



MINUTES

Board of Commissioners Meeting

8:00 AM - Thursday, August 27, 2026

H.H. Purdy Building Board Room, 125 W. Lincoln Street, Caro, MI 48723

Commissioner Bardwell called the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Tuscola, Michigan, held at the H.H. Purdy Building Board Room, 125 W. Lincoln Street, Caro, MI 48723, on Thursday, August 27, 2026, to order at 8:00 AM local time.

Prayer - Commissioner Bardwell

Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Lutz

Roll Call - Clerk Fetting

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

Commissioners Absent: Kim Vaughan, Matt Koch

Others Present In-Person: Clerk Jodi Fetting, Tracy Violet, Mike Miller, Jordan Wade, Treasurer Ashley Bennett, Tom McLane, Prosecutor Erica Walle, Connie Keinath, Terry Camp, Drain Commissioner Dara Hood, Alecia Little, Sheila Long, Shelly Lutz

Also Present Virtual: Mary Drier, Amy Gregor, Angie House, Anthony Zyber, Bonnie Fackler, Carrie Tabar, Carrie Venus, Chad Brown, Debbie Babich, Jeff LeValley, Lori Offenbecher, Matthew Sexton, Mitch Davies, Olivia Chapin, Steve Root, Shelby Austin, Shannon Beach, Rosemary Kuerbitz, Shelly Lutz, Jennifer Jones, Drain Commissioner Dara Hood, Katie Robinson, Kandi Teddy, Register Marianne Brandt, Robin Neff, Samuel Putnam, Scienna Nieschulz, Tanya Pisha, William Hill, Tricia Sharp, Alecia Little, Barry Lapp, Ashley Gaudett, Juli Walters, Tim Green, Beth Hoppe, Chad Tumblin, Laura Boyke-Hawes, Judge Nancy Thane, Cindy Hughes, Brenda Peters, Judy Cockerill, Maggie Root, Curtis Elenbaum, Karlee Romain, Echo Torrez, Estee Bitzer, Heather Malloy, Jamie Pierce, Jonathon Ramirez, Toni James, Wendy Franks, Eean Lee, Shannon Nelson, Judge Amy Grace Gierhart, Amanda Ertman, Tiffany Gerds, Jessica Risky, Tyler Ray, Dan Lisowski, Prosecutor Erica Walle

At 8:37 a.m., there were a total of 46 participants attending the meeting virtually.

Adoption of Agenda

1. Adoption of Agenda -

2026-M-195

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to adopt the agenda as amended.
Motion Carried.

Action on Previous Meeting Minutes

1. Action on Previous Meeting Minutes -

2026-M-196

Motion by Nancy Barrios, seconded by Bill Lutz to adopt the meeting minutes from the August 13, 2026 Regular meeting and the August 13, 2026 Public Hearing. Motion Carried.

Brief Public Comment Period for Agenda Items Only

None

Consent Agenda

None

New Business

1. Prosecutor Request to Fund Special Prosecutors Using Available Payroll Funds -
Erica Walle, Tuscola County Prosecutor, presented the request to use the assistance of Special Prosecutor's from other counties due to the shortage of a Chief Assistant Prosecutor and Assistant Prosecutor in the office.

2026-M-197

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to approve per the recommendation of Prosecutor, Erica Walle, the use of current funds allocated to the open Chief Assistant Prosecutor, and open Assistant Prosecutor positions to pay the cost of special assistant Prosecutors to assist in the various functions required by the office of the Prosecuting Attorney during the time period the Prosecutor's office has open prosecutor positions beginning as of August 26, 2026. All budget amendments approved as necessary.

Motion Carried.

2. Prosecutor Office Update -
Erica Walle, Tuscola County Prosecutor, read a statement regarding an out of office dating relationship and provided a handout from the State Bar of Michigan from 2010 and the Wisconsin Ethics Opinion (E-86-1).

Judge Amy Grace Gierhart made a statement regarding the potential conflict-of-interest matter being discussed.

3. Saginaw - Tuscola Medical Control Authority 2025 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Subrecipient Funding Agreement -
Jordan Wade, Emergency Services Director, presented the request for the HSGP Subrecipient Funding Agreement as the program has just been opened up to apply for.

2026-M-198

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Subrecipient Funding Agreement with the Saginaw-Tuscola Medical Control Authority, who is the acting fiduciary agent for the 2025 Homeland Security Grant Program. Also, all appropriate signatures are authorized allowing Vice-Chairperson Thomas Bardwell to sign the agreement. Motion Carried.

4. New Federal Mileage Rate increase as of July 1, 2026 -
Mike Miller, Controller/Administrator, presented the request.

2026-M-199

Motion by Nancy Barrios, seconded by Bill Lutz that effective August 27, 2026 the standard county mileage rate be increased from \$.72.5 cents per mile to \$.76 cents per mile as established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Motion Carried.

5. General Fund Budget Adjustments -
Connie Keinath, Chief Accountant, presented the request for the budget adjustments outlined in the report in the agenda packet.

2026-M-200

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to approve General Fund Budget Adjustments for Fiscal Year 2026 to be budgetary compliant and approve all budgetary adjustments. Motion Carried.

6. Special Funds Budget Adjustments -
Connie Keinath, Chief Accountant, presented the request for budget adjustments for the special funds as outlined in the agenda packet.

2026-M-201

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to approve Special Funds Budget Adjustments as presented for Fiscal Year 2026 to be budgetary compliant and approve all budgetary adjustments. Motion Carried.

