

THE BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

August 14, 2007

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners met in a special meeting on Tuesday, August 14, 2007, with the Benzie County Chapter of the MTA, at the Benzonia Township Hall, Benzonia, Michigan.

Present were: Commissioners Kelley, Pitcher, Roper and Walterhouse

Absent: Commissioners Damm, Sandman and Smeltzer

Jim Sheets, President of the MTA stated that this was a joint meeting with the Executive Board of MTA and the Board of Commissioners. This not to be an adversarial meeting, but a meaningful meeting. The idea for this meeting has grown out of the quarterly MTA meetings and the concerns that the members have.

ALS/EMS

Discussion held regarding the placement of ambulances and ALS units; purchase of the 669 property; moving from Homestead Township Hall; debt of \$250,000 owed to the county and why the county did what they did and how the ALS budget will pay the county back; hiring of out-of-county residents rather than those that reside in the county with the qualifications needed; floor drains in the 669 garage property; ambulance replacement.

Building Dept

Jim Sheets shows the board members a stack of permit for re-roofs for the months of May & June – a lot of revenue for that department; feels this is above and beyond the State of Michigan construction codes.

Planning Dept

Discussions held regarding the Master Plan being torn apart by the current Planning Commissioners; they are not knowledgeable; the public feels the present planner is being blamed for not completing the zoning ordinance, when Chuck Clarke stopped him when Mr. Olson was hired; the feeling is that the departments are being micro-managed by Mr. Clarke and show not be; they feel it is illegal for Mr. Clarke to oversee Mr. Neiger; Mr. Clarke is to enact policy, not adopt police; and he should never have a vote; feel the Board of Commissioners are stacking the deck with committees – especially the planning commission; the Planning Commissioners must be trained by certified trainers; feel the Wyckoff Analysis should be reviewed by a new committee of unbiased individuals. There is a big feeling that Mr. Clarke has a conflict of interest and carries too many hats; Mr. Olson has a conflict too; Benzonia Twp is looking to do something different – still discussing what; a Planning Commissioners has made the comment that Homestead and Inland Twps are doing something illegal; Platte Twp is disappointed with the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance not being completed, there was better service before; Mr. Clarke makes the county look bad because he is fighting against it; Perception is that Chuck Clarke has a conflict of interest.

Zoning

Public questions the hiring of a zoning administrator at \$56,500 + benefits when he was to be offered \$45,000; citizens feel at that price the board should have used a headhunter and found someone that is qualified – it is too important of a position; the majority of the townships did not agree with the agreement which was sent out and did not pay or sign the agreement and you still went ahead and hired a full time person; telephone calls are not being returned by the zoning administrator.

Community Mental Health

The Board was asked if they are paying the full match to CMH? No, but they are working with the interim administrator to understand how the match is figured.

County Administrator

People feel he seems to be allowed to set policy – he works for you (BOC) – you need to take that back; there is a strong feeling to get rid of him; he oversteps his bounds; the board feels that when they ask him to research something and report back, he does it; they don't feel he oversteps; we need an administrator; builders feel the increase in fees came because of Mr. Clarke.

The feeling is that promotions should be made from within the building, not outside.

Comm Pitcher thanks Mr. Sheets for this meeting.

Comm Roper asks that the Board of Commissioners be placed on the agenda for the MTA meetings.

8:40 p.m. Public Input

Mike Moorman says thank you for this meeting, it was needed.

Craig Johnson stated that if any townships have questions, he would be happy to talk at their meetings or with the supervisor.

Steve Haugen presents a State of Michigan handout; says the permits required for re-roofs was due to lack of quality of work by contractors; you are welcome in his office at any time.

Craig Seger says thank you for holding this meeting; call with questions and he will return them.

Deb Lindgren also says thank you; asks about the building inspectors carrying guns? No

Jack Richter asks if there is anything to prevent digging a hole and burying a house.

8:50 p.m. Adjourned