



MINUTES

Committee of the Whole Meeting

8:06 AM - Monday, December 8, 2025

Tuscola County People's Building, Community Room,
171 N. State Street, Caro MI 48723

Commissioner Bardwell called the regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the County of Tuscola, Michigan, held at the Tuscola County People's Building, Community Room, 171 N. State Street, Caro MI 48723, on Monday, December 8, 2025, to order at 8:06 AM local time.

Roll Call - Clerk Fetting

Commissioners Present In-Person: Nancy Barrios, Thomas Bardwell, Bill Lutz, Matt Koch

Commissioners Absent: Kim Vaughan

Others Present In-Person: Clerk Jodi Fetting, Eean Lee, Erica Dibble, Steve Anderson, Mike Miller, Sheriff Ryan Robinson, Carrie Tabar, Larry Zapfe, Suzy Rockwell, Pennie Rienas, Russell Rienas, Billy Putman, Jennifer Putman, Isabella Putman, Laura Boyke-Hawes, Brian Schriber, Julie Matuszak, Tyler Ray, Amanda Ertman, Cody Horton, Duane Hornbacher, Jim Mantey, Drain Commissioner Dara Hood, Michael Clinesmith, Cindy Hughes, Joanna Samuelson, Robert Baxter, Connie Keinath, Judge Amy Grace Gierhart, Elizabeth Reilman

Also Present Virtual: Tracy Violet, Mary Drier, Brent Dankert, Anthony Zyber, Mitch Davies, Cindy McKinney-Volz, Bonnie Fackler, Cody Horton, Shelly Lutz, John Boggs, Connie Keinath, Estee Bitzer, Linda Strasz, Steve Root, Chad Tumblin, Angie House, Judy Cockerill, Kandi Teddy, Debbie Engelhardt, Prosecutor Erica Walle, Karlee Romain, Olivia Chapin, Greg Ryneerson, Dan Lisowksi, Amy Prill, Kristi Phipps, Judge Nancy Thane, Treasurer Ashley Bennett, Angie Daniels, Echo Torrez, Commissioner Kim Vaughan, Heather Malloy, Kyle Nordstrom, Pat Dennis, Sherry Billot, Sheila Long, Tricia Sharp, Wendy Franks, Jeff LeValley, Matthew Sexton, Register Marianne Brandt, Krystaria Skakle, Drain Commissioner Dara Hood, Barry Lapp, Jamie LeValley, Melanie Radabaugh, Tanya Pisha, Tim Green, Tom McLane, Katie Robinson

At 8:06 a.m., there were a total of 39 participants attending the meeting virtually.

New Business

1. Discussion on a Hiring Freeze for the County -
Erica Dibble, Controller/Administrator, provided some background history of previous hiring freezes that were implemented by the Board of Commissioners. Matter to be placed on the Board agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.

2. New Radio Console Expenditure -
Carrie Tabar, Deputy Dispatch Director, reviewed the need to replace the console. Steve Anderson, Emergency Manager, reviewed that a used part was priced as well as a quote for a new replacement. At this time, new equipment was recommended with payment from the 911 Dispatch budget. Matter to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.
3. Uninterrupted Power Source (UPS) Aerico -
Eean Lee, Chief Information Officer, explained that the current power usage is over the recommended level. CIO Lee is requesting authorization to approve the repair quote. The generator is currently experiencing an issue that has been looked at with the repair covered under warranty. Matter to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.
4. Onsolve Renewal -
Carrie Tabar - Deputy Dispatch Director, explained the renewal of the Onsolve Contract. The Dispatch Authority Board is to discuss at their meeting to determine if this should be continued. Matter to be placed on the Board agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.
5. 2026 Motorola Renewal -
Carrie Tabar - Deputy Dispatch Director, and Steve Anderson, Emergency Manager, reviewed the potential renewal of the contract. The original contract is being researched for renewal dates. Matter to be placed on the Board agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.
6. Dispatch Intrado Invoice -
Carrie Tabar, Deputy Dispatch Director, explained the renewal invoice. Matter to be placed on the Consent Agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.
7. Sheriff's New Hire Request for Jessica Gordon -
Sheriff Ryan Robinson presented the request to fill a vacant Road Officer position for the individual to attend the Delta College certification program. Matter to be placed on the Board agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.

