint Board Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2021

PERSONS PRESENT:

Janice Covey, Mecosta County Chairman
 Susan Haut, Mecosta Vice-Chair
 Glenn Bluhm, Osceola County Vice-Chair
 Jan McBrien, Mecosta County Board Member
 Sally Momany, Osceola County Commissioner
 Jennifer Schmidt, Acting-Director
 Wendy Nystrom, Mecosta County Commissioner

ABSENT:

Carolyn Curtin, Osceola County Chairman
 Carole Edstrom, Osceola County Board Member

The Meeting was called to order by Ms. Covey at 9:02 am via teleconference.

Minutes from the February 23, 2021 meeting were reviewed and motion to approve made by Ms. McBrien with support by Ms. Haut. Motion Carried.

The Agenda was reviewed. A motion was made to amend Agenda to add approval of Contracts. Supported.

After discussion, a motion by Ms. Covey to have the Osceola County DHHS Board approve the Contract Reviews. Motion supported by Ms. Haut. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Nystrom stated Mecosta County Commissioners setup a vaccination clinic for county employees. Also, Mecosta County acquired software promoting better communication and efficiencies between departments.

LOCAL OFFICE ISSUES/Directors Report:

Acting-Director, Jennifer Schmidt, updated the Boards on:

- Local Staffing.
 - New hire in the Assistance Payments Division starting on April 5th. Additional hires in the AP Division forthcoming on the account of retirement and personnel shifting.
 - Status on Acting-Director Jennifer Schmidt becoming permanent Director. Decision should be rendered soon.
- ESA Mission (Economic Stability Administration)
- Project One Day – Involves determining client benefits in *One-Day* by putting the onus on the Department on how it collects verifications for determining benefits. A county pilot is in the works.
- FAP (Food Assistance Program) for College Students rolls out April 1st.

MCSSA:

- Ms. Covey stated the organization has contracted a company to handle some of the administrative duties.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Bluhm at 9:24 a.m. with support from Ms. McBrien. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

 Jennifer Schmidt, Acting-Director
 Secretary to the Board

 Carolyn Curtin, Osceola County Chairman

 Janice Covey, Mecosta County Chairman

Mecosta County Department of Health & Human Services

Board Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2021

PERSONS PRESENT: Janice Covey, Mecosta County Chairman
Jan McBrien, Member
Susan Haut, Vice-Chairman
Wendy Nystrom, Mecosta County Commission
Jennifer Schmidt, Acting-Director

The Meeting was called to order by Ms. Covey at 9:25 am via teleconference.

Minutes from the February 23, 2021 meeting were reviewed and motion to approve made by Ms. McBrien with support by Ms. Haut. Motion Carried.

The Agenda reviewed and motion to approve by Ms. Nystrom, Supported and Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Nystrom stated Mecosta County Commissioners setup a vaccination clinic for county employees. Also, Mecosta County acquired software promoting better communication and efficiencies between departments.

FISCAL:

A. Financial Report:

The February Financial Report reviewed. A motion to approve was made by Ms. Haut. Supported by Ms. McBrien. Motion Carried.

COUNTY SPECIFIC BUSINESS:

Please see Joint-Meeting minutes

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Covey at 9:30 a.m. with support by Ms. Haut. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 10:00 am.

Jennifer Schmidt, Acting Director
Secretary to the Board

Janice Covey, Chairman

Darren Hengesbach, Recording Secretary

BUILDING AND ZONING COMMITTEE MINUTES
10:30 AM COUNTY BUILDING Conf Rm F and Zoom ID 608 471 9153
March 18, 2021

PRESENT: Wendy Nystrom– Chair, Linda Howard, and Tom O’Neil

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Bullock and Michelle Stenger

CALL TO ORDER: 10:30 AM

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

BUILDING REPORT:

- Rental Inspections: The City has provided a letter cancelling the rental inspection contract in 90 days. Ms. Stenger has spoken with the City and they requested that an earlier termination be approved on April 9th. **The Committee will recommend to the Board that the Administrator be authorized to approve the early termination as requested.**

ZONING REPORT:

- Storage Containers: Ms. Stenger gave a short briefing on issues that will be reviewed by the Planning Commission including the prohibition on roll off storage units in all zoning classes and ZBA meetings.

FINANCIALS:

- Year to Date: The Committee reviewed the year to date financials and year to year for the month of February.

MEMBER COMMENTS: Ms. Howard asked where the Morton Township inspections stand. Ms. Stenger advised that she expects we will be done in Morton in 2 or 3 weeks as their new Building Inspector should be registered with the State by then.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

Adjournment: 10:59 AM

Next regular meeting: April 15, 2021

**Minutes
Drain Committee Meeting
Wednesday – March 10, 2021 1:30 pm
Mecosta County Services Building, Room F & via Zoom**

1. Call to Order: 1:30 p.m.

Members Present: Linda Howard (Chair), Wendy Nystrom, Tom O'Neil, Bill Routley (a), Karla Miller

Others Present: Paul Bullock, Controller / Administrator, Nicole Clementshaw, Deputy Drain Commissioner, Jerrilynn Strong, County Commissioner

2. Brady Lake Dam

- James Tiffany, engineer on this project, submitted EGLE permit and it is up for public comment. Connie Redding submitted a public comment. The engineer wrote up a rebuttal and submitted it to EGLE. Waiting on EGLE's decision on public comment and then it will go up for bid.

3. Soil Erosion report through February 2021

- 2021 SESC Report - Karla gave a brief report of the current 2021 status of Soil Erosion permit activity.

4. Update on drain projects

- Tonkin Drain – Four easements are still being negotiated and obtained. Some may proceed to condemnation procedures.
- Ives Drain – Easement acquisition is still in process.
- Ford Drain – Greenscape ditched the entire drain. The final inspection of this project will occur in the spring.

