

Tuscola County Incorporated in 1851

Providing Services to County Residents for 158 Years

Board of Commissioners Leadership



The following information explains the important leadership role of a county commissioner in providing efficient county government services and improving the quality of life for county residents.

County Commissioner Leadership

Common Sense Leadership

Serving the public as a County Commissioner is an essential leadership position. To be effective, this position requires objectivity and a common sense approach to decision making. A County Commissioner is a member of the county governing body and major policy setting center for county government. In this role the Commissioner critically evaluates proposals for change from citizens, department administrators, state government and other boards and commissions. The demands of a County Commissioner are relentless especially in these challenging economic and difficult financial times. Commissioners must be good communicators. Significant time and commitment is required to make effective policy and informed decisions as a County Commissioner.

Commissioner System Historical Development

The County Commissioner system in Michigan came into existence approximately 40 years ago. Before 1969, county government oversight was the responsibility of the 23 Township Supervisors and the City of Vassar (called the Board of Supervisors) who attended meetings once a month and made decisions regarding county affairs. As the scope and complexities of county government grew and the demands for Township Supervisors became overwhelming, stronger central oversight became necessary. In 1969, the County Commissioner System of Representation was born with the first seven members of Tuscola County Commissioners elected by district.

1915-1916 Board of Supervisors



Last meeting of the Board of Supervisors in December of 1968



First meeting of the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners in January of 1969



Current 2009 Tuscola County Board of Commission Members

Current County Commissioners are from left to right (standing):

- District 4 – Roy Petzold 989-871-3789
- District 2 – Thomas Bardwell (Vice-Chairperson) 989-673-0409
- District 1 – Amanda Roggenbuck 989-674-0000
- District 3 – Tom Kern 989-872-3838
- District 5 – Gerald Peterson (Chairperson) 989-823-7891(Seated)



County Commissioner Statewide Trends

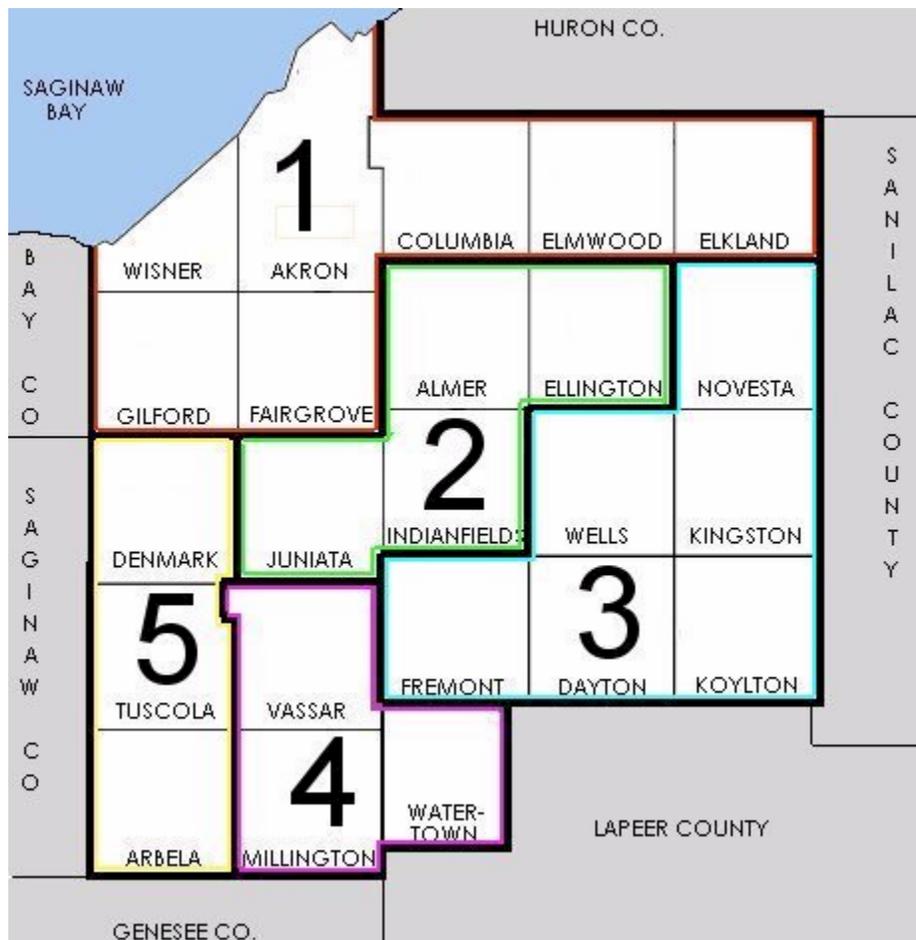
Michigan State University - Extension compiled statewide statistics from the 2008 County Commissioners' election. Some of the interesting results are summarized below:

- For 2009, there are a total of 699 commissioners statewide
- From 2008 to 2009, there was a new commissioner turnover rate of 24%
- The number of commissioners by individual county ranges from 5 to 26
- The majority of counties have between 5 and 10 commissioners
- The number of constituents per commissioner is larger in urban versus rural counties
- For 2009, 80% of commissioners were male compared to 20% female

Commissioner Selection Process – Elected Every Two Years

Commissioners are elected by districts for a two year term of office. To qualify, a candidate must be a registered voter, U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age and be a resident of the district they propose to represent. After the U.S. Census of Population is conducted every 10 years, population and population distribution information is used by the apportionment commission to establish the number and location of commissioner districts. The following officials make up the apportionment commission: County Clerk, County Treasurer, County Prosecutor, Chairperson of the County Democratic Party and Chairperson of the Republican Party. In 2002, the number of Tuscola Commissioners was reduced by the apportionment commission from 7 to 5. The minimum number Commissioners allowed by law is 5.