Sheriff Robinson expressed concern with the hiring freeze as it would relate to the Sheriff's Department and the 911 Dispatch Center due to public safety interest.

Old Business

1. Agreement for Shared Use of the Tuscola County Building Located at 362 Green Street -
Erica Dibble, Controller/Administrator, reviewed the proposed agreement as discussions have been held with the parties involved. The agreement does state that an insurance policy needs to be provided. Matter to be placed on the Board agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.

2. Review & Discuss Pool Cars -

Erica Dibble, Controller/Administrator, provided a list of County Pool Cars for the Board to use in consideration of the replacement of a county pool vehicle. If an employee uses their personal vehicle for county business and an accident were to occur, their personal auto insurance would be the primary coverage. The Board discussed using the current Drain Commissioner truck as a county pool vehicle. The current Drain Commissioner truck will not work for Animal Control as the truck box is a 6-foot box and the current kennel from the previous truck is for an 8-foot box. Matter to be placed on an upcoming agenda for further discussion.

3. Review of the Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) for 2025 With an Analysis -

Erica Dibble, Controller/Administrator, provided information on the current special voted millages and special funds that are impacted by the indirect costs. There was a cap of indirect costs implemented by the Board in 2021. The Health Department was charged for IT Services in 2025 although they have their own IT Department. This error in the indirect costs will be corrected in the 2026 cycle. The Controller/Administrator's Office is to review the indirect costs further to provide additional information to the Board. Matter to be placed on the Board agenda for the December 15, 2025 meeting.

4. 2026 Budget Development Calendar-Proposed Amendments -

Erica Dibble, Controller/Administrator, reviewed the changes made in the budget calendar. Matter to be placed on the Consent Agenda.

Finance/Technology

Primary Finance/Technology

1. Board Review of Third Draft 2026 Budget -

Erica Dibble, Controller/Administrator, presented the draft budget for 2026 that is still at a deficit. It was discussed that each Department may need to reduce costs by 5% to 7% for 2026.

Clerk Fetting asked if a Department has already suggested a cost-savings plan for their 2026 budget, are they going to be asked to cut another 5% to 7%.

Michael Clinesmith, Parks and Recreation Chair, presented regarding the 2026 budget and the grant reimbursements from 2025 that may not be received until 2026.

Cindy Hughes, Friend of the Court, provided an explanation of how the state can reimburse for expenses in the Friend of the Court.

Judge Amy Grace Gierhart, Chief Judge, provided information regarding the CRP Reimbursement as it relates to the Friend of the Court office. The position of the Referee was not filled in 2025 in order to keep that budget balanced. The goal is to maximize the reimbursement to the fullest.

Jodi Fetting, County Clerk, discussed the Clerk's office budget with reductions offered, CPL fund balance that can be used towards wages, and revenue generating opportunities. The mandated function of elections was discussed with the utmost importance of election security. It was also discussed of the difficult times the county experienced in 2008. It was asked to consider what a Department has already offered during this budget cycle as the Board asks to move forward with cuts to department's budgets.

Eean Lee, Chief Information Officer, reviewed the projects requested in the 2026 budget. The transition from server based to cloud-based licensing was discussed.

Larry Zapfe, Mosquito Abatement Director, reviewed the 2026 budget and the upcoming millage request. The fund balance will be needed for equipment replacement. It is requested to retain the millage rate for the 2026 ballot language.