5. Dams that require Triennial Inspections in 2021

- Blue Lake Dam – Morton Township
- Horsehead Lake Dam – Martiny Township
- Chippewa Lake Dam – Chippewa Township
- Bids have been received for this. The low bidder was Fleis & VandenBrink and they were awarded the inspections.

6. Stormwater review plan revision

- Our current stormwater review plan is based on a 50-year storm event. The standard used by other drain commissioners is based on a 100-year event. Karla would like to have an engineer review and recreate the plan based on a 100-year storm event. Money collected from past plat-review fees can be used to pay for this review.
- Karla presented a written request to change the plan and will present to the Board of Commissioners at the next meeting on March 18, 2021.

7. Public comment. None.

8. Date & Time of upcoming Drain Committee Meetings for 2021:

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

9. Adjourn. 1:48 p.m.

Submitted by Nicole Clementshaw

EMS COMMITTEE MINUTES
1:45 PM Conf Rm F and Zoom ID 608 471 9153
March 18, 2021

PRESENT: Jerrilynn Strong, Tom O'Neil, and Ray Steinke.
Others Present: Tim Ladd, Scott Schroeder, and Paul Bullock.

CALL TO ORDER: 1:45 PM PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

FINANCIAL REPORTS: The February 2021 billings, write-offs, and revenue were reviewed. **The Committee will recommend to the Board that contractual write-offs of \$91,175.84 non-contractual write-offs of \$472.54 and collections write-offs of \$7,932.44 be approved.**

MONTHLY STATISTICS: Mr. Ladd presented the number of transports, non-transports, total calls, and billings for February 2021. Mr. Ladd also presented the monthly statistics for e-calls, transfers, and calls with treatment but no transport.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

- Demo Ambulance: One proposal has been received for a demo ambulance. Three firms were advised of our bid process, only one has responded. Kodiak Emergency Vehicles has offered a fully equipped, including power load and power cot, ambulance for \$209,886. With the power load and cot we would normally pay approximately \$220,000. **The Committee will recommend to the Board that Mr. Ladd be authorized to accept the proposal, sign the contract, and process the down payment of \$20,988.60.**
- Part Time EMT/MERS: Mr. Ladd and the Administrator advised that when the recent addendums were being prepared for MERS the Administrator indicated that the regular part time EMT's were eligible for MERS. Mr. Ladd and the Administrator requested permission to offer a letter of understanding to the Union that would include the regular part time EMT's in MERS eligibility. Mr. Ladd explained that this would be a retention and recruitment aid. **The Committee will recommend to the Board that a letter of understanding be offered to the Union bringing the regular part time EMT's into MERS eligibility.**
- Medical Control: Mr. Ladd briefed the Committee on issues he is dealing with regarding preemption of our ambulances for interfacility non-emergency transfers.
- Personnel Vacancy: Mr. Ladd requested permission to convert one part time EMT position to full time to assist with the current and probably long term challenges of filling slots. **The Committee will recommend to the Board that the request be approved.**

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

- Homeland Security Grant: Mr. Schroeder requested permission to split the interop project order to bring the total purchase under the amount already approved. Bids came in high, but one vendor is lower on radios the other on equipment and splitting the order will bring the order down within budget. **The Committee will recommend to the Board that the request be granted.**

NEXT MEETING: 1:45 PM April 15, 2021

ADJOURNMENT: 2:25 PM

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 18, 2021 2:30 PM

Zoom ID 608 471 9153

PRESENT: Bill Routley – Chair, Wendy Nystrom, Jerrilynn Strong

OTHERS PRESENT: Paul Bullock, Sheriff Miller, Undersheriff Williams

CALL TO ORDER: 2:30 PM

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

- Request for Approval of Lateral Transfer:
The Sheriff requested permission to bring a 15 year law enforcement veteran into the Sheriff's Office at the 3 year pay step, per the previously approved Letter of Understanding. **The Committee approved the request.**

Meeting: At the Call of the Chair.

Adjournment: 2:43 PM

B2103185
March 11, 2021



THE HONORABLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN ADOPTS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, in March of 2020, the global pandemic, COVID-19, resulted in local bodies of government having to hold their meetings virtually due to in-person meeting number restrictions put in place at the State level; and

WHEREAS, due to ongoing orders requiring mask wearing and social distancing, the need for meetings to continue being held virtually still exists; and

WHEREAS, while the timeframe to hold meetings virtually was extended through Senate Bill 1246, that window expires on March 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS, while a recent MDHHS order expands the number of individuals that gather for a meeting to 25, that window expires April 19, 2021; and

WHEREAS, with the mask wearing and social distancing requirements still in place, Berrien County does not have a facility that would allow for the Board of Commissioners and the public to be present for a meeting; and

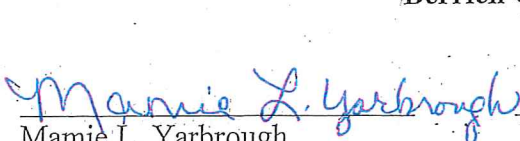
WHEREAS, in addition, after March 31, 2021, the expanded reasons allowing virtual meetings ends; and

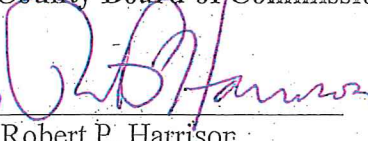
WHEREAS, Senate Bill No. 207 would expand that window allowing virtual meeting through June 30, 2021.

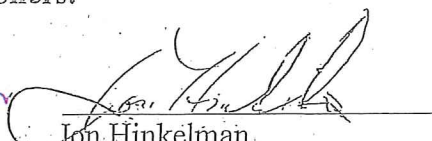
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Berrien County Board of Commissioners supports Senate Bill No. 207 which would expand the window for holding virtual meetings of a public body through June 30, 2021.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the resolution will be forwarded to the Michigan Association of Counties and to all of the legislators representing Berrien County.


