
Bi-Weekly Update from County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott, 5/8/14:

Quarterly City/County Meeting

City Managers and Mayors from Albion, Battle Creek, Marshall and Springfield met with County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott and Board Chairman Art Kale on May 8 to exchange updates on key projects and ideas for further collaboration between our local units of government. We rotate meeting locations throughout the county, with this latest meeting in the City of Albion. Discussion items included: the City of Battle Creek and County implementation of a new **law enforcement Records Management System (RMS)** that just went live this week and allows for expansion to include any other law enforcement agencies within the county; and the proposed new **Marshall Regional Law Enforcement Center (MRLEC)**, which is a collaborative between the State Police, the City of Marshall and the County Sheriff's Office that is being finalized through lease agreements and grant acceptance scheduled for County Board consideration next Thursday, May 15.

We also discussed the upcoming **August 5 Primary ballot initiative** necessary to provide revenue replacement to local governments, for losses from the Bills already enacted to eliminate **personal property taxes** starting this year. The Michigan Association of Counties supports this ballot initiative through a campaign led by the Michigan Citizens for Strong and Safe Communities, who explain that a YES vote will "Protect Our Communities & Help Small Businesses Create Jobs Without Increasing Taxes." The impact on the County's operating budget without this new stable source of revenue replacement is approximately \$2 million per year, of which \$800,000 provides for essential public safety services.

Other topics for follow up discussions included expanding **recycling** opportunities for residents, the County's plans to consider new options for the administration of our **Workforce Development** programs, and how to address ongoing county-wide **public transportation issues**. For the next meeting scheduled in August, we are planning to ask for a special presentation by Southwest Michigan First, our privately funded **regional economic development** organization serving Calhoun County as well as several other counties in our region.

Workforce Development Administration in Transition

The Barry, Branch and Calhoun Counties' **Workforce Development Board** met on May 1 to discuss plans to select a new Administrative Entity, following the recent notice from the Calhoun Intermediate School District (CISD) of their decision to stop being the Administrative Entity effective June 30, 2014. The CISD has served in this partner capacity since 1995, and conveyed in their notice their support of a new alternative proposed by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research that includes taking this opportunity to redraw the area boundaries, for purposes of workforce development, to better match those defined by the State of Michigan's Prosperity Regions. The newly proposed Michigan Works! Area would include Kalamazoo, Calhoun, St. Joseph and Branch Counties, while realigning Barry County with the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance that includes Kent and other counties. The goals are to reduce administrative expenses, and enhance service delivery through increased efficiencies. The Workforce Development Board has asked the County Administrators, legal counsel and Commissioners currently representing Barry, Branch and Calhoun Counties on the Chief Elected Officials Board (CEOB), working with the Upjohn Institute, to review options for securing a new Administrative Entity by July 1 or soon thereafter, and to consider longer-term options for the best delivery of Workforce Development

Programs in the future. Calhoun County's CEOB members are Commissioners Kathy-Sue Dunn, Steve Frisbie, and Derek King.

Southwest Michigan Alliance for Region Three (SMART) Meeting

County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott attended the May 7 quarterly meeting of the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) regional group of commissioners and administrators from 14 counties, called the Southwest Michigan Alliance for Regional Three (SMART). The 14 counties include Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, St. Joseph, and Van Buren. The meeting locations rotate among all counties, with this quarter's meeting hosted by Muskegon County. As part of the standard agenda, representatives from MAC gave legislative updates, mostly surrounding the State's fiscal year 2014-15 budget preparations and the impacts on various county mandates such as public safety and child welfare. Muskegon County officials gave presentations on two new "best practice" initiatives: the creation of a new Juvenile Transition Center to replace the former Juvenile Home; and the creation of an Office of the Muskegon County Public Defender to replace formerly contracted independent indigent defense attorneys. County commissioners from Allegan County indicated they will ask voters in August to increase the Senior Millage rate, as well as a new per-device 911 funding surcharge. Barry County also shared plans for August ballot initiatives to renew millages for transit, Area Agency on Aging, and 911 funding.

Road Department Adding Workers for Summer Maintenance

In response to this year's horrible pothole season, the Road Department is in the process of replacing previously vacant road worker positions, as well as *seeking several seasonal workers* to greatly boost our patching efforts. We have also modified shifts and office hours to provide patching crews and office staff on an ongoing basis Monday through Friday throughout the summer. The Road Department Office will be *open 7am - 3pm Monday through Friday this summer*, which is a change from the four, 10-hour days employed in previous years. In order to double up on patching efforts, the Road Department has rented two durapatchers in addition to the two owned by the Department. Now that hot asphalt mix is available, crews are able to make much more effective and efficient progress to attack potholes starting immediately. Road crews are dedicated to patching activities almost exclusively and are focused on improving motorists' safety. There is a *current deployment to Emmett, Bedford, Pennfield Townships every day*, based on the largest volume of road issues being identified in those areas. Managing Director Jerry Peterson is also happy to report the Road Department was successful in securing **\$184,000** in competitive *federal safety grants* that will be available for guardrail upgrades in Bedford, Pennfield and Athens Townships over the next two years.

Veterans Affairs Strategic Planning

The County's Veterans Affairs Committee, chaired by Rodger Seidel, is in the process of creating a new short and long term plan for the allocation of Veterans Millage funds and the delivery of Veterans' programs in Calhoun County. With the passage of the 0.1 mills in dedicated tax funding starting this year, the office will receive roughly three times as many budget dollars per year for the next 10 years to enhance services to veterans. Committee members Jack Hunn, Rob Beam, Sam Gray are participating in this planning process, along with County Administration and VA Office Director Scott Losey and Service Officer Kristina Higgins. Facilitated by Humanergy, the group met last on May 1 to review a draft Strategic Plan, and is targeting June 1 for completion of their work.