7. 2026 Budget Update as of August 24, 2026 With Adjustments -
Connie Keinath, Chief Accountant, presented the update. There was no action requested.
8. Note Cards -
Mike Miller, Controller/Administrator, presented a quote received from Heritage Press for note cards for any department in the county to be able to use. There was no action at this time.

9. Drain Office Funding Request for a Drain Project in the Village of Gagetown -
Drain Commissioner Dara Hood reviewed the Gagetown Drain Drainage District project as it is at the stage of needing funding.

Treasurer Ashley Bennett explained the opportunity to have the Delinquent Tax Revolving fund loan the money for the project. This would earn a slightly higher interest rate than what is being earned currently as well as be at a lower rate than if traditional lending was sought which will save the taxpayers money that are a part of the project.

2026-M-202

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to approve the request from Tuscola County Drain Commissioner, Dara Hood, to obtain a loan up to \$500,000.00 from the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund (626) for a drain project in the Village of Gagetown. The 15-year loan with 4.5% interest will require yearly payments payable by June 30th of each year, with the final payment being received June 30, 2041. Also, approve Tuscola County Treasurer, Ashley Bennett, to move the approved funds from the 626 (Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund) to the 830 (Gagetown Drain Construction) fund. All necessary signatures are authorized.

Motion Carried.

10. Court Staffing Request (matter added) (matter continued below) -
Judge Amy Grace Gierhart submitted a request for a Staff Attorney effective August 24, 2026. Board wants to clarify the budgets and salary line items that will be impacted.

Old Business

None

Correspondence/Resolutions

1. Fairgrove Fire Department Pancake Breakfast

Commissioner Liaison Committee Reports

Vaughan

Absent

Board of Health

County Planning Commission

Economic Development Corp/Brownfield Redevelopment

MAC Environmental Regulatory

Mid-Michigan Mosquito Control Advisory Committee

NACo-Energy, Environment & Land Use

Parks and Recreation Commission

Tuscola County Fair Board Liaison
Local Units of Government Activity Report

Barrios

County Road Commission Liaison -

There is a project at Cemetery and Bay City Forestville Roads.

Great Start Collaborative

Human Services Collaborative Council (HSCC)

MAC Agricultural/Tourism Committee

Parks and Recreation Commission -

The unveiling of the historical kiosk was this past weekend.

Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative

Local Units of Government Activity Report -

- Elmwood Township Supervisor Chris Graf has resigned.

- A new store in Cass City has opened - Cloke and Stone.

- The Fairgrove Fire Department Pancake Breakfast, Octagon Barn and Bean Festival are upcoming events.

- Met with Connections Human Services regarding services that they provide.

- The walking path at the Medical Care Facility has been opened and she participated in a tour.

- Keith Aeder from Fairgrove Township was recognized by Representative McClain's office for his years of service.

Bardwell

Behavioral Health Systems Board

Caro DDA/TIFA

Economic Development Corp/Brownfield Redevelopment -

Met earlier this week with a speaker that provided information on Brownfield Redevelopment.

MAC 7th District -

There has been no meeting scheduled.

MAC Workers Comp Board -

Meets on September 1, 2026.

MAC Finance Committee -

Next meeting is in September.

NACo Rural Action Caucus (RAC)

Local Units of Government Activity Report -

-There was an EDC meeting but a date was indicated incorrectly on a sign so there was public confusion as to when the meeting was to be held.

Lutz

No Report

Board of Health

Community Corrections Advisory Board

Department of Human Services/Medical Care Facility Liaison

Genesee Shiawassee Thumb Works

Human Development Commission Board of Directors Liaison

Jail Planning Committee

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

MAC Judiciary Committee

MEMS All Hazard

Multi-County Recycling Committee

Local Units of Government Activity Report

Koch

Absent

Dispatch Authority Board

Genesee Shiawassee Thumb Works

Jail Planning Committee

MI Renewable Energy Coalition (MREC)

Recycling Advisory

Local Units of Government

Other Business as Necessary

-Commissioner Bardwell explained a situation of a homeless individual in Caro in which finding a resource to assist him was challenging. Amy Cuthrell was able to assist in the matter.

At 10:08 a.m., there were a total of 41 participants attending the meeting virtually.

Recessed at 10:10 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:34 a.m.

At 10:34 a.m., there were a total of 31 participants attending the meeting virtually.

New Business Continued**1. Court Staffing Request -**

Sheila Long, Court Administrator, was able to provide the requested budgets that will be impacted along with the line-items regarding the staffing request.

2026-M-203

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to approve per the August 29, 2026 memo from Amy Grace Gierhart, Tuscola County Chief Judge, the hiring of a Staff Attorney with a start date of August 24, 2026, with an annual wage of \$90,000.00.

Wages to be paid from the following budgets:

\$49,200.00 from the Unified Court Budget - Line Item 101-130-704-000

\$36,000.00 from the Friend of the Court Budget - Line Item 215-100-704-000

\$4,800.00 from the Child Care Fund - Line Item 292-662-704-000

All necessary budget amendments approved as necessary. Motion Carried.

Extended Public Comment

-Commissioner Barrios shared that as she attends various meetings that county agencies are appreciative of the work of Treasurer Ashley Bennett.

-The number of virtual attendees at the meeting was discussed as there were 64 at one point of the meeting.

Adjournment

2026-M-204

Motion by Bill Lutz, seconded by Nancy Barrios to adjourn the meeting at 10:41 a.m.
Motion Carried.

Jodi Fetting
Tuscola County Clerk, MCCO