Respectfully submitted,
Berrien County Board of Commissioners:

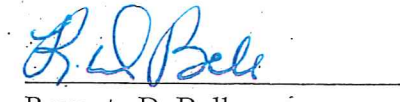

Mamie L. Yarbrough

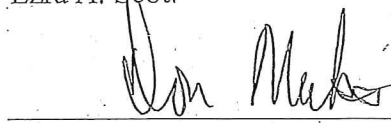

Robert P. Harrison

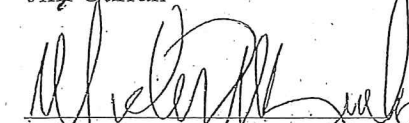

Jon Hinkelman

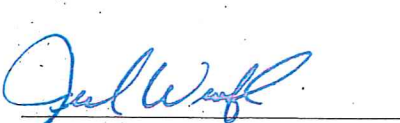

Ezra A. Scott

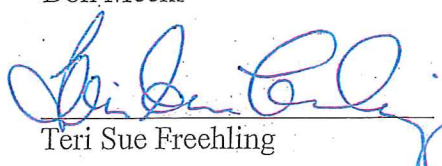

Jim Curran

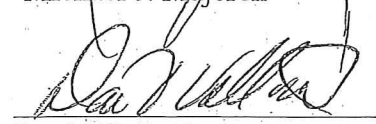

Rayonte D. Bell

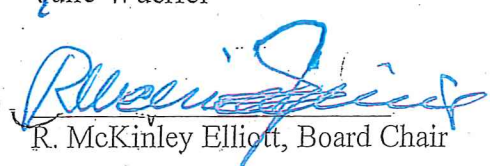

Don Meeks


Michael J. Majerek


Julie Wuerfel


Teri Sue Freehling


David Vollrath


R. McKinley Elliott, Board Chair

TUSCOLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

125 W. Lincoln Street
Suite 500

Telephone: 989-672-3700
Fax: 989-672-4011

At a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for the County of Tuscola, State of Michigan, on the 11th day of March, 2021 with the meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Commissioners Present: Thomas Young, District 1; Thomas Bardwell, District 2; Douglas DuRussel, District 4; Daniel Grimshaw, District 5.

Commissioners Absent: Kim Vaughan, District 3.

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Grimshaw, seconded by Commissioner DuRussel,

RESOLUTION REGARDING VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS 2021-05

WHEREAS, we live in a time of COVID-19 pandemic fear, and

WHEREAS, Governor Whitmer and the various state agencies acted without authority to unilaterally change the Open Meetings Act, and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Legislature recognized the issue of legally held meetings needed to be addressed, and

WHEREAS, the legislation created legal protections for non-traditional meetings by changing the requirement for in person attendance by members, and

WHEREAS, Public Act No. 228 of 2020 was signed by the Governor on October 16, 2020, established rules for board members to participate while not being physically present, and

WHEREAS, Public Act No. 254 of 2020 was signed by the Governor on December 22, 2020, extending the sunset date of Public Act No. 228 of 2020, to March 31 2021, and

WHEREAS, members of boards must be present to participate, except for absence due to military duty or a medical condition, and

WHEREAS, the changes to not allow participation by members who were unable to attend in person were made with little or no input from those impacted, and

WHEREAS, members of boards were allowed to participate while absent for other reasons, prior to the changes.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners calls upon the Michigan Legislature to modify the restrictions on meeting participation to include out-of-state travel for up to thirty (30) days by any member.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to Senator Daley, Representative Green, the Michigan Association of Counties, all Michigan Counties, along with the Michigan Township Association and all Townships, Cities and Villages within Tuscola County.

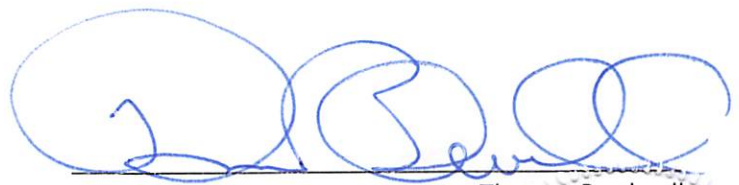
Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Young; DuRussel; Grimshaw; Bardwell.

Nays: None.

Absent: Vaughan.

Resolution declared adopted.



Thomas Bardwell

Chairman of the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners

I, the undersigned, Clerk of Tuscola County, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners, at its Regular Meeting held on March 11, 2021.



Jodi Fetting

Tuscola County Clerk

Clerk to the Board of Commissioner Tuscola County





COUNTY OF HILLSDALE, MICHIGAN



March 23, 2021

Resolution number 21-035

**The Honorable Board of Commissioners of Hillsdale County, Michigan
adopts the following Resolution:**

Whereas, the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners recognizes the heroic efforts of our front-line workers and first responders and applauds the citizens and businesses who have diligently adhered to mitigation measures; and

Whereas, the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners appreciates the need for appropriate executive and epidemic orders and policies to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus and promote public safety, while also protecting local and state economic interests; and

Whereas, Hillsdale County's cases and positivity rates continue to decline, hospital capacity continues to improve, and the number of citizens who have been vaccinated to protect themselves from the virus increases daily; and

Whereas, Hillsdale County as a border county has seen a magnified effect on our economy due to our citizens being able to drive a short distance to Ohio and Indiana, where restrictions are less; and

Whereas, the proximity of Ohio and Indiana to Hillsdale County has particularly impacted our local restaurant industry which is already struggling to recover from another dine-in closure by a curfew and limited capacity that lacks financial viability for most area establishments; and

Whereas, high density populated urban areas and low density populated rural areas have different response needs; and

Whereas, some local businesses may have received some governmental assistance, it was not enough to offset the loss of revenue due to closures and restrictions, thus many local businesses may be forced to close permanently due to the irreparable economic harm they have experienced throughout the past year and many more will follow if the state does not adopt a new approach to mitigation policies; and