Judge Amy Grace Gierhart, Chief Judge, referenced that the 2026 budget is relatively status quo. The court does not have additional staff in order to participate in any employee layoffs should there be any. The history of courthouse security was provided regarding the agreement that was entered upon to provide courthouse security and bailiffs in the courtroom.

Commissioner Bardwell stated the court is unique as they are considered a sole-employer not a co-employer.

Tyler Ray, Animal Control Director, stated his department is funded by the General Fund and Dog Licensing fees. The fees from dog licensing are significantly lower than the department's history. The department began censusing to increase revenue in dog licensing with this to continue in 2026.

On-Going and Other Finance

None

On-Going and Other Technology

None

Building and Grounds

Primary Building and Grounds

None

On-Going and Other Building and Grounds

None

Personnel

Primary Personnel

None

On-Going and Other Personnel

Commissioner Barrios would like to discuss opportunities for improved onboarding with new county employees.

Other Business as Necessary

None

At 10:22 a.m., there were a total of 57 participants attending the meeting virtually.

Public Comment Period

Clerk Fetting expressed that there were up to 59 virtual participants as well as a room full of in-person attendees, which is encouraging to see so much participation from the community and employees.

Billy Putman presented regarding adding safety features to various critical intersections throughout the county where there have been many accidents with costs that would be incurred to implement. It was reviewed how the costs could be covered through various sources.

Julie Matuszak stated Commissioner Young was treated with respect when he attended the Road Commission meetings. If a speed test is requested, the request needs to come from the local jurisdiction. The Road Commission is looking at various intersections where accidents occur. The new task force started by Governor Whitmer is to target reducing accidents by 30%.

Commissioner Lutz addressed Birch Run road as it is not a MDOT road and they consider it a county road. Matuszak stated there is a report that is forthcoming regarding many roads in the county.

Commissioner Bardwell addressed the number of accidents that have occurred at Hurds Corner Road and Deckerville Roads since the Putman Family accident. The urgency of the public is to look for solutions.

Suzy Rockwell stated there have been 11 accidents since then.

Julie Matuszak asked for the opportunity to investigate the situations and to allow for the Road Commission Board to take action.

Commissioner Barrios addressed that lives are important and need to be considered. She understands that the Road Commission has to do their due diligence but there has to be some flexibility as well.

Isabella Putman explained that an issue, a solution and a method of payment was taken to the Road Commission meeting and was presented to the Road Commissioners.

Elizabeth Reilman stated that action needs to be taken to improve the critical intersections within the county.

Laura Boyke-Hawes stated in recent attendance at the Road Commission meetings she has felt there is no respect given to those in attendance.

Private business owner, she has been attending the Board of Commissioners meeting because of her experience with the Road Commission Board.

Joanna Samuelson shared her experience of attending a recent Road Commission meeting.

Commissioner Barrios stated that she stayed for the entire Road Commission meeting where the effectiveness of communication was discussed. She would like to make sure those who are elected or appointed are given the tools to do that specific job as to what their job and duties are.

Commissioner Lutz stated the MDOT does not have jurisdiction on the county roads. They are our county roads for consideration.

Commissioner Bardwell stated the only oversight the Board of Commissioners has over the Road Commission is financial. At one time, the Road Commissioners were an appointed Board. Any training for the Road Commission Board would be internal from inside the Road Commission.

Commissioner Vaughan (virtual) stated there is oversight by the Board of Commissioners over the Road Commission. He would like the credit card policy and what is spent each month as well as what is spent on water in each office for employees.

Jim Mantey, Almer Township Supervisor, shared positive experiences with the County Road Commission and asked that before a decision is made that the Board take a broad look at it.

Mary Drier stated that the Commissioners should look at their budget when asking others to cut their budgets to determine if health insurance is truly needed for them as it was given up previously.

Adjournment

Motion by Matt Koch, seconded by Bill Lutz to adjourn the meeting at 11:17 a.m.
Motion Carried.

Jodi Fetting
Tuscola County Clerk, MCCO