Tuscola County Commissioner Citizen Representation Districts



Responsibility for Diverse Service Base

Commissioners and other elected and appointed officials are ultimately responsible for the finances and effective operation of a diversity of county services. County government provides a broad range of services including: police; dispatch; courts; jail; vital records maintenance; drainage; public health; child support and custody; care of abused, neglected, and delinquent youth; building codes; animal control; emergency services/homeland security; economic development; recycling; mosquito control; and medical care facility to name a fraction of their service responsibilities.

In addition to the five elected Commissioners, there are 9 other elected officials serving residents and operating county services. These elected county positions include:

Circuit/Family Court Judge, Honorable Patrick Joslyn	Sheriff, Lee Teschendorf
Prosecutor, Mark Reene	County Treasurer, Patricia Donovan-Gray
County Clerk, Margie White-Cormier	Drain Commissioner, Robert Mantey
Register of Deeds, Dan Grimshaw	Probate Court Judge, Honorable Wallace Kent
District Court Judge Honorable Kim David Glaspie	

Controller-Administrator

The size and complexity of county government makes it impossible for Commissioners to perform all of their functions without assistance. The Controller-Administrator's Office was established in 1986 by the Board of Commissioners (BOC) to provide financial, budgetary, personnel, and other administrative services for county government operations. The Controller-Administrator is appointed by the BOC and serves as the County's Chief Appointed Administrative-Fiscal Officer as set forth under the Michigan Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act and Controller's Act. One of the primary roles of this position is to assist the Board in the financial and administrative management of the county operations.

Managing the Financial Resources - Budget Development

The most important authority and responsibility of the BOC is adopting a balanced county budget and monitoring the current and projected financial standing of the county through monthly financial reports and the annual audit process. A comparison can be drawn from the private sector because in many respects the BOC serves as the Board of Directors for a \$44 million dollar county government operation. County government is the largest service provider and employer in Tuscola County. The BOC budgeting authority includes determining the number of staff and compensation for staff in each department. State law requires county government to have a balanced budget which is an on-going challenge in these difficult financial times.

The annual budget is a financial plan for the year. It is critical to effective financial management and fulfilling the state statute that requires county government to maintain a balanced budget and operate within its financial means. The budget determines how financial resources will be allocated to programs and services to best meet the current and future needs of county residents. An in-depth process is followed each year to develop the budget. This process includes estimating available revenues and expenditures and determining service priorities for the coming fiscal year. One of the BOC functions is to choose among competing demands for limited resources. Revenues and expenditures are reviewed monthly to monitor actual information in relationship to budget to decide if adjustments are necessary to maintain a balanced budget. An annual audit (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) is conducted each year to verify county financial standing.

Assistance Provided through Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Oversight of the \$44 million county operation requires considerable time. On average, County Commissioners attend 10 to 15 meetings in a month and spend significant amounts of time

discussing problems and issues with constituents and staff. In addition, extensive amounts of time are required to research issues and review information critical to the decision making process.

The BOC makes appointments to various boards and commissions to assist in the multitude of tasks necessary to operate county government. Citizens serving on these boards and commissions are critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided to county residents. Their service is valuable and greatly appreciated. County Commissioners and citizens are appointed to the following boards and commissions.

County Boards and Commissions

Behavioral Health System Board	Michigan Association of Counties Board of Directors
Board of Health	Michigan Association of Counties Committees
Board of Public Works	Modular Emergency Medical System (MEMS)
Brownfield Redevelopment Authority Board	Mosquito Control Technical Advisory Committee
Community Corrections Advisory Board	Multi-County Solid Waste
County Parks and Recreation Commission	National Association of Counties
County Planning Commission	Recycling Advisory Committee
Dispatch Authority Board	Region VII Area Agency on Aging
Downtown Development Authority	Resource Conservation and Development District
Economic Development Commission	Road Commission Liaison
Enterprise Facilitation	Senior Services Advisory Council
Human Development Commission	Thumb Area Consortium
Human Services Coordinating Council	TRIAD
Human Services/Medical Care Facility Liaison	Tuscola 2011
Local Emergency Planning Committee	

Other Noteworthy Responsibilities of a County Commissioner

- Economic development
- Set compensation for elected various and appointed officials
- Property equalization and appointment of taxes
- Appoint a variety of department heads
- Establish personnel policies for a variety of county departments
- Review and adopt grants
- Provide for necessary facilities and equipment for county government operations

Useful Web Sites Regarding County Commissioners

- County web site - <http://www.tuscolacounty.org/boc/>.
- Michigan Association of Counties - <http://www.micounties.org/>
- National Association of Counties - <http://www.naco.org/>
- Michigan Association of County Administrative Officers - <http://macaoweb.org/>