Whereas, Hillsdale County has seen a consistent downward trend in numbers affected by COVID-19, it is now time for all of our businesses, including but not limited to restaurants and banquet facilities, to remain open in accordance with CDC guidelines with industry specific procedures and protocols aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19 in place;

Whereas, Hillsdale County Sheriff and Hillsdale County Prosecutor have declared to not enforce or prosecute unconstitutional mandates pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, Therefore Be it Resolved that the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners supports the Hillsdale County Sheriff and Hillsdale County Prosecutor in not enforcing or prosecuting unconstitutional mandates pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

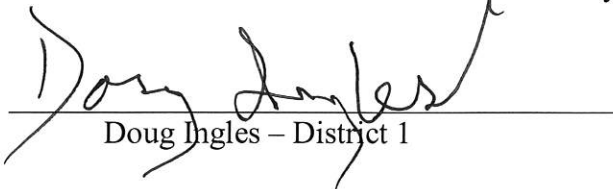
Be it Further Resolved that the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners does not support the expenditure of any county funds for the purpose of arrest and prosecution of any person accused of violating MDHHS emergency orders regarding COVID-19.

Be it Further Resolved the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners calls upon the citizens of Hillsdale County to act responsibly with regards to others while determining for themselves what is best for their own families and loved ones and how to protect themselves from the ongoing risks associated with the COVID-19 virus.

Be it Further Resolved that the Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners calls upon the Director of MDHHS to implement a new, regional approach to mitigation that values local input; takes cases, vaccinations, seasonality, and regional differences into consideration; and sets clear benchmarks for easing of restrictions on businesses for the public to follow.

Be it Further Resolved that this resolution is sent to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, both United States Senators, all Michigan Members of Congress, the Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives, the President of the Michigan Senate, Senator Mike Shirkey, Representative Andrew Fink, all counties within Michigan, The Michigan Association of Counties, The Michigan Townships Associations, and Elizabeth Hertel Director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Respectfully,
Hillsdale County Board of Commissioners


Doug Ingles – District 1


Kathleen Schmitt – District 2


Mark E. Wiley, Chair – District 3


Brad Benzing, Vice-Chair – District 4


Brent Leininger – District 5

Approved by the Board of Commissioners
on March 23, 2021.



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

County Building
P.O. Box 70, Room 131
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721

Tel ~ (231) 627-8858
Fax ~ (231) 627-8881
E-mail ~ ccao@cheboygancounty.net

CHEBOYGAN COUNTY RESOLUTION 2021-06 RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A COLLECTIVE EFFORT BY MICHIGAN COUNTIES IN OPPOSING CURRENT AND FUTURE ORDERS UNILATERALLY ISSUED BY GOVERNOR WHITMER AND STATE AGENCIES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

WHEREAS, Antrim County, Baraga County, Delta County, Grand Traverse County, Houghton County, Kalkaska County, and Menominee County have recently passed resolutions opposing orders unilaterally issued by Governor Whitmer and various state agencies in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Cheboygan County wishes to voice our solidarity with the other counties in the State of Michigan in opposing orders unilaterally issued by Governor Whitmer and various state agencies in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus has caused an unprecedented time in our history; however, even in the time of crisis the basic civil liberties and foundations of our society must be preserved; and

WHEREAS, Governor Whitmer and the various state agencies do not have authority to unilaterally impose orders that essentially equate into laws. This function is reserved by the Michigan Legislature and is essential to the checks and balances upon the three branches of government; and

WHEREAS, Cheboygan County acknowledges that there are differing opinions on the path to be taken in response to COVID-19; however, those debates and decisions are to be made by the legislators that have been duly elected by the People of the State of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the draconian orders that have been issued thus far throughout the pandemic have resulted in irreparable harm to the economy, education of youth, and mental health of residents in Cheboygan County; and

WHEREAS, Cheboygan County would like to gesture to other counties in the State of Michigan that Cheboygan County is an ally in any collective effort initiated to challenge the legality of the orders and restrictions issued by Governor Whitmer, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, or any other state agency that were unilaterally imposed without the approval of the Michigan Legislature; and

District 1
Mary Ellen Tryban

District 2
Richard B. Sangster
Vice-Chairman

District 3
Michael Newman

District 4
Ron Williams

1

District 5
Roberta Matelski

District 6
John B. Wallace
Chair

District 7
Steve Warfield

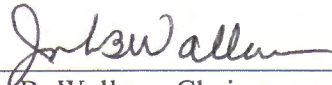
WHEREAS, Cheboygan County does not dismiss the seriousness of COVID-19; however, the response to the threat must be appropriate and justified. Unfortunately, the orders issued by Governor Whitmer and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services have resulted in, and are indicative of, inflicting future collateral damage to the local economy, small businesses, and families that far exceed the actual threat of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Cheboygan County supports common sense approaches to combat COVID-19, such as: following social distancing recommendations, health screenings for employees and customers, promoting healthy hygienic practices, and encouraging individuals that are considered high risk to continue to self-quarantine and adhere to the strictest recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners calls upon the Michigan Legislature to fulfill their duty to the People of the State of Michigan and restore the checks and balances essential to our democracy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners support a collective action by the counties in the State of Michigan to challenge the legality of the orders and restrictions put forth unvirtuously in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic by the Executive Branch of Government in the State of Michigan; and

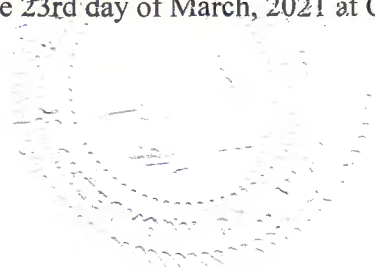
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this Resolution be sent to Governor Whitmer, Senator Schmidt, Representative Allor, Representative Damoose, the Michigan Senate, the Michigan House of Representatives, the Michigan Association of Counties, and to the Clerk of each County in the State of Michigan.



John B. Wallace, Chairperson
Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners

I, Karen L. Brewster, Clerk of Cheboygan County and of the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners regular meeting held on March 23, 2021.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of the County of Cheboygan on the 23rd day of March, 2021 at Cheboygan, Michigan.



Karen L. Brewster
Cheboygan County Clerk/Register



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

County Building
P.O. Box 70, Room 131
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721

Tel ~ (231) 627-8858
Fax ~ (231) 627-8881
E-mail ~ ccao@cheboygancounty.net

RESOLUTION 2021-07

CHEBOYGAN COUNTY RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SENATE BILL 1 2021

WHEREAS, many counties in the State of Michigan have passed resolutions opposing orders unilaterally issued by Governor Whitmer and various state agencies in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Cheboygan County wishes to voice our solidarity with the other counties in the State in opposing orders unilaterally issued by Governor Whitmer and the various state agencies in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: and

WHEREAS, Cheboygan County supports measures to combat COVID-19 such as: following social distancing recommendations, health screenings for employees and customers, promoting healthy hygienic practices and encouraging individuals that are considered high risk to continue to self-quarantine and adhere to the recommendations established by the Centers for Disease Control CDC; and

WHEREAS, "Senate Bill 1 would amend the Public Health Code to require an emergency public health order issued by the Director of the Health Department and Human Services (DHHS) to include information about the rationale for the order, to limit the effectiveness of such order to 28 days unless the legislature approves an extension and to prohibit a new emergency order that addresses the same epidemic as an earlier order without legislative approval".

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Cheboygan County supports the adoption of Senate Bill 1 2021 by the legislature and Governor to insure that orders issued to combat COVID-19 are subject to checks and balances.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this Resolution be sent to Governor Whitmer, Senator Schmidt, Representative Allor, Representative Damoose, the Michigan Senate, the Michigan House of Representatives, the Michigan Association of Counties and to the Clerk of each County in the State of Michigan.

John B. Wallace, Chairperson
Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners

District 1
Mary Ellen Tryban

District 2
Richard B. Sangster
Vice-Chairman

District 3
Michael Newman

District 4
Ron Williams

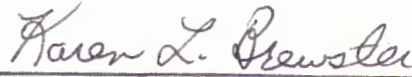
District 5
Roberta Matelski

District 6
John B. Wallace
Chair

District 7
Steve Warfield

I, Karen L. Brewster, Clerk of Cheboygan County and of the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners regular meeting held on March 23, 2021.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of the County of Cheboygan on the 23rd day of March, 2021 at Cheboygan, Michigan.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Karen L. Brewster", written over a horizontal line.

Karen L. Brewster
Cheboygan County Clerk/Register



2020 Annual Report to Mecosta County



A Message from the District Director Spring 2021

2020 will be a year to remember for many reasons. The creativeness, dedication, teamwork, and resilience

that our MSUE professionals exhibited during this global pandemic will be something I will always remember. This has been a difficult time for communities, families and staff, and I am proud of the work we have done to continue to provide high-quality educational programs throughout Michigan.

During the pandemic and subsequent stay-home orders, MSUE staff were given an opportunity to do something they have wanted to do for a long time - convert their in-person programming to a digital format. Digital formats don't work for everybody or every program, but to expand our reach and help more people incorporate the evidence-based learning from a major university into their homes, families, businesses and communities, has always been a goal worth pursuing. Many were moving in that direction already; the pandemic required others to move there faster.

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) brings the science, programs and resources of Michigan's land grant university to organizations, communities and individuals throughout the state. Our outreach and engagement is built on a local basis, thanks to our county partnerships and more than 600 faculty and staff in offices across all 83 counties.

Historically, most of our relationships have been maintained through in-person meetings and programs. Over the last few years we have built up the breadth and quality of our website at extension.msu.edu which now averages 1.25 million visitors per month.

Working from home with the tools and support needed to help them succeed in a remote environment, MSUE educators have continued to assist farmers, elected officials and decision makers, parents, families and

In 2020, we expanded our capacity to provide high-quality virtual education. In this report, you will find stories of strength and effort, stories of resilience and creativity. There is no doubt this pandemic has pushed us all to the edge from time to time, but we have worked together to get beyond it and to continue to do the good work we do and deliver the best for our residents. We are looking forward to a time when we can all meet in person safely again.

youth by meeting with them on virtual platforms through online meetings and webinars. With the work they have accomplished over the last months, staff have reported some of the benefits and disadvantages to "virtual" learning:

- Programs that are recorded allow people to view the meetings in a time convenient for them.
- We are reaching audiences that would not be able to attend our programs in the past because of time, travel and disability.
- We are reaching local, regional, state, national and global audiences.
- We are able to share our expertise, ideas and best practices more efficiently across the state.
- There are more opportunities available to everyone – once a program is made virtual anyone can sign up, regardless of where they live.
- A digital divide still exists, not all programs work in an on-line format, and nothing will replace our local, face to face, relationship- based work.

In the end, I believe this experience in on-line program development and investment in capacity will augment our face to face work (**once that resumes**) and provide greater access to our work than ever before. Thank you for your continued support!

Shari Spoelman, District Director

Spoelma4@msu.edu



Response of MSU Extension to the impact of Novel Corona Virus

In late March, MSUE pivoted all of our programming to online formats to comply with the original Stay Safe, Stay Home order (EO2020-42). Within six days of that order, we launched the [Remote Learning and Resources](#) website and our teams immediately began modifying programming to a digital format that would provide equal educational value right in people's homes. This online space provided a platform to launch this effort and since then has become a robust virtual one-stop-shop for everything MSU Extension has to offer online. Within a few days into quarantine, staff had new programming spooled up and ready to present digitally. A few noteworthy examples include:

Adulting 101: Staff members quickly pivoted from a face-to-face program offered in a few locations to a series of one-hour presentations called **Adulting 101**. Topics include things such as what to look for when renting, tips and tricks for easy cooking, how to keep your finances in order and the right way to do household tasks such as ironing and setting a table. Once promoted via social media, it went "viral," attracting more than **3,000** registered participants statewide and was recommended by school districts. This program has now become a regular recurring series and engaged a team of program staff to share in its delivery.

Gardening Cabin Fever Conversations – Gardening became a highly popular series of webinars via Zoom and Facebook Live designed to get people's minds off of being cooped up inside and get them thinking about their garden spaces. Sessions focused on lighthearted but educational conversations about topics like seed saving, houseplants, pollinator health, community gardening and container gardening. The webinar's success of more than **500 attendees per session** prompted organizers to continue programming during winter 2021.

[Educational Resources for Parents, teachers and families](#) were compiled to assist with remote and home-based learning. 4-H Curriculum, videos, tip sheets and virtual learning tools were developed and continue to be added to and improved as we begin the Fall school year.

[Rapid Response For Agriculture](#) was a site developed in 2019 to provide a single point for farmers to access resources developed in response to several weather related emergencies. In 2020, our agriculture team immediately rose to the challenge to assist the industry with resources and management tools to aid them through the pandemic emergency.

One first response was a series of articles and best practice options for the [floriculture industry](#) who were limited in the ability to sell to their wholesale markets. Other resources were aimed at keeping farm employees safe and [how to best manage operations](#) while still meeting consumer demands for a fresh, safe food supply during emergency conditions created by Covid-19.

Canning food became more popular during the pandemic. While working from home has its challenges, food safety staff witnessed some really great results with programming online. By having online classes, instead of face:face, the reach for food preservation classes increased by over 4,000%.

Adulting 101: Preparing for Life and College

DATE & TIME:
April 9 2 pm
Budget and Credit

April 16 2 pm
Rent Smart

April 23 2 pm
Cooking 101

April 30 2 pm
Household Tasks

LOCATION:
Virtual through web

COST:
Free

Prepare yourself for the future!

SPONSORS:
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension
MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:
Older youth (11th and 12th Graders)

DESCRIPTION:
Learn some quick tips that will help you navigate life and college.
Budget and Credit-Explore the basics.
Rent Smart-Learn what to know when you rent.
Cooking 101-Learn some tips and tricks for cooks for yourself.
Household Task- Learn ironing, making bed, and other helpful hints.

HOW TO REGISTER
<https://msu.zoom.us/j/257448955>

CONTACT:
Michelle Neff by hydemic@msu.edu or 989-429-2359

MSU is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Persons with disabilities have the right to request and receive reasonable accommodations.

Join Us Online

Food Preservation Series

Every Thursday 1 p.m. & 6 p.m. EDT

March 18 - Introduction to Home Canning

March 25 - Preserving Maple Syrup

April 1 - Selecting Plants for your Garden

April 8 - With Spring's Arrival, Asparagus Won't Be Far Away

To Learn More Visit:
https://www.canr.msu.edu/food_preservation/events
To join by phone, call in advance to register at 877-643-9882.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension



MSU Extension in Mecosta County

2020 By the numbers:

Jan—Dec 2020	
# of programs hosted in County	41
# of participants that attended programs hosted in County	1093
# of programs offered statewide attended by County residents	147
# of County residents who attended programs	708
# of MSUE staff reporting serving residents of County	50
# of Direct Consultations Reported (Field Crops, Com Vitality, Prod Center, Soil tests, gardening, food safety, etc.)	209

General Fund Budget Expenditure	
FY 2019-2020	\$124,511 (budgeted)
	\$107,082 (expended)

4-H 2019-2020	
4-H Adult Volunteers	76
4-H Youth Club Enrollment	333
Total Youth Served (duplicates removed)	1074

MSU Extension District 6 Advisory Council

County	Name	
Clare	Sandy Bristol	Commissioner
Clare	Ken Brown	
Gladwin	Rick Grove	Commissioner
Gladwin	Dick Metz	
Isabella	Jerry Jaloszynski	Commissioner
Isabella	Bob Wachowski	
Mecosta	Marilynn <u>Bradstrom</u>	Commissioner
Mecosta	Vacancy	

County	Name	
Missaukee	Frank <u>VanderWal</u>	Commissioner
Missaukee	Vacancy	
Osceola	Jill Halladay	Commissioner
	Tim Michell	Alternate
Osceola	Russ Nehmer	
Osceola	David <u>Eggle</u>	
Wexford	Judy Nichols	Commissioner
Wexford	Mike <u>Soloman</u>	
Wexford	Chris Gentry	Chair



4-H Program Highlights



MOLLIE HOGG

4-H Program
Coordinator

hoggmoll@msu.edu
231-592-0795

"I feel extra close to my volunteers and youth because I grew up here and participated in 4-H. I have major support from so many people which helps us all feel like a family,"

Mollie Hogg loves to fish. She also loves 4-H. As the Mecosta County 4-H program coordinator, she loves working in the county in which she grew up and participated in the 4-H program. One of the favorite parts of her job is visiting schools throughout the county and working on different programs with youth, like embryology and reading.

Plat Books. During 2020, Mollie worked diligently preparing information for the publisher of the new plat book. This was a very intense project and timeline to meet the goal of having the books available before Christmas, so customers were able to purchase them for holidays gifts. The 2021 plat books were made available for purchase beginning in December of 2020. Due to the MSU Extension office being closed because of the pandemic, Mollie brainstormed new ideas to make the books available to the public. As expected, they were very popular during and after the holiday season and the office phone was filled with messages for the new plat books. Three businesses were willing to help market the books. Big Rapids Farm & Garden sold over 300 books in a short month. Remus Lumber made the books available for citizens on the east side of the county and the Mecosta County Building & Zoning department has assisted as well. This support has been a major factor in the success of the plat book sales which is important to the support of the local 4-H program.

What would you like our commissioners and other stakeholders to know about your work during 2020?

Another popular and successful way 4-H engaged with youth in the absence of face to face programming involved educational kits that were mailed to youth at their homes. One such program occurred in August and September with a program called FishFul Thinking. In partnership with Project Fish, a statewide program offered through Michigan State University, 86 youth in Mecosta County and throughout the state learned about a different aspect of fishing each week. The goal was to give them the skills to get outdoors and enjoy the hobby of fishing. Participating youth were taught how to make pop can caster rods, and how to clean and cook fish. Online games helped them learn to identify the fish found in Michigan while having fun. Another fishing program is planned for this spring about Michigan's salmon fishing industry.

When not working, what do you like to do that makes you happy?

Mollie has recently completed education in taxidermy and is working towards fulfilling her dream of having a taxidermy shop and side-business. She enjoys the creativity and art behind taxidermy. In addition to spending time outdoors fishing, hunting, and snowmobiling, Mollie loves to be with her family, especially her nephew.



4-H'er Carver Hodges proudly poses with the fish he caught with the "pop can" caster rod he made.



PAM DANIELS

Disease Prevention & Management

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231-592-0792

"Offering workshops, cooking videos, and health programs virtually has opened the door for many more individuals to take advantage of Extensions resources."

Pam Daniels is an Extension Educator specializing in chronic disease prevention and management. She enjoys working for Extension because it has allowed her to acquire a sense of community activism. "Extension's resources, programs and network of expertise directly support people in our local communities," said Pam.

What would you like people to know about your work during 2020?

In 2020, MSU Extension worked meticulously, laying the groundwork to offer our Health programs virtually. Our highest priority was reaching the homebound. This outreach continues to grow and develop with overwhelming community support. In 2021, community residents can expect more cooking and nutrition tips online. With MSU Extension's volunteer chef, Don Zimmer, we are working on a chef led cooking blog called, "Dish 'n Nutrish'n."



Recently Pam shared a couple of "success stories" that happened in 2020 because of, or in spite of, the pandemic.

"These success stories are a prime example of how virtual contact with participants can be as effective as face-to-face, or more effective," noted Pam. "Offering workshops, cooking videos, and health programs virtually has opened the door for many more individuals to take advantage of Extensions resources. Whether they are homebound, quarantined, or working, Extension's virtual classes have been very well received!"

From Her Hospital Bed - A Success Story of Inspiration & Commitment.

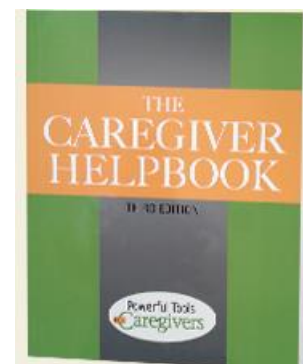
During the 2020 pandemic, MSU Extension transitioned their "Diabetes Prevention Program" from a face -to – face format to fully online. It was during that program that we witnessed the power of virtual programming! Katie, a class participant, was being hospitalized, and from her hospital bed she joined our class. "I didn't want to miss this class!" Katie shared. "This class has made me so motivated, I just had to find a way to log-in and not miss it." Class facilitator Pam Daniels said she has never witnessed such dedication. "Katie's enthusiasm, while under the circumstance of being in the hospital was one of the greatest facilitating moments I've witness. She gave such a testimony to others in the class about pushing through obstacles to prioritize self-care, truly motivating to the entire class!" There would have been no way that (Katie) could have joined our MSU Extension class if it were a face-to-face class.

The second example of success during Covid is found here, in this feedback from a participant.

Dear MSU Extension,

I want to thank you so much for the virtual "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" class. I had my doubts about enrolling and considered cancelling before it began. But from the first day I was so glad I stayed. Even your first slide filled my heart with the knowledge that you really understood! Meeting virtually "face to face" with other caregivers was more rewarding than I knew was possible and really showed me how isolated I had become and how much I needed more human interaction.

I really learned solid skills and new coping strategies. I'm just so grateful for your help. I feel that staying connected might help our group and I know would help me. Feel free to share my email address with our class and let them know I am open to communication. - Jan





Nutrition



RENEE SANDERS
Community Nutrition
Instructor
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231-592-0792

"Even though we are not in the office, we are serving our community. We are still answering phone calls for recipes and questions, we are keeping in touch with our community partners, and we are doing our best to offer education to our local schools and community."

Renee enjoys working closely with small groups of people and teaching them new ways to improve their health through nutrition and physical activity. She is MSU Extension's Community Nutrition Instructor for Mecosta and Osceola counties. For her, the interaction with consumers is always engaging and fun. "I enjoy building relationships with individuals and families, as well as community partners," said Renee.

MOISD Cognitively Impaired. For the past few years Renee has been working with an adult cognitively impaired classroom at the Mecosta Osceola Intermediate School District Education building. Pre Covid-19 she went into the classroom and taught the "Teen Cuisine" curriculum and provided a food demo each week. The young adults (18-26) helped her prepare the recipe and they all got to taste it. The pandemic put an end to

that. Outside groups are not allowed in the schools. To complicate matters, there are several students who cannot risk exposure, so they are homebound. The solution? Renee has been able to "Zoom in" with the class and do a new curriculum, Cooking for One, utilizing food demonstration videos with her own instruction to teach the class how to make a recipe. The at-home students, as well as the in-class students are all able to attend the Zoom class. In class, the teacher has purchased all the ingredients for the students to make the same recipe (with the help of their paraprofessionals). One young man always complained when onions were being cut up because he doesn't like onions. But onions are rich in vitamins and minerals. He

would want them chopped big enough to be able to pluck them out, so he always volunteered to cut them up. Virtually, Renee was able to ask for the students input on what recipes they would make. Oddly enough, this same young man wanted potato leek pizza, which is simply pizza crust with pan fried potatoes lightly seasoned, sliced leeks and mozzarella cheese on top. The students watched the cooking demonstration online, Renee logged off and they went to work in their kitchen. The next week this young man told Renee that the potato leek pizza was some of the best pizza he has ever tasted. When asked about the leeks, he said they were really good. For a young man with such strong opinions about onions to find out that he likes leeks and would eat them again made her glad he chose potato leek pizza for one of the recipes. Trying something new can be scary for most adults, but for adults with cognitive impairment it could have been devastating. This is what nutrition instructors call a win!



When not working, Renee is busy in her garden, raising her grandchildren, camping, puzzling, and painting. Since the pandemic, she has started raising chickens.





Agriculture

Paul Gross is an Agriculture Extension Educator specializing in Field Crops and Soil Health. When not working, he is happiest spending time with his family and friends.



PAUL GROSS

Field Crops

Educator

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"I am utilizing technology to improve efficiency in my work and to reach more people."

Paul enjoys working with farmers and agribusinesses, bringing the research and information from MSU's Extension Specialists and applying it to their farms to improve productivity, profitability and environmental practices. Paul engages in on-farm research in the county to test products, practices, and systems that address issues on their farms.

During the pandemic, Paul worked with his colleagues to develop a stronger online presence for programming. They developed online courses, podcasts, informational videos, and short how-to videos that farmers can view on demand. These have been posted on our social media sites. Covid-19 has forced all of us to be more creative in how we communicate and interact with farmers.



Impact of COVID:

According to Paul, "Like everyone else, Covid-19 changed our world and how I carried out my programming. I am fortunate that I was able to conduct all of my planned on-farm research in the summer of 2020. I was able to travel to fields to monitor pest traps, provide soil samples and scout pests. We utilized pictures and videos for weed, insect, and disease problems when travel was not possible. I am utilizing technology to improve efficiency in my work and to reach more people."



FaceBook Live weekly "Lunch Break" is an ongoing event that brings up to date information from the MSU Extension field crops team and other members of MSU's ag educators and specialists to growers.



Farm Stress



ERIC KARBOWSKI

*Community Behavioral
Health Educator*

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(989) 444-2211

*"Every connection and outreach
made to someone that is
struggling can have a lifelong
impact."*

Eric Karbowski is our Farm Stress educator who enjoys spending time with his family and friends, football, hunting, kayaking, and cutting wood. He is passionate about working with farmers, creating tools, and developing resources to support those in need. Eric joined MSU Extension to help provide behavioral health supports and services to farmers and farm families in our community. The existing farm stress programs created a nationally recognized foundation that set the stage for the advanced opportunities and supports now available to those we serve. The focus on adhering to the programming models, yet flexibility to be creative and innovative, have proven to be important in allowing resources such as the teletherapy program and "wrap around" model to be implemented. For Eric, his position with MSU Extension is helping him fulfill both personal and professional goals.

Mental Health Minute: When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Eric and his team of colleagues in agriculture were able to make an impact despite the inability to provide in person programming. One of those examples is a program called "Lunch Break." Once a week, ag educators and Eric provide a Facebook live feed for updates and advice for growers and producers. Each week, Eric provides a Mental Health Minute, and embeds good, sound mental health education for the participants. Sometimes, you don't know that you can use this information until you receive it.

Teletherapy: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, MSU Extension through a partnership with Pine Rest Behavioral Health, created the teletherapy program for farmers to access supports through online-counseling with master's level clinicians that have a connection to agriculture. This was timely because the roadmap to support and recovery was already in place, making connecting farmers with the services efficient. It later received funding to help offset cost further reducing access barriers.

According to Eric, "The heralding truth behind behavioral health is that often the effectiveness of the supports we are providing will not likely be publicized. Every connection and outreach made to someone that is struggling can have a lifelong impact. Although we have a large amount of reportable farm stress impact data and outreach engagements, as friends, neighbors, and supporters of MSU Extension, you are supporting the continued development of resources and tools further reducing the impact of stress, mental illness, and the potential loss of life by suicide through our farm stress efforts."



Responding to Farmers in Need



Finance and Homeownership



TEAGAN LEFERE

**Financial &
Homeownership
Program Instructor**

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989-539-7805 ext 5623

I enjoy hearing back from individuals who learn something new during one of our classes and the positive changes they are making in their personal finances.

Teagan Lefere is a grandma that loves to crochet. But don't let that fool you. She is also an active Finance and Homeownership instructor for MSU Extension, helping hundreds of people every year prevent a mortgage foreclosure, improve their family budgets, prepare for homeownership, or become stable renters. Teagan loves working with individuals and families toward a positive financial outcome. I enjoy hearing back from individuals who learn something new during one of our classes and relay back to me what they learned and the positive changes they are making in their personal finances.



During the pandemic and work from home orders, Teagan had to become more creative while working with people who may not have had the abilities or technology to fulfill documentation requests from Step Forward.

This is a Success Story that happened in spite of COVID. But it's also a story about why Teagan is such an amazing employee. Without her persistence, this outcome wouldn't have materialized.

Many things changed with COVID-19 and how I work with homeowners and assisting them in applying for Step Forward Hardest Hit funds. Before COVID-19 I would meet with individuals in a convenient location to assist them in gathering paperwork or to sign documents. Once I began working from home and travel restrictions were imposed, that became a challenge. One woman I assisted was in a wheelchair and had a hard time scheduling rides to meet me in my office. Step Forward needed a letter of explanation regarding her hardship and subsequent delinquency in her property taxes. Before COVID I would take her documents to sign or pick-up documents requested by Step Forward at her home. She had been admitted to a nursing care facility due to health issues and I was unable to meet with her due to COVID restrictions. With her permission, I contacted the facility director and asked if I emailed her a letter, would she be able to print the letter, have her sign it and email it back to me. She said that would not be a problem and I was able to fulfill Step Forward's request. She was approved for Step Forward funds to bring her property taxes current from 2017 to the present tax year.

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